



MEMORY, IDENTITY & MENTALITIES

Development, Left and Right:

Ideological Entanglements of Reformist Projects
in Pre-communist Romania

VICTOR RIZESCU



EDITURA UNIVERSITĂȚII DIN BUCUREȘTI



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1

Introduction

However much the dimension of social-economic and legal-institutional reformism targeting the challenges of modernization, state construction and nation building has featured over the long run of historical time as inbuilt into the grand ideological visions competing for higher audiences in the public spaces of countries like Romania, there is certainly a need for a careful consideration of development projects elaborated in such places under a separate rubric of study. For sure, particular issues arising from the condition of relative backwardness – and most often correlated to short and medium-term objectives – have always tended to take precedence over bodies of abstract theory addressing seemingly timeless dilemmas regarding the nature of the human species in the discourses of local ideologists, and contextualized debates revolving around clearly circumscribed questions put deeper imprints on the national constituencies than philosophical disagreements cast in universalistic languages. It was thus such kind of questions and debates that contributed more than any other intellectual patterns to configuring the Left and the Right parts of the political spectrum in the countries holding a peripheral position within the modern world structured by the expansion of capitalism and the advent of recurring quests for eventual non-capitalist models of change. Still, one cannot disregard the significance of the analytical difference between generalizing statements pertaining to the domain of ideological orientation and specialized

stances of a recognizably more pragmatic character when setting forth to draw a detailed map of the broad cultural dynamics upon which the continuous search for public policies was predicated in the respective settings.

Observing the difference mentioned also implies a focus on clarifying the precise connections established between the two types of endeavors. Hence this book, that opens towards a research on the public policies of pre-communist Romania through an examination of the ways in which the various projects of development and reform of the period got entangled with the major liberal, left-wing and right-wing advocacies advanced in the same milieu. This approach only deepens the one deployed in two previous books. Composed in the same fashion and entitled *Ideology, Nation and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks* (2013), respectively *Canonul și vocile uitate. Secvențe dintr-o tipologie a gândirii politice românești* (2015), they are designed by sustained reference to the canonical – both domestic and foreign – interpretations of the modes of ideological discourse prevailing in the country before the installation of the communist regime, with a view to discover important voices falling outside the thrust of the mainstream narratives, alongside an overall re-evaluation of the canonized figures, options and systems of thought. Pondering anew the relation between these latter ones and the relevant eccentric spots of the record that are disclosed goes together with a conceptualization of national ideological development relying heavily on comparative insights, taken with the hindsight of communism and post-communism and appropriate for serving the purposes of orientation in the horizon of the present.

An emphasis upon a (rather limited) welter of ideological trends and attitudes shaped in Romanian society up to the early 1940's, identified to suit best the values of post-1989 democratization, emerges from the

approach described. The ensuing proposal for redrawing the canon of the field thus highlights the moderate – agrarianist and social-democratic – varieties of the Left, and (to an even greater extent) the minority versions of liberal thinking – all of them sharing the philosophical stance of Enlightenment rationalism but departing from several other groups supporting the same basic philosophy by their opposition to the insidiously spread forms of authoritarianism with a modernizing bent – , as the main past repositories of a political wisdom resonating with nowadays liberal-democratic concerns. Closely related to such evaluative judgments are, however, the findings referring to the very structure of the process of ideological growth surveyed. They exhibit a deep interplay between a drive to acculturation – involving the constant adjustments of imported ideas to match peculiar local urgencies and inertias – and a flow of innovative views prompted by an entrenched dissatisfaction with the course of modernization, altogether aimed to evolve into authoritative critical sociologies of the structural transformations underway, of their manifestations in the realm of culture and of their consequences at the layer of politics. It is also shown that the central thread running through this body of social criticism was represented by a sustained reflection on the local distortions of capitalism, conjoined with a multifaceted theorizing on the perversion of parliamentarianism into oligarchic rule prone to perpetuate indefinitely the ills of bureaucratic profligacy and inflated interventionism overstraining the available – and blatantly scarce – budgetary resources.

The series of overlapping historical landscapes staying at the borderline between political ideologies and development designs that are drawn in the following pages issued, in turn, from sharper engagements with the (multiple) modernizing faces of liberalism; with the nature of the fascist Right, considered from the standpoint

of its relation to the unfolding of modernity; and with the characteristics of the Left, most intriguingly exhibited – when measured against the realities of backwardness – in the guise of the cooperatist conception of economic organization. Tackling with the first problem allowed for a more accurate delineation of the mainstream and the oppositional segments of the liberal camp, shedding new light on the statist-nationalist dedication cherished within the former while also circumscribing the contours of the strategies coined by the representatives of the latter for counteracting the peripheral degeneration of the creed (on the basis of either rejuvenating its original individualist inspiration or laying down the principles and practical implications of its necessary turn towards embracing a social vocation). The second inquiry led to the discovery of corporatism as a major structuring idea of the Romanian public mind during the period. Hitherto completely unnoticed, this wide dissemination of the project usually associated with the name of one single – and internationally renowned – theorist can be recorded both among the high profile people contemplating the large-scale refashioning of the economic and political format of the country and within the ranks of the movement of professional representation looking forward to find a viable alternative to syndicalism (the previously disregarded strength of the organizations with middle class social origins, which ardently adopted the respective view, being disclosed in this connection). As for the third question, it is here treated by taking account of its deep intermingling with the one of the corporatist theorizing and policies with respect to both the domain of the institutional articulation of professional interests and that of the searches for third-way models of economic planning, set in between capitalism and socialism.

Revisiting the complexity of liberalism yielded into a focus on the left-wing variety of it. Otherwise, revealing

the multifariousness of corporatism and the importance of middle-class professional activism led to a concern with welfare arrangements and their entrenchment in capital-labor relations, which made possible a new perspective on the obsolescence of the only historical views on these matters enjoying any influence up to this moment (and shaped under communism). When conjoined, these two main strains of the research drove its general edge towards an emphasis on the social reformist side of the Romanian efforts to enhance the speed of modernization, while at the same time containing its painful effects. For that reason, the articles assembled here in a book are part of a series written over the past several years and dwelling increasingly on the intricacies of the process by which labor legislation, social policies and welfare arrangements have taken hold and have grown in the country, on the nature of the break induced into the same process by the advent of communism and on the difficulties encountered by the post-communist social sciences in terms of convincingly conceptualizing the successive stages of the evolutions involved. The most comprehensive piece of the series to date – entitled “Începuturile statului bunăstării pe filiera românească. Scurtă retrospectivă a etapelor unei reconceptualizări” (2018) – is therefore planned to stay at the core of another book, nevertheless premised on the same methodological guidelines which are employed in the present work.

Among the many debts incurred while writing the book, a mention is due to New Europe College and the Romanian Academy, which supported a part of the research in the framework of a POSDRU fellowship program, indicated below when it is the case. One more piece indebted to the same support was retained in *Ideology, Nation and Modernization*, as specified. The other acknowledgements given there always remain appropriate.

PART I

Liberal Views of Development and Social Reform

Very often treated as just a disguise of economic nationalism, development projects driven by liberal principles in interwar Romania emerge, on a closer scrutiny, as displaying a spectrum of orientations targeting different objectives and sustained by various ideological rationalizations. Distinguishing among them can be seen as the necessary baseline of any effort to draw a general map of basic intellectual constructions shaped in the context with the task of guiding the process of modernization and available to the policy-makers of the time. In other words, it is in relation to the prospective views of social change issuing from within the (compartmentalized) headquarters of liberalism that one can best circumscribe the contours of the relevant conceptions exhibiting (more deeply marked) left-wing and right-wing identities and featuring in the same national space. In the fashion it is pursued throughout the following two chapters, this approach must be predicated not only against the standard historical wisdom regarding the quasi-homogenous nature of Romanian liberal ideas and politics, but also by opposition to the mainstream interpretation about the long-term dynamics of liberalism across the entire area of Eastern Europe (repeatedly invoked as a defining region-wide trait in the late XIXth and the early XXth centuries, moreover able to bestow a nefarious legacy upon post-communist democratization). Indeed, this comparative vision is itself

prone to maintain that, no matter the (relative) diversity of stances adopted by the central modernizing doctrine when first tailored to the conditions of delayed development, its subsequent evolution was streamlined in all countries – and by responding to similar pressures – along the trajectory of mild authoritarianism praising the virtues of economic closure to the benefit of national growth.

In so far as the eastern part of Europe up into the period of the world wars sheltered a laboratory of ideas and policies addressing the predicament of backwardness whose findings were later to be adopted or rediscovered by parties and congeries of theorists acting in other – less Europeanized, and more backward – settings affected by the same global syndromes, one has good reasons to expect a research focused on the major splits opened within the (seemingly unitary) liberal camp in a country like Romania to meaningfully pave the way for elaborating a typology of liberalism that combines a sustained inquiry into the generic metamorphoses suffered by the core – and primarily western – doctrine with a sensitivity for the transformations affecting it in conjunction with its dissemination across the world. Chapter 2 lays down precisely such an approach. It delineates – over the long run of history – two intertwining tendencies of western origins and global extension stretching through the continuum of liberal advocacy, defined by their (constantly, although variously manifested) leanings towards the Left and, respectively, the Right poles of the modern ideological spectrum. Getting incubated in the early modern era and in the medium of the confrontation between the republican tradition and that of enlightened absolutism – crisscrossing with the tension functioning at the interplay of the radical and the moderate strands of Enlightenment culture –, the liberal languages in question then developed multiple idioms in successive settings, from the time of the radical democratic surge

nourished by the memory of Jacobinism and pitted against the spirit of circumspection towards revolutionary ventures prevailing in Congress of Vienna Europe to the recently rejuvenated debate opposing the promoters of Keynesian policies and those of neoliberalism in the framework of the 2008 economic crisis.

It is then argued that this twofold classification of liberal stances can be appropriately employed by reference to pre-communist Romania only when acknowledging that the local ideological views and conceptions of development which best fit into the traditions disclosed featured here in the guise of minority discourses pertaining much rather to the domain of opposition politics and lingering in the condition of chronic marginalization (despite overlapping, for sure, with the mainstream segment of social and political life and taking inroads into the sphere of power). They have to be depicted as such when related to that embodiment of liberalism which enjoyed a dominant status in the national environment. Placed further to the Right than the Romanian individualistically-based participant to the pedigree of the Hayekian-style liberal wisdom – mostly focused on praising unhindered entrepreneurship and the liberty of trade – , this one was always ready and eager to favor the ideals of collective betterment endangered by the combined constraints of geopolitics and structural underdevelopment at the cost of thwarting the requirements of legalism, the demands of popular sovereignty and the safeguards of free individual pursuits by appealing on a quasi-permanent basis to an insidious mixture of oligarchic rule and economic interventionism. The cynical flavor displayed by one particular encapsulation of this way of thinking – contained in the works of Ștefan Zeletin – is considered at length, with due attention paid to the theoretical ambitions and the wide-ranging implications of the same argumentation, while a series of periodicals

are highlighted, otherwise, as privileged venues for the expression of the competing liberal views. No matter the differences separating from each other the three components of the enlarged typology thus emerged, there is also placed an emphasis on the assumptions they all share, revolving around their patriotic dedication compounded by westernizer zeal premised on rationalistic convictions (from which a corresponding rejection of traditionalist nationalism enmeshed in different philosophical preferences is derived).

The Left-liberal discourse alone is given a separate treatment in chapter 3, by the means of a closer look at the figure of Dumitru Drăghicescu, here underscored as the most accomplished representative of the trend in Romania at the level of theory (and with no hint at his better recorded interventions enlarging upon the patterns of westernizer nationalism, mentioned in the previous chapter). There is followed the journey leading him from a (slightly qualified) socialist allegiance before the First World War to embracing a liberal-socialist stance in the circumstances marked by the disappointments of early Soviet communism. His characteristic long-term reading of Marxism through the lens of Durkheimian sociology is proved to square well with the equal dedication to socialism and the radical-democratic tradition that he professed, no less coherence being found in his determination of harnessing Christianity to the pleading for social justice without ever abandoning the matrix of positivism (investing to this extent the International Labor Organization with the role of disseminating the synthetic welfarist-Christian message). Consistency along a line of reasoning cut midway between liberal and socialist values – without succumbing to any contingent temptation to embrace one-sidedly one of the two visions and resisting on this basis all forms of radicalism encountered throughout – emerges as the most impressive

quality of the construction depicted, whose profile is further highlighted by a contextualization in the medium of contemporary Romanian left-wing – and non-communist – ideological currents. These are shown as either prone to cohabitate with the ever more numerous (and mostly right-wing) upholders of collectivistic beliefs extolling the highly elusive virtues of economic dirigisme – a subject that will be brought to the forefront in the last chapter of the book –, or inclined to travel the whole road from the same attitude to that of an accommodation with Bolshevism (as in the case of a group indulging in an interesting experiment of syncretism which is briefly considered).

Hard to be identified as such when his works published abroad and addressed to foreign audiences are preponderantly invoked, Drăghicescu's version of liberal socialism betrays its indebtedness to the entire cluster of turn-of-the-century socially-minded "new liberal" modes of thinking stretching from West to East, shaped by a departure from the monopolist-plutocratic shortcomings previously manifested by the "sectarian" remolding of Manchesterianism but still lacking of the Keynesian and New Deal regulatory devices which were later to be associated with the welfare state institutions and practices. Its role as a special vantage-point for surveying the beginnings of the welfare agenda and instruments in the Romanian space will get clarified in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Otherwise, the vistas that the comparative look at the three interpretations of liberal demands is likely to open towards a deeper understanding of the way development and social policies unfolded in the country get crystallized most conspicuously in connection to their polemical encounters. An exchange between Drăghicescu and a leading voice coming from the camp of refurbished classical liberalism is read as a plain transplant into the context of the interventionism *vs.* non-interventionism dilemma, whose paradigmatic formulations in the standard

languages of western social sciences have always tended to be given with a sharp emphasis on western realities. On the contrary, the (strikingly only) implicit disagreements – clearly spelled out here – separating Zeletin and the representative of liberal socialism when sharing the pages of the same journal dedicated to pondering the right scope of state interference with economic life – at the juncture of the 1923 constitutional revision – display the full harshness of a predicament most characteristic to the setting of delayed development. Apparently making similar claims regarding the obsolescence of classical liberalism – and customarily packed together by historical accounts on this ground – the two advocates of some kind of planning are in fact dedicated to specific objectives, to be attained by no less different methods. It is precisely the state mediation in the relations between capital and labor that Drăghicescu wants maximized – for the sake of labor protection – which is intended by Zeletin to be minimized, such as to make possible the large-scale – and openly acknowledged – employment of state levers for the purpose of increasing capitalist productivity, ultimately geared to national growth. As the first vision would pour into the stream of social policies, so the latter one would contribute to the articulation of corporatist politics. In parts II and III the eventual convergence of these seemingly disjoined developments will be brought into focus.

2

The Nation of the Westernizers: Mainstream and Minority Varieties of Romanian Liberalism

Between 1900 and 1940, westernizer liberalism embraced, in Romania, three ideological formulations clearly distinguishable from each other. They can be discovered as crisscrossing in the pages of three periodicals. Published over the year 1923, from January to November – and significantly focused on debating the preparation and reverberations of the constitutional revision adopted in the same year, in March –, the journal *Dreptatea socială* was underlined by a “liberal socialist” vision that the sociologist Dumitru Drăghicescu (acting as a director) offered as an elaboration of his broader social philosophy shaped at the interplay between the European social-democratic tradition and his core Durkheimian ideas. This view is much too easy to be mistaken for the one that it (strangely) cohabitates with in the pages of the same journal: the argumentation in favor of enhancing the interventionist cast of the local mainstream liberalism advanced by Ștefan Zeletin, in conjunction with his open acknowledgement of the oligarchic and bureaucratic

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nature of the policies customarily employed by the National Liberal Party as a privileged driving force of modernizing social change.

Between January 1933 and December 1937 – and decreasingly so over the following years, up to December 1940 –, the journal *Libertatea. Economică, politică, socială, culturală* (headed by the economist George Strat as a chief-editor and by the industrialist Ion P. Gigurtu as a director) advanced a vision of free trade liberalism in stark opposition to the same mainstream and deeply entrenched interventionist wisdom in the course of being strengthened by the rising authoritarian ideologies of the Left and the Right. The few statements that Drăghicescu gave here spelled out his disagreements with the unqualified individualist philosophy of the journal, nevertheless maintaining a line markedly different from the Zeletinian one.

In its turn, *Libertatea's* stance – prodigiously served by the journalist Ștefan Antim (with a legal training) and occasionally also by the elder H. Sanielevici (an influential, although always marginalized figure of literary criticism as well as of broader topics of journalistic interest) – was anticipated by that of another periodical: *Curentul nou*, with Sanielevici as a director and issued first in 1905-1906, and then again in 1920 (this second time with Antim as a main collaborator). Expressions of the views calling for a statist-based adjustment of the liberal ideas sometimes featured in the last journal – with the demands for social protection schemes taking a leaf from the socialist tradition still hard to disentangle themselves from the drive to economic closure with a nationalist edge – , in cohabitation with its growing intimation of the need for a return to classical liberalism. The three Romanian interpretations of liberalism are considered in the following, by making recourse to comparative references over the long run of history.

1

The doctrine of liberal socialism is consistently elaborated, in the pages of *Dreptatea socială*, by Drăghicescu alone, in continuation to his political tracts of the previous two years.¹ The opening article entitled “What do we want?” (unsigned, but undeniably his) thus advocates a program meant to strike and broaden a wise middle road between liberalism and socialism, stating that “in order not to degenerate into abusive practices, into fraud and unchecked competition, the principle of liberty has to function only in conjunction with that of justice, in the same way as justice itself can go along without liberty, as the socialists want, only at the cost of relapsing into the most odious tyranny”.² This statement can only be made after acknowledging that a significant part of the socialist view has established itself as the horizon of any meaningful policy of social reform, to the extent that “the socialist movement shows itself, nowadays, as impetuous as the liberal one was in 1848, and its chances to succeed seem to be also much the same”.³ Hence, “the principle of social justice” promoted by the new periodical must not be perceived as a challenging minority opinion, but as “underlying the aspirations of the entire Romanian politics”. The publishing enterprise inaugurated can only have the function to act as a vehicle for bringing to full light such diffuse ideals and unclear expectations, thus “defining

¹ D. Drăghicescu, *Evoluția ideilor liberale*, București, Imprimeriile “Independența”, 1921; Idem, *Partide politice și clase sociale*, București, n. p., 1922.

² (unsigned) “Ce voim?”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 1, January 15, 1923, p. 5

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

and clarifying the principle in question and scrutinizing its many practical implications”.⁴

While thus making plain its closeness to socialist politics, the new doctrine nevertheless underscores its pacifist edge. It is meant to lessen social tensions and class warfare, in the same way as it is dedicated to preventing war “between peoples and states”. Indeed, “while customary political activity inflames the state of conflict as to transform it into social warfare, the morality of social justice requires that conflicts are to be prevented by the means of arbitration”.⁵ This task can only be approached by the means of reworking the notion of “property”, which is placed at the very core of the liberal socialist endeavors: “Because the issue of property stays as the very foundation and regulatory principle of the relations between classes, it is only natural that we start by focusing on its understandings. The way property is acquired, used and transmitted must be the first object of our inquiries”.⁶ In their turn, such inquiries can only start from acknowledging that the redefinition of property is currently underway, due to the inescapable process by which economic production is gradually socialized: “Industrial property is already collectivized and socialized. This is because the form of the shareholding company adopted, especially after the war, by most of industrial and commercial enterprises, is in actual fact a collective or social form of property”.⁷

Having said this, however, a genuine vision of social justice must act such as to prevent the development of this process of socialization into the full nationalization of

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ D. Drăghicescu, “Dreptate și dreptate socială”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 1, January 15, 1923, p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷ Idem, “Noțiunea proprietății și formele ei”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 3, February 15, 1923, p. 70.

economic life envisioned by Marxist socialism: “Property of whatever kind has to be warranted, because its existence is a requirement of social peace”.⁸ Recent historical experience has “disavowed socialist theories, showing how wrong their expectations of forced socialization, by the expropriation of the expropriators, actually were”.⁹ It has also shed a revealing light on the “incapacity of the bureaucratic state to act efficiently in the economic field, together with its ingrained tendency to shift the deficits incurred by state-managed enterprises on the shoulders of the tax payers”.¹⁰ It is on these grounds that “liberal socialism [...] must militate for an association between individual and state interests, within state-controlled enterprises. [...] Liberal socialism rules out the tyranny of state management which, besides oppressing the individual and individual initiative, leads to stagnation or even decline”.¹¹ Accordingly, “the objectives of socialization and nationalization must be approached gradually, by taking account of the types of enterprises and of the various factors of production involved”.¹² They can most appropriately be attained in the framework of the “autonomous socialized enterprises”, conceived by Drăghicescu to allow for the employees to act as co-proprietors and co-administrators, together with the state¹³ (provided that the state itself would abandon its bureaucratic,

⁸ Idem, “Dreptul de proprietate și pacea socială”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 4, March 1, 1923, p. 109.

⁹ Idem, “Proprietatea și marile întreprinderi. Societățile anonime”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 6, April 1, 1923, p. 168.

¹⁰ Idem, “Regimul proprietății și întreprinderile mari. Socializarea și regia de stat”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 7, March 1, 1923, p. 202.

¹¹ Idem, “Burghezia și socialismul liberal”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 3, February 15, 1923, p. 95.

¹² Idem, “Regimul proprietății și întreprinderile mari”, p. 200.

¹³ Idem, “Naționalizarea întreprinderilor mari. Regia socială independentă”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 9, May 15, 1923, pp. 266-274.

centralized and militarized character, in so far as, when adopting an “economic function”, it would have to “create an organization suited to its new role”¹⁴). It is only by such doing that the task of refashioning the bases of property as to place them in accordance with the requirements of social justice can be accomplished: “By [...] various policies, including progressive taxation, nationalization, expropriation and confiscations, the fortunes amassed in great amounts by whatever means [...] will be lowered down to levels legitimate from the standpoint of social equity. It is only in this way that right and rational relations between capitals and the demands of social justice can be obtained. In other words, it is only under these conditions that the contradiction between capital and the principle of justice can be solved”.¹⁵

Drăghicescu’s perception of the core socialist program as tacitly subscribed to, at the beginning of the 1920’s, by virtually all the segments of Romanian political and ideological life emerges retrospectively as starkly incongruent with the realities of a chronically marginal and electorally insignificant social-democratic movement,¹⁶ of a communist trend rapidly wiped out as a factor of political significance – in another way than in the guise of a small clandestine group¹⁷ – and of an agrarianist current always vacillating over its vision of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

¹⁵ Idem, “Proprietatea (capitalul) și dreptatea socială. Cum se câștigă averile?”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 12-13, July 1-15, 1923, pp. 367-368.

¹⁶ Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania. Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1969 [1951], pp. 243-258.

¹⁷ Lucien Karchmar, “Communism in Romania, 1918-1921”, in Ivo Banac, ed., *The Effects of World War I. The Class War after the Great War: the Rise of Communist Parties in East Central Europe 1918-1921*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1983, pp. 127-187.

class conflict as it related to the peculiar class structure of the country.¹⁸ Although the calls for social pacification and harmonization professed by *Dreptatea socială* were, otherwise, very common in the local cultural and ideological milieu,¹⁹ the doctrine of liberal socialism had overtones hard to be discovered as part of other – and more influential – ideological traditions.

Its counterparts in other countries of Europe are easy to identify, however. Most closely reminiscent of it was definitely the view developed under the same ideological label in Italy by Carlo Roselli, emerging to the same extent as that of Drăghicescu as a result of a gradual disentanglement from social-democracy by a way back to liberal principles (and eventually used by the same political thinker as a support of his opposition to fascism).²⁰ Of still greater significance was the entire welter of ideas pointing to a broadening of liberalism towards embracing social concerns, originated already in the last decades of the XIXth century and establishing itself as dominant within the liberal camp during the opening decades of the XXth. Shaped at the interplay between political theory and sociological inquiry – and accordingly elaborated by the means of a sustained

¹⁸ Z. Ornea, *Țărănismul. Studiu sociologic*, București, Ed. Politică, 1969; George D. Jackson, „Peasant Political Movements in Eastern Europe”, in Henry A Landsberger, ed., *Rural Protest: Peasant Movements and Social Change*, London, Macmillan, 1974, pp. 259-315.

¹⁹ Z. Ornea, *Sămănătorismul*, București, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, 1998 [1970], pp. 134-140; Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, „Conceptia conservatoare și progresul”, in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul „Cultura Națională”, [1923], pp. 47-64.

²⁰ Stanislao G. Pugliese, *Carlo Roselli: Socialist Heretic and Anti-fascist Exile*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1999; Serge Audier, *Le socialisme libéral*, Paris, La Découverte, 2006, pp. 53-72.

dialogue between political philosophers and the representatives of the discipline of sociology, in the course of being entrenched as a separate academic compartment²¹ – the “new liberalism” drew on various philosophical premises, stretching from positivism, through neo-Kantianism and neo-Hegelianism, to Orthodox Christianity. In Italy itself, Roselli’s concerns were shared by theorists as different as the elite sociologist Vilfredo Pareto and the neo-Hegelian philosopher (and idealist historian) Benedetto Croce,²² that constituted a part of a cross-European intellectual movement. Best represented in Britain – where it was developed by T.H. Green, J.A. Hobson and L.T. Hobhouse, in continuation to the radical thrust of John Stuart Mill’s thinking,²³ the same enterprise of ideological refashioning could resonate, in France, with the local republican tradition, broadened on neo-Kantian bases by Charles Renouvier and translated into the idiom of “solidarism” by Leon Bourgeois.²⁴ The politics of Durkheim, issuing from its sociological understanding of the disruptive and atomizing effects that modernization had on social bounds, belonged to the same company,²⁵ to the same extent that, in Germany,

²¹ Anthony Giddens, “Classical Social Theory and the Origins of Modern Sociology”, in *The American Journal of Sociology* 81: 4, 1976, pp. 703-729.

²² Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society. A Historical Argument*, University Park, Penns., The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, pp. 121-156.

²³ Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism. An Ideology of Social Reform*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978; Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pp. 9-57.

²⁴ Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pp. 58-74; Michael Freeden, “The Coming of the Welfare State”, in Terence Ball, Richard Bellamy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 30-35.

²⁵ Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pp. 74-104.

Max Weber's sociological conception was intimately connected with his urge for the adaptation of liberal constitutionalist practices to the requirements of heavy bureaucratization and accomplished rationalization prevalent in modern society.²⁶ In Russia, a "new liberal" trend of thought emerging, with Vladimir Soloviev, from within the Slavophile tradition, turned to adopting neo-Kantian premises and evolved towards a liberal socialist stance in the works of Leon Petrażycki, Pavel Novgorodtsev and Bogdan Kistiakovsky, in order to move then to the position of "rule of law socialism" with Sergius Hessen.²⁷

Five of the articles contributed by Ștefan Zeletin to *Dreptatea socială* were retained by him in the volume *Neoliberalism* of 1927,²⁸ and it is undeniable that they have to be seen as an integral part of his sophisticated refashioning of the Romanian tradition of economic protectionism, thus transformed into a wide-ranging political rationalization of oligarchic modernizing liberalism with a strong nationalist commitment (best embodied historically in the National Liberal Party but envisioned by him to get an even better incarnation in the People's Party). Although occasionally paying homage, conveniently, to the master-discourse of the journal – as for example when designating it as "neoliberalism' or 'liberal socialism'"²⁹ –, Zeletin nevertheless proceeds undisturbed and all throughout with an argumentation

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-216.

²⁷ Andrzej Walicki, *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism*, Notre Dame, Ind., The University of Notre Dame Press, 1992 [1987], pp. 165-465.

²⁸ Ștefan Zeletin, "Pseudoburghezie", "Finanță și antisemitism", "Forță și constituție", "Politica muncii", "Naționalismul. Un nume pentru două atitudini opuse față de evoluția socială", all in *Neoliberalismul. Studii asupra istoriei și politicii burgheziei române*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927].

²⁹ Idem, "Liberalism, neoliberalism și socialism de stat", in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 8, May 1, 1923, p. 235.

strikingly, but undeniably at odds with that advanced by the director of the publication. Stretching through it is the vision that – even when proven as a spoliator of the whole society by the standards of usual morality³⁰ –, the reigning financial oligarchy – denounced as such from all corners of the public opinion and emerged from within the bureaucratic class ruling over Romanian society during the preceding period, up to the immediate aftermath of the First World War³¹ – has to be accepted as a most necessary evil and a benefactor to the national interests over the long run. When enriching itself, even at the cost of employing state levers to serve its own narrow interests, the plutocracy works to the betterment of the whole society. This is because, “as long as the class division of society prevails, national prosperity hinges on the prosperity of the ruling class and national ruin comes from the ruin of that same class”.³²

Advancing this idea in order to face the criticisms leveled by the left-wing newspaper *Adevărul* against the project of constitutional revision engineered by the National Liberal Party, Zeletin discovers the oligarchic behavior – usually blamed on that political force in a privileged fashion – as a pervasive temptation arising from deep social demands, to which opposition parties very easily succumb: “Economic evolution in modern Romania has inescapably led to the strengthening of the financial oligarchy, and our entire politics is predicated

³⁰ Idem, “‘Acumularea primitivă’ în România”, in *Neoliberalismul. Studii asupra istoriei și politicii burgheziei române*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927], pp. 135-141 (first published in 1922).

³¹ Idem, *Burghezia română. Originea și rolul ei istoric*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Humanitas, 1991 [1925], pp. 163-194.

³² Idem, “Finanța națională și politica de stat (Răspuns profesiei de credință a ziarului *Adevărul*)”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 7, April 15, 1923, p. 216.

on this reality. Our self-styled democratic parties, that claim to fight against the oligarchy, tend to become themselves parts of the same financial oligarchy. Indeed, this is just the natural consequence of our entire social evolution”.³³ Playing, as usually, on his ingenious comparisons between (delayed) Romanian and (pioneering) western social forms and stages of evolution, Zeletin manages to legitimize the intermingling – through blatant corruption practices – between bourgeois financial greed and state power as part and parcel of the record of social and economic development, reminiscent of the alliance between the nascent bourgeoisie and absolutist monarchies in the old regime societies of the West: “As nowadays we live under a democratic parliamentary regime, capitalism cannot confine itself to obtain on its behalf the favors of the monarch alone, as it used to do in the past. It must have its voice heard in the democratic factory of legislation as well. It is to this extent that the most prominent political figures are driven into the administrative bodies of the economic enterprises. We can encounter there, for sure, former ministers and prime ministers of great public influence, whose word is an order for a large parliamentary gallery. They are, as already said, the political agents of the financial bourgeoisie: they have to obtain all the legal provisions needed to further the pursuit of capitalist interests”.³⁴ Just several days before the adoption of the constitutional revision in the parliament by a substantial Liberal Party majority and in the midst of a sustained public contestation of the same piece of legislation, Zeletin is eager to depict the constitutional document itself as the result of such a bargaining between the political class and its economic counterpart: “It is

³³ *Ibid*, p. 218.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 213.

undeniable that the actual constitutional project is fashioned on the basis of financial capitalist interests. But our countrymen refuse to accept this idea. How is it possible, they say, that a handful of people – or an oligarchy – rule over the country in a quasi-absolutist manner, imposing on it even the fundamental law? We can only answer that this is not only possible, but even natural. In such historic moments, when all the other classes fall into darkness, allowing only one of them to act meaningfully, the interests of this last class are one and the same with those of the nation as a whole, and its aspirations are undistinguishable from those of the entire nation”.³⁵

Although sometimes pointing to financial cartels as possible coordinating agencies for his envisioned design – otherwise marked by deep de-centralization – intent on broadening the scope of social justice by the means of a combination between state management and individual economic initiative,³⁶ Drăghicescu has as his main objective the entrenchment of welfare policies in conjunction with greater democratization. (As a stark advocate for universal suffrage, he conceives of it in a developmentalist way, as a vehicle for the maturation of social conscience.³⁷) Zeletin, instead, does not miss any chance to present low-class suffering as a requirement of national consolidation, which can only be obtained by compliance to the oligarchic leadership of modernizing

³⁵ Idem, “Forță și constituție”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 5, March 15, 1923, p. 137.

³⁶ D. Drăghicescu, “Finanța și coordonarea marilor întreprinderi (Creditul industrial)”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 10, June 1, 1923, pp. 296-301.

³⁷ Idem, *Reforma electorală. Discurs rostit la Senat în ședința de la 15 decembrie 1925*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1926. Compare, for example, G. Panu, *Sufragiul universal*, București, Tipografia “Lupta”, Al. Lefteriu, 1893.

change. While the former thinker speaks as a disappointed socialist who has come to appreciate at full value the relevance of individual freedom, the latter makes his case for enhanced authoritarianism, semi-parliamentarianism and openly displayed economic interventionism with an oligarchic cast only to offer, as a compensation, his reassuring prospect that a form of mild socialism imposed top-down, without any involvement of revolutionary upheavals, stays as the inescapable fate of the entire capitalist world of which Romania is a part.³⁸ The difference is stark and undeniable.

Articles 17-21 of the constitutional document adopted in March provided for an understanding of property as based on the notion of “social utility”, and there has always been a tendency to briefly mention Zeletin and Drăghicescu as parts of a “neoliberal” quasi-consensus making for this result.³⁹ The interwar constitution was harshly criticized on account of its loopholes allowing for further authoritarian evolutions.⁴⁰ It is hard to look at Drăghicescu as to an inspiration for such political faults of the 1920’s and the 1930’s. The responsibilities in the field of Zeletin can only receive a different assessment.

2

Mainstream Romanian liberalism could be classified as a peripheral variety – with a corresponding focus on bureaucratic

³⁸ Ștefan Zeletin, “Neoliberalismul” [1926], in *Neoliberalismul*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927], pp. 83-100.

³⁹ M. Rusenescu, I. Saizu, *Viața politică în România, 1922-1928*, București, Ed. Politică, 1979, pp. 27-29; Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după marea unire*, vol. 1: 1918-1933, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1986, pp. 55-70.

⁴⁰ Roberts, *Rumania*, pp. 97-99.

interests – of the late XIXth century “sectarian liberalism”, functioning as a narrow minded ideology of the (upper) bourgeoisie, after basic liberal values had been institutionally and socially entrenched, coming to be adopted quasi-consensually by all parts of the political spectrum.⁴¹ The incongruence between the pleading for Manchesterian-style free trade principles advanced by this dominant liberal discourse and the blatant realities of a growing monopolist economy increasingly controlled by banking cartels and indebted to state-driven policies of imperialist expansion contributed heavily to the rise of the socially-minded – and basically left-wing – “new liberal” view, by way of reaction.⁴² To the same extent, Zeletin’s expectation of oligarchic-induced socialism – argued primarily by reference to the dissident socialist conception of Werner Sombart and to Rudolf Hilferding’s Austro-Marxist analysis of finance capitalism – strongly recalls the main tenets of the German “socialism of the chair” (connected with the same “sectarian” bourgeois interests) and of the Russian “legal Marxist” school⁴³ (that yielded, in the case of its most conspicuous representative, Peter Struve, into a political redefinition leading him from social-democracy, through left-wing liberalism, to a liberal conservative position⁴⁴).

⁴¹ Victoria F. Brown, “The Adaptation of a Western Political Theory in a Peripheral State: The Case of Romanian Liberalism”, in Stephen Fischer-Galati et al., eds., *Romania between East and West*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1982, pp. 269-301.

⁴² Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*, pp. 3-4.

⁴³ Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, New York, Norton, 2005 [1978], pp. 435, 646-655.

⁴⁴ Richard Pipes, *Struve, Liberal on the Left, 1870-1905*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1970; Idem, *Struve, Liberal on the Right, 1905-1944*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1980.

Beyond such particular connections, the type of liberal practices ideologically reinforced by Zeletin was a general rule all throughout the (sub)regions of Eastern, (Est-)Central and South-Eastern Europe, no matter whether modernizing policies strongly committed to nation-building and accelerated social change featured under a liberal banner or otherwise.⁴⁵ Liberal discourse itself was most instrumental to propel policies of modernization of the sort over the long run in such countries as Greece,⁴⁶ Hungary⁴⁷ or Romania.⁴⁸ It also acted as an original impulse for the same kind of policies in Serbia and Bulgaria, where it lost ground, later on, to other discourses eager to emphasize their more left-wing, radical-democratic and (partly) socialist credentials only to take over and strengthen the oligarchic practices they criticized.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1985: Feudalism to Communism*, sec. ed., London, Unwin Hyman, 1989; Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World. The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000.

⁴⁶ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "The Enlightenment East and West: a Comparative Perspective on the Ideological Origins of the Balkan Political Traditions", in *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy. Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*, Aldershot, Variorum, 1994, pp. 51-70; Ioannis Tassopoulos, "The Experiment of Inclusive Constitutionalism, 1909-1932", in Paschalis M. Kitromilides, ed., *Eleftherios Venizelos: the Trials of Statesmanship*, Edinburg, Edinburg University Press, 2006, pp. 251-272.

⁴⁷ Andrew C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982.

⁴⁸ Idem, "Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective: the Case of Romania", in Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940. A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978, pp. 72-116.

⁴⁹ Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria, 1878-1918. A History*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1983; Gale Stokes, *Politics as Development. The Emergence of Political*

Having to postpone indefinitely any flirtation with liberal parliamentarianism, Russian autocracy nevertheless participated to the same historical trend as a “well-ordered police state”.⁵⁰ The oppositional liberalism developed here was itself propelled on a path of de-radicalization,⁵¹ the same predicament being shared by its Polish counterpart.⁵² From Germany⁵³ to Japan,⁵⁴ the surge to freedom was calibrated – and partially falsified – in order to meet the demands of (relative) backwardness.

It is against the background of the reigning statist modernizing liberalism and of the prevalent Zeletinist tradition that one can fully understand the originality of the stance adopted, from its first issue, by the journal *Libertatea*. The opening article rejects communism and fascism in conjunction with a diffuse interventionist wisdom which sustains a widespread skepticism towards

Parties in Nineteenth-century Serbia, Durham, Duke University Press, 1990.

⁵⁰ Marc Raeff, “The Well-ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Europe: an Attempt at a Comparative Approach”, in *The American Historical Review* 80: 5, 1975, pp. 1221-1243.

⁵¹ George Fischer, *Russian Liberalism: from Gentry to Intelligentsia*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1958; Andrzej Walicki, “Russian Social Thought: an Introduction to the Intellectual History of Nineteenth Century Russia”, in *Russian Review* 36: 1, 1977, pp. 1-45.

⁵² Brian A. Porter, “Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth-century Poland”, in *The Journal of Modern History* 71: 2, 1999, pp. 346-393; Maciej Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*, transl. by Danuta Przekop, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2004, pp. 147-218.

⁵³ James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1978; Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany*, transl. by Christiane Banerji, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.

⁵⁴ Douglas Howland, “Translating Liberty in Nineteenth-century Japan”, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62: 1, 2001, pp. 161-189.

the ideas of economic and political freedom: "At present, the public is invited to subscribe, in turn, to the otherwise most opposite doctrines, from medieval-style corporatism to Asiatic bolshevism, not to forget fascist corporatism, statist economy and other interventionist utopias, at the cost of abandoning completely economic and political liberty. They are not only seen as outdated but are even held responsible for the terrible crisis the entire world is facing".⁵⁵ The chief-editor George Strat understands the drive away from classical liberalism as paving the road to dictatorial serfdom: "Statist and interventionist practices must be eliminated without hesitation, as it is through them that, without notice, society is set on the road to socialism and dictatorship".⁵⁶ A peculiar – and primitive – social psychology is found at the roots of the interventionist disease, to the same extent as liberalism is depicted as the underlying psychological drive of genuine modern social life: "To the mechanistic conception, which stays at the basis of any system of statist economy and which can only suit the barbaric and destructive mind, civilized world has to oppose the conception of an organic economy, that, for the time being, cannot be given a better name than liberalism".⁵⁷

Although contributing all throughout primarily with pragmatic commentaries on internal and foreign politics and on domestic and international economic developments, and never eulogizing individualistic values in the same fashion as the other collaborators, Ion P. Gigurtu, the funder and director of the publishing enterprise, nevertheless tackles from the beginning the delicate issue

⁵⁵ (unsigned) "Cuvânt înainte", in *Libertatea* 1: 1, January 5, 1933, p. 3.

⁵⁶ G. Strat, "Viitorul capitalismului", in *Libertatea* 1: 12, June 20, 1933, p. 179.

⁵⁷ I. Constanțiu, "Psihologia economiei drijate", in *Libertatea* 3: 13-14, July 5-20, 1935, p. 204.

of the relation between politics and economics,⁵⁸ in order to then make clear – however occasionally – his dissatisfaction with the statist perversion of capitalism, found by him as strongly connected with the spread of an anti-capitalist opinion. The bourgeois class itself is guilty for this, in so far as, facing the disruptions brought by the economic crisis, its members “joined forces with the interventionist state policies”. This is because “they liked to see the state first covering a part of their losses, and then granting to them large benefits at the cost of falsifying the capitalist regime, based on free competition. It is because of such policies that a negative stance towards capitalists has gained ground. Subsequently, this stance was extended to the capitalist system itself, the two notions being easily mistaken for each other”.⁵⁹

No matter how pathetic *Libertatea*’s defense of liberalism against both internal and international enemies might have looked like over its first five years – inaugurated at the very moment of the Nazi seizure in Germany, in January 1933, and followed by three years of increasing concessions and growing accommodation to domestic authoritarianism, from the beginning of 1938 to the end of 1940 –, the attempt of Dumitru Drăghicescu to vindicate here, against the classical liberal comeback promoted by Strat and his associates, a rightly balanced ratio between the demands of individual freedom and the need of containing the damaging effects of unqualified economic individualism, sounds even more impressive in the circumstances. Arguing in the footsteps of an exchange between Strat and the agrarianist Mihai Ralea⁶⁰ – the latter criticizing the stance of *Libertatea*, from a

⁵⁸ I.P. Gigurtu, “Politicul și economicul”, in *Libertatea* 1: 1, January 5, 1933, p. 5-6.

⁵⁹ Idem, “Capitalismul și capitaliștii”, in *Libertatea* 3: 13-14, July 5-20, 1935, pp. 194-195.

⁶⁰ G. Strat, “Răspuns d-lui Ralea”, in *Libertatea* 1: 9, May 5, 1933, pp. 132-133.

sociological standpoint, in the journal *Viața românească* –, Drăghicescu tries, once again, to cut a middle way between socialist temptations and bare liberal capitalism. Briefly recalling the changing fortunes of the combat between free trade economy and statist policies on the European scene, he explains that Manchesterian liberalism led to the monopolistic falsification of free enterprise, and state interventionist policies were then required precisely in order to protect individualistic values: “Excessive individualism provoked the reaction of the social principle, that manifested itself in the guise of monopolist practices, harnessed to the service of either particular persons or associations. It is in this way that liberalism worked for its own annihilation, leading to the creation of medium and large enterprises which, by taking advantage of propitious situations, grew into gigantic shareholder companies. Under their influence, individualism was eventually socialized, being regimented into syndicates and cartels. [...] Interventionism was then called upon precisely as an instrument for the protection of the individual freedom and of free enterprise, its task being that of ruling out or at least lessening the monopolistic pressures placed upon them. It was in this fashion that the social principle acted to the very benefit of individualism”.⁶¹

While Strat established a connection between insidious interventionist prejudices and thriving political tyranny in a way strongly reminiscent of the arguments later advanced by Friedrich Hayek regarding the socialist temptations as a springboard for totalitarianism,⁶² Drăghicescu’s understanding of the perverse effects of XIXth century Manchesterian economy can be claimed on behalf of Karl Polanyi’s opposite view (delivered at the same time as Hayek’s), that traced back interwar political

⁶¹ D. Drăghicescu, “Determinismul social și valoarea inițiativei individuale”, in *Libertatea* 1: 11, June 1933, pp. 161-163.

⁶² Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1994 [1944].

authoritarianism to the long-term effects of unhindered economic individualism.⁶³ This Romanian anticipation of a classical disagreement on the causal connection between economics and politics was not broadened in *Libertatea*. When restating his case⁶⁴ – in continuation to his long-standing reflections, informed by Durkheimian theorizing, on the relation between individual “agency” and the constraints of social “structure” in human developments, in order to ponder the scope of determinism as part of a right approach to the intricacies of social life⁶⁵ –, Drăghicescu provoked a brief rejoinder of Strat,⁶⁶ which, on all accounts, abruptly closed the debate. Even unaccomplished, the discussion in question can still display fresh meanings when revisited with a new hindsight. An attempt to disclose precisely such meanings will be advanced below.

3

Before engaging with the project of re-infusing a democratic cast to local liberalism and infusing it with welfarist ideals, Drăghicescu got immersed, at the time of the First World War and the peace settlement, in the politics of nation building, taking an active part as a diplomat in the

⁶³ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2001 [1944].

⁶⁴ D. Drăghicescu, “Liberalismul și economia dirijată”, in *Libertatea* 2: 13-14, July 5-20, 1934, pp. 193-194.

⁶⁵ Idem, *Le problème du déterminisme social: déterminisme biologique et déterminisme social*, Paris, Éditions de la Grande France, 1903; Idem, *Du rôle de l'individu dans le déterminisme social*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1904. See also Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994 [1982], pp. 18-32.

⁶⁶ G. Strat, “Răspuns domnului D. Drăghicescu sau despre ‘pseudo-liberalismul român’”, in *Libertatea* 2: 21, November 5, pp. 1934, p. 325-328.

creation of Greater Romania.⁶⁷ At the beginning of the XXth century, his nationalist vision was formulated in the language of historical social psychology, in the best known of his books (and the only one that has exercised a significant influence on Romanian culture over the long run, up to the present).⁶⁸ The work is a belated restatement of the variety of nationalist thinking sustained by an unqualified drive to westernization that so much characterized late Enlightenment and early XIXth century liberal discourse all throughout Eastern Europe.⁶⁹ In the same way as his predecessors of the 1848 period in Romania and the surrounding countries of the region – for which Russian Decembrists stood as paradigmatic anticipators⁷⁰ –, Drăghicescu pleads the cause of modernization on the western pattern with a determination that is only matched by his eagerness to disclose old virtues – deeply inscribed in the local cultural texture – likely to act as an engine for catching up with the advanced nations. It is this that sets him apart from contemporaries with a related ideological orientation, but inclined to explain modernization as resting almost entirely on cultural imports taken against a quasi-amorphous traditional social and cultural background.⁷¹

⁶⁷ D. Drăghicescu, *Les problèmes nationaux de l'Autriche-Hongrie. Les Roumains (Transylvanie, Bucovine, Banat)*, Paris, Éditions Bossard, 1918.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Din psihologia poporului român*, ed. de Elisabeta Simion, București, Albatros, 1995 [1907].

⁶⁹ Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested. Philosophy, Modernity and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 295-325; Diana Mishkova, "The Interesting Anomaly of Balkan Liberalism", in Iván Zoltán Dénes, ed., *Liberty and the Search for Identity. Liberal Nationalisms and the Legacy of Empires*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2006, pp. 399-456.

⁷⁰ Walicki, "Russian Social Thought", pp. 3-6.

⁷¹ A.D. Xenopol, "Influența franceză în România" [1887], in *Națiunea română*, ed. de Constantin Schifirneț, București,

Sometimes conjoined with Romantic-conservative⁷² or with socialist⁷³ stances, westernizer nationalism has been one of the most clearly cut features of modernizing liberalism in non-western – and particularly East-European – contexts.⁷⁴ It does not follow from this, however, that it could not take slightly different forms within the various compartments of the respective national ideological trends. The Romanian record here surveyed provides good testimonies to this extent. While Drăghicescu argues his case for westernization by (seemingly) ignoring the traditionalist culture in the course of being shaped at the time in the country, Zeletin starts his journey as a political writer precisely by confronting the stark reality of a Romanian westernizer-traditionalist divide. His pamphlet entitled *From the Land of the Donkeys* of 1916 looks like an exercise in critical distancing from both camps (maybe animated by a harsher attitude towards the latter).⁷⁵ After a short and dubious flirtation with precisely that kind of traditionalist

Albatros, 1999, pp. 313-323; Pompiliu Eliade, *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România*, ed. și trad. de Aurelia Dumitrașcu, București, Humanitas, 2000 [1898].

⁷² Dale E. Peterson, “Civilizing the Race: Chaadaev and the Paradoxes of Eurocentric Nationalism”, in *Russian Review* 56: 4, 1997, pp. 550-563.

⁷³ Andrzej Walicki, “Rosa Luxemburg and the Question of Nationalism in Polish Marxism”, in *The Slavonic and East European Review* 61: 4, 1983, pp. 565-582.

⁷⁴ Leonard Schapiro, *Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian Nineteenth-century Political Thought*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967; Daniel Chirot, “Ideology, Reality and Competing Models of Development in Eastern Europe between the Two World Wars”, in *East European Politics and Societies* 3: 3, 1989, pp. 378-411.

⁷⁵ Ștefan Zeletin, *Din țara măgarilor. Însemnări*, București, I. Brănișteanu, 1916.

culture,⁷⁶ he then moves on to adopt his characteristic stance of giving an unqualified support to that brand of nationalist discourse which was meant to support nation-building policies – on the basis of economic protectionism yet fully within the framework of the expanding world capitalism –, while at the same time rejecting wholeheartedly the anti-modern nationalism of Romantic progeny, predicated on agrarian nostalgias and on an organic understanding of the local culture.⁷⁷ His interventions to *Dreptatea socială* give voice to the same argumentation.⁷⁸

Although the National Liberal Party has always subscribed only reluctantly to the (somewhat too cynical) Zeletinian rationalization of its policies⁷⁹ – and some of his dissident leaders even contributed occasionally to *Libertatea* in order to argue for a half-way departure from the same policies and from their ideological reinforcements⁸⁰ –, the discourse of Zeletin could obtain a significant following in the late 1930's.⁸¹ Of still much greater influence was,

⁷⁶ Idem, “Naționalism și țărănism”, în *Convorbiri literare* 52: 12, 1920, pp. 769-774.

⁷⁷ Idem, “Romantismul german și cultura critică română” [1929], în *Neoliberalismul. Studii asupra istoriei și politicii burgheziei române*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927], pp. 55-72.

⁷⁸ Idem, “Naționalismul. Un nume pentru două atitudini opuse față de evoluția socială”, în *Dreptatea socială* 1: 18-19, October 1923, pp. 420-427.

⁷⁹ Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după marea unire*, vol. 2: 1933-1940, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988, pp. 108-147.

⁸⁰ Gheorghe I. Brătianu, “Liberalism și democrație”, part I, în *Libertatea* 3: 5, March 5, 1935, pp. 65-68; Idem, “Liberalism și democrație”, part II, în *Libertatea* 3: 6, March 20, 1935, pp. 81-84.

⁸¹ Mihai Plătăreanu, *Politica economică și socială a României în trecut și în cadrul legislației actuale*, București, Cartea Românească, [1935]; Victor Jinga, *Prefaceri și orientări ale burgheziei române*, Cluj, Imprimeria Fondul Cărților Funduare, 1938.

however, its corporatist progeny, revolving around the figure of Mihail Manoilescu. Disentangled from the same “neoliberal” stance of the early 1920’s that was defended by Zeletin⁸² – and sustained, at the time, by much the same kind of opposition to the peasantist left-wing ideology and democratic rhetoric⁸³ –, the corporatist doctrine came back full circle to its original inspiration in the 1940’s – after a long-term involvement with Carolism and a protracted relation with local fascism – by the means of an attempt to entrench itself in Romanian history taken as an exercise in historical sociology betraying its indebtedness (however critically) to Zeletinian thinking.⁸⁴ It is significant that, no matter how much it tried to enlist on its side the traditionalist nationalist and legionary-fascist rhetoric of the “organic state”,⁸⁵ the discourse of Manoilescu never fully relapsed into a celebration of anti-western and nativist values⁸⁶ in the same way as fascist social-political and economic thinking.⁸⁷ This is certainly

⁸² Zeletin, “Neoliberalismul”; Mihail Manoilescu, “Neoliberalismul”, in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul “Cultura Națională”, [1923], pp. 141-162.

⁸³ M. Manoilescu, *Țărănism și democrație*, București, Atelierele “Poporul”, 1922; Ștefan Zeletin, “Țărănism și marxism”, in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* 5: 1-2, 1924, pp. 192-220.

⁸⁴ Zeletin, *Burghezia română*; Mihail Manoilescu, *Rostul și destinul burgheziei românești*, ed. de Leonard Oprea, București, Athena, 1997 [1942].

⁸⁵ Mihail Manoilescu, *Eminescu economist*, București, Monitorul Oficial, Imprimeria Națională, 1935, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Philippe C. Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu and the Political Consequences of Delayed-Dependent Development on the Periphery of Western Europe”, in Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940. A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978, pp. 117-139.

⁸⁷ Compare Traian Brăileanu, *Sociologia și arta guvernării. Articole politice*, ed. a II-a, București, “Cartea Românească”,

telling of the inner nature of its liberal modernizer ideological core.

Unlike the democratic liberalism of Drăghicescu – claiming on its behalf the legacy of 1848 but hardly aware of the already strong heritage of anti-“fortyeightism” at the turn of the century –, the anticipators of *Liberated*’s free-trade doctrine that contributed to the two series of the journal *Curentul nou* – in 1905-1906 (at Galați), and then in 1920 (at Bucharest, where the other two periodicals surveyed here were also issued) – initially defined themselves precisely by opposition to the growing culture of indigenist nationalism.⁸⁸ Unlike the supporters of Zeletin and their corporatist descendants, however, they extended this opposition towards the modernizing nationalism employed by the Romanian ruling oligarchy – and the Liberal Party leadership specifically – for legitimating policies of economic growth “by ourselves alone”. When recalling, in 1920, his 1905-1906 venture – and broadening his criticism of “populist” traditionalism such as to cover (misleadingly in the main), alongside the right-wing brand originally targeted, the left-wing version issued from the agrarian populism of Russian revolutionary inspiration⁸⁹ –, H. Sanielevici thus underscores that “[early XXth century] populism was nothing more but a complot of our neo-feudal and protectionist-driven oligarchy

1940; Ion Veverca, *Naționalism economic*, București, Cartea Românească, [1941]. See also below, chapter 4.

⁸⁸ H. Sanielevici, “Falimentul poporanismului”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 4, February 22, 1920, pp. 49-53. See also Idem, *Poporanismul reacționar*, București, Socec, 1921.

⁸⁹ Compare Valeriu Ciobanu, *Poporanismul: geneză, evoluție, ideologie*, București, Tipografia “Bucovina” I.E. Torouțiu, 1946; See also Victor Rizescu, “Constantin Stere, populismul și celelalte marxisme românești”, in *Canonul și vocile uitate. Secvențe dintr-o tipologie a gândirii politice românești*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2015, pp. 223-293.

against the industrialization of the country, that is against the independent bourgeoisie”, in order to then make clear: “It was in the name of this bourgeoisie that my protests were voiced at the time”.⁹⁰

Alongside the early and rapidly classicized formulations of protectionist economic thinking,⁹¹ anticipations of liberal revisionism with a social cast had already been put forward at the moment the rejuvenated *Curentul nou* was clarifying its stance,⁹² and influences of this way of thinking – still rather inchoately merged with the one mentioned above⁹³ – did pervade the pages of the journal. Arguing for “neoliberalism”, a collaborator thus starts by distinguishing between two extreme theoretical positions taken with respect to economic policies: “A first extremist stance is that of individualism, with its two faces, namely orthodox liberalism and anarchism. [...] Another extremist view is that of statist interventionism, with its two incarnations: imperialism and socialism”. After thus clearing the ground of erroneous creeds, the author introduces his own vision of an individualist-statist synthesis, that he presents as a (loosely defined) version of “solidarism”:⁹⁴ “In

⁹⁰ H. Sanielevici, “Ce-a însemnat *Curentul nou* de la 1906”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 1, February 1, 1920, p. 6.

⁹¹ P.S. Aurelian, *Elemente de economie politică*, București, Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1889; A.D. Xenopol, *Opere economice*, ed. de Ion Veverca, București, Ed. Științifică, 1967.

⁹² I.N. Angelescu, *Cooperația și socialismul în Europa*, București, Albert Baer, 1913.

⁹³ Idem, “Dependența noastră economică și reorganizarea economiei naționale”, in *Democrația* 3: 16, November 15, 1915, pp. 720-728.

⁹⁴ See in this connection Idem, “Solidarismul social-economic”, in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul “Cultura Națională”, [1923], pp. 201-217. But also Idem, “România și actuala politică economică internațională”, in *Analele economice și statistice* 10: 1-2, January-February 1927, pp. 3-13; Joseph L. Love, *Crafting the Third World*.

between these two extremes, we find the eclectic view: solidarism proclaims the right of the individual to the full exercise of his freedoms, while nevertheless maintaining that the community can only gain from the free expression of personal interests and from the broad development of individual energies. Having said this, it is important to underscore that the individual takes birth as a debtor to society. Hence, state intervention is necessary each time individual activity is ineffective, or stays at odds with the principle of solidarity”.⁹⁵ Against the theoretical basis delineated in this way, a directive for Romanian politics is set: “The new regime will be based on cooperation. [...] As far as the state is concerned, it will act, most often, as the most important partner in the cooperative pursuits, having to encourage [...] the various forms that cooperation might take”.⁹⁶

Such a voice sounds, however, as a strikingly isolated one in the pages of *Curentul nou*. All throughout, the journal is dedicated to promote the emancipation of free trade economic mechanisms from the constraints of interventionism, also taking a sustained pleading for foreign capitals as a necessary cure to statist-based social inertia.⁹⁷ The Romanian deviation from the developmental path of genuine liberalism is most often

Theorizing Underdevelopment in Rumania and Brasil, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 75.

⁹⁵ N.N. Tiron, “Neoliberalism”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 22, June 27, 1920, p. 339.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 441. But see also, as indicative for the merger underscored above: Idem, *Cum vom birui*, Huși, Tipografia Constantin Lețcae, 1911.

⁹⁷ Sanielevici, “Falimentul poporanismului”; Ștefan Antim, “Capitalurile străine și împrumuturile externe”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 5, February 29, 1920, pp. 72-73.

found as predicated on entrenched bureaucratization.⁹⁸ Ștefan Antim takes a slight departure from this interpretation, by his theory – invoking the authority of the social-democrat Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea – that Romanian society suffers from the ills of neo-feudalism, with the National Liberal Party as the most prominent support of the syndrome.⁹⁹ Framing his analysis in the footsteps of Gherea – always eager to emphasize, in a characteristic Plekhanovist fashion, the urgency of capitalist development and democratization over socialist revolutionary designs¹⁰⁰ –, Antim explains how the agrarian reform of 1864 that abolished feudal arrangements failed to issue into agrarian capitalism. Instead, “the new bourgeoisie that the reform of Cuza created rapidly degenerated into an agrarian class, conjoining his landholding fortunes with his control over the levers of political power. When destroying the boyardom, the new agrarianists indulged into a sustained hatred for the genuine bourgeoisie”.¹⁰¹ The law of the inalienability of peasant lands adopted in conjunction with the agrarian reform of 1864 and acting as a pillar of the neo-feudal structures “stays in total contradiction to the very essence of liberalism”. When subscribing to these arrangements and taking advantage of them, “our liberal party erected a wide-ranging system that runs

⁹⁸ Sanielevici, “Falimentul poporanismului”; Al Ciurcu, “Funcționarismul”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 21, June 20, 1920, pp. 326-327.

⁹⁹ An argument already developed in Ștefan Antim, *Chestiunea socială în România*, București, Imprimeria “La Roumanie”, 1908.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Kitch, “Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea and Rumanian Marxism”, in *The Slavonic and East European Review* 55: 1, 1977, pp. 65-89; Rizescu, “Constantin Stere, populismul și celelalte marxisme românești”.

¹⁰¹ Ștefan Antim, “Spre adevărata democrație”, in *Curentul nou* (n. s.) 1: 1, February 1, 1920, p. 13.

contrary to the demands of liberalism, a typical anti-liberal system".¹⁰²

Once making thus his claim for true liberalism dependent on a pleading for genuine bourgeois-capitalist development, Antim proceeds then to argue that democratization itself – the undeniable watchword of the years immediately following the First World War – can only come after Romanian society disentangles itself from the prevailing falsifications of liberalism and capitalism: "The emergence and consolidation of the bourgeois class is the real objective of democracy, of true democracy, which cannot arise and thrive in the narrow and unpropitious frame of an agrarian state". Such a development is easy to envision, as the Liberal Party will have to make appeal to bourgeois constituencies in the new conditions created by the introduction of universal male suffrage, accompanied by a redistribution of lands. Indeed, having seen their hopes of gaining the peasant electorate on their side thwarted – due to the fact that enfranchised peasants moved easily into the political folds of peasantism and nationalism –, "the liberals can only survive if they manage to adapt to the new situation, which they themselves created in fact. They will have to go to the towns, in order to find in that milieu their old supporters whom they expelled from the great agrarian holdings. We can be sure that our liberals will succeed in doing this time what they should have always done: they will look for the support of the bourgeois class, of the independent and productive bourgeoisie".¹⁰³

In *Curentul nou*, the pleading for classical liberalism was born in direct confrontation with the practices of mainstream modernizing liberalism that were to receive, soon thereafter, the rationalization elaborated by Zeletin.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

In *Libertatea*, the theoretical defense of liberalism and individualism would greatly gain in sophistication, at the cost of dropping out expressions of explicit opposition to the liberal establishment. After joining the enterprise driven by Gigurtu and Strat, Sanielevici and Antim continued to broaden their criticism of bureaucratic parasitism,¹⁰⁴ of protectionism and economic isolationism¹⁰⁵ and of “neo-medieval” traditionalism,¹⁰⁶ while abstaining from taking issue explicitly with either the party staying in power up to December 1937 under the leadership of Gheorghe Tătărescu or, indeed, with Carol II and his camarilla (that Gigurtu himself would increasingly get associated with). Even when lessening the critical edge of their theories in this way, they nevertheless continued to envision national development as professed westernizer liberals.¹⁰⁷

4

The exchange between Drăghicescu and Strat mentioned above emerges retrospectively as a Romanian fragment of a world-wide and long-term confrontation between two traditions of liberal thinking and practice. At the time he refashioned it in order to counteract the attempt at a liberal-individualist revival of the journal *Libertatea*, the

¹⁰⁴ Idem, “Funcționarismul”, in *Libertatea* 2: 15-16, August 5-20, 1934, pp. 242-245.

¹⁰⁵ Idem, “Liberalismul”, in *Libertatea* 3: 7, April 5, 1935, pp. 97-99; See also H. Sanielevici, “Agonia capitalismului”, in *Libertatea* 1: 3, February 5, 1933, pp. 33-35.

¹⁰⁶ Ștefan Antim, “Spre un nou Veac de Mijloc”, in *Libertatea* 1: 9, May 5, 1933, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁷ Compare Brian A. Porter, “The Social Nation and Its Futures: English Liberalism and Polish Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-century Warsaw”, in *American Historical Review* 101: 5, 1996, pp. 1470-1492.

social thesis expressed by Drăghicescu from within broadly conceived liberal theoretical principles was being placed on sounder foundations by the Keynesian revolution in economic theorizing.¹⁰⁸ New Deal policies taking inspiration from the same new economic view were already being coined, in the United States, as a response to the intrinsic instability of the capitalist system that the economic crisis had made manifest. Large-scale extensions and full-blown applications of the same policies, in Western Europe and other parts of the capitalist world, came after the end of the Second World War.¹⁰⁹ Despite the fact that it functioned as an integral part of the Cold War international constellation, in conjunction with reconstruction strategies designed to contain global communism, the welfare state agenda drawn on the basis of a left-wing understanding of liberalism took advantage of the anti-fascist consensus and of the interwar Popular Front tradition.¹¹⁰ Its demise in the late 1970's, partly under the impact of new international pressures arising from the restructuring of the same Cold War framework,¹¹¹ issued into a rejuvenation of precisely those deregulating economic practices that Strat and his associates had envisioned in the 1930's as a necessary cure for the entrenched ills

¹⁰⁸ Wayne Parsons, "Politics and Markets: Keynes and His Critics", in Terence Ball, Richard Bellamy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 45-69.

¹⁰⁹ Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: the History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 229-339.

¹¹⁰ Idem, "Legacies of Antifascism: Constructing Democracy in Postwar Europe", in *New German Critique* 67, 1996, pp. 73-100.

¹¹¹ Robert E. Goodin, "The End of the Welfare State?", in Terence Ball, Richard Bellamy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 202-216.

brought about by the Romanian statist-driven economy. Continuously fed by an ingrained apprehension of any liberal concession to socialist ideals and objectives, the neoliberal view – canonized as the “Washington consensus” and strengthened by the breakdown of Soviet-style communism as a major ideological alternative to capitalism on a global scale¹¹² – then reigned supreme up until the inauguration of a new economic crisis of capitalism.¹¹³ Critics of neoliberal practices underscored the importance of China’s refashioning of its economic-political system on the state capitalist model as an integral part of the (temporary) victory of right-wing liberalism over its rival,¹¹⁴ thus bringing to light the full relevance of older analyses of the Chinese deviation from the Russian (and East European) communist pattern, itself predicated on marked differences between centuries-long historical legacies.¹¹⁵

Alongside their bare urge for a return to welfare-state ideals, such criticisms of the three decades of neoliberal ascendancy – this one installed in 1979, enhanced in 1989 and shattered in 2008 – also point to the need for reconsidering the theoretical bases of the socially-sensitive liberalism and the wider intellectual tradition staying behind it. Polanyi’s view of economic “embeddedness” – already hinted at above – thus went together with Keynesian economics as a theoretical

¹¹² Fran Tonkiss, “Markets against States: Neoliberalism”, in Kate Nash, Alan Scott, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004 [2001], pp. 250-260.

¹¹³ Craig Calhoun, Georgi Derluguian, eds., *Business as Usual. The Roots of the Global Financial Meltdown*, New York, New York University Press, 2011.

¹¹⁴ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 120-151.

¹¹⁵ Theda Skocpol, “Old Regimes Legacies and Communist Revolutions in Russia and China”, in *Social Forces* 55: 2, 1976, pp. 284-315.

reinforcement of left-wing policies predicated on broad liberal premises (despite its emergence – and unlike Keynesianism – from within the socialist tradition¹¹⁶). The (rather eclectic) “new liberalism” of the pre-Keynesian variety to the fold of which Drăghicescu belonged was rooted in a tradition stretching back across the welter of the XIXth century democratic radicalism with Jacobin overtones, to the republican and radical Enlightenment tradition of early modern times.¹¹⁷ Hayek’s neoliberal alternative was elaborated, for sure, on neo-classical economic foundations already set at the end of the XIXth century and refashioned by the Austrian school during the interwar era.¹¹⁸ Its economic theory and historical sociology were deeply intertwined with a revival of liberal conservative philosophical principles taking place against the background of totalitarian politics,¹¹⁹ but also staying in continuity to the liberalism of the Right forged in the aftermath of the French Revolution and indebted to the vision of moderate Enlightenment.¹²⁰ How can we then

¹¹⁶ S.C. Humphreys, “History, Economics and Sociology: the Work of Karl Polanyi”, in *History and Theory* 8: 2, 1969, pp. 165-212; Parsons, “Politics and Markets”, pp. 46-48, 51-53.

¹¹⁷ Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 699-861; Gregory Claeys, Christine Lattek, “Radicalism, Republicanism and Revolutionism: From the Principles of ’89 to the Origins of Modern Terrorism”, in Gareth Stedman Jones, Gregory Claeys, eds., *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 200-254.

¹¹⁸ Parsons, “Politics and Markets”, pp. 60-65.

¹¹⁹ Jeffrey C. Isaac, “Critics of Totalitarianism”, in Terence Ball, Richard Bellamy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 181-201.

¹²⁰ J.G.A. Pocock, “Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions: the American and French Cases in British Perspective”, in *Government and Opposition* 23: 1, 1989, pp. 81-106; Annelien de Dijn, “Aristocratic Liberalism in

characterize the three Romanian liberal stances delineated so far by reference to the Left-Right historical divide thus disclosed within the larger liberal tradition?

The ideological experiment of *Dreptatea socială* can firmly be placed on the side of Left-liberalism. Otherwise – and despite the fact that it can reasonably be vindicated as a Romanian contribution to the revival of classical liberal economics and liberal-conservative politics in the guise of the XXth century neoliberalism –, the discourse promoted by Sanielevici, Antim, Strat and their associates is more difficult to be characterized as participating to the world-wide development of liberalism with a right-wing cast, when taking into account the role it performed as part of the Romanian ideological context. The collaborators of *Libertatea* took a (somewhat timid) critical stance towards the expanding culture of fascism,¹²¹ while describing the prevailing “ideological confusion” of the age as evenly nurtured by false idols belonging to all parts of the political spectrum.¹²² They sometimes adopted recognizable liberal-conservative overtones, harshly opposed to democratic demagoguery.¹²³ In a related fashion, they could argue that “the Right continues to be the Right”, while “the Left is not the Left anymore”, in so far

Post-revolutionary France”, in *The Historical Journal* 48: 3, 2005, pp. 661-681; Lawrence Goldman, “Conservative Political Thought from the Revolutions of 1848 until the *Fin de Siècle*”, in Gareth Stedman Jones, Gregory Claeys, eds., *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 691-719.

¹²¹ P. Dinopol, “Cetind Pentru legionari de dl. Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu”, in *Libertatea* 5: 3, February 5, 1937, pp. 44-46; Idem, “Roza vânturilor”, in *Libertatea* 5: 11, June 5, 1937, pp. 200-202.

¹²² Idem, “Haos ideologic”, in *Libertatea* 5: 15-16, August 5-20, 1937, pp. 281-283.

¹²³ Nicolae Steinhardt, “Socialiștii apărători ai libertății”, in *Libertatea* 5: 9, May 5, 1937, pp. 161-163.

as “it can only get embodied by following the ways of the Right”.¹²⁴ Still, when contrasted to the Zeletinian conception streamlined on a path of evolution leading to the corporatist surge for a nationalist-authoritarian breakthrough, the voices of *Curentul nou* and *Libertatea* emerge as belonging together with that of Drăghicescu – and indeed with that of the social-democratic theory acknowledged by Antim as an inspiration –, as parts of a large oppositional camp that can loosely be described as left-wing, on local criteria. The view originated with Sanielevici at around 1900 has always remained a minority variety of liberalism throughout the last pre-communist decades of Romanian history. Holding an even starker minority status in the interwar period, the liberal socialism that glimmered in *Dreptatea socială* relied on the memory of fortyeighter democratic radicalism,¹²⁵ itself an oppositional discourse at the time but which had nevertheless managed to accede to a position of prominence in the sphere of culture. Acting as a perverted inheritor of fortyeightism, the peripheral variety of “neoliberalism” defended by Zeletin occupied a solid mainstream position among the Romanian interpretations of the liberal view.

The liberal heritage of Eastern Europe is almost entirely associated with the same perspective that received its best Romanian expression in the works of Zeletin.¹²⁶ By gradually disentangling themselves from communist intellectual patterns, East European intellectual circles participated – in some countries of the region at least – to the cross-bordering elaboration of late

¹²⁴ H.H. Streiman, “Dreapta și Stânga”, in *Libertatea* 5: 13-14, July 5-20, 1937, p. 246.

¹²⁵ Drăghicescu, *Evoluția ideilor liberale*, pp. 10-18.

¹²⁶ Jerzy Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, transl. by Chester A. Kisiel, Budapest, Central European University Press, 1995, pp. 43-72.

XXth century neoliberalism.¹²⁷ However, despite the fact that warnings against the conflation of the broader liberal vision with the narrower tenets of its neoliberal version alone have occasionally been formulated,¹²⁸ no sustained attempt at elaborating a historical typology of regional liberal politics and thinking has been advanced so far. The present paper was therefore intended as an attempt to start filling this gap of the available scholarship.

¹²⁷ Johanna Bockman, Gil Eyal, "Eastern Europe as a Laboratory for Economic Knowledge: the Transnational Roots of Neoliberalism", in *The American Journal of Sociology* 108: 2, 2002, pp. 310-352.

¹²⁸ Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, pp. 119-170.

3

Liberal Socialism in Romania: an Interpretation of Social Justice

Arguing in the immediate aftermath of the First World War as an inside reformist voice of the National Liberal Party that fully acknowledged his long-standing dedication to the promotion of social-democratic ideals, and asking for a re-infusion of the party's discourse and practice with the largely abandoned radical democratic temper of its mid-XIXth century revolutionary forerunners, the sociologist Dumitru Drăghicescu (1875-1945)¹ went on to embark on the tentative to elaborate a doctrine of "liberal socialism". This one was intended to bring the various streams of social and ideological evolutions underway into a channel of national development likely to go beyond the manifest shortcomings of capitalism, while also avoiding the relapse into Soviet-style communism. Offered primarily in the pages of the Bucharest-based journal *Dreptatea socială* which he headed as a director,

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¹ D. Drăghicescu, *Evoluția ideilor liberale*, București, Imprimeriile "Independența", 1921.

published over the year 1923 – from January to November – and paying close attention to the debates revolving around the constitutional revision adopted in March of the same year, this vision yields its full significance when related to the general evolution of the various currents of liberal thinking over the long run, in western, Romanian, and generally East-European contexts. Its contours are delineated in the following, also taking in view the evolution of Drăghicescu himself as a sociological theorist, a philosopher and a social reformer. The context of the evolution of ideological advocacy belonging to the camp of the Left in interwar Romania is considered, however, in the beginning.

1

One can take an appropriate departure for evaluating the pleading of *Dreptatea socială* by looking briefly at another publishing venture, featuring at the beginning of the following decade. Itself of short duration – as issued from November 1932 to March 1933 –, the journal *Stânga* was inaugurated as an encompassing left-wing platform intended to cross the existing dividing lines stretching through the same large ideological camp. As such, it was meant at “bringing together people with ideological, social and political orientations resonating with the new spirit of the times” and at promoting “an organic solidarity in accordance with the basic problems of the age”.²

The values of the Left are vindicated here as consonant with a general assertion of progressivism: “Animated by a progressive spirit, *Stânga* will act as a staunch obstacle against any kind of reactionary

² (unsigned) “Linia generală a vremii”, in *Stânga* 1: 1, November 13, 1932, p. 1.

tendencies”.³ Such a progressive activism is somewhat strangely found, however, as only possible on the basis of subscribing to a broadly conceived democratic collectivism, which is envisioned as implying a turn away from individualism into adopting the vision of the masses: “The new world will be erected not from within the old one but on its ruins. It will only become possible, however, once we accept to subscribe in a disciplined fashion to the demands of the community. The old individuals died together with the false doctrine of individualism, in order for new individualities to live properly as parts of a new social life. This collective life is prepared by a new economy, a new sociology, a new esthetics and a new ethics”.⁴ Intellectuals themselves are called upon to fight the forces of reaction by getting immersed into the spirit of the community: “Once the wall of prejudices is demolished [...], will the masters of ideas understand what path they have to take? They have to succumb to the collective ethos, together with the masses”.⁵ It is significant, however, that the emerging communitarian social organization must be carefully distinguished from the hierarchical one envisioned by the ascending corporatist doctrines: “The reactionaries work for bringing back defunct personal privileges and castes with a feudal mentality. This is definitely contrary to the entire evolution of mankind towards the integration of the individual into the masses, by harnessing personal efforts to those of the whole community, to the benefit of the community”.⁶ A departure from the tradition of

³ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁴ V.V. Stanciu, “Orientare”, in *Stânga* 1: 1, November 13, 1932, p. 1.

⁵ N. Tatu, “Intellectualul factor de progres social”, in *Stânga* 1: 3, November 27, 1932, p. 3.

⁶ Pavel Pavel, “Stat corporativ”, in *Stânga* 1: 3, November 27, 1932, p. 1.

revolutionary syndicalism went together with the same democratic-collectivist stance,⁷ hand in hand with a reluctant attitude taken towards the idea of the state as a privileged engine for top-down policies of development.⁸

Although it undeniably harbored some specific overtones, this experiment of Leftist ecumenism nevertheless displayed tendencies shared with the main ideological families located on the same side of the political spectrum at the time. Alongside a rejuvenation of the Peasant Party's left-wing revolutionary temper of the early 1920's – partially discarded after the creation of the National Peasant Party in 1926 by the merger with the non-peasantist and "above class" Transylvanian National Party and the inauguration of its governmental tenure in 1928 –, the design of the "peasant state" adopted by the theorists of agrarianism in 1932 also involved significant steps taken towards adopting a collectivist vision, which in this case went together with the incorporation of some elements of corporatist theorizing, harnessed to the interests of the plowmen's class⁹ (and easy to be distinguished from the early XXth century populist vision of an "agrarian democracy", meant at consolidating individual peasant proprietorship as the only conceivable healthy social basis of the country,¹⁰

⁷ I. Felea, "Reabilitarea lui Sorel. Discuții", in *Stânga* 1: 3, November 27, 1932, p. 5; Idem, "Sindicalism. Puncte de vedere", in *Stânga* 1: 4, December 4, 1932, p. 2.

⁸ P. Boteanu, "Generația statului sau generația maselor", in *Stânga* 1: 4, December 4, 1932, pp. 1-2.

⁹ Ernest Ene, "Ce poate fi statul țăranesc?" [1932], "Fundamentul economic al statului țăranesc" [1932], and "Industria în statul țăranesc" [1932], all in *Doctrina țăranistă în România. Antologie de texte*, ed. de Ion Ilinciu et al., București, Noua Alternativă, 1994, pp. 161-166. See also below, chapters 4 and 7.

¹⁰ C. Stere, "Social-democratism sau poporanism?" [1907-1908], in *Scrieri politice și filozofice*, ed. de Victor Rizescu, București, Dominor, 2005, pp. 169-353;

alongside the entrenchment of no less individualistic rule of law procedures¹¹). Virgil Madgearu, the most influential agrarianist theorist, had acted in the previous decade as an unqualified champion of free-trade economy open to foreign capitals¹² against the expanding “neoliberal” interventionist and protectionist wisdom gradually elaborated by such figures as Ștefan Zeletin in conjunction with the policies of the National Liberal Party and the People’s Party.¹³ At the beginning of the 1930’s, however, he joined the emerging (however unclear) conception of a half-corporatist and mildly collectivist “peasant state”, by subscribing to the expanding call for a “state-driven economy”¹⁴ and invoking to this extent as a model the New Deal policies in train in the United States.¹⁵ He also demanded a reinterpretation of constitutional principles in accordance to the new requirements of economic planning, as “the crisis of bourgeois-individualist democracy has to be taken as a consummated fact”¹⁶ and, as such, “democratic life tends to replace the liberal state with a normative state, meant to offer guidance to economic

¹¹ Idem, “Încercări filozofice” [1897], in *Scrieri politice și filozofice*, ed. de Victor Rizescu, București, Dominor, 2005, pp. 60-120; Idem, *Evoluția individualității și noțiunea de persoană în drept*, Iași, Tipografia H. Goldner, 1897.

¹² Virgil Madgearu, “Capitalul strein. Este ceasul din urmă pentru a salva o situație compromisă”, in *Plutus* 1: 17, October 31, 1923, p. 1.

¹³ Ștefan Zeletin, “Interesele economice ale Angliei și politica ei continentală”, in *Plutus* 2: 97, February 7, 1924, p. 1. See also Idem, *Burghezia română*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Humanitas, 1991 [1925]; Idem, *Neoliberalismul*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927].

¹⁴ Virgil Madgearu, “Economia dirijată”, in *Viața românească* 26: 7, April 15, 1934, pp. 2-18.

¹⁵ Idem, “Revoluția Roosevelt”, in *Viața românească* 26: 9, May 15, 1934, pp. 2-20.

¹⁶ Idem, “Tendențele de renovare a democrației”, in *Viața românească* 27: 5-6, May-June 1935, p. 12.

activity and to place it under its control, such as to subject it to collective interests”.¹⁷

Around the moment of the Nazi seizure in Germany in January 1933, the vague vindication of mass politics sustained by a communitarian feeling advanced by *Stânga* turns very rapidly into a staunch support for communism, implying a recipe for an “economic Bolshevik” reorganizing of Romanian society on the pattern of “integral nationalization” and “absolute planning”.¹⁸ Ideological rationalizations for a revolutionary assault on the state by the mobilization of the peasantry are formulated, betraying the inspiration of Lenin’s *State and Revolution*,¹⁹ and social-democracy is rejected as a virtual ally of fascism, on account of the fact that “the political form of democracy made sense only for the period of flourishing, free trade capitalism”, while “monopolist capitalism has fascism as its political counterpart, as shown by what is happening nowadays”.²⁰ Otherwise, mainstream social-democratic discourse of the same years was mainly concerned with refurbishing its older theory – exposed at the beginning of the century by Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea²¹ – of peripheral social

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Such a turn of the argumentation did definitely not stay in plain conjunction, otherwise, with Madgearu’s republication in volume form, in 1936, of his basically anti-Zeletinian works of the 1920’s: see Idem, *Agrarianism, capitalism, imperialism*, ed. de Ludovic Bathory, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1999 [1936].

¹⁸ P. Boteanu, “Bolșevism economic”, in *Stânga* 2: 10, January 15, 1933, p. 6.

¹⁹ V.V. Stanciu, “Statul și țărănimea”, in *Stânga* 2: 14, February 12, 1933, pp. 4-5.

²⁰ N. Tatu, “Social-democrația în lumina materialismului dialectic”, in *Stânga* 2: 15, February 19, 1933, p. 7.

²¹ Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, “Post-scriptum sau cuvinte uitate” [1908], in *Opere complete*, ed. de Ion Popescu-Puțuri et al., București, Ed. Politică, vol. 3, 1977, pp. 476-504;

evolution, which underscored the need for full-blown capitalism as a necessary stage on the path to socialism,²² also drawing on the related analysis of the local society as dominated by a non-feudal and non-bourgeois bureaucratic oligarchy whose class interests were intimately linked with distorting the development of genuine capitalism.²³ Such basic statements involved a reassertion of world-wide developmental uniformities against the peasantist search for a special pattern of modernization operating in the setting of backwardness.²⁴ They did not prevent, however, the representatives of the same ideological stance to start speaking as promoters of economic planning, seen as a reformist vehicle leading to the full revolutionary socialization of the means of production but nevertheless presented as “in fact a system envisioned by virtually all the bourgeois economists”.²⁵

Idem, “Asupra socialismului în țările înapoiate” [1911], in *Opere complete*, ed. de Ion Popescu-Puțuri et al., București, Ed. Politică, vol. 5, 1978, pp. 43-75.

²² Lotar Rădăceanu, “Din evoluția țărilor înapoiate”, in *Mișcarea socială* 1: 4, January 1930, pp. 153-159; 1: 5, February 1930, pp. 201-217; 1: 11-12, August-September 1930, pp. 465-469. Also S. Emil, “Revizuirea lui Gherea?”, in *Mișcarea socială* 2: 3, December 1930, pp. 607-611; 2: 4, January 1931, pp. 646-652.

²³ Lotar Rădăceanu, “Oligarhia română”, in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* 5: 3-4, 1924, pp. 497-532; 6: 1-2, 1926, pp. 160-184; 6: 3-4, 1927, pp. 435-459. Also Victor Rădescu, “A Divide over the Oligarchy: Competing Uses of Marxism in Pre-communist Romania”, in *Ideology, Nation and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2013, pp. 81-110.

²⁴ Stelian Dumbravă, “Marxism și țărănism”, in *Stânga* 1: 4, December 4, 1932, p. 6; Al. Teodoru, “Marxism și țărănism”, in *Stânga* 1: 5, December 11, 1932, p. 7.

²⁵ Ioan I. Mirescu, *Proletariatul și economia dirijată*, București, Șantier, [1934], p. 36; Idem, “Social-democrația și politica

The participation of agrarianist and socialist voices to the rising quasi-consensus regarding the imperatives of dirigisme and of semi-corporatism could have only grown stronger after the inauguration of dictatorial politics by Carol II in February 1938. Published in 1939, the third volume of the *Encyclopedia of Romania*, designed by the master-sociologist of the country, Dimitrie Gusti (with a syncretic ideological orientation drawing on social-democracy, agrarianism and traditionalist nationalism), and meant to bring together materials for elaborating a “science of the nation”, allowed the economic historians Gheorghe Zane (also acting as an agrarianist theorist) and Eugen Demetrescu (a disciple of Madgearu in the field and contributing decisively to a retrospective positive evaluation of the XIXth century Romanian school of free-trade liberal economics) to place their interventions²⁶ – in a section dealing with “the past” of national economic life – in the broader framework drawn by the articles of Ion Veverca (a fascist social and economic thinker) and Mihail Manoilescu²⁷ (the most influential voice of corporatism), giving credit implicitly and explicitly to an interpretation of the social and economic evolution of the country streamlined towards the mobilization of resources for an authoritarian breakthrough accompanied by

creditului în economia dirijată”, in *Mișcarea socială* 4: 8-10, August-October 1934, pp. 1622-1625.

²⁶ G. Zane, “Originea și dezvoltarea economiei de schimb” and Eugen Demetrescu, “Liberalismul economic”, both in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 3: *Economia națională. Cadre și producție*, București, Cultura Națională, [1939], pp. 245-254, resp. 261-274.

²⁷ Ion Veverca, “Dezvoltarea formelor și mișcarea ideilor economice”, “Procesul destrămării vechilor forme” and “Naționalismul economic”; Mihail Manoilescu, “Evoluția economiei industriale”, all in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 3: *Economia națională. Cadre și producție*, București, Cultura Națională, [1939], pp. 233-236, 237-244, 275-286, resp. 255-260.

national regeneration. It is telling that, in the same section, the socialist Șerban Voinea offered a dull narrative of the disarray of the social-democratic movement after the First World War.²⁸

2

It is against this brief survey of the general course taken by left-wing ideological pleading in interwar Romania that one can appreciate at full the significant originality in the local context of the position adopted by Drăghicescu in *Dreptatea socială*. Evolving intellectually from within the socialist camp and acting as a politician of the National Liberal Party, he spares no effort to place his ideological synthesis of socialist and liberal principles on the firm foundations of philosophical individualism, staying in this respect far away from the collectivist strictures later to be advanced in the pages of the journal *Stânga*. This is maybe most conspicuous when we find him eulogizing the memory of the German politician and political thinker Walther Rathenau, died by assassination in 1922, relatively well-known to the Romanian public²⁹ and conveniently invoked by Drăghicescu in the journal as an incarnation of liberal socialist principles: “A fanatic of liberal individualism, bestowing the highest value on the importance of inner individual life, of the spirit, he was also able to understand the need for social organization, to be approached in such a way as not to debase

²⁸ Șerban Voinea, “Socialismul”, in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 3: *Economia națională. Cadre și producție*, București, Cultura Națională, [1939], pp. 287-292.

²⁹ Walther Rathenau, *La triple révolution. Essais*, trad. par David Roget, Paris, Aux Éditions du Rhin, 1921; Idem, *Critica revoluțiunii*, trad. de Otton L. William Ossenkop, București, n. p., 1923.

individuality to the benefit of the community. As such, he was keen not to miss anything legitimate and beautiful that socialist doctrines had to offer. Not content with the purely materialistic side of Marxism, Rathenau added to it the mystical idealism of individualist liberalism, and his conceptions can thus be seen as a symphonic mixture of liberal and socialist doctrines". As such, "he emerges as the most powerful representative of liberal socialism in Germany. [...] A synthetic spirit as his could have only embodied the eclectic needs of the age, which are best summarized by the notion of liberal socialism or neoliberalism, holding a dominant status in contemporary thinking".³⁰

When speaking programmatically and in a less eulogizing fashion, Drăghicescu makes clear that, if the socialist movement gets victorious – as in Soviet Russia – one can only expect "justice to suffocate liberty". In such circumstances, "peoples would move from the present state of uncertainty into another one of the same kind and no less dangerous. The peace of contemporary societies can only be obtained by conciliating justice and liberty, by carefully adjusting them to each other. Neither classical liberalism, nor orthodox socialism (of the Marxist stripe) can bring peace and prosperity to the peoples; neither of them can stay as the foundation for the future development of the civilized world. [...] Justice has actually to be understood as a well-balanced application of liberty, a way to discipline that longing of the human soul, and for that matter, those who fight for justice will fight, in fact, for redressing the imbalances of liberty or the damages it suffered".³¹ Such a high valuation of entrenched freedom as a precondition for

³⁰ D. Drăghicescu, "Walther Rathenau", in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 14-15, August 1-15, 1923, p. 388.

³¹ Idem (unsigned), "Ce voim", in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 1, January 15, 1923, p. 5.

tackling the delicate issue of social justice was not inaugurated by Drăghicescu in *Dreptatea socială*. It stood in continuity to his political tracts of the previous years, which also underlined the reverse relationship: liberty could only thrive when consolidated by social justice. Indeed, “liberty survives only when justice acts as a counterweight to each and every manifestation of it. If this does not happen, liberty acts self-destructively, and this is why after an age of increased liberty, mankind has a powerful thirst for justice”.³²

As it featured in the 1923 journal, Drăghicescu’s reformist engagement predicated on liberal socialist principles was shaped within several crisscrossing theoretical frameworks, and nourished from various ideological traditions. Of greatest importance was his long-term effort to ponder the scope of individual subjectivity against the constraints of social structure, in order to elaborate an accurate account of social development. Presented as a gradual disentanglement from Durkheimian sociological theorizing that never led to a total break with the thought of his Paris doctoral supervisor, the argumentation of the sort was framed, originally, as an inquiry about the relation between “biological” and “social determinism”³³ and about “the role of the individual as part of social determinism”.³⁴ It was later broadened into a meditation on “the problem of conscience”³⁵ and on the “creative ideal” as a factor of

³² Idem, *Partide politice și clase sociale*, București, n. p., 1922, p. 12.

³³ Idem, *Le problème du déterminisme social: déterminisme biologique et déterminisme social*, Paris, Editions de la Grande France, 1903.

³⁴ Idem, *Du rôle de l’individu dans le déterminisme social*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1904.

³⁵ Idem, *Le problème de la conscience: étude psycho-sociologique*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1907.

social evolution,³⁶ leading to the project of a “subjective sociology” that vindicated pathetically “the reality of the spirit”.³⁷ Occasionally, the same train of thinking issued into a sharp negation of the possibility of any “objective sociology” patterned on the model of the natural sciences.³⁸

As summarized at the beginning of the XXth century for the Romanian audience, such an assertion of the methodological autonomy of the social sciences started by maintaining that “the aim of all sociological researches up to the present, indeed the all-encompassing task of the existing social science, has been that of discovering social laws of the same sort as the physical, chemical and biological ones, or in other words belonging to the same category with the natural laws”.³⁹ Conceiving sociology as primarily a description of society understood as an artifice created by human volition, Drăghicescu moves on to underscore the formal juridical rules as the only laws operating in the social space: “It is only logical [...] to claim that artificial things do not obey of natural laws, but only of artificial laws, imposed by human beings”. As such, “there can be no other sociological laws but the formal prescriptions of the positive juridical rules. Accordingly, to search in society for natural laws amounts to [...] mistaking nature for art, artifice for truth”.⁴⁰ This is, however, only the other side of an understanding of sociology as social activism sustained by professional knowledge of human affairs: “As social

³⁶ Idem, *L' Idéal créateur: essai psycho-sociologique sur l' évolution sociale*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1914.

³⁷ Idem, *La réalité de l'esprit. Essais de sociologie subjective*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1928.

³⁸ Idem, “De l'impossibilité de la sociologie objective”, in *Sonderabdruck aus dem Archiv für systematische Philosophie* 12: 3, 1906, pp. 410-426.

³⁹ Idem, *Raporturile dintre drept și sociologie*, București, Tipografia Guttenberg, Joseph Göbl, 1904, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

reality stays within our capacities to create it [...], how could a law emerge here otherwise than by an act of human will [...]? Nature creates spontaneously its own laws, so why should we not allow human beings to create their laws?" As a consequence, "the sociologist should be given the power to create laws".⁴¹

Science can be harnessed to social activism only in so far as its statements do not provide for a conservative attitude to society and politics, and Drăghicescu dispels the idea that the principles of differentiation and heredity, as offered by biological evolutionism, could be applied to the field of social evolution such as to establish aristocratic hierarchy as of the very nature of social reality. When arguing in this vein, he advances a case for democratization that makes it hard to distinguish from the progression towards socialism. As he says, "the basic postulates of democracy are, without doubt, the egalitarian tendency and the idea of fraternity. [...] When touched by the light of democracy, societies nourish an aspiration for the progressive leveling of economic, social and political differentiations".⁴²

It is the same quasi-conflation of democracy and socialism that presides over Drăghicescu's strenuous efforts to place the latter in continuation to Christian ideals,⁴³ to which we shall come back below. The tendency towards the equalization among human beings in society is found again as of the essence of democracy, with qualifications regarding the way equality must be understood: "It is to take for granted that we do not come into the world as equals. [...] Certainly, our various aptitudes given by nature make us different from each other. It would therefore be

⁴¹ Idem, "Știință și practică socială (concluzii actuale și inactuale)", in *Omagiu lui C. Dimitrescu-Iași*, n. p., n. p., 1904, p. 281.

⁴² Idem, "Știința și democrația", part II, in *Noua revistă română* 8: 7, May 23, 1910, p. 95.

⁴³ Idem, *Creștinism și democrație*, București, Tipografia Ziarului "Voința Națională", 1909.

impossible and absurd to consider that all human beings are equals. We easily understand that it is not this kind of equality that socialism speaks about. Democracy does not intend to make people one and the same in this way”.⁴⁴ The democratic/socialist conception of equality is then delineated as follows: “The equality that democracy demands is a relative one, limited to the social and economic field; the inequalities that socialism fights against and wants to rule away are those that society creates in an arbitrary fashion, against the background of social and economic equality that all of us share at birth.”⁴⁵

The way Drăghicescu speaks about the democratic and the socialist visions as quasi-identical betrays his indebtedness to both the tradition of democratic radicalism and that of Second International social democracy. As to the former, it came to a great extent from the republicanism of Durkheim himself and of Charles Renouvier.⁴⁶ The local trend of democratic radicalism coming from the 1848 era was also highly significant, and it presided over the shaping of Drăghicescu’s mind from the very beginning, in the medium of family education. A late XIXth century journal addressed to the problems of “rural Romania”, issued by “a committee of peasant students” and based in the village of Drăghicescu’s birth amply certifies this.⁴⁷ It is also of significance to note, however, that the journal in question took an energetic anti-socialist stance,⁴⁸ close to

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society. A Historical Argument*, University Park, Penns., The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, pp. 74-104.

Șt. Drăghicescu, “Din drepturile și datoriile noastre politice și culturale”, in *România rurală* 1: 6, February 7, 1899, p. 1; Idem, “Milostivii de la guvern”, in *România rurală* 1: 29, September 12, 1899, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Sergiu Cujba, “Are socialismul rost la noi?”, in *România rurală* 1: 35, October 31, 1899, p. 1.

the emerging populist discourse, thus arguing that “as a socialist one must argue for proletarianization and against small proprietorship, as a ruralist one must defend small property which, if honestly protected, can bring great benefices”, in order to conclude: “Let us then plead for ruralism and against socialism”.⁴⁹

In spite of this, however, Drăghicescu defended, up into the years of the First World War, the idea of socialism as a way to the fulfillment of basic democratic objectives in the context of capitalist modernity. When advancing, in 1914, the view of Marxist socialism as the all-encompassing ideal of the age,⁵⁰ and speaking as such from within the National Liberal Party, he found himself strikingly at odds with the sharp rejections of Marxism as an outdated doctrine coming from fellow-party members that had formerly acted as the very leaders of local socialism, and who could now maintain that Marxist objectives were in the train of being properly accomplished under the ideological labels of radical liberalism and solidarism: “When looking to the working class movement in the whole world, [...] we can see the workers coming closer to the liberal and radical constituencies. In their turn, the advanced bourgeois parties, staying under the influence of the solidarist idea, get closer to the workers. Once the theory of Marx has been revealed as nothing more but a ruin and a historical document, an utopia among others, it is being replaced by a realist politics, resonating with the interests of the progressive classes in society”.⁵¹

Very little of Drăghicescu’s discourse at the time anticipates the calls for placing the idea of social justice

⁴⁹ (signed as “Un antimarxist”) “Ce-are a face?”, in *România rurală* 1: 36, November 7, 1899, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Drăghicescu, *L’ Idéal creator*, pp. 318-398.

⁵¹ Ioan Nădejde, “Ce-a mai rămas din marxism”, in *Voința națională* 28: 8265, March 16, 1914, p. 1. See also Idem, “Falimentul socialismului”, in *Voința națională* 28: 8204, June 13, 1913, p. 1.

championed by socialism on the firm foundations of a liberal vindication of liberty, that he would advance after the war, when facing the communist experiment in Russia. Instead, his pre-war defense of Marxism is built on a mild interpretation of social determinism, which rests on the statement that “the realities of tomorrow can only issue from those of today”,⁵² and which recalls Marx’s own statement that “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please”. Explaining that Marxism offered a right intimation of the future precisely by virtue of the ardent idealism it has brought about, he understands the march towards the world of social justice as propelled by the dialectic of revolutionary pressures and interventionist practices designed to counteract them: “The theses of Marxism can be shown as false by the evolution of social reality only in so far as this reality is transformed precisely according to the indications and suggestions derived from the very same theses. We live in an era when the socialist movement interacts, in practice, with the products of the economic developments sustained by liberal individualism. [...] To the extent that the socialist society takes hold, with the bourgeois society correspondingly retreating, the picture drawn by Marx will emerge as more and more inaccurate”.⁵³ The reasonableness of Marx’s predictions can be established by the means of an experiment of the imagination: “Let us place socialism in the framework of pure liberalism: it will then lead us inescapably to the revolutionary cataclysm anticipated. [...] Let us then think of the opposite situation: imagine that interventionist reforms are implemented as a general practice, that the resistance opposed by particular interests is diminished, that professional associations are helped to take shape,

⁵² Drăghicescu, *L’Idéal creator*, pp. 385-386.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

that monopolist enterprises are nationalized, in a word that all hindrances that capitalism places in the way of new economic tendencies are removed. This can only lead us directly into a collectivistic system”.⁵⁴

The sustained effort to Christianize socialist reformism is connected with Drăghicescu’s very understanding of socialism as a creative ideal. After stating that “at the time of its romantic youth, [socialism] was known under the name of Christianity”, while “today, when it came to maturity, Christianity was renamed as socialism”,⁵⁵ he goes on to underscore that “up to the present, socialism has manifested itself as nothing more than a purely social doctrine, whose ‘theology’ does not go beyond the interpretation and justification of its ethics by the means of plain economic, sociological and historical generalizations”, in order to envision that “at some point, maybe, the ethical doctrine of socialism [...] will require an ontological framework able to confirm and fortify it. Socialism will then act as a religion accompanied by a new theology”.⁵⁶ In the vortex of the world war, he discovers the need for a religious revival in accordance to positive science as a requirement of sustainable social reform: “The urgent problem that this war has brutally brought to the fore is that we need to raise the level of our morality at the level attained by our science and technology”.⁵⁷ The war will bring forth a religious revolution that will “finally provide mankind with the psychological climate necessary for its moral evolution and, by the same token, with the cure for the terrible crisis it faces”.⁵⁸ As this religion of the future will be “a messianism of science”, and as the “socialists [...]

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 386-387.

⁵⁵ Idem, *Creștinism și democrație*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Idem, *L’Idéal creator*, pp. 396-397.

⁵⁷ Idem, *Le renouveau religieux et la guerre mondiale*, Bucarest, Les Imprimeries “L’Indépendance”, 1916, p. 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

are the genuine prophets of the modern belief in science”,⁵⁹ it is the socialists who will “offer [to mankind] the elements and the mental attitude of a higher morality”.⁶⁰ The prophetic role that socialism is expected to play is the more so appropriate as the doctrine itself can only exert the desired influence on society in so far as it acquires the fervor of a religious creed: “In order for socialism to win, it has to be transformed into a religious movement; it will never be able to propagate itself into society otherwise than by being sustained by the force of religious enthusiasm”.⁶¹

The concern of rejuvenating Christianity in the framework of modern science would become more and more important for Drăghicescu after the war, coming eventually to occupy a central position in his works towards the end of his life. His most extensive book addressed to an international audience is a proof of this,⁶² as also a Romanian one published posthumously.⁶³ Broadening his theory of social evolution into a philosophy of history keen to establish “the analogies between contemporary developments and those of the time of St. Augustin”,⁶⁴ he set forth, then, to provide the League of Nations with neo-Christian foundations able to sustain the building of a new transnational City of God. As part of the enterprise, he invested the International Labor Office of the same organization with the task of elaborating the appropriate social basis for the global

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, loc.cit.

⁶² Idem, *Verité et revelation*, Paris, Félix Alcan, vols. 1-2, 1934.

⁶³ Idem, *Dumnezeu și destinul universului*, ed. de Lazăr Cârjan și Ioan Octavian Rudeanu, București, Solaris Print, 2011.

⁶⁴ Idem, *La nouvelle cite de Dieu*, vol. 1: *La Voie, ou comment la philosophie de l’histoire justifie la Société des Nations et son idéologie: le Neo-Christianisme*, Paris, Marcelle Lesage, 1929, p. 11.

construction in view, by drawing on the ascertained fact that “in each period and in every phase of the historical-social evolution, the social class that accedes to political rule can only be the one that dominates the process of production”.⁶⁵ International cooperation must act as a vehicle of social transformation, and “with the help of the League of Nations, the proletariat will defeat the plutocracies in the same way that, at Rome, the party of the people defeated the aristocracy”.⁶⁶ As in the age of the advent of Christianity, the search for global ecumenism and the striving for social justice would advance together, and therefore “triumphing international socialism is the best foundation for the League of Nations, in the same way as the last one is a very important precondition for the victory of the working class”.⁶⁷

In the 1920's Drăghicescu would continue to cherish his radical democratic ideas of republican provenance, his pleading for universal suffrage⁶⁸ involving a wholesale support for the full enfranchisement of women.⁶⁹ After infusing his doctrine with a stronger sense of the urgency to defend the values of liberty, in the immediate aftermath of the war – while continuing to argue for socialist emancipation on the world scale, to be accomplished with the support of the League of Nations –, he did not join the drive towards collectivism and planning followed – as shown – by the journals *Stânga*, *Viața românească* and *Mișcarea socială* and the contributors to the *Encyclopedia*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Reforma electorală. Discurs rostit la Senat în ședința de la 15 decembrie 1925*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1926.

⁶⁹ Idem, “Constituanta și egalizarea politică și juridică dintre sexe”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 2, February 1, 1923, pp. 35-38. See also in this connection Idem, *L' Eternel feminine: essais de psychologie feminine*, Bucarest, Imprimerie de “L' Indépendance Roumaine”, 1905.

of Romania, together with large parts of the Left constituencies. Instead, he preferred to remain close to the searches for tailoring liberalism to the ever changing needs of the European society rapidly transformed by the economic crisis and the strengthening of political authoritarianism of both the Left and the Right. We can encounter him, in the 1930's, participating to such kind of debates in the pages of the journal *Libertatea. Economică, politică, socială, culturală*, intended as a vehicle for recasting liberal individualism of the classical sort by opposition to both its devout enemies and its insidious falsifications in Romania and throughout the world. As the journal promoted an enthusiastic and unqualified call for a return to Manchesterian economic practices against the ubiquitous danger of collectivism, we cannot be surprised to find here Drăghicescu making a qualified case for social determinism⁷⁰ and defending the virtues of well-pondered economic planning.⁷¹ We can only find as impressive, otherwise, his determination to promote this vision of economic freedom counteracted by welfare devises even in the circumstances of the royal dictatorship.⁷² It is also to note, as well, that the position he expressed in *Libertatea* could induce contemporary socialist theorists to present him as somebody who was "not at all an economic thinker of the Left, being as keen as such people like G. Strat, An. Gusti or M. Sanielevici [mainstream voices of the journal] to plead for maintaining the capitalist economic regime" (nevertheless having "some opinions worth mentioning").⁷³

⁷⁰ Idem, "Determinismul social și valoarea inițiativei individuale", in *Libertatea* 1: 11, June 1933, pp. 161-163.

⁷¹ Idem, "Liberalismul și economia dirijată", in *Libertatea* 2: 13-14, July 5-20, 1934, pp. 193-194.

⁷² Idem, "Economia liberală trebuiește nu dirijată ci controlată și rectificată", in *Libertatea* 6: 18, September 20, 1938, pp. 387-389.

⁷³ Mirescu, *Proletariatul și economia dirijată*, p. 59.

The conception of liberal socialism promoted by Drăghicescu did not exhibit a sustained concern for asserting the basic rule of law principles of liberalism against the Marxist conception of liberation understood as overcoming the state of alienation through the dialectic of the historical process,⁷⁴ that we encounter in both the western⁷⁵ and the Russian⁷⁶ intellectual experiments of the kind. The label itself was not employed by him in writings addressed to an international public, and featured conspicuously only in the pages of *Dreptatea socială*. Although definitely an inconsistent liberal socialist, Drăghicescu can firmly be placed in the larger context of the socially sensitive “new liberalism” that marked the evolution of liberal thinking at the turn of the XIXth to the XXth century all across Europe,⁷⁷ acting as an essential segment of the long-term pedigree of the mid-XXth century Keynesian and welfare state vision, itself intermingling in an adverse fashion with that of neoliberalism.⁷⁸ Disclosing its contours is part of a broader effort to identify the Romanian counterparts of the left-wing and right-wing varieties of liberalism, which can only be circumscribed as minority discourses,⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Andrzej Walicki, “Karl Marx as Philosopher of Freedom”, in *Critical Review. A Journal of Politics and Society* 2: 4, 1988, pp. 10-58.

⁷⁵ Serge Audier, *Le socialisme libéral*, Paris, La Découverte, 2006; Carmelo Calabrò, *Liberalismo, democrazia, socialismo. L'itinerario di Carlo Roselli*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2009.

⁷⁶ Andrzej Walicki, *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism*, Notre Dame, Ind., The University of Notre Dame Press, 1992 [1987], pp. 213-403.

⁷⁷ Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*.

⁷⁸ Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism. An Ideology of Social Reform*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978; Idem, “The Coming of the Welfare State”, in Terence Ball, Richard Bellamy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 7-44.

⁷⁹ See above, chapter 2.

acting alongside the dominant one of the modernizing doctrine that allowed for statist-interventionist adjustments of the basic principles of western provenance such as to suit the conditions of backwardness.⁸⁰

The relation between the latter trend of liberal advocacy and the view exposed by Drăghicescu requires further clarifications. Never recorded as a part of the history of socialist ideas in Romania,⁸¹ and neither of the general evolution of the ideological Left in the same context,⁸² Drăghicescu's political thinking has also not been charted by the general surveys of ideological development in the interwar period,⁸³ of the economic thinking over the same period⁸⁴ or even of the author's own sociological and philosophical views.⁸⁵ It was

⁸⁰ Victoria F. Brown, "The Adaptation of a Western Political Theory in a Peripheral State: The Case of Romanian Liberalism", in Stephen Fischer-Galati et al., eds., *Romania between East and West*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1982, pp. 269-30; Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World. The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000. See also Helga Schültz, Eduard Kubû, eds., *History and Culture of Economic Nationalism in East Central Europe*, Berlin, Berliner Wissenschafts Verlag, 2006.

⁸¹ Constantin-Titel Petrescu, *Socialismul în România*, Bucureşti, Ed. Fundaţiei Social-Democrate "Constantin-Titel Petrescu", 2003 [1944].

⁸² F. Vladimir Krasnosselski, *Stânga în România, 1832-1948. Tentativă de sinucidere sau asasinat?*, n. p., Ed. Victor Frunză, 1991.

⁸³ Z. Ornea, *Tradiţionalism şi modernitate în deceniul al treilea*, Bucureşti, Ed. Eminescu, 1980.

⁸⁴ Ioan Saizu, *Modernizarea României contemporane. Perioada interbelică. Pas şi impas*, Bucureşti, Ed. Academiei Române, 1991.

⁸⁵ N. Bagdasar et al., *Istoria filozofiei moderne*, vol. 5: *Filozofia românească de la origini până astăzi*, Bucureşti, Societatea Română de Filozofie, 1941, pp. 370-380, 524-526; Virgil Constantinescu, *Sistemul sociologic al lui Dumitru Drăghicescu*, Bucureşti, Ed. Academiei R.S.R., 1976.

occasionally mentioned briefly, however, as an integral part of an early interwar “neoliberal” discursive front acting for the strengthening and ideological justification of interventionist development strategies and for legislative reform meant to sustain them.⁸⁶ Drăghicescu and the hard-line ideologist of modernizing liberalism Ștefan Zeletin were most conspicuously packed together under this description. A closer comparison between them can only go together with a deeper understanding of Drăghicescu’s own conception of social justice.

3

Writing in 1924 in a “journal of commerce, industry, finance and agriculture”, in order to offer a diagnostic of the social evolutions underway in the country and throughout the world, Ștefan Zeletin could announce the consummate exhaustion of the revolutionary tide that had been raised by the world war and the victory of Bolshevism in Russia: “Since 1917, Europe has been living under the illusion that an era of proletarian revolution is on the way. However, the proletarian movement went into rapid decline, and the year 1923 shown the working class and the bourgeoisie confronting each other, in a state of turmoil through which we can see clear enough the forthcoming decisive victory of the bourgeoisie”.⁸⁷ As far as the local context was concerned, the same author could herald the bourgeois triumph as

⁸⁶ Mihail Rusenescu, Ioan Saizu, *Viața politică în România, 1922-1928*, București, Ed. Politică, 1979, pp. 27-29; Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după marea unire*, vol. 1: 1918-1933, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1986, pp. 55-70.

⁸⁷ Ștefan Zeletin, “Anul social 1923”, in *Plutus* 1: 78, January 13, 1924, p. 13.

an undeniable fact, also pointing to the constitutional document adopted in the previous year as to a fetter of capitalist development, inescapably connected with plutocratic consolidation. Indeed, in the footsteps of “the revolutionary moment of 1920”,⁸⁸ “the Romanian bourgeoisie established a virtual social-political dictatorship. In 1923, this dictatorship scored a new success, endowing itself with a new constitution that offers the legislation corresponding to the very needs of capitalist development”.⁸⁹

Zeletin made no secret of the implications that his doctrine had regarding the price that the proletariat was to pay, following its defeat on the social battlefield. Perfectly in tune with his strictures of the previous years, referring to the higher-order legitimacy of the spoliations that public wealth had been subjected to from the part of the rising bourgeois class, during the war and its immediate aftermath – by illegal means but nevertheless serving the purposes of the primitive accumulation of capital resembling the colonial ventures of the western bourgeoisie in previous times⁹⁰ –, he argues in the same journal that, in order to stand up to the requirements of national economic growth over the long run, the Romanian working class cannot reasonably demand welfare provisions on a par with its counterparts in the western countries. Indeed, “a worker in a backward country must be required to work as much as necessary for producing the same exchange value as the worker of an industrialized country produces by laboring eight hours per day. Otherwise, if we establish the same

⁸⁸ See, in this connection, Lucien Karchmar, “Communism in Romania, 1918-1921”, in Ivo Banac, ed., *The Effects of World War I. The Class War after the Great War: the Rise of Communist Parties in East Central Europe 1918-1921*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1983, pp. 127-187.

⁸⁹ Zeletin, “Anul social 1923”, loc. cit.

⁹⁰ Idem, “‘Acumularea primitivă’ în România”, in *Neoliberalismul*, pp. 135-141 (first published in 1922).

laboring time provisions” in the contexts of industrial development and, respectively, of agrarian backwardness and infant industrialization, “the bourgeoisie of the backward countries will inescapably be condemned to ruin”.⁹¹

Issued at the same time – in a conference delivered in 1923 as part of a series organized by the Romanian Economic Institute and dedicated to the “monetary problem”, but published in 1924 –, Drăghicescu’s assessment of the social predicament took a perfectly opposite line. Recalling that “the most important ideological development of the period preceding the war had been the spread of socialist doctrines and the advancement of working class demands inspired by them”, he highlights the fact that “the obvious consequence of the war and of the inflation ensuing from it has been the speeding up of the social transformations put in train in the pre-war period. [...] As a consequence of the gains obtained by the working class, most of the European countries display a decline of the bourgeoisie from its previous dominant position”.⁹² Drăghicescu can thus optimistically envision a close collaboration between the intellectuals and the manual workers as the “main social classes of the future”, the former being expected to provide the latter with instruction in order to enable them to act as “equals and associate rulers” in the years to come.⁹³

Just three years before, in 1921, the two theorists had spoken ideological languages hard to distinguish from each other. When taking an intervention regarding Drăghicescu’s book *The Evolution of Liberal Ideas* (published in the same year), Zeletin also took the

⁹¹ Idem, “Orele de muncă și producția”, in *Plutus* 1: 75, January 7, 1924, p. 3.

⁹² D. Drăghicescu, *Problema monetară din punct de vedere social*, București, “Cartea Românească” S.A., 1924, p. 2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

opportunity to state a score of complains – characteristic for that period in his intellectual evolution – about the distortions of Romanian modernization in train for several decades under National Liberal Party leadership.⁹⁴ The references he made to the social diseases and the institutional ineffectiveness brought about by those policies of development fully resonated with a semi-traditionalist conception of the national texture and of the requirements for its regeneration,⁹⁵ temporarily adopted by him after abandoning the stance of ironical despair above parties and ideologies exhibited in his previous pamphleteering writings.⁹⁶ They stood also very close to the strictures of Drăghicescu that the official liberalism of the day was “lacking of the sacred flame of generous liberal ideals”⁹⁷ which its 1848 radical predecessor had been endowed with.

When navigating in the same publishing boat, in 1923, we can see the same liberal ideologists as coexisting peacefully, yet promoting undeniably different discourses. By the time he joined Drăghicescu in a venture dedicated to the promotion of social justice, Zeletin was elaborating his full-blown rationalization of the mildly authoritarian modernizing practices with a nationalist bent and relying on interventionist economics employed by the National Liberal

⁹⁴ Ștefan Zeletin (signing as “Un intelectual mai bătrân”), “Capitalismul liberal și politica”, in *Ideea europeană* 3: 69, June 19-26, 1921, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Idem, “Naționalism și țărănism”, in *Convorbiri literare* 52: 12, 1920, pp. 769-774.

⁹⁶ Ștefan Zeletin, *Din țara măgarilor. Însemnări*, București, I. Brănișteanu, 1916; Victor Rizescu, “Un critic al Partidului Liberal: primul Ștefan Zeletin”, in *Canonul și vocile uitate. Secvențe dintr-o tipologie a gândirii politice românești*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2005, pp. 27-91.

⁹⁷ Drăghicescu, *Evoluția ideilor liberale*, p. 10. See also “Întâmpinarea domnului Drăghicescu”, in *Ideea europeană* 3: 69, June 19-26, 1921, pp. 2-3.

Party, that he had started to fashion already in 1921, departing – without explanations – from his previous intellectual stance, sharply critical towards the same social realities.⁹⁸ Some pronouncements he gave in *Dreptatea socială* could indeed induce us into mistaking this position for the one defended by the director of the journal. Indeed, in a fashion not entirely different from Drăghicescu's, he can thus underscore that “the golden age of liberalism was the mid-XIXth century”, when it was deemed that “the free play of individual forces acted such as to breed social progress and public harmony”. However, “starting from around 1880, modern societies entered a new stage of development, entirely opposed to the spirit of the old liberalism. [...] Our century is an era dominated by the call for organization. Once the social forces have been developed and strengthened in combat, the state power now intervenes, [...] forcing them to act jointly. [...] While the previous period was dominated by the idea of ‘concurrence’, our times are dominated by the idea of ‘cooperation’”.⁹⁹

Behind this invocation of the demand for social solidarity against the mere operations of the invisible hand, one can only discover the familiar ideological construction erected by Zeletin in order to prove the oligarchic style of politics prevalent in Romanian society – centered upon the National Liberal Party and cynically geared to the benefits of a ruling stratum combining entrenched bureaucratic power and the interests of emerging industrial entrepreneurship revolving around the main financial institutions of the country – as a historical necessity and as conducive to the progress of

⁹⁸ Ștefan Zeletin, “Revoluția burgheză în România, I: ‘Era nouă’. Dezvoltarea socială a României dela 1829 până la 1866, și nașterea oligarhiei române”, in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* 3: 2-3, 1921, pp 223-263; Idem, *Burghezia română*.

⁹⁹ Idem, “Libertatea presei, în lumina sociologiei”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 4, March 1, 1923, pp. 112-113.

the whole nation over the long run. Arguing that the interests of the financial oligarchy with a liberal political core “are one and the same with those of the nation as a whole, and its aspirations are undistinguishable from those of the entire nation”,¹⁰⁰ the outspoken but misleading supporter of social harmonization has no hesitation to warn the readers that, “although the naïve people think that we have come close to the sunset of the oligarchy and the dawn of democracy, the objective researcher of our social history knows very well that, in fact, we are placed only at the beginning of the era of oligarchic dictatorship”. He therefore sets forth to explain the “huge positive work” that the politics of authoritarian liberalism is on the way to accomplish, “a work of grandiose organization and harmonization of our social functions, by the means of which the future society is elaborated”.¹⁰¹ His characteristic statements to the extent that “an organic link has been forged by [the national] historical development between state policies and the liberal finance”¹⁰² delineate the task of teaching the public “to look at what is commonly called ‘the oligarchy’ as to a historical institution, born from historic needs and serving historic purposes”.¹⁰³

Nothing can be that far from Zeletin’s stern acceptance of bourgeois-bureaucratic greed and low class hardships as constituting, together, integral and unavoidable parts of the record of retarded modernization than Drăghicescu’s conviction – expressed in a polemic with the traditionalist journal *Neamul românesc* regarding the consistency of the

¹⁰⁰ Idem, “Forță și constituție”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 5, March 15, 1923, p. 137.

¹⁰¹ Idem, “Finanța națională și politica de stat (răspuns profesiei de credință a ziarului *Adevărul*)”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 7, April 15, 1923, p. 210.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

liberal socialist doctrine – that the Romanian ruling class would easily accept income sacrifices in order to stand up to moral imperatives, while also allowing itself to survive as a social group: “If enlightened enough, Romanian bourgeoisie will understand what is and what is not attainable for it. It will give up enough of its greedy tendencies in order to preserve what can be justly and rightly preserved. The best proof that the liberal bourgeoisie will proceed like that can be found in its recent history, which shows it, in 1914, deciding to appropriate lands to the peasantry. The same bourgeoisie is now lowering the fiscal burden of the poorer classes, while raising progressively the taxes incumbent upon it”.¹⁰⁴ In other words, Romanian society can be placed on the basis of a broad conception of “distributive justice” by enlarging upon “the work of social justice started at Iași in 1917”¹⁰⁵ (when the agrarian reform was unleashed).

Imparting a greater degree of justice to social relationships is possible, for Drăghicescu, due to the underlying transformations suffered by the basic philosophical categories sustaining modern constitutionalism: “As wealth and property could act as privileges, they are not any more sacred and inviolable; as freedom of commerce could degenerate into fraud and speculation, it is not any more a dogma of bourgeois society; as freedom of the press could be used for insult and calumny, it is not conceived any more as unlimited”.¹⁰⁶ Of all these notions, that of property is most significant as a cornerstone for a conception of justice drawing on the principles of both liberalism and socialism, so it is on reworking the idea of

¹⁰⁴ D. Drăghicescu, “Burghezia și socialismul liberal (răspuns *Neamului românesc*)”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 3, February 15, 1934, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ Idem, “Dreptate și dreptate socială”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 1, January 15, 1934, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁶ Idem, “Constituanta și egalizarea politică și juridică dintre sexe”, p. 35.

property that the theoretical inquiry stretching through the pages of *Dreptatea socială* rests upon. In its turn, property is defined by reference to its inherent multifariousness: "Property is a historical category. This is for sure too abstract a definition, yet it is only meant to say that no form of property is eternal; it takes various forms, transforming itself according to the successive historical epochs and in connection to the forms adopted by society at large".¹⁰⁷ It follows from this, of course, that "we must not stick to the actual prevailing form of the capitalist-individual property, looking to it, instead, as already outdated and in the course of being refashioned". As existing shareholding companies are based on a "collective or social form of property", it is only realistic to assert that "the socialization of the means of production, envisioned by the socialists for such a long time, is being accomplished every day in this fashion, which is not, for sure, the fashion they have had in mind".¹⁰⁸ It has to be added to this, besides, that "the various forms of property emerging along the course of social and economic evolution do not exclude each other, but can exist side by side, one or another of them gaining prominence according to the role they perform in the process of production and the benefits they bring to society".¹⁰⁹

In so far as the right to property has to be qualified on the basis of two complementary criteria – the contribution each form of property can bring to entrenching social peace¹¹⁰ and, respectively, the capacity each type of

¹⁰⁷ Idem, "Noțiunea proprietății și formele ei", in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 3, February 15, 1923, p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹¹⁰ Idem, "Dreptul de proprietate și pacea socială", in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 4, March 1, 1923,, pp. 106-110.

property can have for increasing economic productivity¹¹¹ –, social experience has shown that small enterprises perform better when based on the old conception of individual property, to the same extent as large enterprises require the collective, shareholding pattern.¹¹² By drawing on this classification, Drăghicescu then moves on to fortify the liberal side of his design for social reconstruction by acknowledging the ineffectiveness of full nationalization.¹¹³ On this basis, he advances a recipe for gradual socialization operating in the various branches of production according to their profile and conditions of efficiency,¹¹⁴ pointing to the regime of the co-proprietorship of the employees and the state in the framework of “autonomous socialized enterprises” as the privileged juridical base for economic reorganization.¹¹⁵ A system of progressive taxation has to act as an adjunct to the new institutional framework of economic life, provided that both “moral and economic reforms” are required for establishing a right balance between capital and the principle of justice.¹¹⁶

Dumitru Drăghicescu’s attempt to update the notion of social justice according to the changing circumstances

¹¹¹ Idem, “Dreptul de proprietate și progresul producției”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 5, March 15, 1923, pp. 142-143.

¹¹² Idem, “Proprietatea și marile întreprinderi. Societățile anonime”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 6, April 1, 1923, pp. 163-179.

¹¹³ Idem, “Regimul proprietății și întreprinderile mari. Socializarea și regia de stat”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 7, March 1, 1923, pp. 195-203.

¹¹⁴ Idem, “Naționalizarea întreprinderilor mari. Regia socială independentă”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 9, May 15, 1923, pp. 266-274.

¹¹⁵ Idem, “Proprietatea în întreprinderile mari. Regimul cointeresării”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 8, May 1, 1923, pp. 227-234.

¹¹⁶ Idem, “Proprietatea (capitalul) și dreptatea socială. Cum se câștigă averile?”, in *Dreptatea socială* 1: 12-13, July 1-15, 1923, pp. 367-368.

of the 1920's, which required him to tailor his dedication to socialist ideals according to new historical experiences brought about by the First World War and the Russian Revolution and to redefine it under the label of liberal socialism, is certainly only a small segment of the relevant stream of semantic change that Romanian history can display, if appropriately inquired. While the present article took some steps towards contextualizing this intellectual experiment within the horizon of local ideological development and locating it at the crossroads of European trends of social and political thought, it can certainly not claim to have accomplished much on the way to disclosing the chain of socially embedded meanings the notion in question acquired along the process of modernization.

Acknowledging these insufficiencies, it might also be proper to note that describing the interplay between the remarkably different voices of Drăghicescu and Ștefan Zeletin in the pages of *Dreptatea socială* is likely to delineate a score of meanings participating to a broad understanding of the dynamics of ideological change in the Romanian and more generally the East European milieu. An influential overview of developments in the field of the history of political thought over the last several decades has underscored the strong affinity between methodological innovations meant to go beyond the classical re-reading of past authors in the light of present concerns – most conspicuously the novelties brought about by the approaches of “contextual history” and “conceptual history” – and the gradual democratization underway of the historical landscape: minority trends of thought and collateral meanings hitherto neglected by the established narratives are thus recovered for the use of social memory and sometimes proved as more farsighted than the canonized ones. This can have the role of demonstrating that such intellectual stances “were

at least thinkable” – no matter how deep their marginality was – in various past historical epochs.¹¹⁷

The socially minded liberalism of Drăghicescu could never escape the position of marginality in a context heavily dominated by Zeletin’s ideological reinforcement of social suffering as a requirement of national growth. Not unexpectedly, the canon of Romanian ideological development has failed to allow his voice to be heard and listened better than it could be at the time he addressed his contemporaries.¹¹⁸ The present inquiry is animated by the conviction that social meanings significant for us can irradiate from his interventions thus far reconsidered.

¹¹⁷ Siep Stuurman, “The Canon of the History of Political Thought: Its Critique and a Proposed Alternative”, in *History and Theory* 39: 1, 2000, p. 156; Also Maria Grever, Siep Stuurman, eds., *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-first Century*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

¹¹⁸ Victor Rizescu, “Historical Canons and Eccentric Voices: a Typological Approach to Romanian Ideological Development”, in *Ideology, Nation and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2013, pp. 201-274.

PART II

Corporatist Designs between Liberalism and the Right

Up to this point, the Romanian version of the theory of corporatism was only mentioned in passing as primarily a political view with a right-wing identity, supporting a program of modernization in an authoritarian garb and competing in this capacity with the oligarchic brand of liberalism (on account of giving a further twist to the basic dispositions of the latter). It was also indicated as getting deeply intermingled with the discourse of the radical Right while refraining from adopting its revolutionary temper and demands and its approach to the national urgencies of the time. This is how the local pre-communist engagement with corporatism – seen, moreover, as exclusively embodied by the figure of Mihail Manoilescu and his collaborators, together with several scattered and inconclusive fascist pronouncements – has been depicted so far by both the entrenched Romanian historical narratives and the relevant established patterns of comparative history. Understood as constituting a minority compartment of right-wing culture and politics during the interwar period, the conception of Manoilescu – a fellow-traveler of the Iron Guard in the late 1930's who had nevertheless started his journey, over the previous decade, in the proximity of Ștefan Zeletin's strictures regarding the necessary adaptations of liberalism according to the predicament of the age and to the conditions of delayed development –

has never been related consistently, therefore, to the evolutions taking place within the context in the field of social policies. Neither has it ever been considered seriously, for that matter, as offering a particular expression to a more general – and multifaceted – Romanian search for elaborating an alternative to the syndical model of professional representation (before being translated into the terms of an overarching design for reconstructing the state on the basis of the parliamentary representation of professional groups and reshaping the social body itself along vertical fault-lines).

International comparative scholarship covering the Romanian case offers one single – however remarkable – exception to the rule of perceiving the corporatist design as performing a marginal role in the rhetoric of Legionary fascism and as providing very limited insights into the functioning of local society before communism. Inaugurated in the 1960's, the interpretation in question had at its core the notion of fascism as essentially a developmental project sustained by the ideological mood of managerial rationality and targeted at redressing the shortcomings of relative backwardness by the means of the enhanced mobilization of national energies, itself resting on the effort of implementing the corporatist type of social and political organization (with Italy as a paradigm and Nazi Germany as the most prominent deviation). As far as Romania is concerned, scant evidences were occasionally invoked on behalf of the same view to the extent that the long-term vacillating relation between Manoilescianism and Iron Guardism had eventually led to the convergence of the two trends, with the fascist party adopting wholesale the corporatist project at the cost of dropping out its original – and fundamentally anti-rationalist – chiliastic calls for national regeneration. Although failing to obtain a large following, the comparative conception mentioned

nevertheless partly resonates with a more recently consecrated – but highly influential – manner of arguing in favor of the thesis that (generic) fascist ideology displayed a forward-looking orientation. Describing the phenomenon much rather as (culturally) “modernist” than (developmentally) “modernizer”, this way of thinking reverts, with respect to Romania, to the practice of denying the existence of any strong links between corporatism and the revolutionary Right (also assigning a lesser significance to the issue of the corporatist ideas for the purpose of understanding in general terms the contours of interwar right-wing politics).

Even in such circumstances, the two interpretative models have to be highlighted as heuristically interlocked from the perspective of a refreshing look taken at the nexus between broader ideological visions and more narrowly focused projects of development in the Romanian context. Accordingly, the article retained in chapter 4 was initially devised for testing, on the basis of renewed documentation, the (broadly defined) vindication of local fascism as partaking in the non-traditionalist character of other European ideological groups belonging to the same category (and also for considering, from the same standpoint, the entire culture of the Right prevailing in the pre-communist period). There was paid special attention, in this connection, to the problem of measuring to what extent corporatist ideas were barely disseminated and authentically put to work throughout that entire body of ideological advocacy. With respect to the first objective, the research led to negative conclusions: stances that can be characterized as displaying a modernist/modernizer orientation have to be seen as staunch exceptions featuring along paths of ideological development basically sustained by retrogressive, anti-modern convictions and pleadings. This does not imply, however, that the theory of fascist

modernism is to be rejected altogether as irrelevant, once it was found unable to give account appropriately of Romanian facts. On the contrary, there is advanced in the following a suggestion for a new comparative approach to the subject, sustained by the hypothesis that the question of the modernist *vs.* the anti-modern character of fascist discourses in various European national settings has to be related to the underlying lags of development across the continent, with the first type of ideological attitude best represented in the French-Italian context of the emergence of fascism and the second one overwhelmingly dominant in the East European locations where that brand of the Right was powerfully entrenched.

The effort of pondering the real scope of corporatist ideas in interwar Romanian affairs was proven to have, otherwise, much greater implications for the threat of inquiries stretching through the entire book. Although Romanian fascism is once again disclosed here as only sporadically interfering with the theory defended by Manoilescu – this situation constituting an integral part of its defining non-modernist orientation – , there is documented a much greater involvement of it with the doctrine than claimed by previous accounts, the same holding true for the other segments of the right-wing culture of the time. There is disclosed, moreover, the fact that corporatist statements were by far not confined to either the camp of the Right or the social layer of ideological searches with immediate political targets. Manoilescu and his fellow proponents of authoritarian solutions who made appeal to the conception of the state grounded on professional bodies for counteracting the obsolescence of liberalism and the ills of democratic politics actually got inspiration from debates about the virtues of corporatist organization taking place within the welter of professional associations with middle class and white collar membership. A confederation of associative

structures of the kind is discovered to have scored a departure in the field over the years 1929-1930, tellingly in advance of the moment 1932, when the corporatist discourse took off along the intertwining channels of the political and ideological Right. In spite of the fact that the two trends rapidly converged, the original advocacy put forward by the movement of professional groups – sharply separated from worker trade-unionism and staying in clear opposition to socialism and the Left – bore overtones markedly different from those of the fascist or semi-fascist argumentations making use of the same basic idea (which was invoked this time as a means for fighting against political parasitism, itself a medium for the proliferation of mushrooming corruption and developmental inefficiency).

There is no wonder that such an understanding of the function that corporatism was expected to perform was correlated with a liberal pleading of the classical variety, closely resembling – and occasionally even intermingling with – the vision defended by the figures and periodicals of this orientation considered in chapter 2. Alongside the evolution leading Manoilescu's thinking from its (authoritarian) neoliberal baseline to the doctrine most customarily related to his name, there is thus discovered here another path of ideological development, stretching from the camp of a competing – and quintessentially oppositional – brand of liberalism to a rival species of corporatist militancy. Chapter 5 goes on with the same kind of inquiry, in order to round up the picture of the corporatist ideas in interwar Romania as placed at the borderline between the discourses of liberalism and those of the Right. A flirtation with corporatism originated on the basis of socially-minded liberal principles – akin to those of Dumitru Drăghicescu surveyed above in the book – is found to have occurred along a journalistic venue intended for promoting the

Romanian social policies in the course of being articulated at the time and for disseminating the ideological wisdom associated with them (before being propelled itself along one particular trajectory of right-wing radicalization). Taken together, the two chapters of this part thus go beyond the usual identification of the corporatist project in pre-communist Romania with Manoilescu and the politics of the Right alone, placing it, instead, at the crossroads of ideological exchanges which involved a larger variety of orientations, at the interplay between political debate proper and an array of social activities sustained by the organizations of the professions and in conjunction with the development of social policies. The last connection will be particularly broadened in part III.

4

Developmental Ideology or Regenerative Nationalism? Competing Strands of the Romanian Right before World War II

A survey of the interwar East European radical Right advanced with a view to delineate systematically its basic regional specificities discovered it as displaying features closer to the Italian than to the German case. An emphasis upon the somewhat large space allowed by the local ideologies and policies of the kind for the corporatist design pointing to a developmental breakthrough went together with this assessment, which also vindicated the need and legitimacy of using the label of fascism such as to cover a variety of rightist movements and political experiments exhibiting only some of the trappings of the generic phenomenon.¹ Other approaches to the topic

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¹ Robert Bideleux, Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe. Crisis and Change*, sec. ed., London, Routledge, 2007, pp. 372-399. An earlier survey in Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918-1945*, Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio,

were more concerned to identify fascism as one strand of the regional Right, by the same token disclosing corporatism as an autonomous political and ideological trend, competing for the same constituencies with the populist and revolutionary right-wing vision of nationalist regeneration.² None of these views ever took issue, however, with the theory of generic fascism as essentially a developmental ideology patterned around the corporatist conception of political reordering for the purpose of accelerated growth, paradigmatically embodied by the Italian case, blatantly falsified in the German milieu and widely rediscovered – although circulating under various names – throughout the XXth century – and outside the interwar setting – in various contexts of delayed development.³ The Romanian record could tentatively be claimed on behalf of this conception, being described as marked by an evolution away from the rhetoric of a nationalist traditionalist revolution and leading to a firm

1971. A recent discussion in Constantin Iordachi et al., “Debate. Fascism in East-Central and South-Eastern Europe”, in *East-Central Europe* 37: 2-3, 2010, pp. 331-371.

² Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others. A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1970, pp. 345-376; Andrew C. Janos, “The One-party State and Social Mobilization: East Europe between the Wars”, in Samuel P. Huntington, Clement H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society. The Dynamics of Established One-party Systems*, New York, Basic Books, 1970, pp. 204-236; Idem, *East Central Europe in the Modern World. The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Post-communism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, pp. 166-217.

³ A. James Gregor, *The Ideology of Fascism: the Rationale of Totalitarianism*, New York, Free Press, 1969; Idem, *Mussolini's Intellectuals. Fascist Social and Political Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005; Idem, *Marxism, Fascism and Totalitarianism. Chapters in the Intellectual History of Radicalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2009.

adoption of corporatism as a watchword of the right-wing program of change.⁴ By contrast, a recent comparative undertaking meant to measure the influence exerted by the corporatist view upon the process of authoritarian “hybridization” in interwar Europe – and drawing on older approaches stressing the compatibility between the same view and a large welter of political regimes, of the democratic variety including⁵ – discovered that “corporatism was a minor ideological component” of Romanian fascism.⁶ Taking account of such (mainly implicit) disagreements, the present article is accordingly intended to check the validity of the interpretation of Romanian fascism as sustained by a corporatist advocacy and, beyond this, to disclose the full scope of corporatist ideas throughout the spectrum of interwar Romanian Right (and even outside this ideological camp, as it will emerge in the following).

When recast as part of a debate of the 1970’s regarding the characterization of fascism in the framework of modernization theory, the interpretation targeted above set itself against a competing one – formulated primarily on the basis of evidence provided by Nazism – maintaining the view of the anti-modern and backward-looking nature of fascist ideology.⁷ Instead, it drew heavily on the Mussolinian discourse and regime in order to argue for an understanding of the radical Right as a modernizer and forward-looking project conceived for

⁴ Idem, *Faces of Janus. Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 176-178.

⁵ Philippe C. Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, in *The Review of Politics* 36: 1, 1974, pp. 85-131

⁶ Antonio Costa Pinto, “Fascism, Corporatism and the Crafting of Authoritarian Institutions in Interwar European Dictatorships”, in Antonio Costa Pinto, Aristotle Kallis, eds., *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 105.

⁷ Henry A. Turner, “Fascism and Modernization”, in *World Politics* 24: 4, 1972, pp. 547-564.

redressing the shortcomings of unequal development.⁸ Conceptualizing fascism as a developmental ideology based on the technocratic wisdom of corporatism has not been, however, the only way of describing it as something different from a retrogressive utopia. By placing itself in continuity to approaches stressing this retrogressive dimension of the fascist discourse (and focused on the German case),⁹ an influential work placed a new emphasis on the wide Nazi appeal to technological rationality for traditionalist ideological purposes, thus redefining the package of ideas promoted by the interwar “conservative revolution” as a form of “reactionary modernism”.¹⁰ In a related fashion, the Italian case has been revisited on the basis of a new attention paid to the emergence of fascist ideas from within the national avant-garde modernist culture.¹¹ Both these strands of interpretation were brought together and refashioned by a recent theory that proceeded by first depicting fascism as a form of “palingenetic ultranationalism”¹² in order to then claim it on this basis as the privileged ideological and political manifestation of the European-wide culture

⁸ A. James Gregor, “Fascism and Modernization: Some Addenda”, in *World Politics* 26: 3, 1974, pp. 370-384.

⁹ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology*, Berkeley, The University of California Press, 1961; George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1964; Turner, “Fascism and Modernization”.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Tehnology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

¹¹ Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence. From Modernism to Fascism*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1993; Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity. Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism*, Westport, Praeger, 2003.

¹² Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1991.

of modernism¹³ (and even claiming to forge thus a new consensus in the field¹⁴ around a “culturalist” interpretation of the fascist phenomenon which vindicates its autonomy as a forward-looking ideology of social regeneration¹⁵). Once again, the case of Romania could be invoked as providing supportive evidence for the new vision,¹⁶ interventions of the kind stressing – in a fashion relevant for the present discussion – the highly qualified acceptance of corporatism by the Romanian fascists, otherwise shown as seeking “to align Romania with the modernizing, industrializing drive of western European fascism”.¹⁷ This vindication will be considered in the following, alongside a general investigation regarding the place occupied by the strand of regenerative nationalism as against the one of the developmental corporatist discourse within the various and interconnected components of the right-wing Romanian interwar ideological spectrum (as also with a view to deepen an all-encompassing typological approach to the local ideological development over the long run of history, built concentrically around the historical

¹³ Idem, *Modernism and Fascism: the Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Idem, *A Fascist Century*, ed. by Matthew Feldman, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

¹⁴ Idem, “The Primacy of Culture. The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies”, in *Journal of Contemporary History* 37: 1, 2002, pp. 21-43.

¹⁵ Idem, “Fascism and Culture: a Mosse-Centric Meta-Narrative (or How Fascist Studies Reinvented the Wheel)”, in Antonio Costa Pinto, ed., *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism. Comparative Perspectives*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 85-116.

¹⁶ Idem, *Modernism and Fascism*, pp. 356-358.

¹⁷ Mircea Platon, “The Iron Guard and the ‘New State’. Iron Guard Leaders Vasile Marin and Ion I. Moța and the ‘New European Order’”, in *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 1: 1, 2012, p. 65.

typology of local liberalism and pointing to a comparative understanding of the typology of ideological dynamics across the lags of development¹⁸).

1

As an autonomous ideological trend, corporatism featured in pre-communist Romania as embodied by the National-Corporatist League headed by Mihail Manoilescu, served by the latter's doctrine and sustained by the journal *Lumea nouă*. Founded in November 1933¹⁹ and anticipated by the first elaborate programmatic piece coming from its leader over the same year²⁰ – in order to be broadened in 1934 into expositions by the same author addressed to both internal²¹ and international audiences²² (the latter set in continuity to an advocacy

¹⁸ Victor Rizescu, "Historical Canons and Eccentric Voices: a Typological Approach to Romanian Ideological Development", in *Ideology, Nation and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2013, pp. 201-274; Idem, *Canonul și vocile uitate. Secvențe dintr-o tipologie a gândirii politice românești*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2015.

¹⁹ (unsigned) "Manifestul Ligii Național-Corporatiste", in *Lumea nouă* 2: 11, November 1933, pp. 698-701; Mihail Manoilescu, "Liga Național-Corporativă", in *Lumea nouă* 2: 12, December 1933, pp. 719-721.

²⁰ Mihail Manoilescu, *România, stat corporativ: de ce și cum trebuie transformat statul nostru*, București, Tipografia Modernă, 1933. Second expanded edition as Idem, *România, stat național-corporativ. Programul de reformă al statului român formulat de Mihail Manoilescu și adoptat de Liga Național-Corporatistă*, București, Tipografia Ziarului "Universul", 1934.

²¹ Idem, *Filozofia și doctrina corporatistă*, București, Tipografia Ziarului "Universul", 1934.

²² Idem, *Le siècle du corporatisme: doctrine du corporatisme integral et pur*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1934.

for economic protectionism started earlier²³) and in 1935 into a proposal for a “system of corporative politics” for the use of the Romanian society issued by his disciple I. Joldea-Rădulescu²⁴ –, the league was meant to promote ideas announced since the inception of the periodical in April 1932.²⁵

Several months before that moment, however, the same corporatist design of social reform had been taken as an ideological watchword by the newspaper *Calendarul*, inaugurated in January 1932, headed by Nichifor Crainic and conceived as a vehicle for translating into sustained ideological pleading the cultural traditionalist vision articulated since 1921 in the journal *Gândirea* (the latter taking firmly this stance in 1924, after a period of eclectic experimentation, being joined by Crainic in 1922 but coming under his control in 1926) – and acting as such much more emphatically than *Cuvântul* (launched in 1924 and dominated since 1926 by Nae Ionescu, established as a director in 1929) and *Curentul* (founded in 1928 by Pamfil Șeicaru) –, to the same extent as an attempt at the unification of nationalist forces.²⁶

Between August and November 1932, Mihail Polihroniade – a fresh convert to the Iron Guard²⁷ and presented by his associates as “the emerging political mentor of the young generation” precisely by reference to

²³ Idem, *Théorie du protectionisme et de l'échange international*, Paris, Marcel Giard, 1929.

²⁴ I. Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, București, Atelierele Grafice Soccec & Co, S. A., 1935.

²⁵ Mihail Manoilescu, “Anticipare”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 1, April 1932, pp. 1-9.

²⁶ Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre. Memorii*, ed. de Nedic Lemnaru, București, Casa Editorială Gândirea, vol. 1, 1991, pp. 228-232.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

the politicization of *Gândirea*'s cultural advocacy,²⁸ after pronouncing himself in the latter journal to this extent²⁹ – published in *Calendarul* a series of 20 articles offering an engaged presentation of fascism.³⁰ Largely confined to the Italian example, the inquiry had nevertheless been preceded by a friendly look at the Nazi campaign for the elections of July 31³¹ – underlined by the evaluation that national-socialism had to face at the time “much greater setbacks than those staying in the way of fascism ten years beforehand”³² –, and still earlier by pleadings in favor of the Iron Guard, seen as “the Romanian counterpart of fascism and of national socialism”.³³ This came at the same time with three other Romanian explorations of the topic reviewed in the journal by the same author, when focusing upon the most representative of them, coming from the fascist leader Vasile Marin.³⁴ It is to note that, while one of the other two books – authored by the young writer Sandu Al.

²⁸ Emil Cioran, “*Gândirea*”, in *Calendarul* 1: 238, December 1932, p. 2.

²⁹ Mihail Polihroniade, “Necesitatea politică a reformei morale”, in *Gândirea* 12: 9-11, September-November, 1932, pp. 319-321.

³⁰ The series opened with Idem, “Fascism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 138, August 25, 1932, pp. 1-2. It was drawn to an end with Idem, “Concluziuni”, in *Calendarul* 1: 215, November 10, 1932, pp. 1-2.

³¹ Idem, “Hitler *ante portas*”, in *Calendarul* 1: 107, July 25, 1932, p. 1. See also Nichifor Crainic, “Germania, ceasornicul Europei”, in *Calendarul* 1: 109, July 27, 1932, p. 1.

³² Mihail Polihroniade, “Între Hitler și Mussolini”, in *Calendarul* 1: 113, July 1932, p. 1.

³³ Idem, “Rostul Gărzii de Fier”, in *Calendarul* 1: 100, June 18, 1932, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Vasile Marin, *Fascismul. Organizarea constituțională a statului corporativ italian. Doctrină. Realizări. Legislație*, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1932; Mihail Polihroniade, “Vasile Marin: *Fascismul*”, in *Calendarul* 1: 247, December 15, 1932, p. 1.

Tzigara Samurcaș – could be easily appropriated by the journalist due to its advertizing of the “fascist doctrine” as “a new tendency of the human thought in the field of politics and society, with an innovative character of universal relevance”,³⁵ the other one – belonging to the sociologist Constantin Enescu – was mentioned despite of being sustained by a comparative critical approach to the political experiments of fascism and communism alike (in a fashion reasonably anticipating the perspective of totalitarianism), from which the author could only draw a vague indication that mankind was moving towards economic dirigisme based on “the social primacy of the group over the individual”.³⁶

All these explorations into the achievements of Mussolini’s regime – only the one hosted in the pages of *Calendarul* farsightedly adumbrating the upcoming victory of Nazism – devoted large space to analyzing the corporatist component of fascism. Enescu’s dull presentation of the matter did not amount to an explicit rejection of the system, but it still has to be read in light of his latter clarifications – sustained by a peasantist ideological stance – to the extent that Romania’s desired adoption of a path of evolution marked by a “planned economy” and an “organizing state”³⁷ had to avoid both “the military camp spirit of communism and the exasperating spirit of bureaucratic regulation characteristic to corporatism”.³⁸ It also has to be related, for sure, to his

³⁵ Sandu Al. Tzigara Samurcaș, *Fascismul. Doctrină și realizări sociale*, București, Socec & Co, 1932, p. 96.

³⁶ Constantin Enescu, *Statul sovietic și statul fascist*, București, “Cartea Românească”, 1932, p. 73.

³⁷ Idem, “România, țară săracă”, in *Prezentul economic, financiar, social* 2: 301, February 3, 1936, p. 8, making reference to such other interventions as Virgil Madgearu, “Economia dirijată”, in *Viața românească* 26: 7, April 15, 1934, pp. 2-18.

³⁸ Enescu, “România, țară săracă”.

still later anxious contemplation of the Iron Guard and National Christian Party advances in the dramatic elections of December 1937 as announcing large dislocations of the existing Romanian political and social environment, leading him to envision “the growth of ever larger strata of the people as conscious participants to political life”, together with “the emergence of new political elites, conceiving of their rule over the nation in a different way than older, prewar and postwar parties”.³⁹ It is significant, however, that even in such circumstances the fascist experience was to provide him with tools of sociological interpretation, in so far as we find him describing his country as a “proletarian nation” and acknowledging that “Mussolini was right when transposing the conflict between capital and labor onto the international plane and asserting that the world is divided between bourgeois-capitalist nations and proletarian nations”.⁴⁰

Polihroniade, on his part, approves of the Italian fascist corporatist design⁴¹ by paying special attention to its dedication for statist-led social development and maintaining that “the corporatist system allows for disciplining and harmonizing social life and economy

³⁹ Idem, “Semnificația alegerilor din decembrie 1937 în evoluția politică a neamului românesc”, in *Sociologie românească* 2: 11-12, November-December 1937, p. 526.

⁴⁰ Idem, “România, țară săracă”. See also Idem, “Justificările politicii de românizare”, in *Prezentul economic, financiar, social* 1: 47, March 28, 1935, p. 1. Otherwise, such statements stood in conjunction with a peasantist and left-wing Romanian tradition of center-periphery theorizing. See C. Stere, “Social-democratism sau poporanism?” [1907-1908], in *Scrieri politice și filozofice*, ed. de Victor Rizescu, București, Dominor, 2005, pp. 169-353.

⁴¹ Mihail Polihroniade, “Premisele statului corporativ”, in *Calendarul* 1: 162, September 18, 1932, pp. 1-2.

under the direct control of the state”.⁴² In this connection, he also points to the revolutionary anti-capitalist implications of fascist politics, underscoring how wrong it is to consider fascism as “non-innovative in the economic field, as a political regime based on capitalism or even as a capitalist reaction”.⁴³ Besides distinguishing here the mere rejection of the Marxist interpretation of fascism as an instrument of decaying capitalism, we have to relate such statements to Polihroniade’s conviction – expressed earlier in the journal and consonant with the opinion prevailing in the periodical against the economics of free trade⁴⁴ – that the depression underway cannot be approached on the basis of the palliatives of monetary policies, and hence that the way out of the dire predicament can only consist in “a rationalization of production and consumption, to be accomplished both at the national and the world levels, by restricting the scope of anarchic private initiative and by international cooperation”.⁴⁵ We shall come back to the author’s commitment for statist policies below. For the time being, let us retain his remark that, in the local context, “none [...] of the ‘quiet’ parties” – a category including the non-fascist political organizations with a nationalist orientation – “raises appropriately the problem of the state”, something that indicates the role that the Iron Guard is expected to play, in so far as “within the

⁴² Idem, “Sindicate și corporații”, in *Calendarul* 1: 166, September 22, 1932, p. 2.

⁴³ Idem, “Economia fascistă”, in *Calendarul* 1: 173, September 29, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Dragoș Protopopescu, “Anglia și moartea liber-schimbismului”, in *Calendarul* 1: 48, March 12, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Mihail Polihroniade, “Între finanțe și economie”, in *Calendarul* 1: 78, June 28, 1932, p. 1.

nationalist camp, it is the only [party] that raises the problem of the state”.⁴⁶

Ideas of the kind feature widely in the pages of the periodical. The opposition to democracy as a “dead body”,⁴⁷ together with its characterization as opposed to genuine politics in the service of the people,⁴⁸ is very rapidly translated into a defense of the corporatist view, seen as an alternative to parliamentary democratic procedures.⁴⁹ The pleading is sustained by a denunciation of political parties as parasitic bodies and a corresponding assertion of the professional organizations as the only possible cure for political parasitism and chaotic incertitude”,⁵⁰ only them being able to replace the current party-parliamentary disease with the “moral, intellectual, economic and social values of the nation”.⁵¹ This goes together with a departure from the socialist understanding of syndicalism as a preserve of proletarian class struggle, intended to help the workers to intimate the conception

⁴⁶ Idem, “Rostul Gărzii de Fier”, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Idem, “Ideologie și democrație”, in *Calendarul* 1: 10, February 3, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Nichifor Crainic, “Democrație și demofilie”, in *Calendarul* 1: 49, March 14, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Dragoș Protopopescu, “Cerem votul breslelor”, in *Calendarul* 1: 41, March 5, 1932, p. 1; Ion V. Gruia, “Statul corporativ. Rechizitoriu împotriva democrației”, in *Calendarul* 1: 126, August 13, 1932, p. 2; Nichifor Crainic, “Spre corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 155, September 11, 1932, p. 1; Roger F. Nicolescu, “Liberalism, socialism, corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 158, September 14, 1932, p. 1; I.D. Enescu, “Spre corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 198, October 24, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Nichifor Crainic, “Falimentul partidelor”, in *Calendarul* 1: 16, February 9, 1932, p. 1. See also Idem, “Lichidarea politicianismului parazitar”, in *Calendarul* 1: 42, March 6, 1932, p. 1; Idem, “Partide și brelse”, in *Calendarul* 1: 49, March 14, 1932, p. 1.

⁵¹ I.D. Enescu, “Școala ticăloșiei”, in *Calendarul* 1: 107, July 25, 1932, p. 1.

that “only together with all the other professional organizations they will manage to obtain an effective representation of their interests, and only in such circumstances true syndicalism will prevail”.⁵² Maintaining that “over the short run, the new form of public life can only come from replacing the state of the parties with the state of the guilds”,⁵³ *Calendarul* takes political parties as “reflecting in the field of politics the atomistic tendencies of the century which brought them into being” and as “facing, now, the socially productive categories which participate, together with the monarchy, in the work of integration and unification absorbing all the viable and living organisms in society”.⁵⁴ Asserting that “the parliament has to be the institution of the producers and of the professions, not of the political parasites”,⁵⁵ Radu Dragnea – whose otherwise eccentric position within the cultural trend led by Crainic will be considered below – urges the professional groups to stop acting as “mere annexes of the parties” and to “build their own civic consciousness, such as to become the true public opinion in the country”.⁵⁶ In light of the above mentioned stance of the journal to the extent that the politics of the guilds is conducive to enthroning real democracy instead of the one falsified by the regime of party politics, one has to mention its acceptance of

⁵² Radu Dragnea, “Muncitorii și organizațiile profesionale”, in *Calendarul* 1: 16, February 9, 1932, p. 1.

⁵³ Nichifor Crainic, “Spre statul breslaș”, in *Calendarul* 1: 32, February 25, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Radu Dragnea, “Întregimi sociale și fracțiuni politice”, in *Calendarul* 1: 39, March 3, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Idem, “Mistificarea reprezentanței profesionale”, in *Calendarul* 1: 28, February 21, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Idem, “A doua opinie publică”, in *Calendarul* 1: 35, February 28, 1932, p. 1.

feminist demands,⁵⁷ involving a commitment to full women enfranchisement as an integral part of the corporatist worldview.⁵⁸

When delivering in *Calendarul* a series of 5 articles dealing extensively with the topic of corporatism and expanding upon the Italian model, between May and June 1933,⁵⁹ Polihroniade does not add anything significant to the previous pleading of the journal in the field. Otherwise, when issuing another series of 15 articles on the topic of the “national revolution”, between July and October of the same year,⁶⁰ he shows himself less interested to underscore the corporatist system as the core of nationalist politics than to disclose the unbreakable connection between democracy and the capitalist economy, predicated on the fact that “economic, social and political individualism is the conservative force which survives within the cradle of the democratic state”.⁶¹ Capitalism is then rejected as “a lethal germ within the body of the nation”, with the implication that “modern nationalism has to be hostile to capitalism”,⁶²

⁵⁷ Eugenia Dem. Constantinescu, “Feminismul și drepturile politice”, in *Calendarul* 1: 41, March 5, 1932, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Radu Dragnea, “Femeia și statul breslaș”, in *Calendarul* 1: 58, March 22, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Mihail Polihroniade, “Corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 2: 372, May 19, 1933, p. 1; Idem, “De la sindicate la corporații”, in *Calendarul* 2: 372, May 25, 1933, p. 1; Idem, “Mecanismul corporativ”, in *Calendarul* 2: 390, July 11, 1933, pp. 1-2; Idem, “Corporatism. Magistratura muncii și reprezentanța politică”, in *Calendarul* 2: 396, June 18, 1933, pp. 1-2; Idem, “Concluzie”, in *Calendarul* 2: 401, June 24, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Opened with Idem, “Revoluția națională”, in *Calendarul* 2: 426, July 22, 1933, pp. 1-2. Ended with Idem, “Mondial și național”, in *Calendarul* 2: 510, October 28, 1933, pp. 1-2.

⁶¹ Idem “Ce înseamnă revoluție”, in *Calendarul* 2: 430, July 27, 1933, p. 2.

⁶² Idem, “Capitalism și revoluție”, in *Calendarul* 2: 468, September 9, 1933, p. 1.

and economic dirigisme is indicated as the basic goal of the nationalist ideological camp in the economic domain, on account of the fact that “the powerful state, the planned economy, social solidarity and ethnic purity are the essential ideas and the common traits of European nationalisms”.⁶³ This resonates with his belief that a revolution of the Right can only have chances of success provided that “it approaches in deep the social problem”.⁶⁴ It undeniably goes against other interventions of the period which are keen to promote the design as squaring well with both capitalism and individualism, alongside the ideal of increasing social equity, thus arguing that corporatism “will take inspiration from the collective aims of the society based on social justice and fellow feeling, without curbing personal initiative and individual gain”⁶⁵ and pointing to the fact that “if the bourgeoisie does not understand that it can only maintain capitalism within a corporatist order, this capitalist system will always be threatened to be engulfed by communism”.⁶⁶ However, the vision of corporatism as emerging against the basic foundations of individualism and leading beyond the horizons of capitalism is dominant in the journal over the last stage of its existence,⁶⁷ before being suspended on December 31,

⁶³ Idem, “Statul tare”, in *Calendarul* 2: 483, September 27, 1933, p. 1. See also Idem, “Economia dirijată”, in *Calendarul* 2: 486, September 30, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Idem, “Revoluția politică și revoluția socială”, in *Calendarul* 2: 274, June 19, 1933, p. 1. Also Idem, “Formalism juridic și realism politic”, in *Calendarul* 2: 327, March 23, 1933, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁵ A.C. Cusin, “Capitalismul și orizonturile lui actuale”, in *Calendarul* 2: 261, January 2, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Idem, “Infirmitatea statului individualist”, in *Calendarul* 2: 271, January 15, 1933, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Nichifor Crainic, “Marxism și corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 2: 324, March 19, 1933, p. 1; Roger Nicolescu, “Corporatism. Organizarea și coordonarea producției”, in *Calendarul* 2:

1933 – together with *Cuvântul* – under the accusation of instigating for the assassination of the liberal prime-minister I.G. Duca on December 29.⁶⁸ After two years, Polihroniade would contribute to *Lumea nouă* in order to point to the death of capitalism as a precondition for the victory of national revolutions.⁶⁹ The journal of Manoiilescu would never subscribe, however, to the same conception. This can only be taken as an indication for the various ideological roles performed by the corporatist idea in interwar Romania.

2

By the time Crainic and his associates embarked on their campaign for corporatism at *Calendarul*, the idea had already been entrenched as the core of a political creed by another periodical: *Drum nou*, launched in October 1930 and issued – “under the direction of a committee” – by the General Confederation of Professional Associations, itself founded on June 15 of the same year⁷⁰ but delivering a fully articulated program only in March 1932.⁷¹ The architect Ion D. Enescu, president of the Society of Romanian Architects, served as the secretary

330, March 26, 1933, pp. 1-2; Constantin Săndulescu-Godeni, “Corporație și fascism”, in *Calendarul* 2: 488, October 3, 1933, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁸ Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre*, pp. 253-255.

⁶⁹ Mihail Polihroniade, “Moartea capitalismului și revoluțiile naționale”, in *Lumea nouă* 4: 10-11, October-November 1935, pp. 455-459.

⁷⁰ (unsigned) “Crezul nostru” and (unsigned) “Spre drumuri noi în viața politică a țării”, both in *Drum nou* 1: 1, October 4, 1930, pp. 1, resp. 4.

⁷¹ (unsigned) “Programul Confederației Asociațiilor Profesionale”, in *Drum nou* 3: 5, March 1, 1932, pp. 3-4.

general of the Confederation. A collaborator to Crainic's newspaper with articles on the topic,⁷² at the same time hosting in his journal interventions of the same kind signed by the theorist of traditionalism,⁷³ Enescu was to be acknowledged by the latter as "the first militant for the corporatist idea in Romania, acting within the movement of the free professions".⁷⁴ In the Autumn of 1932, the Confederation and *Calendarul* organized together a series of conferences on the problem of corporatism,⁷⁵ to which Enescu participated with a lecture presenting the system envisioned as "not belonging to either the Right, the Left or the Center" and instead acting as "a means to get crystallized and consecrated the organic realities, liberated by all parasitism",⁷⁶ provided that "the nation can only obtain its definitive and complete expression through corporatism".⁷⁷ This was only a sequence of a longer series of events with the same content promoted by the professional organizations,⁷⁸ later indicated by Enescu (in 1941) as having been initiated in 1929.⁷⁹

⁷² See again Enescu, "Școala ticăloșiei" and "Spre corporatism".

⁷³ Nichifor Crainic, "Spre corporatism", in *Drum nou* 3: 19, September 15, 1932, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Idem, *Programul statului etnocratic*, București, Tipografia Ziarului *Universul*, [1937], p. 7.

⁷⁵ Idem, "Conferințele noastre despre corporatism", in *Drum nou* 3: 24, November 28, 1932, p. 2; the same article in *Calendarul* 1: 225, November 29, 1932, p. 1.

⁷⁶ I.D. Enescu, *Corporatism și partidism*, București, Ed. Secției de Studii a Confederației Asociațiilor Profesionale, 1932, p. 30.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ (unsigned) "O mare întrunire meșteșugărească. Manifestație pentru statul corporativ", in *Drum nou* 2: 9, May 1, 1931, p. 3; (unsigned) "Statul politicianist și statul corporativ. Conferința d-lui arhitect I. D. Enescu", in *Drum nou* 2: 11, May 31, 1931, p. 2.

⁷⁹ I.D. Enescu, *Tradiția corporatistă în lumina actualității*, București, Imprimeriile "Frăție Românească", 1941, p. 20.

Enescu's strictures regarding the irrelevance of the Left-Right opposition for describing the ideological identity of the corporatist doctrine was definitely contradicted by the actual politics of the Confederation of Professional Associations. Indeed, the latter had as an outgrowth the Citizens Block for the Salvation of the Country (*Blocul Cetățenesc pentru Mântuirea Țării*), founded in June 1932,⁸⁰ led by the schoolteacher Grigore Forțu, served by Enescu as a vice-president and making a common anti-government front with the right-wing parties over the period 1932-1937 in the name of "civic resistance" against the entrenched venality of the political system.⁸¹ The Block assumed the corporatist idea as a rubric of its program from the very beginning, in the same way as the Confederation, *Drum nou* and Enescu himself subscribed immediately to the program in question, presenting the newcomer as "in fact the block of the guilds acting for the salvation of all laboring and productive people".⁸² Nevertheless, Forțu and his followers imparted a marked tendency towards politicization to the discourse of the professional organizations, also propelling it on a rapid course of radicalization. Indeed, one can easily measure the difference between Enescu's mere claim that "the Citizens

⁸⁰ Grigore Forțu, "Blocul Cetățenesc pentru Mântuirea Țării. Chemare", in *Drum nou* 3: 12, June 15, 1932, p. 2.

⁸¹ *Politics and Political Parties in Romania*, London, International Reference Library Publishing Co., 1936, pp. 238-240; Al.Gh. Savu, *Sistemul partidelor politice din România, 1919-1940*, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1976, pp. 53, 59, 86, 88; Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după marea unire*, vol. 2: 1933-1940, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988, pp. 320-322; I. Scurtu et al., *Enciclopedia de istorie a României*, ed. a III-a, București, Meronia, 2002, p. 240.

⁸² I.D. Enescu, "O constatare", in *Drum nou* 3: 15, July 15, 1932, p. 1.

Block for the Salvation of the Country is the corporatist block intended to redeem the fatherland from the leprosy of politics”⁸³ and the official statement of Forțu’s organization to the extent that “the present slogan of the Block is that of taking over state power and ruling away immediately all political parties”.⁸⁴ In spite of such differences of emphasis, the two intertwined bodies could issue together a statement harmonizing their tasks by the clarification that “the Block cleans the field of the heather of politics [...] such as to allow the Confederation to build the state of tomorrow on this ground”.⁸⁵

Staying in close connection to the Block, the Confederation gradually adopted itself a political identity of the Right (a process of ideological conversion to which we shall come back below). For now, let us underline that, when using the pages of *Drum nou* in order to condemn the “persecution unleashed [...] against the youth, which took its worst form with respect to the Iron Guard”, Nichifor Crainic⁸⁶ sets himself in plain resonance with other articles of the journal. A collaborator can thus oppose “the Right, to which we [the Confederation and *Drum nou*] belong, together with the Citizens Block, the Iron Guard and the League of National Christian Defense”, to “the Left, that comprises the communists, the social-democrats and – according to circumstances – virtually all historic or governmental parties”, further defining the Right as “founded on the ideal of infusing

⁸³ Idem, “Ideea corporativă”, in *Drum nou* 3: 13, June 21, 1932, p. 1.

⁸⁴ (unsigned) “Lozinca momentului”, in *Drum nou* 3: 13, June 21, 1932, p. 2.

⁸⁵ (unsigned) “Blocul și confederația duc acțiune comună”, in *Drum nou* 3: 15, July 15, 1932, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Nichifor Crainic, “Groaza neantului”, in *Drum nou* 4: 25, July 23, 1933, pp. 1-2.

morality to public life”.⁸⁷ In the same way, Enescu himself can assert that “people of the Right defend their work, integrity and human dignity, while those of the Left defend their plunder”.⁸⁸ All such statements issued in the journal of the professions square well with the vision of right-wing ecumenism advanced at the same time by the partner periodical, which enables Crainic to say that “*Calendarul* does not belong to either the Christian league or the Iron Guard, but both these vigorous branches of the nationalist movement are of interest for us”,⁸⁹ also allowing Dragnea to complain that “ever since fascism made its appearance in Italy, the anti-fascist, anti-corporatist and anti-Mussolinian forces, evenly distributed among our political parties, have been eager to prevent it from making its way into Romania”.⁹⁰

The common history of the Confederation, of the Block and of Crainic’s publishing venture would be drawn to an end in the Spring of 1934, in circumstances that will be detailed in the following. By that time, a part of the associations brought together in 1930 possessed a new organizational framework: the Confederation of the Associations of Intellectual Professionals, created in February 1933⁹¹ (after being advertized in *Drum nou* in November 1932⁹²). With a tighter structure and adopting

⁸⁷ Gheorghe Pruncu, “Dreapta și Stânga”, in *Drum nou* 4: 26, July 30, 1933, p. 1.

⁸⁸ I.D. Enescu, “Curentele de dreapta”, in *Drum nou* 4: 35, October 22, 1933, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Nichifor Crainic, “Biruința naționalismului”, in *Calendarul* 1: 104, July 22, 1932, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Radu Dragnea, “Spaima de fascism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 208, November 3, 1932, p. 1.

⁹¹ (unsigned) “Adunarea generală de constituire a confederației”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali din România. Buletin Informativ* 1: 1, March 1933, pp. 2-7.

⁹² (unsigned) “Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali”, in *Drum nou* 3: 24, November 28, 1932, p. 2.

a more prudent stance towards politics and politicization, this one would be active up until 1940, cherishing an ideological vision partly inherited from its predecessor.

3

When mentioning ironically in his memoirs – written over the period 1944-1947 – some strenuous and purportedly ill-founded claims advanced by Crainic and Enescu in 1933 for the paternity of corporatist pleading in Romania,⁹³ Manoilescu draws on his long standing strategy of ignoring the local ancestry of his theory. Indeed, we can find him in December 1933 referring obliquely to the first stirrings produced by the program of *Lumea nouă* in the pages of other periodicals (thus mentioning *Axa* and *Libertatea*) and unrealistically avoiding any hint to *Drum nou* and *Calendarul*.⁹⁴

On their part, the representatives of the latter trends themselves originally appropriated on behalf of their advocacy the prestige of Nicolae Iorga, together with that of Simion Mehedinți, coming from the same fold of pre-war traditionalist nationalism and participating to corporatism-based events organized by the professional organizations since 1929.⁹⁵ After being invoked as employing a rhetoric of the sort during the elections of June 1931 organized by him as a prime minister and meant to entrench his tenure – started in April of the same year and lasting up until May 1932 – and as raising corresponding expectations regarding the envisioned

⁹³ Mihail Manoilescu, *Memorii*, ed. de Valeriu Dinu, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, vol. 2, 1993, p. 350.

⁹⁴ Idem, “Liga Național-Corporatistă” p. 719.

⁹⁵ (unsigned) “Programul Confederației Asociațiilor Profesionale”, p. 3.

implementation of a corporatist program, Iorga was rapidly repudiated as a blatant incarnation of demagoguery nurtured by the spirit of party politics by the associates recalling their hopes that “he would transform the state of the parties into a corporatist state, the more so as he had promised precisely that in his manifestos”.⁹⁶ Mehedinți, instead, survived as a faithful – however inconclusive – supporter of the movement, maintaining that “the professional groups [were] the only genuine parties to take into consideration”⁹⁷ in the given circumstances, to the extent that the country faced the alternative of “either corporatism or Bolshevism”.⁹⁸

As regards Manoilescu, he is first mocked in *Drum nou* in September 1932 as a former member of Iorga’s cabinet (where he had served as a minister of Industry and Commerce) who is dishonestly embracing the corporatist idea “after rejecting it as a childish one two years before”,⁹⁹ in order to be then welcomed sarcastically in November as a newcomer to the field who, after “using the materials of the two series of conferences on the topic organized by the Confederation in 1930 and 1931”, ventures to “place the beginnings of corporatism in Romania just six months beforehand, at the moment

⁹⁶ (unsigned) “O lămurire”, in *Drum nou* 2: 11, May 31, 1931, p. 1.

⁹⁷ Simion Mehedinți, *Partidele politice și statul corporativ*, București, Ed. Librăriei Socec & Co., S.A., 1931, p. 19. See also (unsigned) “Se mai poate îndrepta statul român cu actualul sistem politic? Conferința d-lui profesor Simion Mehedinți”, in *Drum nou* 3: 8, April 15, 1932, p. 2; *Drum nou* 3: 9, May 1, 1932, p. 2.

⁹⁸ Simion Mehedinți, “Baricade?”, in *Drum nou* 3: 21, October 15, 1932, p. 1; (unsigned) “Ori corporatism, ori bolșevism”, in *Drum nou* 3: 21, October 15, 1932, p. 1.

⁹⁹ (unsigned) “Manifestări corporatiste”, in *Drum nou* 3: 18, September 1, 1932, p. 2.

of his conversion".¹⁰⁰ Soon thereafter, his program is received in the same journal as "something that can only please" the people who had "advanced such principles already two years in advance".¹⁰¹ In *Calendarul*, the reception is still more critical, involving accusations from Dragnea leveled against the director of *Lumea nouă* for participating to the growing "ideological orgy" in the country by his attempt to combine corporatism with decentralization¹⁰² (as the program of the National-Corporatist League would indeed provide that "regionalism emerges as a basic demand for the integration of national forces"¹⁰³) and others coming from Crainic, depicting the same figure as somebody whose critique of democracy is "so mild and gentle as to almost convince everybody of not existing any reason for abolishing the democratic regime".¹⁰⁴ After several months, Polihroniade can welcome Manoilescu here as a figure who "has got enrolled in the young Romanian corporatism movement", nevertheless depicting him as a theorist who "thinks that a constitutional reform, that is a legal and formal one, will be enough for entrenching the corporatist system in Romania"¹⁰⁵ and envisioning instead a "period of social, technical and cultural evolution"¹⁰⁶ as a prerequisite for the latter.

¹⁰⁰ (unsigned) "Un succes", in *Drum nou* 3: 22, November 1, 1932, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Ferdinand Koşca, "Un program corporativ", in *Drum nou* 3: 23, November 15, 1932, p. 4.

¹⁰² Radu Dragnea, "Orgia ideologică", in *Calendarul* 1: 134, August 21, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁰³ Manoilescu, *România, stat național-corporativ*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ Nichifor Crainic, "Discursul d-lui Manoilescu", in *Calendarul* 1: 137, August 24, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Mihail Polihroniade, "România, stat corporativ de Mihail Manoilescu", in *Calendarul* 2: 303, February 23, 1933, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The determination of appropriating Iorga as a forerunner of corporatist pleading was not exhibited by the contributors to *Drum nou* alone. In 1935, Manoilescu's collaborator Joldea-Rădulescu likewise pays homage to the prominent historian and politician as a pioneer in the field, underscoring his pleading for a "Senate of the competences" in the constitutional assembly of 1923,¹⁰⁷ in order to then make reference to his interventions of the kind delivered in the context of the same 1929 moment targeted by the representatives of the professional organizations when drawing their legitimating history.¹⁰⁸ We can indeed find Iorga issuing at the time a vague call for somehow associating the professions – indicated as "organic bodies" of society – to government, as a means for overcoming the shortcomings of party politics, however taking pains to underline that "the corporatist state does not rely on fascism" and that Romania is "not prepared for the kind of corporatism displayed by the new Italian Middle Ages".¹⁰⁹ Such statements are recovered by Joldea-Rădulescu, for sure, on behalf of his own brand of the doctrine alone. While also making reference to some other slight pronouncements of the same years pointing to a search for replacing the existing and obsolete type of parliamentarianism by another one, better entrenched in

¹⁰⁷ Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 16. See, indeed, A. Lascarov-Moldovanu, Sergiu D. Tomescu, coord., *Constituțiunea României din 1923 adnotată cu dezbateri parlamentare și jurisprudențe*, București, Ed. Tipografiei "Curierul Judiciar", 1925, p. 350.

¹⁰⁸ Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ (unsigned) "Întrunirea cetățenească de la 'Dacia'. O manifestare călduroasă pentru o politică scăpată de politicianism. Cuvântarea d-lui profesor N. Iorga", in *Neamul românesc* 24: 269, December 7, 1929, p. 2. See also (unsigned) "Spre o nouă viață politică. Discursul d-lui profesor N. Iorga", in *Neamul românesc* 24: 272, December 11, 1929, pp. 1-2.

social realities (and coming from such figures as the National Peasant Party leaders Iuliu Maniu and Ion Mihalache, the conservative politician Grigore Filipescu and even the feminist militant Alexandrina Cantacuzino), he never alludes to either the Confederation of Professional Associations or the journals *Drum nou* and *Calendarul*, instead mentioning in passing the Citizens Block – alongside the League of National Christian Defense and the Iron Guard – as the confused promoter of “some kind of timid corporatism, with a pseudo-economic orientation and without regard for the domain of politics”.¹¹⁰ In 1933, an article in *Lumea nouă* dealing with “contemporary political currents in Romania” had already surveyed the three organizations together in the same fashion, paying no attention to the involvement of the Block with promoting the corporatist idea and instead describing its doctrine as suffering from a staunch dedication to an “ethical postulate”, itself functioning as a counterpart of the “ethnic postulate” cherished by the other two parties.¹¹¹

Claimed as an anticipator on both sides of the divide, Iorga would choose to favor Manoilescu’s version of the story of the rise of corporatism in Romania. The relevant pronouncement came in 1938, when I. D. Enescu offered a disappointed retrospective view of the process, recalling the heroic age of the years 1929-1930 and stressing the primacy in the field of the grass-roots movement of the professional organizations, itself set in train most immediately as a response to the abrogation in 1929 of a law encouraging construction enterprises by the National Peasant Party cabinet of Iuliu Maniu.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 24.

¹¹¹ Enric Otetelișanu, “Considerațiuni asupra curențelor politice din România”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 6, June 1933, pp. 337-346.

¹¹² I.D. Enescu, “Corporatismul românesc”, in *Țara noastră* 17: 6, March 26, 1938, p. 175.

Iorga's tenure of 1931-1932 is once again depicted as marked by "an attempt to apply corporatist principles", unfortunately deterred by the "representatives of political parasitism within, who purposively compromised the whole idea", in the same way as Manoilescu is mentioned as a follower.¹¹³ A rejoinder coming very soon in Iorga's *Neamul românesc* wipes away the bitter statement of Enescu as a fantasy, going as far as to assert that "*Drum nou* was not founded with a view to propagating the corporatist creed, but for altogether different purposes, the several articles on the topic published there being all that can be more alien to the authentic corporatist idea".¹¹⁴ Manoilescu and Joldea-Rădulescu are indicated as the only theorists of the subject to take account of, and *Lumea nouă* does not miss the chance to quote approvingly the intervention advanced to its favor.¹¹⁵ One cannot leave behind this episode without noting that, otherwise, Enescu and Manoilescu stood at that moment as colleagues in the direction committee of the Confederation of the Associations of Intellectual Professionals, where the former had served since the foundation of the organization – as the president of the Society of Romanian Architects –, with the latter joining in 1935, in his capacity as the president of the General Association of Romanian Engineers and replacing N. Gheorghiu as vice-president of the committee.¹¹⁶ As shown by the "informative bulletin" of the Confederation, Enescu had renewed here

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹¹⁴ (unsigned) "Un istoric al corporatismului românesc. Scurtă punere la punct", in *Neamul românesc* 33: 76, April 6, 1938, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ (unsigned) "Istoricul corporatismului românesc", in *Lumea nouă* 7: 5-6, May-June 1938, p. 155.

¹¹⁶ *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali din România. Buletin Informativ* 3: 2-3, Aprilie-September 1935, information on the second cover.

his pleadings for corporatist reforms in 1936,¹¹⁷ coming back to the topic in 1938 to give a response to the constitutional changes with a corporatist slant brought about by the Carolist dictatorship in February of the same year.¹¹⁸

4

Whatever the depth of such disagreements from the period regarding the origins of corporatist pleading in the Romanian context – and the relevance of the reconstruction advanced above regarding the actual sources of the idea that was to be associated firmly with the name of Manoilescu –, it appears that the three branches of corporatist discourse launched in turn by *Drum nou* (as a direct expression of the professional organizations confederated in conjunction with the Citizens Block for the Salvation of the Country), by *Calendarul* (as an outgrowth of the cultural vision articulated by *Gândirea* but also taking inspiration from the discourse of the professional organizations) and by *Lumea nouă* (as an autonomous advocacy embodied by the National-Corporatist League) offered slight variations of the same ideological body, that placed corporatism at the service of a statist-authoritarian nationalist vision widely spread across large sections of the Romanian ideological spectrum and staying in close connection to fascism.

¹¹⁷ I.D. Enescu, “Arhitectura socială”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali din România. Buletin Informativ* 4: 1, January-March 1936, pp. 25-38.

¹¹⁸ Idem, “Organizarea profesiunilor intelectuale în cadrul noului regim constituțional”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali din România. Buletin Informativ* 6: 2-4, April-December 1938, pp. 37-46.

To take Manoilescu first, one can only evaluate his protracted relation with the trend of revolutionary nationalism set on the path of ideological development leading to its radical Right embodiment with the hindsight of his participation to Iron Guard politics over the years 1937-1938. This involved his election as a senator on the lists of the fascist party in December 1937 and his interventions throughout the same years in the journal *Buna vestire*¹¹⁹ (accompanied by those of his brother Grigore Manoilescu,¹²⁰ as well as by articles sympathetic to his works¹²¹ and to *Lumea nouă*¹²²). At the beginning of his engagement with the corporatist program, we can find him in 1932 saying prudently that “the future state will have to allow for the appropriate national integration of social-economic categories”¹²³ and

¹¹⁹ Mihail Manoilescu, “Mussolini și evreii”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 28, March 25, 1937, p. 1; (unsigned) “Organizarea muncii naționale. Conferința d-lui M. Manoilescu la ‘Tinerimea Română’”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 31, March 28, 1937, p. 3; Mihail Manoilescu, “O nouă constituție”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 32, March 30, 1937, pp. 1, 3; Idem, “O revizuire de primă etapă”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 33, March 31, 1937, p. 1; Idem, “Profesorul Bartolotto”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 45, April 14, 1937, p. 1; (unsigned) “Drept și economie corporatistă. Strălucita și substanțiala conferință a profesorului Bartolotto la ‘Institutul de Cultură Italiană’”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 46, April 15, 1937, p. 2; Mihail Manoilescu, “Românismul partidelor și românismul corporațiilor”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 92, June 17, 1937, pp. 1, 3; (unsigned) “Universalitatea fascismului și viitorul corporatismului. Declarațiile făcute de dl. profesor Mihail Manoilescu trimisului special al ziarului *Lavoro Fascista*”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 272, January 1938, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Grigore Manoilescu, “Naționalism economic... verbal”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 265, January 18, 1935, p. 1.

¹²¹ Nicolae Bogdan, “Despre partidul unic”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 27, March 24, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

¹²² Gabriel Bălănescu, “*Lumea nouă*”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 288, February 8, 1938, p. 2.

¹²³ Manoilescu, “Anticipare”, p. 2.

keen to underscore the non-coincidence between his advocacy and the radical Right, thus arguing that “the corporatist idea is by its very nature more multifarious than the liberal one”,¹²⁴ something that must warn anybody against the danger of conflating corporatism with fascism. The latter tendency comes from the fact that “the only version of generalized corporatism existing in contemporary states is the fascist one”, something that induces “some superficial thinkers to maintain a full identification of Italian fascism with corporatism”.¹²⁵ Against this, one must take into account that “in agrarian countries like Romania, corporatism can only take peculiar forms, allowing peasant interests to assert themselves”.¹²⁶

While thus advancing qualifications to the idea of the purported universality of the corporatist model of Italian fascism by reference to the peasant character of local society, Manoilescu takes all precautions not to relapse into the left-wing discourse of the “peasant state”, launched by the National Peasant Party in 1932, in the context of political crisis created in turn by the Carolist restoration and the Iorga government.¹²⁷ His journal develops a sustained critique against this trend,¹²⁸ fully in resonance with the collaborators of *Drum nou*¹²⁹ and

¹²⁴ Idem, “Corporatism românesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 3, June 1932, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Ernest Ene, “Ce poate fi statul țăranesc?” [1932], in *Doctrina țăranistă în România. Antologie de texte*, ed. de Ion Ilinciu et al., București, Noua Alternativă, 1994, pp. 161-163; Idem, *Spre statul țăranesc*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1932.

¹²⁸ I. Joldea Rădulescu, “Statul țăranesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 4, July 1932, pp. 12-21; Aurelian Motomancea, “Formula statului țăranesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 3: 12, December 1934, pp. 638-640.

¹²⁹ (unsigned) “Stat țăranesc”, in *Drum nou* 3: 19, September 15, 1932, pp. 1-2.

Calendarul.¹³⁰ Subscribing to such criticisms,¹³¹ the most prominent corporatist theorist gets involved, instead, into a strenuous effort to consecrate his credentials as a genuine representative of Romanian nationalist culture. Most spectacular in this respect is his attempt to enlist on the side of his advocacy the figure of the very founder of traditionalist nationalism, Mihai Eminescu (also a staunch promoter of the drive to economic closure in the 1870's). Writing in 1935 in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, Manoilescu can thus say that "it is not only a matter of subjective preferences [...] to present Eminescu as an anticipator of corporatism, after underscoring his role as an inspirer of protectionism. [...] Indeed, we can encounter in his writings not only nostalgia for the guilds [...], but also a creed, based on certain principles of social philosophy, that shows an impressive unity and remarkably overlaps with what our present day social philosophy labels as the doctrine of the organic state"¹³² (an evaluation that he would retain in a work of Romanian cultural history written over the period 1945-1948 and published posthumously¹³³).

An integral part of Manoilescu's efforts to get ingratiated with the large nationalist political camp consisted, however, in sustained strivings for diverting the new generation nationalist calls from an association with fascist politics alone, by enlisting them on the side of a long-term and diffuse development of traditionalist

¹³⁰ Nichifor Crainic, "Stat țăranesc", in *Calendarul* 1: 132, August 19, 1932, p. 1.

¹³¹ Mihail Manoilescu, "Țară de țărani", in *Lumea nouă* 4: 1, January 1935, pp. 3-5; Idem, "Contradicția țăranismului", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 6, June 1936, pp. 271-274.

¹³² Idem, "Eminescu economist", in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 2: 1, January 1935, p. 90.

¹³³ Idem, *Tragica predestinare a geniului moldovenesc*, ed. de Valeriu Dinu, Iași, Moldova, 1993, p. 70.

culture able to be conjoined with his designs for institutional change. In a Senate speech delivered in 1936 – and taking the foreign policy as a criterion for measuring the “gulf opened” between “the state” and “the young generation”¹³⁴ –, he thus explains that “what is inappropriately called today ‘the nationalist Right’ is a reality comprising the treasure of idealistic efforts pursued by several successive generations”.¹³⁵ In the same year, a collaborator of *Lumea nouă* similarly underscores the staunch and long-term consistency of Manoilescu’s involvement with defending nationalist values.¹³⁶ No matter the determination of such efforts, in 1937 the corporatist theorist delivers a long intervention on the “anti-bourgeois nature” of the “national revolution” underway by taking as a point of departure the description of Greater Romania as “a mere form” waiting for a content advanced by the Iron Guard leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu,¹³⁷ also making clear that the target of the revolution that he calls for together with the fascist party is that of a “national economy transformed from a jungle of animal-like greed into a field of collaborative work for the betterment of society”, which is nothing else but “the ideal formulated and partly accomplished by the leaders of fascism and national-socialism”.¹³⁸

The creation of the National-Christian Party in 1935 by the fusion between the former political organization with this orientation acting since 1923 under the leadership of A.C. Cuza and the Transylvanian-based

¹³⁴ Idem, *Generația nouă și politica veche*, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeria Statului, 1936, p. 18.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹³⁶ Victor Munteanu, “Continuitatea naționalismului nostru”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 2, February 1936, pp. 51-56.

¹³⁷ Mihail Manoilescu, “Sensul antiburghez al revoluției naționale”, in *Lumea nouă* 6: 10-11, October-November 1937, p. 317.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

National Agrarian Party headed by Octavian Goga and functioning since 1932 did not involve any statement regarding the corporatist idea.¹³⁹ Nichifor Crainic had joined Cuza's party shortly before that (together with his former *Calendarul* collaborators A. C. Cusin and Toma Vlădescu), obtaining the position of vice-president and presenting this gesture as implying an act of "abandoning the stance of neutrality".¹⁴⁰ Over the same period, the official party journal *Apărarea națională* underscored the close relation between the national Christian ideology and the cultural vision promoted by Crainic at *Gândirea*.¹⁴¹ Rivalry for leadership within the party and Crainic's ambition to establish himself as the main ideological voice within the same organization – as actually within the entire nationalist movement – was to lead very soon to his exclusion, in October 1936.

Already in 1932, the director of *Calendarul* had pointed to the idea of an "ethnocracy" – implying the strict application of the principle of ethnic proportionality within each professional group – as to a necessary adjustment of the corporatist model in the Romanian setting.¹⁴² The full development of this view would come in 1937, with the "program for an ethnocratic state", first launched in May in the journal *Sfarmă piatră*, inaugurated in November 1935 and controlled by Crainic although directed by Al. Gregorian, due to the interdict

¹³⁹ (unsigned) "Actul de constituire și programul Partidului Național-Creștin", in *Apărarea națională* 12: 29-30, July 21, 1935, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁰ (unsigned), "Declarațiile d-lui profesor Nichifor Crainic", in *Apărarea națională* 12: 12, March 17, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ (unsigned) "Interview cu dl. profesor Nichifor Crainic", in *Apărarea națională* 12: 9, February 24, 1935, p. 6; Aurel Mihai Ionescu, "Cuzism și gândirism", in *Apărarea națională* 12: 27, June 30, 1935, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁴² Idem, "De la democrație la etnocratie", in *Calendarul* 1: 127, August 14, 1932, p. 1.

faced by the former regarding the directorship of another periodical, following the episode of December 1933. Also published separately, the program comes in the footsteps of renewed pressures, started in 1934, in favor of the *numerus clausus* view¹⁴³ – adopted as a watchword by nationalist movements since 1922 – and looks striking for such statements pertaining to the same ethnic exclusivist and anti-Semitic vision as the one providing that “state functionaries and officers will not be allowed to get married with foreign women”.¹⁴⁴ Above all, however, it rests on the “central idea” of a “corporatist or professional ethnocracy”,¹⁴⁵ pointing to the fact that “in Italy the problem of the minorities and of the Jews does not exist”,¹⁴⁶ while in Romania “it is meaningful to discuss only about corporatism rectified and adapted to the prevailing conditions, such as to have applied within each corporation the principle of ethnic proportionality”.¹⁴⁷

Conceiving of *Sfarmă piatră* as about a forum for operating dissociations within the camp of nationalism,¹⁴⁸ Crainic would reap the rewards of this attitude. The journal *Porunca vremii* – exhibiting an ideological stance closest to the national Christian trend, served by Crainic with harshly anti-Semitic articles¹⁴⁹ but echoing the same concerns about the general evolution of

¹⁴³ Henri Prost, *Destin de la Roumanie*, Paris, Éditions Berger-Levrault, 1954, pp. 77-89.

¹⁴⁴ Crainic, *Programul statului etnocratic*, p. 13. Also published as an annex in Idem, *Ortodoxie și etnocrație*, București, Ed. Cugetarea, [1937], pp. 273-311.

¹⁴⁵ Idem, *Programul statului etnocratic*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, loc.cit.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁸ Idem, *Zile albe, zile negre*, p. 292.

¹⁴⁹ Idem, “Democrația e pentru jidani ceea ce e marea pentru rechini”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 850, September 6, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

the nationalist movement¹⁵⁰ – welcomes the ethnocratic program enthusiastically as a view which “wipes out class struggle” within the nation, envisioning the national community as organized in “categories of labor or professions, all of them working together and in harmony for the betterment of the fatherland”¹⁵¹ (this positive reception being accompanied by a friendly retrospective look at the whole of Crainic’s corpus¹⁵²). *Apărarea națională*, instead, delivers an unqualified critique¹⁵³ (to be considered below, together with the attitude of *Lumea nouă* on the same issue), while the Iron Guardist journal *Buna vestire* indulges in a public execution of the author as a saboteur of nationalist efforts, eschewing however from a genuine discussion of his ideas.¹⁵⁴ Following the rejection of his program by the fascist, the national-Christian and the national-corporatist camps alike, Crainic would tend to push to the back-stage his pleading for a corporatist state in favor of the bare support for exclusivist nationalism. His advocacy for authoritarianism would target, in turn, the Carolist

¹⁵⁰ Petru Bănescu, “Lipsurile mișcării naționaliste”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 821, August 8, 1937, p. 1; Idem, “Să dăm sens practic naționalismului”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 831, August 18, 1937, pp. 1, 3; Idem, “A pierit mișcarea naționalistă?”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 842, August 29, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁵¹ Ilie Rădulescu, “Statul etnocratic”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 798, July 16, 1937, pp. 1.

¹⁵² N. Crevedia, “Puncte cardinale în haos”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 804, July 22, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵³ (unsigned), “Pe marginea actualității. Naționalism și ‘etnocrație’. Ideologii și probleme”, in *Apărarea națională* 14: 32, August 10, 1937, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Toma Vlădescu, “Pentru cel mai trist cadavru. Disecția lui Nichifor Crainic”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 70, May 19, 1937, pp. 1, 3; Idem, “Pro domo. Și încă ceva pentru cei care n-au priceput o disecție”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 75, May 26, 1937, pp. 1, 3; (unsigned) “Nichifor Crainic va fi demască”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 83, June 4, 1937, p. 3.

regime¹⁵⁵ and the National-Legionary one of September 1940-January 1941,¹⁵⁶ but we nevertheless find him rehearsing his ideological evolution resonating with the Italian and German revolutions of the Right in 1940,¹⁵⁷ and again in 1942,¹⁵⁸ each time allowing generous space for documenting his role as one of the pioneers and the main promoters of the corporatist vision in Romania.¹⁵⁹

Driving his discourse on the road of nationalist politics together with the Citizens Block brought I. D. Enescu alongside Crainic into the fold of the National Christian Party, being elected on its lists as a deputy for the Vlașca county in December 1937,¹⁶⁰ after acting as the president of the party organization in the Green district of Bucharest¹⁶¹ and contributing in the same year to the journal *Porunca vremii* in order to denunciate “the collusion between the Jewry and political parasitism”.¹⁶² In 1936, he was elected as president of the Christian

¹⁵⁵ Nichifor Crainic, “Regele și cultura”, in *Gândirea* 19: 6, June 1940, pp. 405-414.

¹⁵⁶ Idem, “Revoluția legionară”, in *Gândirea* 19: 8, October 1940, pp. 521-525.

¹⁵⁷ Idem, “Scurtă recapitulare”, in *Gândirea* 19: 7, September 1940, pp. 465-469.

¹⁵⁸ Idem, *Lupta pentru spiritul nou*: vol. 1: *Germania și Italia în scrisul meu de la 1932 încoace*, București, Cugetarea, [1942].

¹⁵⁹ Idem, “Hitler și corporatismul” (first published in *Calendarul* in June 1933) and “Mussolini” (first published in *Calendarul* in October 1933) both in *Lupta pentru spiritul nou*, pp. 75-77, resp. 181-193.

¹⁶⁰ (unsigned) “O parte din noii deputați ai Partidului Național Creștin”, in *Apărarea națională* 14: 51, December 24 1937, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶¹ (unsigned) “Combătând capitalismul exploatator, partidele democrate trebuie să combată iudaismul. Un frumos program de guvernământ preconizat de dl. arhitect I.D. Enescu”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 880, July 18, 1937, p. 4.

¹⁶² I.D. Enescu, “Dictatura bancară și tirania modernă”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 806, July 24, 1937, p.2.

Front of Labor created alongside the party and bearing the mark of his inspiration by the provisions regarding its organization on the basis of guilds congregated in larger corporations.¹⁶³ Also in 1936, Enescu forcefully presents corporatism as “staying in the frame of nationalism and supporting methodically the latter in its fight for purifying and improving the nation”.¹⁶⁴ It is on this basis that “corporatism will help nationalism to replace the man of idle words with the man of action and the naïve or charlatan theoretician with the one anchored in realities”.¹⁶⁵ Coming back to the problem in 1939, under the regime of the royal dictatorship and acknowledging that “the new constitution [of 1938] places at the basis of the state the organic realities of the nation”, providing for “elections taking place within each sector of social activity”,¹⁶⁶ he offers a strong statist-nationalist statement, which maintains that “the state has the function of leading and organizing the nation”, such as “the happiness or misfortunes of the nations fully depend on the states”.¹⁶⁷

The idea of a “creative nationalism” thus formulated by Enescu is hard to be distinguished from that of a “constructive nationalism” advanced in 1936 by the engineer Pompiliu Nicolau – another acknowledged

¹⁶³ (unsigned) “Ședința de constituire a Frontului Creștin al Muncii. Cuvântarea d-lui arhitect I.D. Enescu. Alegerea comitetului”, in *Apărarea națională* 12: 36, November 24, 1936, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ I.D. Enescu, *Pe drumul românismului. Drumul marilor români: Vasile Conta, Mihai Eminescu, Dr. Paulescu, Alexandru C. Cuza, Octavian Goga*, București, Tipografia “Libertatea”, [1936], p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁶ Idem, *Naționalismul istoric și naționalismul creiator*, București, Tipografia “Cuvântul Românesc” Constantin Ștefănescu, [1939], p. 24.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

inspirer of Crainic “ethnocratic state”¹⁶⁸ – who otherwise pays only lip service to the corporatist doctrine when indicating that “the national state has the mission of establishing a balance among the interests of various categories of productive social elements”,¹⁶⁹ refraining all throughout from acting as a “state of the classes”.¹⁷⁰ It also squares well with the general orientation of a 1935 “manifest for the national revolution” issuing directly from a rather vague directive for traditionalist politics published in *Gândirea* in 1928¹⁷¹ – moreover strongly endorsed by Crainic at the time¹⁷² – and touching on the problem of corporatism only when arguing that the syndicalist movement has to be rescued from its prevalent condition of acting as “an instrument of anarchy and a means for dynamiting the nation”,¹⁷³ in order to be correspondingly diverted towards working for the national betterment.

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An article hosted by *Lumea nouă* in June 1933 provides us, however, with the most striking proof that the various strands of Romanian interwar corporatist advocacy were divided by sharp disagreements over the scope,

¹⁶⁸ Septimiu Bucur, “Naționalismul constructiv”, in *Sfarmă piatră* 3: 58, January 8, 1937, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Pompiliu Nicolau, *Naționalismul constructiv*, București, Editura “Cugetarea”, [1936], p. 16.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁷¹ Sorin Pavel et al., “Manifestul ‘Crinului Alb’”, in *Gândirea* 8: 8-9, August-September 1928, pp. 311-317.

¹⁷² Nihifor Crainic, “Spiritualitate”, in *Gândirea* 8: 8-9, August-September 1928, pp. 307-310.

¹⁷³ Sorin Pavel et al., *Manifestul revoluției naționale*, Sighișoara, Tipografia Miron Neagu, 1935, p. 79.

implications and basic theoretical assumptions of the design they promoted. Reacting to Manoilescu's booklet *Romania: a Corporatist State* of the same year (adopted as an official program of the National Corporatist League), I. Constanțiu, who likes to speak as an exponent of the professional group of Romanian merchants – and whose electoral manifesto as a candidate for a place in the Senate from the part of the Bucharest Chambers of Commerce had been welcomed in the journal in February¹⁷⁴ –, clarifies the differences between the understanding of the corporatist idea as emerged from within the movement of the professions and what he sees as a growing falsification of it at the hands of the by then already its foremost and most vocal representative. He acknowledges the standing acquired by Manoilescu in the field, when saying that “the professions [...] have looked forward to the solution of corporatism, but did not have the possibility to accomplish it”, as “this can only be done by a political figure, not available up until now”. In the same fashion, however, he rejects the tendency manifested by Manoilescu to interpret the creed as an instrument for reshaping social life through sustained state intervention. According to the same explanations, “the political figure who will build the corporatist state must not be entrusted with any other mission except the one of restructuring the state, without the ambition of remolding society itself. In other words, he is expected to make the state required by the society underlying it, and not at all to remake society as to make it fit whatever type of state, be it a corporatist one”.¹⁷⁵

Corporatism, in the view of Constanțiu, has to be understood as a device for tailoring the state to the needs

¹⁷⁴ (unsigned) “Un manifest electoral corporatist”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 1, February 1933, p. 774.

¹⁷⁵ I. Constanțiu, “Corporatismul văzut și altfel”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 6, June 1933, p. 348.

of a society that has been given real voice and an appropriate representation. Conceiving the state as only having an instrumental function, he does not accept a statist vision allowing the political body to interfere with the workings of the social body thus liberated from the constraints of false representation and the distortions of parasitism. “As we currently fight against the actual state, as impotent as it is usurping”, he proclaims, “we shall reject for sure the tyranny of a still more powerful and interventionist state”.¹⁷⁶ This is because the members of the professional organizations that subscribe to the corporatist view “start [...] from social and economic realities, [...] speaking in the name of society as it stands, with its functions and organs, in other words speaking in the name of the professions [they] exert, outside the sphere of the state”. As such, they “do not want to change fundamentally the structure of society and the norms by which [they] practice their professions”. They do not want “to make [themselves] better through the state, but only to work for making a better state”.¹⁷⁷

After giving an inconclusive rejoinder to Constanțiu, meant to ascertain the hidden coincidence between his views and the one he criticized,¹⁷⁸ *Lumea nouă* would not constitute itself into a space for further polemical exchanges meant to broaden and clarify the disagreement thus delineated. Latter interventions in the same periodical were to offer, however, implicit recognitions of the disagreement denied in 1933. Starting from rehearsing the fact that “the liberals still claim, even nowadays, [...] that the state must maintain some kind of neutrality towards the activities of the individuals and the relations among them”, thus “subscribing to a mechanic and exclusively political conception of the

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 347-348.

¹⁷⁸ *Lumea nouă* 2: 6, June 1933, pp. 351-354.

state”, an article of 1936 goes on to underscore that “the corporatist conception denies the notions of social life as governed by automatism and of the state as defined by simplicity”. On the contrary, it “is founded on an organic and therefore totalitarian conception of the state, this one being taken not only as a political body, but as a permanent, evolutionary and synthetic expression of a system of existential functions characterizing the community which creates it”.¹⁷⁹

An intervention on the topic delivered by the law professor Ion V. Gruia in 1941 can give us another clue for understanding the issue. Writing at the time of Antonescu’s dictatorship to preface a book by a disciple treating “the economic function of the state” in contemporary Italy and Germany,¹⁸⁰ Gruia – whom we have encountered as a militant for corporatism in *Calendarul* in 1932¹⁸¹ – prudently warns the reader against the danger of identifying generic corporatism with the totalitarian interpretation of it. The clarification draws on a still more basic distinction: the one between genuine democracy and the democratic formalism prevailing in Europe over the modern age. Maintaining that a parliamentary assembly “has to act as the expression of the nation, or else of the organic, creative, permanent and specific elements of it”, he goes on to clarify that there is an effort underway for “replacing formal democracy by organic democracy, political representation by professional representation”.¹⁸² It

¹⁷⁹ Christian Petrescu, “Corporatismul, așa cum nu trebuie înțeles”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 1, January 1936, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸⁰ Vasile Marghescu, *Funcțiunea economică a statului contemporan. Sinteza organizării politico-economice a fascismului și a national-socialismului*, București, n. p., 1941.

¹⁸¹ Gruia, “Statul corporativ. Rechizitoriu împotriva democrației”.

¹⁸² Idem, “Prefață”, in Marghescu, *Funcțiunea economică a statului contemporan*, p. VI.

follows from this that corporatism is an instrument for the elaboration of real democracy. Indeed, provided that “the professional group is being asserted everywhere as a decisive social value”, it can only be concluded that “national sovereignty as a product of formal, abstract and inorganic democracy gets transformed into an organic, professional and constructive sovereignty. [...] Hence, there is no antinomy between the democratic idea and the representation of professional interests. This is what corporatism actually means in the domain of politics”.¹⁸³ Furthermore, besides not being contradictory to democracy well understood, the corporatist conception is shown by Gruia as an adjunct to free trade economics, in so far as “economic individualism is given a necessary correction by the professional association, which is an instrument for fighting against its excesses”.¹⁸⁴ The two strands of the argumentation are then brought together by underscoring how “between liberal individualism and economic collectivism or interventionism, there stays corporatism [which is] compatible with democracy”.¹⁸⁵ For sure, the thesis can only be advanced by arguing for a distinction between the totalitarian and the democratic-individualist versions of the corporatist doctrine and practice. This is accomplished by Gruia when acknowledging that “corporatism [...] can be understood in two ways [...]: in an autonomous fashion and in a statist fashion. [...] Hostile to state interventionism, autonomous corporatism looks at the corporations as to autonomous professional organizations; statist corporatism conceives of the corporations as of state organs”.¹⁸⁶

Gruia’s vindication of the legitimacy of a non-totalitarian, democratically minded and individualistically

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. VII.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. X.

inspired version of corporatism was certainly reminiscent of foreign interventions with the same edge hosted by Romanian periodicals.¹⁸⁷ It was maybe also reminiscent of similar – however much more determined and vocal – efforts taking place within the camp of the Left to dissociate the envisioned idea of economic planning from an exclusive association with political authoritarianism. We can thus find the economist Virgil Madgearu several years earlier keen to reject – for the use of both international and Romanian audiences – the “authoritarian planned economy, [...] placed by nationalist political trends in the service of certain designs of state reform” – or “the type of planned economy currently applied in fascist Italy and national-socialist Germany” – from the “constitutional planned economy, developed in democratic countries”, or more precisely from “the system practiced in the United States and in England”.¹⁸⁸ Still, the distinctions advanced by the legal scholar of corporatism – no matter how evasive – can only be seen as an act of temerity given the circumstances.

It might appear, indeed, that such an evaluation can be somehow qualified if we take into account that contemporary directives for the building of war economy – making reference to German authorities on the matter – liked to underscore the legitimacy of basic capitalist survivals even against the demands of planning driven by

¹⁸⁷ B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch, “Le regime corporatif”, in *Revista de drept public* 9: 5-8, May-August 1934, pp. 123-138; Heinrich Wagner, “Constituția austriacă”, in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 2: 3, March 1935, pp. 575-594.

¹⁸⁸ (unsigned) “Fundamentele juridice ale economiei dirijate. Conferința d-lui Virgil Madgearu la Universitatea din Paris”, in *Prezentul economic, financiar, social* 1: 78, May 8, 1935, p. 1. See also Virgil Madgearu, “Revoluția Roosevelt”, in *Viața românească* 26: 9, May 15, 1934, pp. 2-20; Nicolae Petrescu, “Noi concepții de organizare în Statele Unite”, in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 2: 10, October 1, 1935, pp. 59-79.

the national interest as a supreme value. Summarizing in the same year a lecture by the Nazi economist Heinrich Hunke, the journal *Sfarmă piatră* points thus to the necessity of “maintaining individual initiative” in the economic field, in so far as “the goal of the new economic policy is to lead and educate private initiative such as to place it in conjunction with the needs of the community”.¹⁸⁹ The statement is predicated on a cursory and elusive reiteration of the corporatist principles in connection to a discussion about social stratification in the context of national mobilization for the military effort underway, by showing that “nationalism does not allow for social classes horizontally arranged” and that “the national state is founded on a vertical perspective”.¹⁹⁰

We can easily measure the difference between such statements and the position defended by Gruia when looking at an earlier intervention by him, coming in 1940 and meant to delineate the peculiarities of the Nazi practice of corporatism and of the intellectual tradition staying behind it. Issued in a journal of legal studies otherwise hosting articles approving of the patterns of Nazi economic planning,¹⁹¹ the inquiry of Gruia is taken from the standpoint of the same conception based on the idea of corporatism as “a political system compatible with essential individual rights”.¹⁹² On this basis, there is advanced a diagnostic of contemporary German society as living “under a regime of planned economy to the

¹⁸⁹ Ștefan Dragu, “O nouă concepție economică”, in *Sfarmă piatră* 8: 89, March 4, 1941, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ (unsigned) “Problema burgheziei”, in *Sfarmă piatră* 8: 78, February 20, 1941, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ Costin C. Kirițescu, “Național-socialismul și economia teoretică”, in *Analele Facultății de Drept din București* 1: 1, 1939, pp. 225-268.

¹⁹² I.V. Gruia, “Particularitățile corporatismului german”, in *Analele Facultății de Drept din București* 2: 1, 1940, p. 217.

utmost degree". A part of this syndrome consists in the fact that the corporatist credentials of the Nazi state are fictitious, to the extent that "the corporations [...] are subordinated, with their entire activity, to the interests of the national community", as expressed by the *Führer*. It follows that "corporatism is distorted [...] in the frame of the totalitarian political organization of the German state".¹⁹³ In light of Gruia's criteria for a genuine incarnation of corporatist principles, the Nazi experimentation with corporatism can only be evaluated "as a disappointment".¹⁹⁴

Some other works on the subject of corporatism elaborated in the same period mildly resonate with the views of Gruia, as shown by a doctoral dissertation of 1941 dealing with the "corporatist state" and advertizing the doctrine as pointing to "the conciliation between liberty, unity and authority".¹⁹⁵ The same inquiry also takes a negative stance on "the highly peculiar character of German corporatism", to the extent that "one cannot speak properly about a representation of economic and professional interests in the Third Reich", with the conclusion that "our future reordering of national labor and economy cannot draw on this distorted experience of corporatism".¹⁹⁶ Another dissertation, defended in 1940 and meant at measuring the appropriateness of the corporatist view in the context of the Romanian legal tradition, also provides a case in point by its eagerness to underscore – otherwise in a fashion that, as it will be shown, does not go very much beyond the strictures of the sort advanced by Manoilescu and Joldea-Rădulescu – how "individualist democracy, where sovereignty belongs

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-265.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

¹⁹⁵ Ion V. Vintilă, *Statul corporatist*, București, Universitatea din București, Facultatea de Drept, 1941, p. 229.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

to the majority of the individuals taken in isolation”, is being transformed into “corporatist democracy, where sovereignty belongs to the majority of the individuals taken as representatives of organized social bodies”.¹⁹⁷ Pointing to the Carolist regime patterned by the constitution of 1938 as to a “pre-corporatist” one,¹⁹⁸ the statement betrays its participation to a (highly timid) defense of democratic values when conjoined with a 1938 pronouncement of the same author in favor of rule of law principles.¹⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the interpretation of corporatism as necessarily going together with full-blown authoritarianism was the dominant one in Romanian public discourse over the period,²⁰⁰ interventions of the kind underscoring that “a corporatist state can only be totalitarian” only to express their conviction that “adapting this system to Romanian conditions could be expected to have amazing results”.²⁰¹ Most of the local presentations of international fascist politics making reference to its corporatist dimension concurred in this,²⁰² in the same way as the surveys of the European ideological landscape urging for the absorption of Romania into the vortex of the prevailing nationalist right-wing revolution, which themselves paid attention to the topic, thus arguing that “the goals of constructive nationalism are only attainable

¹⁹⁷ Costinel C. Jornescu, *Corporatismul și dreptul românesc*, București, Imprimeriile “Curentul”, 1940, p. 71.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁹⁹ Idem, *Dreptul și statul. Misiunea juridică a statului modern*, București, Tipografia “Mișcarea”, 1938.

²⁰⁰ Marghescu, *Funcțiunea economică a statului contemporan*.

²⁰¹ I. Angelescu, *Așezământul corporativ. Principii. Organizare. Realizări. Legislație*, București, Atelierele “Luceafărul”, 1939, pp. 7-8.

²⁰² Marin, *Fascismul*; Tzigara-Samurcaș, *Fascismul*; Alexandru M. Randa, *Statul fascist*, București, FNR, 1935.

within the framework of the national-corporatist state”²⁰³ and that “the corporatist regime alone is likely to create a Romanian state acting as a bearer of ideals”.²⁰⁴

6

Beyond its close connections, the intellectual trend that we have started to chart by reference to I. Constanțiu and I.V. Gruia displays distant origins and a long course of evolution. The beginnings of its articulation can be identified as far back in the past as 1916, when we find Constanțiu pondering the merits of monopolist economic practices in order to discover their negative “social and economic value”, when considered from the standpoint of the real “economic needs” of Romanian society. Defining the “monopolies” as consisting of “a system of exploitation of the national wealth by the means of state intervention in whatever form”,²⁰⁵ he rejects them by an argumentation that combines considerations of national interest and others referring to the values of individualistic enterprise. Allowing that “a genuine economic policy will not grant full economic freedom to everybody, irrespective of nationality, [...], but instead it will place restrictions on foreign elements, while at the same time supporting the national ones” – and taking a departure from such people as the conservative politicians Titu Maiorescu and P.P. Carp who “supported humanitarian economic principles

²⁰³ V.I. Lupșescu-Grănicerul, *România în Europa de mâine*, Timișoara, Editura Autorului, 1937, p. 112.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 116. Also Alexandru M. Randa, *Europa eroică*, București, Ed. Ziarului *Universul*, 1939.

²⁰⁵ I. Constanțiu, *Valoarea socială și economică a monopolurilor (în raport cu nevoile noastre economice)*, Iași, Tipografia “Dacia” P & D. Iliescu, 1916, p. 2.

without concern for nationality”²⁰⁶ –, Constanțiu is nevertheless convinced that “the monopoly is a defective device for the exploitation of national wealth”,²⁰⁷ in so far as state interventionism has the effect of “restricting the scope of economic activities for the national elements themselves” (and not only for the foreigners).²⁰⁸ The suffocating consequences of statist policies in the economic field have the phenomenon of over-bureaucratization as their ugliest and most visible effect. In its turn, the prevalence of state service as a means of social promotion, to the detriment of free economic pursuits, leads to the entrenchment of economic paralysis. Indeed, “which state functionary, acting as an agent of a state economic enterprise, is capable of developing that amount of passion, geniality and dedication that people mastering their own business always display?”²⁰⁹ Statist economy relying on bureaucratization can only disseminate in society “a disposition of mind” that “makes everybody to look at the state and the budget as to solutions for all problems”.²¹⁰ The conclusion drawn from such considerations is that “the genuine economic life, which can strengthen a people and lead it on the road to progress”, can only come from a combination of “liberty and nationalization”.²¹¹

Could such a liberal-nationalist compound serve as the baseline for developing a corporatist program meant to relieve society from the burden of parasitic politics and of ill-conceived state intervention? A surprising positive answer can be found in an intervention of I. D. Enescu delivered ten years later and targeted – in the same

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

fashion as contemporary texts of Constanțiu²¹² – to vindicating the interests of the free and enterprising bourgeoisie as coextensive with the interests of the entire national community. Characterizing Romanian capitalism as squeezed between “the privileges granted to labor by various laws of protection” and the “fiscal apparatus” which acts “in order to cover budgetary deficits”,²¹³ Enescu complains that “after the war, capital has been given blow after blow by the state organs, either by increased taxation or by ever deeper interference in the life of the enterprises”.²¹⁴ Further rehearsing the basic liberal creed according to which “the state has not been made for business, but only for protecting individual liberty”, and hence “it has to function as the servant of the citizens, and not as their master”,²¹⁵ he condemns party-based parliamentarianism as a negation of social efficiency, which comes from the fact that persons that “sometimes have no definite profession emerge in the parliament as competences ready to apply themselves to virtually all problems”.²¹⁶ The idea of corporatism as a solution to the prevailing disease of modern social life is indicated by the statement that “the ideal cherished by mankind, that of working less and enjoying a better life, [...] can only be envisioned on the basis of having the nation represented by its genuine representatives, namely those who work and produce in all fields”.²¹⁷ Supporting his case by making reference to the fact that “all throughout Europe, there is a move away from democracy and parliamentarianism, [...] the much too

²¹² Idem, *Patroni și salariați*, București, Tiparul Românesc, [1928].

²¹³ I.D. Enescu, *Între muncă și capital. Politicianism, doctrină și experiențe*, București, Cartea Românească, 1926, p. 41.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

liberal form of democracy being replaced, in Italy, Spain and Greece, with a more disciplined and organized variety”,²¹⁸ the future staunch promoter of the corporatist system and of nationalist policies nevertheless quotes Mussolini to the extent that “far from declining, capitalism is now placed at the very beginning of its evolution”.²¹⁹ One can easily measure the difference between this statement sustained by the belief that the Italian political system created in 1922 served as a venue for the unfolding of capitalism freed of adverse factors and Polihroniade’s conception of the economic implications of fascist politics, as exposed after six more years in *Calendarul*.

When delivering a speech hosted by the professional associations of the constructors on May 11, 1930, several weeks before the creation of the Confederation, and commenting upon the responses of Romanian political parties to the economic crisis, Enescu further develops his social philosophy towards a corporatist stance, maintaining that “it would be logical for the state to represent the whole nation” and “to be the exponent of all social classes”, therefore pointing to the solution of “replacing the political parties with the professional organizations”, such as to “curb the expenses incurred from sustaining a greedy and incompetent political industry”.²²⁰ Once embracing firmly the corporatist project in *Drum nou*, he also clarifies its anti-statist presumptions and implications, arguing that “state interventionism is not a necessity of economic life, but on the contrary, [...] is a consequence of the politicization of our entire economic structure”, leading to “the forced labor of the great masses of the people for sustaining the

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²²⁰ Idem, *Criza economică și partidele politice*, București, Tipografia “Cultura”, 1930, p. 13.

political clientele”.²²¹ Accompanied by others pointing to the corporatist state as conducive to the consolidation of rule of law procedures²²² – while at the same time shedding light on the falsification of democracy based on universal suffrage under the regime of party politics²²³ –, Enescu’s interventions of the sort in the journal are only a score of the articles promoting the same doctrine, by disclosing the negative effects of protectionist policies,²²⁴ by rejecting dirigisme on the basis of “scientific economics”²²⁵ or by condemning the view of “economic nationalism” as an “abstract theory” and a “sinister discovery”.²²⁶ From an economic standpoint, the road of corporatism is indicated as a middle one, to the extent that capitalism is described as being of “three kinds”, distinguished from each other “not on the criterion of the possession of capitals, but according to how they are administered: 1) the particularist; 2) the statist; and 3) the corporatist”.²²⁷ Acknowledged by Enescu as one of the four persons who have contributed most to the founding of the Confederation (alongside himself, Ferdinand Koșca and Toma Dumitrescu),²²⁸ I. Constanțiu

²²¹ Idem, “Etatism”, in *Drum nou* 2: 16, August 16, 1931, p. 1.

²²² Idem, “Statul corporativ și stabilitatea legilor”, in *Drum nou* 2: 1, January 1, 1931, p. 1; Idem, “Legalitatea”, in *Drum nou* 2: 4, February 15, 1931, p. 1.

²²³ Idem, “Parodia votului universal”, in *Drum nou* 1: 1, October 4, 1930, p. 1.

²²⁴ I. Ghiulea, “Utilitatea unei noi concepții industriale”, in *Drum nou* 3: 10, May 15, 1932, pp. 1-2.

²²⁵ Idem, “Economia științifică împotriva economiei dirijate”, in *Drum nou* 4: 2, January 15, 1933, pp. 1, 3.

²²⁶ Ferdinand Koșca, “Naționalism economic”, in *Drum nou* 4: 23, July 9, 1933, p. 1.

²²⁷ (unsigned) “Precizări necesare. Capitalismul”, in *Drum nou* 3: 7, April 1, 1932, p. 2.

²²⁸ (unsigned) “O grandioasă manifestare pentru statul corporativ. Sărbătorirea d-lor arhitect I.D. Enescu și Ferdinand Koșca”, in *Drum nou* 3: 4, February 15, 1932, pp. 3-4.

describes the creed of the journal as resting on “a coalition of the nation and the king against the parties”,²²⁹ after inaugurating his collaboration by calling for solutions to the prevailing “crisis of commerce”²³⁰ and in order to point then to a glaring contradiction existing between Romanian legislation and the requirements of a healthy economy, due to which, after the war, “political regulations prevented the most capable and honest enterprising people to obtain gains, [...] but saved from bankruptcy the incompetent and dishonest ones”.²³¹

The 1940-1941 statements of I. V. Gruia about the compatibility between corporatism and democracy and about the non-coincidence between the corporatist system and totalitarianism can be found anticipated in an article by him published in *Drum nou* in 1932, first delivered as a radio speech. On the basis of vindicating the demand of fighting against the “formal democracy”, unable to intimate the nature of the national body as “a living organism and a sum of creative functions”, it is argued that “this does not imply the need to fight against the creative, organic and real democracy. We face here a confusion coming from the fact that the supporters of corporatist representation have declared themselves as anti-democrats”. As “the representation of professional interests is only a corrective to the shortcomings of democracy”, it follows that “there is no contradiction, thus, between the democratic idea and the professional representation”.²³² The author making this point emerges

²²⁹ I. Constanțiu, “Coaliția care se impune”, in *Drum nou* 2: 8, April 12, 1931, p. 4.

²³⁰ Idem, “Criza comerțului”, in *Drum nou* 1: 1, October 4, 1930, p. 2.

²³¹ Idem, “Legile economice și legile politice”, in *Drum nou* 3: 10, May 15, 1932, p. 1.

²³² I.V. Gruia, “Statul corporativ”, in *Drum nou* 3: 18, September 1, 1932, p. 2.

as one of the main representatives of the trend of corporatist thinking articulated around *Drum nou*, together with Enescu and Constanțiu, also participating alongside them to the gradual elaboration of the view, in the 1920's. We thus encounter him in 1927 offering basic clarifications of a juridical nature on the issue of professional representation in a specialized journal, drawing on the constitutional debates of 1922-1923 and explaining how "abstract political sovereignty, inorganic and indivisible, has to be replaced by the sovereignty of economic and professional bodies".²³³

The best expression of the eccentric ideology of corporatism we are considering comes in the 1932 program of the General Confederation of Professional Associations. Stating clearly that "corporatism did not originate from fascism, in so far as this one does not even has to be treated as a doctrine, but as a mere political form suited to the needs of the Italian nation", the text goes on to present the creed as "profoundly democratic and opposed to any dictatorial methods". Emphasizing that "the principle of the separation of powers will become a reality in the corporatist state", the programmatic document indulges moreover into a defense of free trade economics, asserting that "the corporatist state will be a coordinator of constructive activities, and not a damaging force place upon them. It will act as a guide to economic life, and not as a paralyzing factor in the domain. It will give general direction, without issuing laws meant to hinder private initiative. [...] Taking private initiative as alone conducive to the prosperity of the nation, it will maintain the balance in economy by employing normal and efficacious

²³³ Idem, "Reprezentarea intereselor profesionale", in *Revista de drept public* 2: 4, October-December 1927, p. 713.

methods, facilitating the free play of supply and demand, of production and consumption”.²³⁴

7

How could then a trend of thought predicated on a striving for curing the ills of distorted parliamentarianism, oligarchic party politics and corrupt economic interventionism prevalent in Romanian society by the means of restructuring it around the principle of the political representation of professional interests be converted into supporting exclusivist right-wing nationalism in conjunction with the idea of “ethnocratic” reform and with the national-Christian and the fascist ideological orientations? The transformation can be identified in the pages of *Drum nou* as taking place over the period stretching from November 1932 to March 1933.

When engaging in a series of conferences in collaboration with *Calendarul* at the beginning of this period,²³⁵ the representatives of the doctrine that we discovered as the original Romanian pleading for the corporatist idea can still complain that “the maladies of democracy” are leading to “the rise of antidemocratic ideologies”, identifying the latter with “the doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism” (one of the sources of fascism) and “the doctrine of Bolshevism”, in order to underscore once again that “corporatism is a democratic doctrine, in so far as it does not contradict either the principle of national sovereignty which is the essence of democracy or the principle of liberty, instead placing both of them on

²³⁴ (unsigned) “Programul Confederației Asociațiilor Profesionale”.

²³⁵ Crainic, “Conferințele noastre despre corporatism”.

strong and organic bases”.²³⁶ I.D. Enescu takes the opportunity to announce forcefully that “corporatism [...] will be profoundly democratic, allowing all powers to issue genuinely from the nation”,²³⁷ in the same way that I.V. Gruia reiterates the idea that “corporatism is not set against democracy, but only against its damaging excesses”.²³⁸

In the same lecture, Gruia makes a complacent vague reference to the conception of an “ethnocracy” in the course of being elaborated by the journal of Crainic, allowing that some concern should exist for establishing “a control over the activities of the state by removing those elements which do not belong organically to it”.²³⁹ While this sounds as hardly more than a courtesy, another lecture summarized soon thereafter in *Drum nou* and delivered as part of the same series by the *Calendarul* journalist of fascist orientation Dragoș Protopopescu explains emphatically that “democracy must become an ethnocracy, that is a form of state where the people lives not according to the abstract criterion of number, [...] but according to the criteria of religion, nation, family and guild”.²⁴⁰ Mihail Polihroniade can then present corporatism as a salutary reaction “against capitalism and democracy – the latter being the political form of capitalism – under the façade of which there stays the tyranny of modern plutocracy”. He also makes clear that in order for the reaction to succeed and to “prevent the corporatist system from being engulfed by

²³⁶ (unsigned) “Ideologiile antidemocratice. Conferința d-lui Vasile Șova”, in *Drum nou* 3: 25, December 12, 1932, p. 2.

²³⁷ (unsigned) “Corporații și partide. Conferința d-lui I.D. Enescu”, in *Drum nou* 4: 1, January 1, 1933, p. 2.

²³⁸ (unsigned) “De la feudalism la democrație. Conferința d-lui profesor I.V. Gruia”, in *Drum nou* 3: 24, November 28, 1932, p. 2.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ (unsigned) “Critica democrației. Conferința d-lui prof. Dragoș Protopopescu”, in *Drum nou* 3: 25, December 12, 1932, p. 2.

the same plutocracy, this one has to be destroyed” by “the leveling of income differences”. This goes together with a reference to “the Italy of Mussolini” as to “an example in this respect as well”.²⁴¹ The significant change of emphasis becomes clear in an article contrasting the two economic models of Bolshevism and fascism in order to characterize “Italian state interventionism, applied with the help of the corporations”, as leading to “a perfect harmonization of social classes, in a condition of prevailing hierarchy and discipline”.²⁴² In the same issue of the journal, Grigore Forțu compares fascism – perceived as “a form of life which is ever developing and improving” – to communism – understood as “the death of human society”. Italian fascism is praised without qualifications as “a new form of life, founded on order and discipline, on work and honesty, on the subordination of everybody to the laws of the fatherland, which has proven able to enthrone calm and wellbeing instead of chaos”.²⁴³

The years 1932-1933 brought a breakthrough for the corporatist idea in Romania. They also exhibited the first harsh and articulated rejections of it, coming from the camp of the Left. The newspaper *Adevărul* exposes “the absurdity of corporatism” – also showing that fascist Italy “is not really a corporatist country”²⁴⁴ –, pointing to the cooperativist movement as “meant to wipe away the obscurantism of those who ape superficially foreign

²⁴¹ (unsigned) “Reacțiunea creatoare a corporatismului. Conferința d-lui Mihail Polihroniade”, in *Drum nou* 4: 1, January 1, 1933, p. 2.

²⁴² (unsigned) “Două sisteme economice. Conferința d-lui prof. A. Tănăsescu”, in *Drum nou* 4: 7, March 12, 1933, p. 2.

²⁴³ (unsigned) “Cuvântarea d-lui Grigore Forțu”, in *Drum nou* 4: 7, March 12, 1933, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ (unsigned) “Absurditatea corporatismului”, in *Adevărul* 47: 15259, October 3, 1933, p. 1.

fashions and propose the outdated medieval corporations as a panacea” for local social ills.²⁴⁵ It also advances the opinion that “professional organizations, no matter how large and strong, cannot replace political parties”.²⁴⁶ In the same fashion, the periodical *Stânga* – otherwise shown in *Calendarul* as “launched by *Adevărul* with great noise”²⁴⁷ – denounces the promoters of corporatism as “reactionaries whose activity is targeted at resurrecting the personal privileges of old castes sustained by a feudal spirit”,²⁴⁸ the intervention coming from an author that would later denounce the whole nationalist movement as a diversion from the urgencies of social reform.²⁴⁹

Just several days before the assassination of I.G. Duca, *Adevărul* makes a mockery of Forțu’s pronouncements in support of the Iron Guard qualified by his rejection of anti-Semitism, the ambivalence in question being mentioned as a proof for the “ideological chaos” prevailing within the nationalist camp.²⁵⁰ We can indeed find Forțu two days beforehand acknowledging that, apart from “the more peculiar way of looking at the Jewish problem”, he subscribes to “the entire creed of the Iron Guard, which is national and Christian, dedicated to legalism and honesty”, and hence his organization and the fascist one “would have been one and the same body and soul for long, had not that difference between them

²⁴⁵ (unsigned) “Cooperatism și corporatism”, in *Adevărul* 47: 15278, October 25, 1933, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ N. Batzaria, “Asociații profesionale și partide politice”, in *Adevărul* 47: 15321, December 14, 1933, p. 1.

²⁴⁷ M. Polihroniade, “Stânga?”, in *Calendarul* 1: 225, November 29, 1932, p. 1.

²⁴⁸ Pavel Pavel, “Stat corporativ”, in *Stânga* 1: 3, November 27, 1932, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Idem, *Moment național sau moment social?*, Cluj, “Minerva”. Institut de Literatură și Tipografie S.A., 1936.

²⁵⁰ Traian Vlad, “Haosul hipernationalist”, in *Adevărul* 47: 15325, December 19, 1933, p. 1.

existed”.²⁵¹ His reluctance to embrace whole-heartedly the radical Right program had looked more convincing in the Spring of the same year, when we discover him pondering how suited the Nazi view was for addressing the urgencies of Romanian political reform. Maintaining that his countrymen had “to learn from others without slavishly imitating them”, he underscores that, “if Germany has particular reasons to be concerned about race purification”, the Romanians “are actually to be concerned about the purification of their entire administration” and “to replace all the rotten girders staying at the bottom of the state”, instead having no reason to bother about race purity.²⁵² Whatever such decreasing reservations regarding the vision of exclusivist nationalism, the leader of the Citizens Block is bewildered, at the beginning of December, when contemplating “the great movement of national revival underway”, showing how “from all parts there emerge movements of the Right, that is of bold and powerful assertion of national spirit and morality”.²⁵³ Already in March, *Drum nou* had pronounced itself against “the cult of the foreigners” and in favor of policies meant to “allow the Romanian work to flourish”.²⁵⁴ Italian fascism is fully embraced as a model, its corporatist frame being presented as a means for acceding to the condition of real democracy through an intermediate state of dictatorship.²⁵⁵ Grigore Forțu proclaims the predicament of the moment

²⁵¹ Grigore Forțu, “Mărturisism...”, in *Drum nou* 4: 43, December 17, 1933, p. 1.

²⁵² Idem, “Hitlerism român”, in *Drum nou* 4: 18, May 28, 1933, p. 2.

²⁵³ Idem, “Căile Domnului”, in *Drum nou* 4: 41, December 3, 1933, p. 1.

²⁵⁴ (unsigned) “Cultul străinilor”, in *Drum nou* 4: 9, March 19, 1933, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ I. Cosma, “De la dictatură la democrație adevărată prin corporatism”, in *Drum nou* 4: 11, April 2, 1933, p. 1.

to consist in “a dictatorship of salvation”²⁵⁶ – thus fully adopting the rhetoric which would drive him into the political boat of the Iron Guard at the time of the 1937 parliamentary elections²⁵⁷ –, in the same fashion as I.D. Enescu recognizably embarks upon the statist nationalist position that he would broaden as a member of the National Christian Party after 1935.²⁵⁸

The scholar of the movement of professional associations in interwar Romania can only be struck by the fact that the articles in the field of the *Encyclopedia of Romania* – intended as a comprehensive picture of the social and institutional evolution of the country, with a marked emphasis upon the recent period –, of which the first three of four volumes were published in 1938 and 1939, under the authoritarian regime of king Carol II, avoided any hint to the activity of the General Confederation of Professional Associations or of the Citizens Block for the Salvation of the Country in the early 1930's.²⁵⁹ The explanation of this embarrassing neglect largely consists, for sure, in the very character of the enterprise run together by the two organizations, as a movement of contestation emerging from the grass-roots and likely to acquire a wide popular support, thus posing a remarkable threat to the existing political regime.

²⁵⁶ Grigore Forțu, “Fără dictatură? (politica lor)”, in *Drum nou* 4: 31, September 14, 1933, p. 1.

²⁵⁷ Armin Heinen, *Legiunea “Arhanghelul Mihail”*. *Mișcare socială și organizație politică*, trad. de Cornelia și Delia Eșianu, București, Humanitas, 1999, p. 211.

²⁵⁸ I.D. Enescu, “Statul de azi și cel de mâine”, in *Drum nou* 4: 30, September 3, 1933, p. 1; Idem, “Tot despre stat și națiune”, in *Drum nou* 4: 31, September 14, 1933, p. 1.

²⁵⁹ George Strat, “Organizația socială a muncitorilor”, Iulian Peter, “Organizarea socială a profesiunilor” and N. Arcadian, “Camerele profesionale”, all in *Enciclopedia României*: vol. 1: *Statul*, București, Cultura Națională, [1938], pp. 586-592, resp. 605-612, 613-618.

Besides this, there stood a staunch and growing anti-Carolist stance developed along both intertwined organizational venues, but most conspicuously exhibited by the Citizens Block. The attempt of the latter to launch a periodical of its own failed, the two-pages journal *Cetățeanul* disappearing after three issues coming in July, August and October 1932 respectively and giving information about incessant harassments from the part of the authorities, also referring to the first legal charges brought against Forțu on account first of his attacks on the prime minister Iorga with the occasion of a congress of the schoolteachers held on May 29²⁶⁰ – before the creation of the Block – and then of some statements delivered in the newspaper *Curentul*.²⁶¹ Arrested on January 15, 1933, Forțu is heralded in *Drum nou* – transformed into an organ of both the Block and the Confederation on October 1, 1932²⁶² – as “the foremost social hero” and “a great citizen”, by opposition to the “false apostle” Iorga,²⁶³ repeated references to his struggle with the judicial system being then given in the same journal and in *Calendarul*.²⁶⁴

Calendarul disappears at the end of 1933 after taking pains to emphasize the consistency of its negative stance towards the party of the defunct prime minister I.

²⁶⁰ Gh. Pruncu, “De ce?”, in *Cetățeanul* 1: 2, August 1, 1932, p. 2.

²⁶¹ *Cetățeanul* 1: 3, October 1932, p. 1.

²⁶² *Drum nou* 3: 20, October 1, 1932, p. 1.

²⁶³ N.N. Crețu, “Gr. Forțu”, in *Drum nou* 4: 3, January 29, 1933, p. 1.

²⁶⁴ (unsigned) “Arestarea profesorului Forțu”, in *Calendarul* 2: 273, January 18, 1933, p. 3; (unsigned) “Cazul Forțu în discuția Asociației Generale a Profesorilor Secundari”, in *Calendarul* 2: 274, January 19, 1933, p. 5; Nichifor Crainic, “Grigore Forțu”, in *Calendarul* 2: 275, January 20, 1933, p. 1; Idem, “Simbolul Forțu”, in *Calendarul* 2: 278, January 23, 1933, p. 1; Idem, “Grigore Forțu revoluționar?”, in *Calendarul* 2: 294, February 12, 1933, p. 1.

G. Duca,²⁶⁵ but *Drum nou* survives the same moment protesting vehemently against the outlawing of the Citizens Block, together with the Iron Guard, shortly before the elections held on December 20-29.²⁶⁶ Restating its corporatist creed²⁶⁷ and strengthening the nationalist one,²⁶⁸ the journal continues to appear over the first part of 1934 – however facing, as in the past, temporary interdictions and harassments – , being finally disbanded after publishing a “hymn for the restoration of king Carol II” with an acrostic attacking the king’s mistress, Elena Lupescu – and running as “but without Lupescu” (“însă fără Lupeasca”).²⁶⁹ It reappears on September 29, 1940, after the abdication of Carol II, explaining the circumstances of its disappearance six years beforehand,²⁷⁰ having Forțu as a director, following firmly an Iron Guardist line under the National Legionary State installed on September 14 – thus referring to the fascist leader Codreanu, eliminated by Carol in November 1938, as to a quintessential “teacher”²⁷¹ –, making no reference to the Confederation of Professional Associations but nevertheless describing the 1932 program of the Citizens

²⁶⁵ Traian Brăileanu, “Agonia liberalilor”, in *Calendarul* 2: 551, December 31, 1933, p. 5.

²⁶⁶ (unsigned) “Tovărășia vinovaților”, in *Drum nou* 4: 44, December 31, 1933, p. 1.

²⁶⁷ I.D. Enescu, “Corporatismul”, in *Drum nou* 5: 1, February 25, 1934, p. 1; Idem, “Corporatismul și partidele”, in *Drum nou* 5: 2, March 11, 1934, p. 1.

²⁶⁸ N.N. Crețu, “Metodele presei ovreești”, in *Drum nou* 5: 6, April 22, 1934, p. 1; Dim. Trăilă, “Partidele vechi și curentele noi”, in *Drum nou* 5: 7, April 29, 1934, p. 1.

²⁶⁹ (unsigned) “Imnul restaurației regelui Carol II”, in *Drum nou* 5: 14, June 17, 1934, p. 1.

²⁷⁰ (unsigned) “De ce nu am mai apărut”, in *Drum nou* 5: 15, September 29, 1940, p. 1.

²⁷¹ Grigore Forțu, “Învățătorul”, in *Drum nou* 5: 15, September 29, 1940, p. 1.

Block as “integrally applied” by the nationalist revolution underway.²⁷² Disavowing the Guardist rebellion against general Antonescu of January 21-23, 1941²⁷³ and welcoming the installation of the general’s own regime,²⁷⁴ the journal launched in 1930 for promoting a reform meant to pattern the Romanian state around the interests of the productive forces organized in professional associations has its last issue published in May 1941, with an article by Forțu that gives an enthusiastic support to the educational policies of the military dictator.²⁷⁵

8

Manoilescu’s conception of corporatism has been repeatedly related to his theory of economic protectionism, being understood as an outgrowth of the latter and as a political device able to allow the implementation of its recommendations.²⁷⁶ While the

²⁷² Gh. Pruncu, “Un program aplaudat un an, prigonit șapte ani și aplicat integral”, in *Drum nou* 5: 16, October 6, 1940, p. 1.

²⁷³ Grigore Forțu, “O criză de conducere”, in *Drum nou* 6: 4, February 9, 1941, p. 1.

²⁷⁴ Idem, “Plebiscitul”, in *Drum nou* 6: 7, March 2, 1941, p. 1.

²⁷⁵ Idem, “O mare reformă: reforma școlară”, in *Drum nou* 6: 16, May 11, 1941, p. 1.

²⁷⁶ Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania. Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1969 [1951], pp. 192-198; Philippe C. Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu and the Political Consequences of Delayed-Dependent Development on the Periphery of Western Europe”, in Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940. A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978, pp. 117-139; Joseph L. Love, *Crafting the Third World. Theorizing Underdevelopment in*

connection between the two bodies of theorizing is undisputable, no proof of their shaping in interrelation before the moment 1932 can be documented, and the author himself did not take pains to build retrospectively such an interpretation of his intellectual evolution when writing his memoirs. When publishing in 1930 a lecture delivered in March of the previous year, hosted by the General Union of Industrialists in Romania and meant to popularize in the country his protectionist ideas, the future director of *Lumea nouă* makes no reference to the political ideas that would become associated that strongly with his name.²⁷⁷ The same holds true for a lecture delineating a “program of economic policy” hosted in November 1930 by the Union of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry²⁷⁸ – otherwise a cradle and a privileged reference of corporatist pleading in the country, for reasons to which we shall come back in the following – or for a Senate speech delivered in July 1931 as a member of the Iorga cabinet and designed to clarify the ideological stance of that experiment of governing “above parties”.²⁷⁹ Otherwise, in his first parliamentary speech, delivered in 1926, when acting as a deputy of the People’s Party and an undersecretary at the Finance Ministry in the government of the same political organization, Manoilescu argues for the unavoidability of capitalism in the given historical circumstances, presenting the system in question as “a school preparing [mankind] for all superior economic forms, as for example corporatism or

Rumania and Brasil, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996, pp. 71-98.

²⁷⁷ Mihail Manoilescu, *O nouă concepție a protecționismului industrial*, București, Tipografia “Bucovina” I.E. Torouțiu, 1930.

²⁷⁸ Idem, *Un program de politică economică*, București, Tiparul Românesc, 1930.

²⁷⁹ Idem, *Constituționalism și sinceritate*, București, Regia “Monitorul Oficial”, 1931.

even a certain kind of socialism, which is still unavailable".²⁸⁰ The passing and non-engaged style of this isolated reference is rather likely to contradict the idea of the gradual incubation of corporatist ideas in the mind of the author hand in hand with his vision in the economic field. There are good reasons to suppose, therefore, that the advocacy of *Drum nou* and *Calendarul* – and the general mood thus created in the country in favor of the creed – contributed significantly to turning Manoilescu towards embracing the corporatist view in 1932, however unacknowledged this influence might be.

There are no reasons to raise doubts, otherwise, regarding the entrenchment of Manoilescu's thinking in the tradition of Romanian mainstream liberal ideas and policies, resulted from the adaptation of the original doctrine of western provenance to the conditions of delayed development.²⁸¹ When participating in the 1920's to articulating the legitimating discourse supporting such adaptations under the label of "neoliberalism", he nevertheless brings specific emphases by comparison to other figures serving the same cause (and certainly by comparison to ideologists from other East European countries engaged in the same enterprise²⁸²). Thus unlike

²⁸⁰ Idem, *O mărturisire de credință*, București, Tipografia Ion C. Văcărescu, 1926, p. 9.

²⁸¹ Andrew C. Janos, "Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective: the Case of Romania", in Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940. A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978, pp. 72-116; Victoria F. Brown, "The Adaptation of a Western Political Theory in a Peripheral State: The Case of Romanian Liberalism", in Stephen Fischer-Galati et al., eds., *Romania between East and West*, Boulder, Colo., East European Monographs, 1982, pp. 269-301.

²⁸² Daniel Chirot, "Ideology, Reality and Competing Models of Development in Eastern Europe between the Two World

I.G. Duca, who in 1923 clarifies the official position of his party on the topic by merely asserting that “the liberal doctrine considers progress as possible only on the basis of order, democracy, nationalism and social harmony” – or still more sharply that “liberalism does not conceive of progress as possible without order”²⁸³ –, and unlike Ștefan Zeletin, who in 1926 broadens such characteristic statements by cynically assuming the past and present unpleasant manifestations of oligarchic politics, façade parliamentarianism and bureaucratic profligacy springing from the National Liberal Party strategy of modernization currently refashioned as a new interpretation of the liberal ideals,²⁸⁴ Manoilescu is keen to invest neoliberalism with the task of acting for obtaining a balance between competing classes in society, further defining this envisioned balance – by taking an implicit departure from Duca – as something different from “the so-called ‘social harmony’, which is more of a non-political desideratum than a political idea”.²⁸⁵ Staying within the conventional wisdom of the time when defining property as a “social function” with the occasion of the debates preparing the constitutional revision of 1923,²⁸⁶ he goes beyond this when allowing that “neoliberalism accepts any form of economic socialism, provided that it

Wars”, in *East European Politics and Societies* 3: 3, 1989, pp. 378-411.

²⁸³ I.G. Duca, “Doctrina liberală”, in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul “Cultura Națională”, [1923], p. 104.

²⁸⁴ Ștefan Zeletin, “Neoliberalismul” [1926], in *Neoliberalismul*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Scripta, 1992 [1927], pp. 83-100.

²⁸⁵ Mihail Manoilescu, “Neoliberalismul”, in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul “Cultura Națională”, [1923], p. 147.

²⁸⁶ Idem, “Politica economică de stat și constituția”, in D. Gusti et al., *Noua constituție a României*, București, Tiparul “Cultura Națională”, [1922], p. 171.

does not lead to a greater amount of constraint placed upon the individual [...] and it is not imposed by a political apparatus, instead emerging naturally from the development of social and economic forces”.²⁸⁷ Condemning the sectarian politics of the political current of peasantism²⁸⁸ – and meeting again with Zeletin on this ground²⁸⁹ – he points to the People’s Party (which he is serving in the period alongside Zeletin), to the Transylvanian National Party and to Nicolae Iorga’s Nationalist Democratic Party as to the only political organizations able to incarnate the neoliberal idea – by virtue of being less affected by the same sectarian (or “material”) interests –, also describing the National Liberal Party as an entity “whose manifest and occult power is a danger for the political health and even for the moral health of the country”.²⁹⁰

The works of Manoilescu have impressed their commentators by “the deep-seated metaphoric vision of an ‘engineered’ society” that they display, something that gives great credit to the hypothesis that “the intellectual basis of his rejection of economic liberalism and his later conversion to political authoritarianism was rooted [...] in the architectonic vision of an intentionally created and balanced order”.²⁹¹ If we subscribe to this, then the clearest anticipations of the political theories of the 1930’s that can be discovered in his texts published over the previous decade are those invoking “the principles of scientific organization” expected to “dominate the entire social life of tomorrow” and envisioned to be “applied to

²⁸⁷ Idem, “Neoliberalismul”, p. 155.

²⁸⁸ Idem, *Țărănism și democrație*, București, Atelierele “Poporul”, 1922.

²⁸⁹ Ștefan Zeletin, “Țărănism și marxism”, in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* 5: 1-2, 1924, pp. 192-220.

²⁹⁰ Manoilescu, *Țărănism și democrație*, p. 37.

²⁹¹ Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu”, p. 120.

the whole system of national production as to a single enterprise”.²⁹² The corporatist design was to provide him with an instrument able to impart a considerable amount of scientific character to political reform. Once suffering the conversion mentioned above, the thinking of Manoilescu largely dropped out recognizable traces of its original liberal inspiration, although never going that far as to deny it. It appears, however, that the relevance of the intellectual genealogy in question came to be better intimated by the author towards the end of his career, after his ambitions as a politician had been thwarted by the disastrous record of his tenure as minister of foreign affairs in the last Carolist cabinet led by Ion Gigurtu, across the period July-September 1940 (when presiding over the devolution of Northern Transylvania to Hungary by virtue of the Vienna settlement arbitrated by Germany and Italy, on August 30). His book of 1942 on “the role and destiny of the Romanian bourgeoisie”²⁹³ develops a train of thinking exhibited by the Iron Guardist statement on “the anti-bourgeois nature of the national revolution” of 1937,²⁹⁴ however adding new accents to the inquiry. Placing himself recognizably once again alongside Zeletin²⁹⁵ in order to supersede decisively this time the vision of his “neoliberal” colleague of the 1920’s, Manoilescu argues now forcefully for the reasonableness of a post-liberal survival of the bourgeoisie as a social category in the framework of full-blown economic nationalism and of political corporatism, as long as “the national revolution is not able to create [...] a governing

²⁹² Manoilescu, *Țărănism și democrație*, p. 50.

²⁹³ Mihail Manoilescu, *Rostul și destinul burgheziei românești*, ed. de Leonard Oprea, București, Athena, 1997 [1942].

²⁹⁴ Manoilescu, “Sensul antiburghez al revoluției naționale”.

²⁹⁵ Ștefan Zeletin, *Burghezia română. Originea și rolul său istoric*, ed. de C.D. Zeletin, București, Humanitas, 1991 [1925].

force outside the bourgeoisie”, also acknowledging the failure of the 1938-1940 Carolist regime in this respect.²⁹⁶

The migration of Manoilescu’s thinking from the fold of liberalism towards that of the nationalist Right along the Romanian ideological spectrum was not an exception within the larger camp of corporatist advocacy whose contours have been delineated so far. While the *Calendarul* branch of the doctrine does certainly not display such an ancestry, the original discourse harbored by *Drum nou* and the movement of the professional associations exhibits a highly surprising attempt to enlist corporatism in the struggle to attain liberal individualist ideals, entrusting the design of brushing aside party-based parliamentarianism in favor of a professions-based one with the mission of cleaning the local capitalist economy of distortions arising from ill-sponsored political interference. Certainly, however, there is no point in looking to the National Liberal Party tradition or to the “neoliberal” searches of the 1920’s set in continuity to it in order to find the ideological inspiration of such endeavors. Much rather, the pleadings of the early 1930’s advanced by such figures as I.D. Enescu and I. Constanțiu resonate precisely with those of the best-known of Manoilescu’s partners of polemical exchanges, namely the economist George Tașcă, a late 1930’s defender of classical liberal ideas taking charge with both the theory of economic protectionism and that of corporatism in the pages of the journal *Analele economice și statistice*²⁹⁷ and

²⁹⁶ Manoilescu, *Rostul și destinul burgheziei românești*, p. 547.

²⁹⁷ G. Tașcă, “Liberalism și corporatism”, in *Analele economice și statistice* 20: 1-2, January-February 1937, pp. 1-70; Mihail Manoilescu, “Doctrinile și teoriile noastre în lumina criticei (răspuns d-lui G. Tașcă)”, in *Analele economice și statistice* 20: 3-5, March-May 1937, pp. 27-92; G. Tașcă, “Liberalism și corporatism. Studiu critic. Răspuns d-lui M. Manoilescu”, in *Analele economice și statistice* 21: 1-3, January-March

whose interventions on the topic over the previous decade bear overtones significantly at odds to those of Duca, Zeletin and Manoilescu previously considered.²⁹⁸

Whatever such implicit connections, it appears that no direct intellectual encounter between Tașcă and the collaborators of *Drum nou* can be recorded. Instead, there can be ascertained a degree of interplay between the latter trend and the publishing venture defending most consistently classical liberal values and the patterns of capitalist economy in interwar Romania: the journal *Libertatea. Economică, politică, socială, culturală*, led by the economist George Strat, launched in January 1933, greeted soon thereafter in *Drum nou*²⁹⁹ and promoting a discourse markedly different from the mainstream liberal one of the local context (although departing less explicitly from this one than its ancestor *Curentul nou*, published in two series – in 1905-1906, then in 1920 – and connected to it most conspicuously by the figures of H. Sanielevici and Ștefan Antim). We can indeed find I. Constanțiu in the pages of *Libertatea* in July 1933 delivering a pleading for philosophical individualism,³⁰⁰ and again in July 1935 with an argumentation in favor of free trade economy³⁰¹ fully resonating with his discourse elaborated within the fold of the movement of professional associations and beforehand. His 1936 critical engagement with the vision of economic planning

1938, pp. 13-85; Mihail Manoilescu, "Lupta între două veacuri. Ultim răspuns d-lui George Tașcă", in *Analele economice și statistice* 21: 4-6, April-June 1938, pp. 11-101.

²⁹⁸ G. Tașcă, "Liberalismul economic", in D. Gusti et al., *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, București, Tiparul "Cultura Națională", [1923], pp. 89-101.

²⁹⁹ *Drum nou* 4: 2, January 15, 1933, p. 3.

³⁰⁰ I. Constanțiu, "Sinteza individualistă", in *Libertatea* 1: 13-14, July 5-20, 1933, pp. 20-212.

³⁰¹ Idem, "Psihologia economiei dirijate", in *Libertatea* 3: 13-14, July 5-20, 1935, pp. 203-205.

includes Manoilescu's theory of protectionism under the rubric of "economic Cartesianism",³⁰² benefiting from a rejoinder from the latter author in *Lumea nouă*.³⁰³

Ideological vacillations are as significant as revelators of the connections between the two currents of thought we are considering as the samples of discursive linearity involved. Certainly a case in point is that of E. A. Poulopol, a central figure of *Libertatea* – making his first appearance there in May 1933 with an article on "the anti-humanist politics and the individual"³⁰⁴ –, but also an occasional contributor to *Drum nou*, where a conference by him delivered as part of one of the series organized by the Confederation of Professional Associations is published in May 1932. Taking the opportunity for treating the problem of the relations between "the state, the individual and the group", Poulopol refers to the "corporatist organization that we envision for tomorrow" only to underscore the need of strictly observing the difference between the realities of the non-individualist medieval guilds – "closed circles, where individuals had a difficult access, in order to become the slaves of collective interests once accepted as members" – and the principles required as foundations of modern corporations – "that have to avoid those shortcomings, being instead liberal towards the individuals, stimulating besides progress and the development of production".³⁰⁵ We find the same author issuing after one year a harsh critique of "the corporatist

³⁰² Idem, "Cartezianism economic", in *Libertatea* 4: 2, January 20, 1936, pp. 17-20.

³⁰³ Mihail Manoilescu, "Naturalitate și artificialitate economică", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 2, February 1936, pp. 82-84.

³⁰⁴ E.A. Poulopol, "Politica anti-umanistă și individul", in *Libertatea* 1: 2, January 20, 1933, pp. 21-22.

³⁰⁵ (unsigned) "Statul, indivizii, grupul. Conferința d-lui E.A. Poulopol", in *Drum nou* 3: 9, May 1, 1932, p. 2.

myth” in *Libertatea*, this time disclosing the “illusion” cherished by the partisans of corporatism when thinking that “if individuals are organized as electors on the basis of their belonging to professions, they will vote according to technical criteria instead of political ones”, as well as the “presumption” they cultivate when considering that “the members of a professional group necessarily have a just representation of the interests of that group”.³⁰⁶ Addressing no specific target, the intervention was to be met with a rejoinder by a collaborator of *Lumea nouă*,³⁰⁷ and again by Manoilescu himself in the same journal.³⁰⁸

The very significant overlapping between the discourse represented by Enescu, Constanțiu and Gruia and the one promoted by Sanielevici, Antim and Strat is certainly much more revealing than the inroads taken by Constanțiu into the pages of *Libertatea* or those of Poulopol into the domain of *Drum nou*. Disclosing this connection draws us towards elaborating a broader picture of the functioning of corporatist ideas in interwar Romania, as placed at the borderline between the field of liberal ideological pleading and the camp of right-wing nationalism represented by the nationalist-democratic trend of Nicolae Iorga and by the national-Christian and the fascist parties and ideologies. To the same extent as the vision of Manoilescu, the corporatist view promoted by the movement of professional associations was strained across the divide separating the two large ideological segments of liberalism and of the Right. Moreover, a significant relation between the morphology of liberalism and that of corporatism can be discerned.

³⁰⁶ E.A. Poulopol, “Mitul corporatist”, in *Libertatea* 1: 10, May 20, 1933, p. 152.

³⁰⁷ Mihail C. Zaharia, “Mit corporatist sau mit individualist?”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 6, June 1933, p. 366-371.

³⁰⁸ Mihail Manoilescu, “Între azi și mâine”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 7, July 1933, pp. 395-400.

Indeed, in the same fashion as Manoilescu's brand of corporatist theorizing came from within the fold of the dominant liberal discourse – together with its “neoliberal” progeny of the 1920's – , the theory featuring in *Drum nou* – with specific accents gradually decreasing in favor of a growing fusion with fascist ideas – originated from the same broad field of discourse to which *Curentul nou* and *Libertatea* belonged, and which represented a minority local interpretation of the basic tenets of the liberal conception. Starting as a search for clarifying the place occupied by corporatism within the ideological constructions of the Romanian fascist and traditionalist Right, the present inquiry thus evolved towards a clarification of the role performed by the same idea as a mediator between the forms of liberalism and the varieties of right-wing advocacy in the local context. It has to be related, therefore, to a series of previous works by the same author delineating in general terms – and against the historical interpretative canons – the typology of Romanian pre-communist liberalism,³⁰⁹ as well as treating separately the mainstream liberal (modernizer and oligarchic) discourse – with its most prominent, Zeletinian theoretical reinforcement³¹⁰ – and the two oppositional liberal trends pointing to a revaluation of classical individualist values and of free trade economy (originated with Sanielevici and developed in the periodicals *Curentul nou* and *Libertatea*),³¹¹ respectively to a broadening of the vision as to incorporate radical-democratic and socially-sensitive objectives (incarnated

³⁰⁹ Victor Rizescu, “Canonul liberal, politica oligarhică și optimismul modernizator”, in *Canonul și vocile uitate*, pp. 165-221. See also above, chapter 2.

³¹⁰ Idem, “Un critic al Partidului Liberal: primul Ștefan Zeletin”, in *Canonul și vocile uitate*, pp. 27-91.

³¹¹ Idem, “Înțelepciunea nebunului sau gândirea politică a lui Henric Sanielevici”, in *Canonul și vocile uitate*, pp. 93-164.

by Dumitru Drăghicescu and by his journal *Dreptatea socială* of 1923).³¹²

One of Constanțiu's interventions in *Libertatea* was meant to ponder the implications and the limits of the nationalist predicament (in connection to a discussion of the "peasant state"),³¹³ and we identified the origins of this concern in his 1916 inquiry on the value of free enterprise for a healthy national development.³¹⁴ There is here an indication for the fact that the reorientation of the corporatist ideology of *Drum nou* towards adopting an emphatic nationalist stance streamlining its members on the road to fascist and national-Christian politics was not a matter of mere contextual influences (however much the influences of the sort contributed to this, as shown above). As a further proof of this, we can encounter the same author in 1931 defending the principles of a well-ordered capitalist economy in the nationalist journal *Neamul românesc*,³¹⁵ alongside an informative statement of I.D. Enescu on the activities of the professional associations.³¹⁶

The writings of Constanțiu do not exhibit only the early fusion of nationalist and classical liberal ideological options on the platform of the corporatist idea, but also a belated survival of the second strain of thought

³¹² See above, chapter 3.

³¹³ I. Constanțiu, "Poate fi statul specific național?", in *Libertatea* 2: 19, October 5, 1934, pp. 294-296.

³¹⁴ Idem, *Valoarea socială și economică a monopolurilor*.

³¹⁵ (unsigned) "Principiile economiei capitaliste. Rezumatul conferinței d-lui I Constanțiu", in *Neamul românesc* 26: 174, August 5, 1931, pp. 2-3; (unsigned) "La hotarele capitalismului. Conferința d-lui I. Constanțiu la Fundația Carol", in *Neamul românesc* 26: 56, March 11, 1931, p. 1; I. Constanțiu, "Economie civilizată și finanță bancară", in *Neamul românesc* 26: 233, October 17, 1931, p. 1.

³¹⁶ (unsigned) "Asociațiile profesionale despre legea construcțiilor. Ce ne spune dl. arhitect I.D. Enescu", in *Neamul românesc* 26: 171, August 1, 1931, p. 3.

mentioned, in a context heavily suffused with the rhetoric of right-wing nationalism. In a speech delivered in 1939 in the Chamber of Deputies – and welcoming the corporatist trappings of the Carolist regime by describing the assembly of which he is a member as “a parliament of one single party but of all the professions”, unlike the “previous ones, where uncounted parties were represented, but only the profession of politics”³¹⁷ –, he complains that, “as recently corporatism has come into fashion, a score of corporatist doctrines and programs emerged, which under this label target such a profound transformation of society [...] as to bring to life an altogether new world, without any continuity with the old one”.³¹⁸ Making reference to his 1933 statement in *Lumea nouă* that we covered above, he recalls how he “rejected such doctrines in the past, pleading instead for a type of corporatism most suited to the very spirit of the economic and cultural guilds” and for understanding the corporation as “nothing more than the mere organized whole of the productive factors allowed to function as freely as possible”.³¹⁹ Recommending himself as “an exponent of the 1906 generation”³²⁰ – that is of the one marked by Nicolae Iorga’s assertion of the nationalist idea over the first decade of the XXth century –, Constanțiu also looks with distaste at the fact that his country “has been living for several years under the regime of heavy reglementation of the foreign trade”, making heard his belief that “all civilized states will have to return to the regime of free trade”.³²¹ This is certainly a spectacular

³¹⁷ I. Constanțiu, *Discurs la mesaj rostit în ședința Adunării Deputaților din 23 iunie 1939*, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1939, p. 4.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

belated occurrence of the original discourse promoted by the movement of professional associations at the moment 1929-1930, of no less significance that I.V. Gruia's vindications of the democratic interpretation of the corporatist idea advanced in 1940 and 1941.

9

Mihail Polihroniade's deep involvement with defending corporatism from a fascist standpoint over the years 1932-1933 in the pages of *Calendarul* – and occasionally in those of *Drum nou* – have not received much attention from the part of the literature dealing with the interplay between the two ideological trends. Otherwise, the statements most often mentioned when the question comes to the fore are those advanced by the Iron Guard leader Ion I. Moța in his articles “The Pre-corporatist Stage” and “Under the Burden of Historical Sediments”, first published in the journal *Axa* in 1933, reissued in a book of 1936 and invoked as a proof of the reluctant attitude taken by the Romanian radical Right to the corporatist program by old³²² and recent³²³ approaches to the topic alike. In a fashion fully resonating with the strictures of Crainic's program for an “ethnocratic state”, Moța deplores the fact that “corporatism, as it is understood [in Romania], and especially by Mr. Manoilescu, is confined to a discussion about the organization of the state, without ever raising the

³²² Roberts, *Rumania*, p. 231.

³²³ Platon, “The Iron Guard and the ‘New State’”, pp. 76-77; Costa Pinto, “Fascism, Corporatism and the Crafting of Authoritarian Institutions in Interwar European Dictatorships”, p. 105.

problem of modifying the ethnic structure of this state”.³²⁴ The vision thus described is further characterized as “vitiating by the survivals of an education without national color, very close to the Marxist and Masonic philosophy”.³²⁵

Although the objection is made with the qualification that “after reforming the basic ethnic structure of the state, [...] the new dressing of corporatism will indeed become appropriate”,³²⁶ it certainly gives expression to a widespread attitude. The same train of thinking can be found, indeed, in the writings of the staunch Iron Guardist and Cernăuți sociology professor Traian Brăileanu, who recommends Manoilescu’s theory of corporatism as “applicable only after reorganizing the state on the basis of restoring the primacy of the political factor by making appeal to the living forces of the nation”, also reminding the readers that “only by such nationalist revolutions Italy and Germany could avoid the installation of demagogic tyrannies on the verge of destroying civilization”.³²⁷ In a 1935 article published in his journal *Însemnări sociologice*, he maintains “against all corporatist or non-corporatist theories, that the economic problem in the national state can only be solved by first accomplishing a deep political reform”,³²⁸ warning against the expectation that his works would offer a “geometric and symmetric scientific theory of the

³²⁴ Ion I. Moța, “Faza precorporativă” (first published in *Axa* in September 1933), in *Cranii de lemn. Articole, 1932-1936*, ed. a IV-a, București, Ed. “Totul pentru Țară”, 1937, p. 145.

³²⁵ Idem, “Sub povara remanențelor” (first published in *Axa* in December 1933), in *Cranii de lemn. Articole, 1932-1936*, ed. a IV-a, București, Ed. “Totul pentru Țară”, 1937, p. 155.

³²⁶ Idem, “Faza precorporativă”, p. 147.

³²⁷ Traian Brăileanu, “Noi teorii politice”, in *Sociologia și arta guvernării. Articole politice*, ed. a II-a, București, Cartea Românească, 1940, p. 355.

³²⁸ Idem, “Problema economică în statul național”, in *Însemnări sociologice* 1: 7, October 1935, p. 11.

future Romanian state, be it corporatist or no”.³²⁹ In 1937, another intervention in the same periodical invokes the authority of Moța’s pronouncements and of Brăileanu’s clarifications on Manoilescu quoted above in order to argue that in Romania “corporatism cannot be introduced immediately, [...] in so far as this could only have the result of creating strong organizations dominated by foreigners”.³³⁰

If *Axa* and *Însemnări sociologice* qualify the appropriateness of corporatist reform by invoking the need of accomplishing first a revolutionary transformation of the national body, the right-wing journal *Dreapta* – offering wide space for fascist ideological utterances – advances, at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933, basic objections against the design, presented as nothing more but one of the “imported ideologies”, as unsuited as communism to the Romanian conditions.³³¹ Maintaining that a parliament structured according to corporatist principles would be non-functional if including peasant representatives in a proportion of 80% and unjustly shaped if providing the same number of members for each profession, the articles reach the conclusion that the classical option of “a political leadership composed of people prepared for this” is to be preferred, in the end, to the innovations of the sort.³³² A stricture is added to the extent that “there is need for an organ taking care of the

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³³⁰ Leon Țopa, “Politicul și economicul”, in *Însemnări sociologice* 3: 8, November 1937, p. 18.

³³¹ Em. Buznea, “Despre ideologiile de import”, in *Dreapta* 2: 4, December 25, 1932, p. 3.

³³² Idem, “Despre ideologiile de import, II: corporatismul”, in *Dreapta* 2: 5, January 20, 1933, p. 2.

general interests, and not merely of the professional ones, provided that the whole is more important than its parts”.³³³

In spite of all this, there can be invoked some proofs that the Romanian fascist discourse evolved towards a better intimation of the relevance of corporatism as an integral part of its political program, thus confirming an interpretation summarized at the beginning of the present article that also takes as a baseline the reservations expressed by Moța in 1933.³³⁴ It is true that, when becoming a collaborator of the corporatist organ *Lumea nouă*, Polihroniade is not interested in continuing his sustained engagement with the promotion of precisely the corporatist idea, instead preferring to tackle other topics, as for example that of the new social reality of a revolutionary class of intellectual proletarians, created after the First World War and seen as the privileged social springboard of the envisioned national revolution.³³⁵ Likewise, after publishing in 1932 his dissertation on the corporatist organization of the Italian fascist state reviewed at the time by Polihroniade in *Calendarul*, Vasile Marin³³⁶ largely abandons the subject, turning to a sustained inquiry regarding the reaction of “the nation against the imported state”.³³⁷ His volume of articles published posthumously in 1937 and meant to delineate “the creed of a generation” touches vaguely on the problem of professional representation as a cure of national ills when reminding that “the principle of national solidarity of the interests of production, with all

³³³ Idem, “Corporatism și democrație”, in *Dreapta* 2: 6, February 15, 1933, p. 4.

³³⁴ Gregor, *Faces of Janus*, p. 230.

³³⁵ Mihail Polihroniade, “Proletariatul intelectual și revoluția națională”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 2, February 1936, pp. 57-63.

³³⁶ Marin, *Fascismul*.

³³⁷ Idem, “Națiunea împotriva statului de import”, in *Axa* 2: 6, February 5, 1933, pp. 1-2.

its multiple forms” has to be adjusted to the “interests of the state and of the nation, which are higher than those of all the individuals, groups and professional categories”.³³⁸ No reference to the corporatist idea is given by the supreme Iron Guard leader Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu in the 1936 book recollecting his evolution and laying bare his political credo.³³⁹ Still, the journal *Buna vestire* of 1937-1938 displays – alongside the inroads of Manoilescu and of his closed collaborators at *Lumea nouă* quoted above – repeated (and hitherto hardly noticed) references to the problem,³⁴⁰ the series of which featuring the figure of Petre Creștinu, a staunch partisan of the conception,³⁴¹ echoing in his pieces Manoilescu’s concerns about the relation between the revolution of the Right and the fate of the bourgeois class³⁴² and convinced of the fact that “the corporatist type of state, based on a

³³⁸ Idem, “Între democrație și statul totalitar”, in *Crez de generație*, ed. a II-a, București, Tipografia “Bucovina” I.E. Torouțiu, 1937, pp. 222-223.

³³⁹ Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, ed. a II-a, București, Ed. “Totul pentru Țară”, 1937.

³⁴⁰ (unsigned) “Spirit corporativ”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 9, March 3, 1937, p. 1; (unsigned) “O corporație hulită: funcționarii”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 84, June 5, 1937, p. 1; Teodor Tăzlăoanu, “Italia. Realizări corporative”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 95, June 29, 1937, p. 5; M. Dorneanu, “Corporatismul se impune pretutindeni”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 97, June 24, 1937, p. 5; (unsigned) “Confederația muncii intelectuale românești”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 297, February 15, 1938, pp. 1, 3.

³⁴¹ Petre Șt. Creștinu, “Finalități corporative”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 40, April 8, 1937, p. 2; Idem, “Problema corporatismului”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 89, June 13, 1937, p. 2; Idem, “Realitățile corporative în țara noastră și viitorul lor apropiat”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 90, June 15, 1937, p. 2.

³⁴² Idem, “Problema burgheziei și mișcarea de dreapta”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 69, May 18, 1937, p. 2.

radically advanced economic mentality, is the only one able to solve the problem of labor”.³⁴³

A brief pronouncement on corporatism contained in an interview given in *Buna vestire* in January 1938 by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu – at a moment when the prospects of a fascist revolution looked bright, still under the National-Christian government of Octavian Goga installed in December of the previous year, before the installation of the Carolist dictatorship in February of the same year and the beginning of the persecutions against the Iron Guard in April – can be taken as marking the culmination of the (relative) corporatist revival within the trend of Romanian fascism, coming after an intermediate eclipse of the idea, itself following in the footsteps of the promising departure consummated at *Calendarul* in 1932-1933. Explaining that his political activities “employ the method of nature”, being meant to foster “spontaneous reforms”, that his political organization has evolved on this path of natural evolution and “is continuing to follow the same path”, the charismatic leader acknowledges that “this appears to be the path of corporatism”, which is “coming out of necessity, and not as a doctrine”. As a proof, he points to the recent reorganization of the fascist party itself on the criterion of professional categories.³⁴⁴ Can this be taken as a decisive proof for the victory of the developmental vision patterned on the model of corporatism within the ideological stream of fascism in interwar Romania, before the final demise of the latter? We shall examine the question again by considering the way the view of regenerative nationalism invoked by Moța and Brăileanu as a precondition of any

³⁴³ Idem, “Munca românească și organizarea”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 59, May 2, 1937, p. 8.

³⁴⁴ (unsigned) “Un interview cu dl. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Omul nou. Spre corporatism. Guvernul. Minoritățile”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 271, January 26, 1938, p. 1.

project of development pervaded fascist social and economic thought, also exploring the relation between forward-looking and backward-looking ideological attitudes throughout the evolution of right-wing advocacy. Before proceeding with this, however, we shall first have to take a deeper look into the process of the corporatist gradual accommodation with fascism.

10

Axa hosted not only Moța's reluctant attitude towards the corporatist vision, but also expressions of utter enthusiasm on the same issue, as given by Nichifor Crainic, who – looking forward, for sure, to the broadening of the program by the addition of the ethnocratic component – could envision the “anti-democratic revolution” as “necessarily a corporatist one, because corporatism is based on the cultivation of competences, on the moral conception of work, on individualism entrenched in social categories, on the right type of authority which is suited to the spirit of the Romanian people”.³⁴⁵ In spite of this, Manoilescu could point at the end of 1933 to the incongruence between the rejection of corporatism in *Axa* and the support for it in *Calendarul* – both journals professing a quasi-Iron Guardist identity – as to an indication for the ideological incoherence of local fascism.³⁴⁶ It is to note, otherwise, that at the same moment *Axa* allowed Polihroniade to take a harsh fascist departure from the national-Christian trend of A.C. Cuza – with which it was cohabitating at

³⁴⁵ Nichifor Crainic, “Spre stânga sau spre dreapta?”, in *Axa* 1: 1, October 20, 1932, p. 1.

³⁴⁶ Mihail Manoilescu, “Opozanții corporatismului”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 11, November 1933, pp. 689-690.

Calendarul –, involving the statement that national “salvation [...] cannot come from Cuzism, which loves democracy and intends to replace the triangle with the Swastika in the corners of the Masonic lodges”.³⁴⁷

Already in September 1933, Joldea-Rădulescu gives a rejoinder to the idea of a “pre-corporatist stage” as a requirement of the corporatist social and political reconstruction³⁴⁸ and in December he tackles the general problem of the relation between the corporatist view and the project of a national revolution.³⁴⁹ Then, in his book of 1935, he alludes polemically to the position in the field best represented by Moța, recording how “the partisans of nationalist revolutionary movements [...] claim that corporatism can only come after a national revolution, not in advance of it” and responding to this claim by maintaining that “corporatism is itself a revolution”.³⁵⁰ This is nothing else but the rhetoric employed by Manoilescu himself, when defining in 1934 the “century of corporatism” by reference to the imperative of “organizing systematically and concretely each element of the nation in the service of a certain national ideal”,³⁵¹ further defining the corporations as “instruments harnessed to the interests of the state, which in its turn is the highest instrument harnessed to the superior ideal of the national community”.³⁵² A slight shift of emphasis then comes in Manoilescu’s discourse on the matter in 1936, when he explains the relation between nation and

³⁴⁷ Mihail Polihroniade, “Naționalism și cuzism”, in *Axa* 2: 5, January 22, 1933, pp. 1, 5.

³⁴⁸ I. Joldea-Rădulescu, “Noi și faza precorporativă”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 9, September 1933, pp. 528-534.

³⁴⁹ Idem, “Revoluție națională și național-corporatism”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 12, December 1933, pp. 728-737.

³⁵⁰ Idem, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 204.

³⁵¹ Manoilescu, *Filozofia și doctrina corporatistă*, p. 6.

³⁵² Idem, *Le siècle du corporatisme*, p. 75.

state in Romania by indicating the former element as healthier than the latter, in so far as “the state brought about Turtucaia [a shameful defeat at the hands of the Bulgarian army in the Great War], while the nation is responsible for Mărăști and Mărășești [spectacular victories over the Germans in the same war]”³⁵³ (shortly after a collaborator had described the predicament of the time as “social egoism” in the form of nationalism³⁵⁴).

Early in 1932, we can find *Lumea nouă* hosting calls for the reshaping of society on a scientific basis which are animated by a fully individualist vision – thus maintaining that “the principle of social organization applies only to the domain of the community, everything pertaining to the domain of the individual having to remain untouched”³⁵⁵ – and by a cosmopolitan conception – looking forward to “a form of social organization marked as little as possible by ethnic differentiations”.³⁵⁶ Such statements cohabitate from the very beginning, however, with others coming close to the conception of the state as the bearer of specific national ideals that would become – as shown above – a central part of Manoilescu’s doctrine of corporatism, thus asserting that “the state is being transformed, from a formal organization meant to implement order and justice, into a factor of effective coordination for all the resources and forms of life within the nation”.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ Idem, “Sensul statului la poporul românesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 8, August 1936, p. 360.

³⁵⁴ Florin Grigorcea, “Egoismul social”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 4, April 1936, pp. 169-176.

³⁵⁵ Enric Otetelișanu, “Despre organizarea rațională a societății”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 2, May 1932, p. 31.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³⁵⁷ Mircea Vulcănescu, “Gânduri despre starea bisericii românești în statul laic”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 2, May 1932, p. 17.

A significant strand stretching through the discourse of *Lumea nouă* likes to assert the non-contradiction between corporatism and the most basic demands of democracy – thus arguing that “the corporatist state is not essentially anti-democratic, in so far as the principle of popular representation will stay as the cornerstone of the corporatist parliament”³⁵⁸ –, Joldea-Rădulescu staying as one representative of the view by his clarification to the extent that “universal suffrage has to be adjusted as to take into account the occupational profile of the elector”, thus leading to the establishment of “a genuine and living representation of the country”.³⁵⁹ Manoilescu is more determined to underscore his doctrine as a departure from the democratic worldview and as participating to the elaboration of a new one “replacing equality by justice and liberty by organization”.³⁶⁰ His system displays, however, a fetter against authoritarianism, consisting in the sharp distinction between the “pure” type of corporatism that he originally advocates – conceiving of the corporations as the only possible source of public authority” – and the “subordinated” type, “eager to employ the corporations as auxiliary organs, subordinated to the state” and paradigmatically embodied by the Italian fascist regime.³⁶¹ The decision of putting into brackets for an indefinite period of time the pleading for the spontaneous remoulding of society into the patterns of pure corporatism and of pointing instead to the one-party state – together with the subordinated, statist version of corporatist regime – as to a necessary intermediate stage on the desired path of social and political transformation was a watershed in the process of Manoilescu’s

³⁵⁸ Ștefan A. Băbeanu, “Bresle și democrație”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 2, May 1932, pp. 43-45.

³⁵⁹ Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 192.

³⁶⁰ Manoilescu, *Le siècle du corporatisme*, p. 111.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

accommodation with the predicament of political authoritarianism. This came in 1936,³⁶² with the argument restated at greater length abroad in the following year.³⁶³

The process of accommodation with the fascist discourse in the pages of *Lumea nouă* takes on a firm course only at the end of 1936, when Manoilescu reviews Codreanu's programmatic book of the same year,³⁶⁴ in order to participate then, in January 1937, to the national mourning for Moța and Marin, following their disappearance on January 13, when fighting as volunteers enlisted in the forces of the Right in the Spanish civil war.³⁶⁵ Shortly before the elections of December 1937, Iron Guard fascism is appropriated as a "basic ideology of corporatist economy",³⁶⁶ hand in hand with Manoilescu's own farewell to bourgeois society uttered as a militant for the national revolution.³⁶⁷ At the beginning of 1938, the director of the corporatist periodical proclaims "political totalitarianism as aprioric" in the given circumstances, "no less than philosophical totalitarianism", further contrasting "the individualist style, which in the field of politics implies universal suffrage", to the "totalitarian style, which implies single

³⁶² Idem, "Partidul unic", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 7, July 1936, pp. 319-323; Idem, "Partidul unic, instituție politică a regimurilor noi", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 12, December 1936, pp. 513-517.

³⁶³ Idem, *Le parti unique. Institution politique des régimes nouveaux*, Paris, Les Oeuvres Françaises, 1937.

³⁶⁴ Idem, "Cartea Căpitanului", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 10-11, October-November 1936, pp. 453-459.

³⁶⁵ Idem, "De la Lord Byron la Ion Moța", in *Lumea nouă* 6: 1, January 1937, pp. 3-5.

³⁶⁶ Christian Petrescu, "Fascism, național-socialism, legionarism ca ideologii de bază ale economiei corporative", in *Lumea nouă* 6: 9, September 1937, pp. 284-297.

³⁶⁷ Manoilescu, "Sensul antiburghez al revoluției naționale".

party politics and corporatism”.³⁶⁸ This comes together with renewed attacks of Polihroniade against capitalism and democracy alike.³⁶⁹

One of the basic principles of corporatism laid down by Manoilescu is that, “in order for a state to have a national character, each corporation has to have the same character”,³⁷⁰ and *Lumea nouă* declares itself as a matter of principle in favor of the *numerus clausus* view in 1935.³⁷¹ A detailed clarification on the issue would only come, however, in 1938, being given by Manoilescu as a response to the provocation of Crainic’s program for an ethnocratic state of the previous year. Taking the opportunity of a recent article by Crainic published in *Gândirea* and coming over the problem of the “autochthonous spirit”, likewise restating the demands of ethnocracy by critical departure from the national-corporatist doctrine³⁷² (and followed by a reinforcing intervention from the part of a disciple³⁷³), Manoilescu restates his view – perfectly in tune with a statement of 1935 addressed to a clerical organization of Transylvania and underscoring that “the Romanian genius has to be identified with the Orthodox creed”³⁷⁴ – that “corporations

³⁶⁸ Idem, “Stil individualist și stil totalitar”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 1-2, January-February 1938, p. 11.

³⁶⁹ Mihail Polihroniade, “Capitalism și democrație”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 1-2, January-February 1938, pp. 25-27.

³⁷⁰ Manoilescu, *Filozofia și doctrina corporatistă*, p. 22.

³⁷¹ Ion Fotiade, “*Numerus clausus* și statul corporativ”, in *Lumea nouă* 4: 5, May 1935, pp. 223-226.

³⁷² Nichifor Crainic, “Spiritul autohton”, in *Gândirea* 17: 4, April 1938, pp. 161-169.

³⁷³ Gh. Iacob, “Statul de mâine, statul etnocratic”, *Gândirea* 17: 9, November 1938, pp. 493-496.

³⁷⁴ Mihail Manoilescu, *Românism și ortodoxie. Conferință ținută la congresul Frăției Ortodoxe Române din Caransebeș în ziua de 6 octombrie 1935*, Caransebeș, Tipografia Diocezană, 1936, p. 27.

[...] are not only meant to perform [...] economic, social, political and cultural functions, but are also [...] expected to [...] accomplish the ideal of having the Romanian element prevailing within each such functional segment of the nation”.³⁷⁵ In spite of this, he goes on to argue in another article that, as conceived by Crainic – and indeed by the *numerus clausus* wisdom generally – ethnic proportionality “is a mechanic solution applied to organic and spiritual matters”, further explaining that “only by practicing consistently the politics of Romanianization can the most appropriate ratio of minority people be obtained, and this can only vary among different braches of productive activity. It can only be established according to the specificities of the professions and of the national regions, definitely in accordance to the national interest but not by applying a single and simplistic rule as that of mere proportionality”.³⁷⁶

If the critique of the ethnocratic view in *Lumea nouă* appears as a matter of theoretical consistency, the rejection of the same vision by the national-Christian journal *Apărarea națională* in 1937 smacks of nothing else but tactical expediency marred by theoretical incoherence and blatant demagoguery. Indeed, the long unsigned article – which invokes the authority of the most comprehensive edition of A.C. Cuza’s works on social problems³⁷⁷ – denounces the corporatist design as an imitation of Italian and German fashions – despite the otherwise strong identification of the periodical and of the

³⁷⁵ Idem, “Corporatism autohton și naționalist”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 3-4, March-April 1938, p. 64.

³⁷⁶ Idem, “Pe marginea ‘statului etnocratic’”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 5-6, May-June 1938, pp. 122.

³⁷⁷ A.C. Cuza, *Studii economico-politice, 1890-1930*, București, Imprimeriile “Independența”, 1930.

party with those foreign models³⁷⁸ –, wiping away as false dilemmas the oppositions coined by Crainic between ethnocracy and democracy and between classes and corporations and pleading for a “national and democratic” approach to the social and economic issue. The first element of this approach can only consist in the determination to promote policies of development according to the “specific ethnic character” of the Romanian people, in the same way as the second one must rest on the demand of “preparing the peasant, by the means of cultural and material improvement, to take part in the administration of his own fate”.³⁷⁹ It is beyond doubt, otherwise, that the National-Christian Party did not take seriously the corporatist deign, making only slight references to it even during its brief tenure of December 1937-February 1938.³⁸⁰

The supporters of the same ideological orientation otherwise manifested themselves as much better disposed towards the cooperatist projects.³⁸¹ Of long standing in Romania, these were forcefully rejected by Crainic as fetters of budgetary draining and economic ineffectiveness, being contrasted negatively to the corporatist view.³⁸² Conceptions of the sort were repeatedly expressed in *Drum nou*, *Calendarul* and *Lumea nouă* in conjunction with the critique of the peasantist

³⁷⁸ Sergiu Axente, “Național-socialism, fascism, cuzism”, in *Apărarea națională* 12: 8, February 17, 1935, pp. 1-2.

³⁷⁹ (unsigned), “Pe marginea actualității. Naționalism și ‘etnocrație’”.

³⁸⁰ Ioan Milescu, “Rânduri pentru breslașii români creștini”, in *Apărarea națională* 15: 3-4, February 7, 1938, p. 3.

³⁸¹ Ilie Rădulescu, “Piei Satano din cooperație”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 827, August 14, 1937, p. 1; Idem, “Cooperația: ancoră supremă a dezrobirii”, in *Porunca vremii* 6: 836, August 23, 1937, pp. 1-2; (unsigned) “Cooperația și naționalizarea economică”, in *Apărarea națională* 14: 53, January 9, 1938, p. 2.

³⁸² Nichifor Crainic, “Naționalismul și cooperația”, in *Ortodoxie și etnocrație*, pp. 220-232.

political trend advanced by the three periodicals and mentioned earlier in this article. The two designs of reform emerge retrospectively, thus, as locked in a competing relationship and essentially staying on different sides of the main ideological cleavages of the time. For sure, there can be recorded various attempts to harmonize them. Some of them were originated from the Left and on a cooperatist basis, as for example a 1926 statement broadening on a conference organized by the Romanian Social Institute in the previous year, demanding a Senate based on the representation of professional categories with a view to alleviating the syndromme of the parliamentary underrepresentation of the peasant class,³⁸³ underwritten by the peasantist leader Iuliu Maniu³⁸⁴ and invoked by Manoilescu in 1933 as part of his ironical references to the peasantist confused flirtations with the corporatist doctrine.³⁸⁵ Some others came from within the circle of *Lumea nouă*.³⁸⁶ The most original attempt of the kind was put forward by the economist T. Rădulescu-Thánir by drawing on his book of 1936 on “neo-cooperation” – that provided an ambitious plan for the overall reconstruction of Romanian economy³⁸⁷ –,

³⁸³ Mihail Șerban, *Tendințele de evoluție ale clasei țărănești*, Brașov, Tipografia A. Mureșianu, 1926, pp. 76-77.

³⁸⁴ Iuliu Maniu, “Prefață”, in Șerban, *Tendințele de evoluție ale clasei țărănești*, pp. 5-9.

³⁸⁵ Mihail Manoilescu, “Dl. Mihalache e corporatist”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 9, September 1933, pp. 560-561; Idem, “Și dl. Maniu e corporatist”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 10, October 1933, pp. 622-624.

³⁸⁶ Mircea Pienescu, “Cooperativele și corporatismul”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 2, February 1933, pp. 85-92; Idem, “O altă orientare a cooperației”, in *Lumea nouă* 3: 9, September 1934, pp. 481-485; Sever Carpișanu, “Cooperație și corporatism”, in *Lumea nouă* 5: 12, December 1936, pp. 521-524.

³⁸⁷ T. Rădulescu-Thánir, *Neocooperația: economie automată, îmbogățire mutuală*, București, Tiparul Românesc, 1936.

being advanced only in a sketchy manner in the pages of his monthly journal *Alianța economică*, published between January 1937 and March 1938.

Also acting as a member of the Confederation of the Associations of Intellectual Professionals – where we find him promoting in 1940 the project of a cooperatist bank meant to sustain the people of the respective social group, patterned on the model of the agrarian banks functioning in the country since the end of the XIXth century³⁸⁸ – Thanir compares in 1937 the two most influential corporatist conceptions available to the local public at the time, declaring his own neo-cooperatist view as “squaring better with the corporatism of Mr. Crainic than with the one of Mr. Manoilescu”. The reason invoked is that the latter advocacy “is mainly concerned with the political side” of the design in question. As otherwise it is mentioned that “Crainic does not have more to say about the organization of the national economy than Manoilescu”, one can hardly avoid the impression that the preference is not motivated by the appeal of the ethnocratic idea, but rather by the smaller implications of Crainic’s pleading in the field that Thanir intends to influence decisively in his own fashion.³⁸⁹ Indeed, in a second and more extensive article on the same topic, he takes the discussion of ethnocratic corporatism more as a pretext for dismissing the statist economic implications of any conception of the kind, offering instead his view of neo-cooperatist planning that rests on the proposal of a “national office of automatic economy”, meant to allow

³⁸⁸ Idem, “O soluție contra scumpirii traiului: cooperativa mixtă cu funcțiuni multiple”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali. Buletin Informativ* 8: 23, April-August 1940, pp. 138-146.

³⁸⁹ Idem, “Corporatism”, in *Alianța economică* 1: 7-8, July-August 1937, p. 25.

the easy articulation of the economic, social and political factors operating within the nation.³⁹⁰

Thanir's strategy of ingratiating himself and his economic thinking with the right-wing discourse of corporatism as a matter of expediency in the given circumstances – and therefore of placing his rhetoric approval on the less influential version of the same discourse – emerges in full light when turning to an article by him published in January 1938, in the convoluted post-elections context. Taking the fusion between national-corporatism and Iron Guardism as an accomplished fact, treating Manoilescu as the main economic theorist of the fascist party and highlighting the “anti-bourgeois” stance recently expressed by the latter as the quasi-official formulation of party ideology on economic issues, the proponent of cooperatist cures for the Romanian ills indulges into a lengthy and remarkable – however neglected – criticism meant at disclosing the vacuity of the Right as a force of social transformation. Giving credit implicitly to the left-wing view of fascism as an instrument of the high capitalist class when referring to contemporary Italy and Germany in this fashion,³⁹¹ the author who would later argue, in 1945, for a solution of “socialization without nationalization” in face of the communist assault on the Romanian social fabric and political structure³⁹² points to the discourse of moral virtues applied to economic questions and promoted by his rivals as to a way of disguising the perspective of having “the national wealth taken over by the great

³⁹⁰ Idem, “Neocoperația, corporatismul și statul etnocratic”, in *Alianța economică* 1: 9-10, September-October 1937, pp. 9-21.

³⁹¹ Idem, “Antiburghezie și legiunocrație”, in *Alianța economică* 2: 1, January 1938, p. 5.

³⁹² Idem, *Socializare fără etatizare*, București, Tipografia “Muntenia”, 1945.

bourgeoisie organized in trusts and cartels”,³⁹³ also fearing the “future social and economic injustices that have to be expected from the part of a militarist, police-like and bureaucratic Legionary state, [...] that will never accept the principle of a just redistribution of wealth among all factors of the economy”.³⁹⁴

The unsigned rejoinder of Thanir’s critique given by *Lumea nouă* in February shows a great degree of contamination from the part of the Iron Guard discourse, when saying that “the nationalist revolution does not target the socialization of material goods, [...] but only that of the ideal goods, that is the socialization of creative energies of the national elite and the permanent mobilization of the cultivated class in the service of the masses”,³⁹⁵ also assigning to the masses the task of “getting integrated into the new atmosphere of severe hard work”.³⁹⁶ Otherwise, in an article published in 1937 in *Apărarea națională*, I.D. Enescu gives a review of Thanir’s theory about the “neo-cooperation” of the previous year which, however dull, is highly supportive of the work³⁹⁷ and strikes different overtones than the other interventions of the period delivered by the president of the Society of Romanian Architects, which subscribe to the mainstream national-Christian discourse. This can suggest to us Enescu’s belated indebtedness to the main tenets of the ideology defended by him at *Drum nou* at the beginning of the decade, in the same fashion as in the cases of I. Constanțiu and I.V. Gruia, and his contextual accommodation with the reigning nationalist discourse in

³⁹³ Idem, “Antiburghezie și legiunocrație”, p. 8.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁹⁵ (unsigned) “Între socializare și mobilizarea elitelor”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 1-2, January-February 1938, p. 35

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁹⁷ I.D. Enescu, “Neo-cooperația”, in *Apărarea națională* 14: 9, March 2, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

the same way as in the case of Thanir himself. Whatever the relevance of such suppositions, it is to note that the Confederation of the Associations of Intellectual Professionals participated to the expansion of the discourse in question, Enescu asserting at a meeting in 1935 that “without policies of ethnic proportionality [...] the profession of the architects will be invaded by foreigners”,³⁹⁸ and the Confederation as a whole holding on May 16, 1937, a congress focused on the same demands. Although it promoted the basic attitude of “professing the creed of integral nationalism without intending to transform it into a political platform,”³⁹⁹ the manifestation benefited from a good coverage in *Buna vestire*.⁴⁰⁰

The interwar Romanian ideological debate on the appropriateness of a corporatist transformation of the state and of society reverted often to the slight corporatist elements contained in the 1923 constitution, whose article 70 provided for the special representation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry – together with envisioned ones of Agriculture and Labor – in the Senate. *Drum nou* referred to this legal device as to an inspiration

³⁹⁸ Idem, “Problema socială și etnică a profesioniștilor intelectuali. Arhitecții”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali. Buletin Informativ* 3: 4, October-December 1935, p. 24.

³⁹⁹ (unsigned) “Problema socială și etnică a profesiunilor intelectuale”, in *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali. Buletin Informativ* 5: 2-3, April-September 1937, p. 36. See also Prost, *Destin de la Roumanie*, pp. 77-89.

⁴⁰⁰ (unsigned) “Principiul naționalității etnice. Asociațiile profesioniștilor intelectuali din întreaga țară au hotărât aplicarea lui. Congresul CAPIR-ului, o grandioasă manifestare românească”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 69, May 18, 1937, p. 2; Nicolae Bogdan, “Resurecția intelectualilor”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 69, May 18, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

and a baseline for further reforms of the sort,⁴⁰¹ Joldea-Rădulescu invoked the liberal prime minister Ion I.C. Brătianu – held as mainly responsible for the constitutional provision in question alongside Nicolae Iorga – as one of the originators of corporatist thinking in the country⁴⁰² and Manoilescu himself was deeply connected with the institutions involved, acting as the president of the Union of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 1929-1930 and serving as a senator from their part from 1932 to 1937. In spite of this, the Carolist constitution of 1938 was acknowledged at the time as “introducing for the first time the category of the profession in [the Romanian] constitutional system, placing it at the basis of the electoral organization”,⁴⁰³ by virtue of its article 61 providing for the organization of the electoral body for the election of the Chamber of Deputies in the three categories of “agriculture and manual labor”, respectively of “commerce and industry” and “intellectual occupations”. This principle could have been made a reality only by the means of a wide reorganization of the various segments of the society into a system of guilds and corporations. A government decree of October 1938 laid down the basic preconditions for the further development of the guilds,⁴⁰⁴ but the legislative project of July 1939 meant to elaborate the full legal framework

⁴⁰¹ Gh. Cristodorescu, “Camerele noastre de comerț și industrie”, in *Drum nou* 2: 14, July 12, 1931, p. 1.

⁴⁰² Joldea-Rădulescu, *Sistem de politică corporativă*, p. 16.

⁴⁰³ Paul Negulescu, *Principiile fundamentale ale Constituțiunei din 27 februarie 1938*, București, Atelierele Zanet Corlățeanu, 1938, p. 69. Also A. Lascarov-Moldovanu, *Noua constituție a României din 27 februarie 1938*, București, Fundația Culturală “Principele Carol”, [1938].

⁴⁰⁴ “Lege pentru recunoașterea și funcționarea breslelor de lucrători, funcționari particulari și meseriași”, in *Monitorul oficial* 237, October 12, 1938, pp. 4846-4849.

needed for their recognition⁴⁰⁵ – conceiving of them as of institutions of private law, unlike in the corporatist model of Italian fascism, where professional organizations were treated as pertaining to the sphere of public law –, for the establishment of a National Council of the Guilds and for the creation of new professional chambers (also transforming the old institutions of this type into offices of the new ones) could never be adopted.⁴⁰⁶ Although it could be argued that communist Romania of the 1970's adopted quasi-corporatist social patterns under an ideological cover totally different from the one which had dominated public life in the country in the late 1930's and the early 1940's⁴⁰⁷ – thus exemplifying the global phenomenon of the rediscovery of organizational structures of the kind in the most diverse social and ideological settings, very often in connection to the pressures of belated modernization⁴⁰⁸ – the record of Carol II's institutional innovations can only be invoked as a failure of the advocacies inaugurated in 1930-1932 by *Drum nou*, *Calendarul* and *Lumea nouă* to take any significant hold in the specific historical context.

The reluctance of the Carolist regime to make true its self-proclaimed corporatist credentials has to be related to its overall ideological orientation, described by a quasi-official work of 1939 as nourishing a

⁴⁰⁵ *Proiect de lege pentru recunoașterea breslelor, înființarea Consiliului Național al Breslelor și organizarea camerelor profesionale*, București, Imprimeria Centrală, 1939.

⁴⁰⁶ Al.Gh. Savu, *Dictatura regală*, București, Ed. Politică, 1970, pp. 186-192.

⁴⁰⁷ Daniel Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism: Notes on Romanian Development", in *Theory and Society* 9: 2, 1980, pp. 363-381.

⁴⁰⁸ Schmitter "Still the Century of Corporatism?"; Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in the Modern Era*, San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986, pp. 279-282.

“dictatorship of legality”.⁴⁰⁹ Drawing a distinction between “evolutionary” and “revolutionary” authoritarian regimes, the same book places the Romanian political system inaugurated in 1938 in the same category with the Portugal of Salazar, contrasting them together to the Italian and German fascist states. The latter ones are here described as resting on the pattern of “a new political personnel organized in a single party”, which “excluded [...] the personnel of the other parties, even when it was ideologically close to it”, to the same extent as the former ones are depicted as built in consonance with “events of utmost importance, which led the leaders of old parties to drop out ideas proven as dangerous for the nation, coming to work all in the same fashion, under a traditional leader”. As a result, “a general feeling of patriarchal rule is present on the one side, being completely absent on the other one”.⁴¹⁰ The separateness and interrelatedness of the corporatist and the fascist political and ideological trends in the Romanian milieu contributed for sure to this general profile of Carolism.

11

Writing in 1942 about the Portuguese political experiment invoked above as a member of the diplomatic service of the Antonescu regime, Mircea Eliade – the 1927 pioneer of the discourse of spiritual renewal with revolutionary overtones voiced in *Cuvântul*⁴¹¹ and the

⁴⁰⁹ Marin Simionescu-Râmniceanu et al., *Contribuții la o ideologie politică specific românească*, București, Ed. Impres S.A.R., 1939, pp. 77-85.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴¹¹ Mircea Eliade, “Itinerariu spiritual” [1927], in *Dreptul la memorie*, ed. de Iordan Chimet, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, vol. 4, 1993, pp. 458-499.

1937 enthusiast of the Iron Guard politics of national salvation featuring in the pages of *Buna vestire*⁴¹² – recommended to the Romanian public the Iberian political model pertaining to the family of the authoritarian traditionalist Right but harboring significant fascist trappings as a “miracle”, on account of the fact that it appeared as a “Christian and totalitarian state, built not on abstractions, but on the living realities of the national community and of its traditions”.⁴¹³ Eliade made his case in a fashion fully recognizable as part of the characteristic rhetoric of the local fascist culture when presenting the Portuguese dictatorial accomplishments as “based on love”. Nevertheless, he discovered the “return to corporations, taken as organic social collectivities” as performing, alongside the “replacement of the individual (or of the ‘citizen’) by the family, taken as the ultimate constitutive element of the nation”, the role of forging the state in the shape an “organic community of love”.⁴¹⁴ All throughout the book he wrote when serving as a secretary at the Romanian embassy in Lisbon, the calls for revolutionary moral regeneration are wisely calibrated by an appeal to orderly institutional reconstruction, taken as the primary engine of national growth.

This is hard to distinguish from Manoilescu’s own understanding of the Salazarian system which he exposed in 1936, when arguing that the Portuguese constitution of 1933 “had given concrete juridical shape to the corporatist state”.⁴¹⁵ The regime of Salazar is praised here as displaying “great peculiarities in terms of

⁴¹² Idem, “De ce cred în biruința mișcării legionare”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 244, December 17, 1937, pp. 1-2.

⁴¹³ Idem, *Salazar și revoluția în Portugalia*, București, Ed. Gorjan, 1942, p. 9.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴¹⁵ Mihail Manoilescu, *Portugalia lui Salazar*, București, Tipografia “Modernă”, 1936, p. 15.

methods and [...] temperament” among the contemporary dictatorships, due to its dedication to “working quietly and silently”, only in order for such differences to be extolled as the best testimony for “the universality of the dictatorial phenomenon and especially for the new phenomenon represented by the totalitarian and corporatist state”.⁴¹⁶ No matter how consistent is his effort of accommodating the corporatist design with fascist politics without discarding the basic tenets of the doctrine, Manoilescu is still keen to dissociate the two entities from each other, discovering that Salazar is superior to Mussolini due to “the Christian inspiration” of his corporatist reform, which “makes [it] different from fascism, the latter subordinating too extensively the human being to the state”.⁴¹⁷ Such a statement goes together with envisioning the transformation of the state-induced corporatist system into a social formation able to perpetuate itself spontaneously, “on the basis of the virtues created by the very functioning of the system and in accordance to the corporatist spirit”.⁴¹⁸

If comparing Manoilescu’s and Eliade’s statements on the Portuguese political regime does not offer an appropriate vantage point for drawing a clear distinction between the national-corporatist and the radical Right discourses, a February 1934 conference exchange between Manoilescu and Mircea Vulcănescu – a “new generation” fellow-traveler of Eliade –, organized by the Union of Romanian Intellectuals and meant to delineate “the tendencies of the new generation in matters social and economic”, emerges as much more useful for the same purposes. Vulcănescu takes state reform as largely irrelevant for national development, which can only derive from the full indigenization of social life, provided

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

that “the important thing is not [...] the precise form that state organization takes, [...] but the underlying realities this one is expected to serve. The actual problem is that of the Romanian soul facing the invading western ways, or in other words is the demand of disclosing our real nature and of indentifying the message we have to convey to other nations”.⁴¹⁹ As for the state, it can only be “a form among others, a coordinating function of the basic social categories, themselves having both economic and spiritual substances”. Having participated to the dynamics of nationalism leading to the recovery of authenticity against western importations, the new generation now has to deepen the sense of the inner national self among its own constituencies, in order for traditional Romania to obtain a final victory over the acculturated one. Indeed, “as young people get integrated into Romanian culture and civilization, the opposition between generations is being transformed into a fight between the two Romanias within the ranks of one and the same generation”.⁴²⁰ Social and economic development can only rely on infusing the wisdom of peasant life into the wider structures of society.

No matter his dedication to nationalist values, Manolescu, instead, has to give significant qualifications to this surge for traditionalism. Agreeing that the task incumbent on both the older and the younger generations is that of “bringing back the Romanian state to the fold of tradition, which means to the traditional patterns of working and thinking”,⁴²¹ he underscores that it is

⁴¹⁹ Mircea Vulcănescu, in Mircea Vulcănescu, Mihail Manolescu, *Tendințele tinerei generații: două conferințe*, București, Tipografia Ziarului “Universul”, 1934, p. 16.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴²¹ Mihail Manolescu, in Mircea Vulcănescu, Mihail Manolescu, *Tendințele tinerei generații: două conferințe*, București, Tipografia Ziarului “Universul”, 1934, p. 30.

precisely the rational reordering of state institutions dismissed by Vulcănescu as irrelevant that can set society on a path of organic growth. Unlike their young contestants, the elder people “were educated in a rationalist spirit, which [they] cannot eliminate from [their] souls”. As such, Manoilescu makes clear, “we think that society can be changed to the better by reason and organization [...]. While Mr. Vulcănescu considers that programs are unimportant and that, even if they are drawn, they should not be primarily concerned with state reform, we claim that programs are highly important and that they have to focus precisely on the state. [...] In times of great upheavals, only novel institutions can create the frame for a healthy national life. We therefore rely on institutions. We are looking forward to discovering rationalist solutions. Still, we do think that our rationalist designs can also be natural and organic”.⁴²² Holding that indigenism can only make sense as an adjunct to institutional modernization driven by rational planning, Manoilescu does not think that peasant society can act as a privileged reservoir of economic wisdom. “I shall never agree” – he thus says – “that our new forms of social life can be drawn exclusively from the remnants of peasant traditions”. If for no other reasons, this is because “the peasant is a starkly anti-economic being”.⁴²³

In the context of the 1937 intermingling between the two trends of ideological advocacy here contrasted to each other, an article in *Lumea nouă* indulges in the same comparison by placing the label of “institutionalism” on the corporatist approach and associating instead the Iron Guard vision with the notion of “spirituality”. Making reference to a question currently debated in the country as to the alternative of taking either “the man” or “the

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

institution” as the basic target of the efforts for building a “new, Romanian and Christian life” – and recalling that the fascist journal *Rânduiala* “has predicated exclusively and passionately” in favor of the first option –, the intervention brushes aside the “choice as impossible”, recommending corporatism “as an institutional system pointing itself to the creation of a new man”.⁴²⁴ Nevertheless, although declaring that between corporatism and fascism in Romania “there is absolutely no difference, but a total coincidence”,⁴²⁵ the author implicitly restates the meaning of Manoilescu’s dissociations expressed three years beforehand, when describing “institutionalism” as a necessary stage on the path to accomplishing “spiritualist” objectives. The two episodes give thus significant credit to the interpretation of Manoilescu’s corporatism as characteristically pervaded by the spirit of rationalism⁴²⁶ and as progressing all throughout on a trajectory of ideological development sharply different from – however interrelated to – the chiliastic fascist revolution.⁴²⁷

Several days after delivering, in February 1932, a lecture hosted by the “Carol I” University Foundation and showing to Romanian society the path of a “new economic medievalism”⁴²⁸ – a part of the extensive text elaborated with this occasion being published in the same year in *Axa*⁴²⁹ – Vulcănescu gives an intervention in *Dreapta* restating his call for a “return to simpler, more

⁴²⁴ Christian Petrescu, “Instituționalism și spiritualitate. Legionarism și corporatism”, in *Lumea nouă* 6: 1, January 1937, pp. 22-23.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴²⁶ Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu”.

⁴²⁷ Janos, “The One-party State and Social Mobilization”.

⁴²⁸ Mircea Vulcănescu, “Spre un nou medievalism economic”, in “*Spre un nou medievalism economic*”. *Scrieri economice*, ed. de Marin Diaconu, București, Compania, 2009, pp. 45-121. See the explanations of Marin Diaconu at pp. 117-118.

⁴²⁹ Idem, “Tendențele actuale ale capitalismului”, in *Axa* 1: 2, November 10, 1932, pp. 3, 8; *Axa* 1: 3, November 27, 1932, p. 3.

natural and more self-contained forms of economic life”.⁴³⁰ Presenting his pleading as just the rehearsing of “a bit of sociology”, he maintains that there does not exist anything like a “fatal and linear evolution of social life from simpler to more complex forms, propelling all countries on a single road, through the same series of stages and towards the same types of social organization”. As “there only exist a plurality of social formations arising from the specific conditions of each society”,⁴³¹ it follows that “the concrete study of the present circumstances drives” the Romanians towards the solution of “a return to the village, in the frame of a new economic Middle Ages”.⁴³²

Mainstream social and economic thinking of Romanian fascism goes on the same path as Vulcănescu’s reactionary social program, nevertheless strengthening its revivalist overtones and deepening its calls for the regeneration of the national community through the reshaping of human minds. Maintaining that “the nationalist movement cannot be revolutionary, but only anti-revolutionary and conservative” – as “it was defined by Eminescu”⁴³³ – and pointing to the ideal of an “ascetic elite” as to the basic endowment of a well-ordered society,⁴³⁴ Traian Brăileanu declares that “the solution of the economic problem in the national state is to have a rich country and poor ministers”.⁴³⁵ Promising that the Iron Guard would tackle the social issue by preventing “anybody from falling below

⁴³⁰ Idem, “Puțină sociologie”, in *Dreapta* 2: 4, February 25, 1932, p. 3.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴³³ Traian Brăileanu, “Funcționarism și birocratism”, in *Sociologia și arta guvernării. Articole politice*, ed. a II-a, București, Cartea Românească, 1940, p. 133.

⁴³⁴ Idem, “Elita ‘ascetică’”, in *Însemnări sociologice* 1: 6, September 1935, pp. 1-17.

⁴³⁵ Idem, “Problema economică în statul național”, p. 14.

a minimum income”,⁴³⁶ the sociologist Traian Herseni advances the reassuring perspective that “in the Legionary state, based on the new man ready for sacrifice, the peasantry, even remaining as poor as it is now, will be a master and not a servant”.⁴³⁷ Whatever the insistence of *Lumea nouă* to argue for a right “institutionalist” approach to social change as a precondition for the “spiritual” transformation of the nation,⁴³⁸ a third fascist sociologist, Ernest Bernea, is keen to assert forcefully the idea of “the primacy of man”, proclaiming that “no political revolution can be accomplished without a revolution in the souls”.⁴³⁹ Presenting the doctrine as “fighting against liberal and bourgeois economy in the same way as communism”, he makes plain that “communism sets out to change the economy in order to improve the human being, while the Legion improves the human being for changing the economy”.⁴⁴⁰ When offering in 1937, in the Iron Guardist journal *Rânduiala*, a brief account of the economic evolution of the country as marked by a process of progressive enslavement of the nation to foreign interests, the economist Ion Veverca explains to his countrymen that “the current state of economic bondage requires a war of liberation employing all possible means”, with the further clarification that “the fight will have to proceed on two different directions: against the others, for recovering the lost ground, and against [themselves], for defeating

⁴³⁶ Traian Herseni, *Mișcarea legionară și muncitorimea*, București, “Caete Verzi”, 1937, p. 27.

⁴³⁷ Idem, *Mișcarea legionară și țărănimea*, ed. a III-a, București, n. p., 1941, p. 28.

⁴³⁸ Petrescu, “Instituționalism și spiritualitate”.

⁴³⁹ Ernest Bernea, “Cartea unui început de veac”, in *Rânduiala* 2: 1, 1937, p. 39.

⁴⁴⁰ Idem, “Economia legionară sau întâietatea omului”, in *Ctitorii. Pagini de luptă politică și spirituală*, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1940, p. 106.

bad habits”⁴⁴¹ (but also for “eliminating Mamonism from [their] souls, on the basis of Christian morality”⁴⁴²). This plainly resonates with the new generation ideology that Manoilescu had opposed in 1934, as embodied by Vulcănescu. In 1939, Veverca would give official statements on the history of economic life and economic ideas in the country as a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Romania*,⁴⁴³ cohabitating with Manoilescu on this platform.⁴⁴⁴ His articles display much the same slight reconversion to a developmentalist language exhibited by Eliade’s pleading for Salazar-style authoritarianism of 1942, coming closer, for that matter, to the rhetoric always employed by the theorist of corporatism. This change of emphasis cannot hide to us, however, the stark difference existing between the ideological premises sustaining the radical Right discourse of regenerative nationalism and, respectively, the doctrine of corporatist reform.

12

The opposition between a statist-based and modernizing right-wing program of change and an indigenist and regressive view of national revival did not stay only as a fault-line separating the corporatist and the fascist

⁴⁴¹ Ion Veverca, “Economia românească”, in *Rânduiala* 2: 9-10, 1937, p. 266.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴⁴³ Idem, “Dezvoltarea formelor și mișcarea ideilor economice”, “Procesul destrămării vechilor forme” and “Naționalismul economic”, all in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 3: *Economia națională. Cadre și producție*, București, Cultura Națională, [1939], pp. 233-236, resp. 237-244, 275-286.

⁴⁴⁴ Mihail Manoilescu, “Evoluția economiei industriale”, in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 3: *Economia națională. Cadre și producție*, București, Cultura Națională, [1939], pp. 255-260.

designs. It also stretched through the very bodies of the national-Christian and the radical Right trends, as proven by a series of polemical articles published in the periodicals *Dreapta* and *Axa*.

Coming in the footsteps of programmatic pieces placing the approach of the journal in staunch continuity to the nationalism of Eminescu⁴⁴⁵ and in advance of other ones proclaiming that “the target of any kind of Romanian politics at present can only be the vision of integral nationalism”,⁴⁴⁶ a 1932 statement of Mircea Vulcănescu in *Dreapta* advances the vindication of nationalist societal regeneration as the true engine of the right-wing revolution, to the detriment of statist-based projects of national reconfiguration. As he makes clear, “a strong state can only become a desideratum once we agree upon the values it is expected to serve”.⁴⁴⁷ To the same extent, the victory of the Right over its rivals does not hinge on designs for state reform. On the contrary, “a Romanian debate opposing the Right and the Left faces the risk of remaining superficial and sterile as long as it revolves entirely around the issue of the most appropriate form of state”. Political refashioning can only come after the contest between traditionalism and the imported civilization is settled in favor of the former camp, to the extent that “the problem of the Romanian state can only be solved after another one, much deeper, finds a resolution. This is the problem of the two Romanias: the agrarian one, of the villages, and the urban and industrial one”.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ O.N. Mugur, “Teoria păturii superpuse în concepția lui Eminescu”, in *Dreapta* 1: 1, December 13, 1931, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁴⁶ Ernest Bernea, “Sensul unei politici românești”, in *Dreapta* 2: 7, March 5, 1933, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Mircea Vulcănescu, “Cele două Români”, in *Dreapta* 2: 2, December 11, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid*, loc. cit.

Much the same pleading for unleashing the forces of national specificity against imported political forms is advanced in *Axa* by Vasile Marin.⁴⁴⁹ However, the same periodical serves as a venue for the opposite argumentation, which promotes the idea of political reform meant precisely at strengthening state institutions and at employing them as instruments for engineering social change inspired by nationalist ideals. Moreover, this second stance of the ideology of national regeneration, staying closer than the other one to that of Manoiilescu encountered above, is framed here by figures placed in both the camp of national-Christian traditionalism and that of fascism. The first camp is represented by Radu Dragnea. As a paradoxical ideologist of *Gândirea*'s Christian-Orthodox traditionalism that had managed to appropriate the mid-XIXth century radical democratic leader Mihail Kogălniceanu – in a monograph published in two editions in 1921 and 1926 respectively – on the side of the anti-democratic trend of thought that he served – and placing a strong emphasis on the latter's accomplishments in the domain of state-induced modernization⁴⁵⁰ –, he goes on, in the pages of *Axa*, to broaden his peculiar reading of Romanian cultural history with a sharp polemical cast. To this extent, he opposes the statist political wisdom of Kogălniceanu to the society-based and anti-statist views advanced by Nicolae Iorga, a traditionalist – yet basically non-religious – forerunner of *Gândirea*. Arguing that well-pondered state reform is envisioned to come in the footsteps of the nationalist revival accomplished during the pre-war and

⁴⁴⁹ Marin, "Națiunea împotriva statului de import"; Idem, *Crez de generație*.

⁴⁵⁰ Radu Dragnea, *Mihail Kogălniceanu*, ed. a II-a, București, n.p., 1926; Victor Rizescu, "Cum poate fi citit Kogălniceanu? Un studiu despre istorie și ideologie", in *Canonul și vocile uitate*, pp. 295-334.

immediately post-war years, he gives account of Iorga's "heresy, according to which it is not the state that creates the nation, but the other way round", thus depicting the author targeted as a representative of "that form of nationalism which has been elaborated independently of the state, in the mystical, chaotic and disorganized depths of the amorphous idea of the people".⁴⁵¹

On the side of the fascist discourse, Mihail Polihroniade sets a directive for the politics of the Right that highlights the construction of strong and effective state structures as the cornerstone of any design for national advancement. Besides its open acknowledgement of institutional change as a revolutionary objective, the project of Polihroniade also places a heavy emphasis on economic growth as a precondition of spiritual renewal along the path of the recovered and better delineated national specificity, maintaining that "the modern Right [...] is characterized by two fundamental principles [...]: the augmentation of state authority in all domains of life and the dedication to enhancing the economic and social resources of the masses within the nation". A surge for modernization focused on the urgent task of administrative reform comes from these general principles, delineating "both the most pressing goal of the Romanian Right and its specific features: it has to broaden state authority, which implies building first a modern state. And what is the meaning of building a modern Romanian state? It is precisely the need to rule away venality from civil and military administration, to introduce modern and effective techniques in politics and administration. Only after accomplishing this task one will be able to think

⁴⁵¹ Radu Dragnea, "Generația neamului și generația statului", in *Axa* 1: 2, November 10, 1933, p. 1.

properly about extending the scope of state responsibilities in the field of economy and society”.⁴⁵²

On the basis of such clarifications, Polihroniade is then able to take issue with the opposite view regarding the order of revolutionary priorities, put forward by Vulcănescu from within the same ideological camp. Referring critically to Vulcănescu’s article about “the two Romanias” in the journal *Dreapta* quoted above, he clearly restates his case, with the significant addition that wholesale urbanization resonating with the demands of world-wide modernization is a necessary prerequisite of healthy social evolution. As perceived by the author, the dilemma facing Romanian people is whether it “can avoid the creation of urban life without endangering its very existence and especially whether it can continue to live in the midst of the modern world without a strong state, which can only be based on an urban civilization”. Recollecting the sad record of Romanian history marked by domination from the part of more powerful foreigners, the article draws the conclusion that this is the only possible fate for “a people of peasants”. As such, “without the creation of an urban life of its own and of a culture that can only be developed on the basis of such social forms, there is no justification for continuing to survive as an independent entity in the modern world”.⁴⁵³

First published in 1936, with a second expanded edition in 1941, the book of Emil Cioran envisioning the “transfiguration of Romania” by the means of a fascist revolution stays as the most articulated expression of the statist-based and modernizing version of right-wing ideology that we have found embodied by Dragnea and Polihroniade. Stating that a country where “the mystical

⁴⁵² Mihail Polihroniade, “Dreapta românească”, in *Axa* 1: 2, November 10, 1933, p. 1.

⁴⁵³ Idem, “O anumită stângă... dar și o anumită dreaptă”, in *Axa* 1: 4, December 22, 1932, pp. 1, 3.

cult of the irrational popular forces stretches everywhere” could not have other evolution except “the fatality of general stagnation”, that “the people is an obsession which has to be avoided”⁴⁵⁴ and that “Romania is the fruit of a modernist passion”,⁴⁵⁵ this work displaying a spectacular political rhetoric fully resonates with the strictures of the two authors mentioned above – also bordering on the thinking of Manoilescu – when proclaiming that “urbanization and industrialization must be two obsessions of a people set on an ascending course” and that “the village is a negation of history, in so far as history involves a rhythm of life”.⁴⁵⁶ Otherwise – and in spite of interesting efforts to argue the opposite⁴⁵⁷ –, when showing how “the tragic problems of modernity are intimately bound with the differentiation and complexity arising from the overcoming of community” and how “the collectivism towards which the modern world evolves is a much more complicated, dense and dynamic reality than the communitarian ethos”⁴⁵⁸ (of the traditional community), Cioran plainly participates to the elaboration of ideological patterns sharply different from those displayed by the writings of not only Iorga, Crainic and Vulcănescu, but also of Codreanu, Moța and Marin, of Brăileanu, Herseni, Bernea and Veverca, and different indeed from the general patterns of social and political thought exhibited by the constellation of periodicals emerging from the matrix of *Gândirea* and by those serving the causes of the nationalist-democratic, national-Christian and fascist ideological and political trends. Revolving within the orbit of the calls for the

⁴⁵⁴ Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, ed. a II-a, București, Vremea, 1941, p. 114.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴⁵⁷ Platon, “The Iron Guard and the ‘New State’”.

⁴⁵⁸ Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, pp. 147-148.

national immersion into the depths of a regained “spirituality” against the tenets of the dry positivist rationalism of the XIXth century, with a long Romanian pedigree but renewed by Mircea Eliade and his fellows in *Cuvântul* and in *Gândirea* at the end of the 1920’s,⁴⁵⁹ the pleadings of Dragnea, Polihroniade and Cioran also differ from the stubborn rationalism characterizing the theoretical endeavors of Manoilescu and of *Lumea nouă*, and certainly so from the basic philosophy sustaining the original corporatist ideology promoted by *Drum nou*. Alongside the other results of the present inquiry delineated above, regarding the limited interference between the vision of corporatism and the right-wing ideological families, such dissociations lead us towards arguing against the attempts of characterizing Romanian fascism and the encompassing culture of the Right as animated overall by a forward-looking, modernizer and modernist vision of change.

The wide amount of articles collected in several volumes by the journalist of fascist orientation Nicolae Roșu between 1935 and 1943 offer the most convincing proofs in favor of this argumentation. After building a story of ideological dynamics meant to legitimize the revolution of the Right as the product of a social wisdom opposed to the modernist fever of cultural imitation and functioning in Romania in much the same way since the middle of the XIXth century,⁴⁶⁰ he takes issue with the “modernist phenomenon”, described as “a mistrust of historical values, an escape from the historical time, a state of boredom striving to cure itself by appealing to new sensations and to revolutionary ideas”,⁴⁶¹ showing

⁴⁵⁹ Eliade, “Itinerariu spiritual”; Pavel et al., “Manifestul ‘Crinului Alb’”.

⁴⁶⁰ Nicolae Roșu, *Dialectica naționalismului*, București, Cultura Națională, [1935].

⁴⁶¹ Idem, “Fenomenul modernist”, in *Orientări în veac*, București, Cugetarea, [1937], p. 40.

then how the same cultural attitude, “saturated by the refinements accompanying a desperate search for certitude, comes down to primitivism and barbarism, sustaining sometimes the gestures of a naïve child [...] and some other times those of a destructive and ferocious savage”.⁴⁶² Pointing to Baudelaire – “a great genius of bourgeois refinement” – and to Rimbaud as to the originators of “modernist decadence”⁴⁶³ and to Dostoievski as the source of the peculiar ethics of the trend – “bringing into the European culture a factor of dissolution and an exogenous poison that only the Russian mind can assimilate”⁴⁶⁴ –, he places the Romanian version of the cultural disease rejected within comparative horizons, concluding that “modernism is the literary expression of democratic individualism”, leading to the isolation of “man from tradition, from the cosmic order and the historical evolution”,⁴⁶⁵ and for that matter opposing to it the “Promethean ideal” embodied by the Iron Guard, with the clarification that “the triumph of Corneliu Codreanu can only mean the victory of the moral mobilization of Romanianism”.⁴⁶⁶ However conscious he shows to be that the experimentalist germ and the modernist temper make inroads into his own ideological camp – as for example when referring to the “experiences of Mircea Eliade” with the hope that the Romanian author would not “follow in the footsteps of Giovanni Gentile [the foremost philosopher of Italian fascism], thus elaborating a spirituality ready to

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁶⁵ Idem, “Zăpăceala modernistă”, in *Orientări în veac*, București, Cugetarea, [1937], p. 76.

⁴⁶⁶ Idem, “Idealul prometeic”, in *Orientări în veac*, București, Cugetarea, [1937], p. 300.

be used by a fascist and a communist regime alike”⁴⁶⁷ – Roșu goes on to decry undisturbed, from a traditionalist standpoint, the fate of the “bourgeois in the modern world”.⁴⁶⁸

Although the vindications of fascism as modernism take a sharp critical stance towards the Marxist scholarship on the question – blaming it for the strong emphasis it places on the reactionary nature of the phenomenon⁴⁶⁹ – , it could reasonably be said that, when applying themselves to non-western historical contexts like the Romanian and generally the East European one, they participate – to a great extent, for sure, without a full awareness – to a broad, collective and multifarious effort of “de-Orientalizing” and “de-colonizing” the established traditions of scholarship, which is otherwise commonly nourished precisely by the tenets of Marxist cultural criticism.⁴⁷⁰ This is implied, after all, in arguing that the political and ideological trend of the radical Right acting in a society marked by the predicament of agrarian backwardness shared the basic features of an essentially forward-looking project displayed by its counterparts in more western countries,⁴⁷¹ and approaches of the sort could even accuse the dominant narratives and

⁴⁶⁷ Idem, “Experiențele lui Mircea Eliade”, in *Critică și sinteză*, București, Tipografia “Universul”, [1939], p. 294.

⁴⁶⁸ Idem, “Burghezul în lumea modernă”, in *Destinul ideilor*, București, Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1943, p. 265.

⁴⁶⁹ Roger Griffin, “Exploding the Continuum of History: a Non-Marxist’s Marxist Model of Fascism’s Revolutionary Dynamics”, in *A Fascist Century*, pp. 46-68.

⁴⁷⁰ Siep Stuurman, “The Canon of the History of Political Thought: Its Critique and a Proposed Alternative”, in *History and Theory* 39: 2, 2000, pp. 147-166; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, sec. ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

⁴⁷¹ Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, pp. 356-358.

interpretations offering the opposite view of being captive to Cold War historical paradigms.⁴⁷²

Agreeing with the main thrust of this tendency, the present inquiry is also keen to place the understanding of the right-wing culture of interwar Romania in the framework of an effort of studying ideological dynamics in relation to the underlying structural disparities among various national contexts in the modern world.⁴⁷³ Recent approaches meant at delineating “the socio-cultural breakthrough of the modern” in the early XXth century⁴⁷⁴ – and paying special attention to explaining the transformations suffered by the German Right – have set themselves in continuity to older ones, that criticized the interpretation of fascism as produced by the survival of pre-modern traditions in an exceptional social and institutional milieu,⁴⁷⁵ instead defining it as emerging from crises of modernity displaying features widely spread across the world capitalist system.⁴⁷⁶ The same trend of scholarship has nourished, however, interpretative statements eager to emphasize the intermediate location of pre-Nazi Germany, in terms of its structural characteristics, along the axis of the West-East lags of development, also drawing implications for understanding

⁴⁷² Platon, “The Iron Guard and the ‘New State’”, p. 66.

⁴⁷³ Victor Rizescu, “Romania as a Periphery: Social Change and Ideological Development”, in *Ideology, Nation and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks*, București, Ed. Universității din București, 2013, pp. 25-48.

⁴⁷⁴ Dennis Sweeney, “Reconsidering the Modernity Paradigm: Reform Movements, the Social and the State in Wilhemine Germany”, in *Social History* 31: 4, 2006, p. 405.

⁴⁷⁵ David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984.

⁴⁷⁶ Geoff Eley, “What Produces Fascism: Pre-industrial Traditions or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?”, in *Politics and Society* 12: 2, 1983, pp. 53-82.

in general terms the connections between the various cultures of the Right and their respective settings.⁴⁷⁷ Although so far the attempts at conceptualizing ideological dynamics as a dimension of the world-system have rather placed an emphasis on understanding the consequences of a structural nature in the peripheries deriving from the ideological confrontations taking place in the core area and from the hierarchies of principles and values established there,⁴⁷⁸ and therefore we lack a consistent theoretical framework allowing us to relate systematically political ideas to their underlying backgrounds, it is a contention of the present paper that the question of the forward-looking, developmentalist and modernist orientation of right-wing ideological families has to be posed from such a standpoint.

The particular topic of the ideology and politics of the professional associations offers a good vantage point for exploring the issue. Its scholarship has described the gradual drive away of the members of this kind of bodies from liberal towards revolutionary conservative and fascist ideological views over the period stretching from the late XXth century to the interwar period, in settings as different as Italy, Germany and Hungary, also underscoring the heavy mark put by corporatist ideas on this process of ideological change.⁴⁷⁹ The Romanian

⁴⁷⁷ Jürgen Kocka, "The Middle Classes in Europe", in *The Journal of Modern History* 67: 4, 1995, pp. 783-806; Idem, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: the Case of the German *Sonderweg*", in *History and Theory* 38: 1, 1999, pp. 40-50.

⁴⁷⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture. Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992 [1991]; Idem, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 4: *Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914*, Berkeley, The University of California Press, 2011.

⁴⁷⁹ David D. Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1979; Mária M. Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics:*

setting displays, however, a somewhat different story, featuring the organizations of the professionals as eccentric supporters of liberal ideas – employing the corporatist creed precisely for targeting objectives of this order – that converted over a very short period of time to upholding the discourses of the nationalist Right (moreover some of their representatives never adopting whole-heartedly the latter stance). The backwardness of the surrounding social landscape must have contributed to imparting to the social actors invoked these specific dispositions. This fact points to the existence of significant peculiarities of ideological change in the peripheral context of Romania by comparison to more western ones, deriving from the structural specificities of the same milieu.

Whatever its multifariousness, fascist modernism was essentially nourished by the peculiar cultural patterns of the avant-garde modernist discourses,⁴⁸⁰ whose translation into political languages were likewise deeply intertwined with the transmutation of some strands of the Marxist revolutionary culture – exhibiting the figure of Georges Sorel as the most influential one – into a rhetoric of social regeneration meant at overcoming the divisiveness of class struggle by a general mobilization around national interests.⁴⁸¹ Although the national-socialist synthesis has been shown for a long

Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust, Washington D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994; Dennis Sweeney, *Work, Race and the Emergence of Radical Right Corporatism in Imperial Germany*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2009.

⁴⁸⁰ Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence*; Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*.

⁴⁸¹ Zeev Sternhell et al., *The Birth of Fascist Ideology. From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, transl. by David Maisel, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 36-91; Gregor, *Marxism, Fascism and Totalitarianism*, pp. 77-101.

time as an important venue for the incubation of fascist ideas in the first half of the XXth century,⁴⁸² it is this emphasis on the “anti-materialist revision of Marxism”⁴⁸³ – allowing for different interpretations in specific matters⁴⁸⁴ – that has contributed decisively to the understanding of fascism – and of other strands of the interwar Right – as driven towards a modernist attitude precisely by virtue of its contamination from ideas originated in other segments of the ideological spectrum. Studies of the phenomenon originally targeted the French and the Italian cases as providing the bulk of the evidence.⁴⁸⁵ The research on the modernist nature acquired by the culture of German conservative and reactionary Right on the way to be transformed into Nazism have definitely put a heavy mark on the field,⁴⁸⁶ but subsequent approaches broadening this view⁴⁸⁷ have tended to miss the relevance of scrutinizing the specific role played by the Sorelian and avant-garde strands of thought as privileged actors of the general transformation targeted. Our contention that it is precisely the feebleness of these strands in the Romanian context that accounts for the general non-modernist

⁴⁸² Eugen Weber, “Nationalism, Socialism and National-Socialism in France”, in *French Historical Studies* 2: 3, 1962, pp. 273-307.

⁴⁸³ Zeev Sternhell, “The ‘Anti-materialist’ Revision of Marxism as an Aspect of the Rise of Fascist Ideology”, in *Journal of Contemporary History* 22: 3, 1987, pp. 379-400.

⁴⁸⁴ David D. Roberts, “How Not to Think about Fascism and Ideology, Intellectual Antecedents and Historical Meaning”, in *Journal of Contemporary History* 35: 2, 2000, pp. 185-211.

⁴⁸⁵ Again the works of Sternhell, Gregor, Adamson and Gentile quoted above.

⁴⁸⁶ Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*.

⁴⁸⁷ Thomas Rohkrämer, “Anti-modernism, Reactionary Modernism and National Socialism. Technocratic Tendencies in Germany, 1890-1945”, in *Contemporary European History* 8: 1, 1999, pp. 29-50; Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, pp. 250-335.

orientation of local fascism draws on the tentative comparison between the German and the French-Italian roads of ideological development invoked above, also offering a clue for deepening this comparison itself, together with the general approach to ideological dynamics – including the dynamics of fascist modernism – across the lags of development.

Social Policy and the Corporatist Design: a Romanian Experience of Reluctant Intermingling

It has been long since the theory proposed by Mihail Manoilescu in *The Century of Corporatism* of 1934 was established as central to a dynamic understanding of the corporatist design of “interest representation” bearing significance beyond the historical horizon of the interwar European Right.¹ Despite the continuing relevance of such a search for delineating the broader implications of the design in question² – and the repeated reinterpretations of the relations between corporatism, fascism and general right-wing authoritarianism between the wars, always confirming the special significance of the Romanian theorist³ –, the discursive context from which the internationally influential vision emerged has not been scrutinized in a manner resembling the contextual clarification of the national roots of Manoilescu’s (equally

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- ¹ Philippe C. Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, in *The Review of Politics* 36: 1, 1974, pp. 85-131.
- ² Peter J. Williamson, *Corporatism in Perspective: an Introductory Guide to Corporatist Theory*, London, Sage Publications, 1989.
- ³ Antonio Costa Pinto, “Fascism, Corporatism and the Crafting of Authoritarian Institutions in Interwar European Dictatorships”, in Antonio Costa Pinto, Aristotle Kallis, eds., *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 87-117.

international) theory of economic protectionism.⁴ Vindicating the two contexts as overlapping but not coincident, the present article is part of an enterprise of the sort.

1

Alongside its deep entanglements with the traditional and the radical Right segments of the pre-communist ideological spectrum, the corporatist conception also got intertwined with the liberal and the left-wing streams of political, social and economic thought. The attitudes of rejection and of qualified acceptance from the part of the representatives of these various trends are all of importance for placing meaningfully the idea which has come to be associated with the name of Manoilescu in its Romanian setting. However, there is a particular compartment of the milieu invoked that displays both peculiarly strong links with the phenomenon surveyed and a spectacular condition of ideological syncretism. The field of discourse targeted here is that of the debate about the representation of professional interests, staying in plain conjunction with the searches for elaborating a local system of social protection, itself based on an appropriate framework of labor legislation. Starting to emerge alongside the gradual disappearance of traditional guilds – stretching from the Organic Statutes of 1831 to the final disbandment of these bodies by a government decree of 1873 – the modern professional associations (as institutions of private law) and the state-sponsored professional chambers (as institutions of public law) came to be deeply intermingled with the

⁴ Joseph L. Love, *Crafting the Third World. Theorizing Underdevelopment in Rumania and Brasil*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996, pp. 71-98.

process of the emergence and continuous redefinition of local social policies (inaugurated in the 1880's).

Corporatism and syndicalism – the latter one most often understood, in Romania, as a synonym for trade unionism – stood as the main intellectual organizing devices of the relation between the expanding welter of professional organizations and the system of labor policies. The trade union movement was shaped at the turn of the XIXth to the XXth century in strong intercourse with the emerging socialist trend, benefiting from a very low degree of autonomy towards the latter and coming to act, over the interwar decades, as a virtual battleground for the contest between social democracy and communism. The tradition of historical interpretation in the field established under the communist regime and pointing to syndicalism as the only genuine expression of structured professional interests has basically been maintained by the works devoted to the subject in post-communist times (a tendency nurtured, otherwise, by the general confusion surrounding for long all topics of inquiry bearing a recognizable Leftist stamp). Partly as a result of this, the corporatist view has continued to be retrospectively located firmly within the area of right-wing politics, being moreover seen as confined to the pleading of Manoilescu and to the scattered Iron Guard relevant pronouncements.

A focus on the journal *Politica socială* – issued under this title from 1934 to 1942, in continuation to a first series entitled *Munca*, of 1933 – is highly appropriate for clarifying the above-mentioned compounded nature of the ideological devices acting as driving forces behind the development of social policies in Romania. For the same reasons, it can help us to delineate the role played by the corporatist idea – with its intrinsic right-wing leanings – as part of the interwar debate on social reform predicated on the notion of professional representation. The two periodicals were published under the directorship of D.R.

Ioanițescu (sometimes indicated as the most significant representative of the field in the interwar period⁵) and meant to develop the legacy of his tenures as minister of Labor held in National-Peasant cabinets between June 1932 and November 1933 (having as their main accomplishment the unification of the systems of labor legislation from the Old Kingdom – already extended to Bessarabia in 1921-1923 –, Transylvania and Bukovina, in 1933). They also bear the mark of his longer engagement with the domain, which included – alongside the parliamentary activity inaugurated in 1919 – his participation to the very creation of the same Ministry of Labor (and Social Care) in 1920 (himself functioning then as a secretary general of the institution, with Grigore Trancu-Iași as a minister),⁶ his contribution to the celebrations marking the consummation of the first decade of social policies with solid institutional foundations in Romania, in 1930,⁷ as well as his later conversion to supporting the nationalist discourse of the Romanian Front (led by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, initiated by him as a splinter of the National-Peasant Party in 1935 and joined by Ioanițescu from the beginning, after having People's Party, National Party and National-Peasant Party affiliations over the previous period).

When cast into this last ideological embodiment, the dedication of Ioanițescu to promoting social reform was

⁵ Ilie Marinescu, *Politica socială interbelică în România. Relațiile dintre muncă și capital*, București, Ed. Tehnică, 1995, pp. 226-239.

⁶ D.R. Ioanițescu, *Charta muncii*, vol. 1: *Contractul colectiv. Organizarea internațională a muncii. Fazele contractului de muncă*, București, Tipografia "Cultura", 1920.

⁷ Idem, *Charta muncii*, vol. 2: *Renașterea meseriilor. Istoric-legislație-corporații-revendicări*, București, Tipografia "Reforma Socială", [1930]; Idem, "Partidele politice și politica socială", in G. Tașcă et al., *Un deceniu de politică socială românească*, București, n. p., 1930, pp. 49-75.

absorbed into the echelons of what an inspired historian called the “bourgeois fascism” of interwar Romania,⁸ being turned into a sustained concern for the “Romanianization” of the economy on the basis of *numerus valachicus* principles, nevertheless staunchly reluctant to embrace the revolutionary temper of full blown fascist theory and politics. A collection of articles from *Politica socială* published in 1938 clearly documents this type of discourse adopted by the former minister of Labor,⁹ in conjunction with a work with the same character and orientation coming at the same juncture from his son and close collaborator D. Ioanițescu-Dere.¹⁰ This general evolution of the periodical has to be taken as a framework for examining, in the following, the way it related to the corporatist idea.

2

The topic makes its first appearance in the pages of the journal in February 1934 with an article by V. M. Ioachim, an author with a firm background in the field of professional representation, that had previously engaged, in the immediate post-war period, with the problem of re-tailoring the institution of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (officially inaugurated in 1864 and functioning since 1868) to the requirements of Greater

⁸ Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others. A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1970, pp. 345-376.

⁹ D.R. Ioanițescu, *În slujba socialului*, București, Tipografia A-B-C, 1938.

¹⁰ D. Ioanițescu-Dere, *Preocupări sociale*, București, Tipografia A-B-C, 1938.

Romania¹¹ and then, over the 1920's, with the one of fashioning, alongside them, the envisioned Chambers of Labor¹² (eventually introduced in 1932, after a failed attempt in 1927). Targeted at dissociating between the "economic" and the "social" meanings of the notion of corporatism – as part of a brief general perspective over its long-term historical evolution – and acknowledging that "recently the importance of professional associations has grown considerably", the intervention takes account that "corporations are now envisioned to be integrated into the very body of the state, as forces guiding the economic and political life of the nation".¹³ Later articles in the same series make clear that "modern economic corporatism is predicated on the demand of deep involvement of the state in economy on a permanent basis", something which is not a system to be accepted when "extending beyond certain limits". In its turn, "political corporatism" – usually understood, in the fashion of Manoilescu, as belonging to the "integral" variety –, requires "the bodies giving representation to the nation to be exclusively the emanations of corporations", a vision staying at odds with the stark reality that "the specific, and often opposed interests of all [social] categories cannot be harmonized by the means of professional representation alone".¹⁴

After rejecting, thus, both the economic interventionist implications of the doctrine – as it currently featured in

¹¹ V.M. Ioachim, *Reorganizarea camerelor de comerț și industrie din Vechiul Regat și din noile teritorii*, București, Tipografia "Hașdeu", 1920.

¹² Idem, *Camerele de muncă și asigurările sociale*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice "Tiparul Românesc", 1926.

¹³ Idem, "Corporatism economic și corporatism social. Evoluția corporatismului", in *Politica socială* 2: 6, February 24, 1934, p. 2.

¹⁴ Idem, "Corporatism economic și politic", in *Politica socială* 2: 7, March 3, 1934, p. 2.

the rising right-wing discourse of the time – and the design of guild-based parliamentarianism exposed by the “hard” promoters of it, Ioachim then offers his pleading for a modest interpretation of the same view, advanced under the label of “social corporatism”. This is understood as an arrangement amounting to nothing more than “the effective collaboration between the state and the professional associations of a public and a private nature”, able to allow the “parliament and the governments to maintain a direct contact with the masses, by using the professional organizations as agents of mediation without succumbing to a domination from their part” and likely to be constructed by simply broadening upon the system of special representation of the professional chambers in the parliament, already in place by virtue of the 1923 constitution.¹⁵ The benefits of such a choice are described vaguely as resting on the fact of allowing Romania to join the general world stream of evolution leading the “democracy of the individualist sort towards a new form, with the character of a solidarist democracy”.¹⁶ Over the same period, Ioachim gives in the journal a strictly descriptive presentation of the Italian fascist type of corporatist theory and practice,¹⁷ in order to come then with a negative evaluation of that system when contrasting it to Manoilescu’s view of integral corporatism. The latter author is invoked as an authority for the sake of underscoring that “one cannot speak about a genuine corporatism functioning at present in

¹⁵ Idem, “Corporatism social”, in *Politica socială* 2: 8, March 10, 1934, p. 2.

¹⁶ Idem, “Foloasele corporatismului social”, in *Politica socială* 2: 9, March 17, 1934, p. 2.

¹⁷ Idem, “Noua ideologie corporatistă italiană”, part I, in *Politica socială* 2: 22, June 9, 1934, p. 1; Idem, “Noua ideologie corporatistă italiană”, part II, in *Politica socială* 2: 23, June 16, 1934, p. 1.

Italy”, but this only comes as a preamble for arguing that, in fact, the doctrine “is more likely to develop in a state with a democratic structure”.¹⁸

The main book of Manoilescu on the subject is reviewed at length by the authorized voice of *Politica socială* in a series of four articles issued in March 1935. The reader is confronted here with a slight change of emphasis, by comparison to the interventions hitherto summarized. The analysis is drawn towards the conclusion that “the corporatist [...] idea must be supported”, which is advocated by pointing to the “brilliant work” under review as to an “important contribution to political and economic science on a world scale”.¹⁹ Such an evaluation is not impaired by the fact that, otherwise, Manoilescu “gives expression to his long-standing conviction that the state has the obligation to take a deep involvement in the organization of national economy”.²⁰ As to the comparison with the Italian case, it is now acknowledged that, “in light of how he understands the way the representatives of the corporations are to be elected, [Manoilescu’s ideas] do not differ very much [...] from the system actually functioning in Italy” (characterized by the fact that the leaders of the corporations are nominated by the head of the government).²¹ Even after taking such a turn of the argumentation, Ioachim is still able to delineate cautiously the “limits of corporatism” in an article of December 1935, maintaining now that the design is faced

¹⁸ Idem, “Corporatismul italian față cu corporatismul integral”, in *Politica socială* 2: 24, June 23, 1934, p. 1.

¹⁹ Idem, “Secolul corporatismului. Pe marginea unei cărți”, part IV, in *Politica socială* 3: 64, March 30, 1935, p. 1.

²⁰ Idem, “Secolul corporatismului. Pe marginea unei cărți”, part II, in *Politica socială* 3: 62, March 17, 1935, p. 4.

²¹ Idem, “Secolul corporatismului. Pe marginea unei cărți”, part III, in *Politica socială* 3: 63, March 23, 1935, p. 1.

with “considerable obstacles of both a psychological and a material nature, which induce us into thinking that this is not the shape that state institutions will take in the near future”, and stating moreover that “there are limitations which have to be observed if we are to disentangle from the corporatist doctrine the valuable components with real chances of being put into practice”. In spite of his earlier half-way approval of Manoilescu and Italian fascism, covered above, the author is thus keen to underline that a Romanian corporatist enterprise must be conducted such as to protect “the idea of private property and the spirit of individual initiative”, while also allowing “the highest public authority to rest in the state, as a political organ over and above the corporations” and refraining from placing interdictions on the circulation of different “philosophical, economic and social creeds”.²²

This appears to be the last attempt of *Politica socială* to take a meaningful critical engagement with the corporatist idea. The subject would reappear in the pages of the periodical only at the beginning of 1938, in the guise of a contextual accommodation with the political regime of Carolism and with its corresponding official discourse. The issue of the professional associations is now rehearsed here in light of the corporatist trappings of the February constitution,²³ together with the larger prospects of an economy patterned on the same ideas.²⁴ As part of the complacent advocacy, there are given enthusiastic descriptions of the fascist or semi-fascist

²² Idem, “Limitele corporatismului”, in *Politica socială* 3: 92, December 7, 1935, p. 1.

²³ Stere I. Ionescu, “Noua constituție și asociațiunile profesionale”, in *Politica socială* 5: 146, March 1, 1938, p. 1; G.N. Dulcu, “Noua constituție și asociațiile profesionale”, in *Politica socială* 5: 151, April 24, 1938, p. 1.

²⁴ Mircea Nuțescu, “Economia corporativă. Principii și realizări”, in *Politica socială* 5: 154, May 22, 1938, pp. 1-2.

corporatist experiments underway in Italy²⁵ and Portugal,²⁶ and even a fresh look at the promising turn taken by the organization of professional bodies and by the policies of labor in France.²⁷ In line with this accommodating discourse of the journal, D. R. Ioanițescu himself would then set forth to tailor his view of professional representation shaped in the 1920's to the principles governing the Carolist projected "law of the guilds" of 1939.²⁸ Still later, he would proceed to take account in the same fashion of the legal vision in the field of the National Legionary State,²⁹ before attempting to cope, in 1945, with the communist conception of syndicalism.³⁰

3

A 1934 article in *Politica socială* tries – inconclusively and without succeeding to inaugurate a sustained line of the sort – to clarify the ideological orientation of the publishing enterprise as resting on a synthesis between the liberal and the socialist traditions.³¹ The pleading has overtones meaningfully resembling those of the "liberal

²⁵ Idem, "Sistemul corporatist în Italia", in *Politica socială* 5: 144, February 1, 1938, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ Idem, "Dictatura corporativă. Aspecte din viața corporativă portugheză", in *Politica socială* 5: 151, April 24, 1938, p. 1.

²⁷ Petre Corcoveanu-Balș, "Organizarea corporațiilor de meseriași în Franța", in *Politica socială* 5: 156, June 5, 1938, pp. 1, 3.

²⁸ D.R. Ioanițescu, *Regimul breslelor*, București, Tipografia A-B-C, 1940.

²⁹ Idem, *Protecția muncii naționale. Istoric. Legiuirile regimului legionar*, București, Tipografia A-B-C, 1941.

³⁰ Idem, *Istoricul organizării sindicale din România. Codul sindicalismului român, 1921. Noul cod al sindicalismului român, 1945*, București, Tipografia Remus Cioflec, 1945.

³¹ C. Dumitrescu, "Între liberalism și socialism", in *Politica socială* 2: 12, April 7, 1934, p. 1.

socialist” experiment taken in 1923 by the journal *Dreptatea socială* under the directorship of Dumitru Drăghicescu, that has been recovered as the most significant local manifestation of the early XXth century socially minded liberalism pertaining to the world-wide pedigree of Keynesianism and of the welfare state vision.³² In February 1935, Ioachim can still foster his anti-interventionist (and anti-Manoilescu) creed under the heading of a meditation on a “new social order”, rejecting Italian fascism and German national-socialism in the same package with American New Deal policies and stating that all of these political families “are keen [...] to enslave the individual to the collective interests of society”. Instead, he maintains that the collaborators of the journal, “grouped around its founder and leader, D. R. Ioanițescu, a former minister of Labor, are sustained by the belief that the social order of the future has to emerge by virtue of a synthesis between the spirit of initiative and responsibility and the spirit of social solidarity”, without destroying, thus, “the ideas of profit and private property which are the two driving forces of progress”.³³ This statement of a vague variety of the liberal-socialist vision seems to glimmer also in an earlier article by Ioachim on “Christianity and the social order”,³⁴ that can easily recall to us Drăghicescu’s strivings to integrate Christian thinking into his theoretical construction dedicated to the ideal of well-pondered social justice.³⁵

³² See above, chapters 2 and 3.

³³ V.M. Ioachim, “În slujba unei noi ordini sociale”, in *Politica socială* 3: 59, February 23, 1935, pp. 13.

³⁴ Idem, “Creștinismul și ordinea socială”, in *Politica socială* 2: 51, December 29, 1934, p. 3.

³⁵ Dumitru Drăghicescu, *Creștinism și democrație*, București, Tipografia Ziarului “Voința Națională”, 1909; Idem, *La nouvelle cite de Dieu*, vol. 1: *La Voie, ou comment la philosophie de*

The works of Ioanițescu elaborated before adopting the Romanian Front position do not exactly open themselves to such an interpretation. Still, one can occasionally encounter characterizations of his political stance that resonate with this vision of ideological harmonization, as for example in a (however encomiastic and bombastic) article dedicated to his activity and published in *Munca* in 1933.³⁶ Some contemporary ideological utterances defining themselves – unlike the contributions of *Munca* and *Politica socială* – as firmly belonging to the National-Peasant fold seem to support the hypothesis that a discourse of the sort featured within the party over the period (the articles of the short-lived journal *Progresul social* of 1932 are good cases in point³⁷). Otherwise, Ioachim's modest interpretation of corporatism, summarized above,³⁸ emerges as closely resembling other proposals for wisely calibrating the demand of professional representation to the universal requirements of party-based parliamentarianism, in continuation to the existing constitutional provisions. A view of the kind is advanced in the works of the influential specialist in labor legislation Marco I. Barasch.³⁹ Participating alongside Ioanițescu to the 1930

l'histoire justifie la Société des Nations et son idéologie: le Neo-Christianisme, Paris, Marcelle Lesage, 1929.

³⁶ (unsigned) "Armonia claselor sociale. Capitalul, munca și partidele politice unite au stabilit pacea sufletească a muncitorimii. Opera prodigioasă a domnului D.R. Ioanițescu", in *Munca* 1: 9, April 23, 1933, pp. 1, 3.

³⁷ Ștefan Mihăiescu, "Rostul nostru", in *Progresul social* 1: 1, March 20, 1932, pp. 1-3.

³⁸ Ioachim, "Corporatismul social".

³⁹ Marco I. Barasch, *Camerele profesionale în organizarea statului modern*, București, "Cartea Românească", 1935.

celebration of the Ministry of Labor already mentioned,⁴⁰ this one entrenched his conception in a legal philosophy already clarified in his 1923 Paris doctoral dissertation⁴¹ and betraying the inspiration of a liberal-socialist synthesis that can itself be related to the vision of Drăghicescu.⁴² There are good reasons to argue, therefore, that the (undeniably unaccomplished) corporatist conception advanced in *Politica socială* in 1934-1935 can be traced back to the local version of the Left-liberal discourse, enjoying thus the same status as the branches of corporatist advocacy previously chartered as part of the approach developed here and discovered as connected, in turn, to the dominant liberalism with an oligarchic cast of the Zeletinian type and to the Romanian stream of classical free-trade liberal theory.⁴³

In January 1935, an intervention in *Politica socială* centered upon the notion of syndicalism can still greet friendly the first issue of a journal with a related focus entitled *Munca. Revistă de doctrină și orientare sindicală*, having a social-democratic orientation, headed by Ioan I. Mirescu and meant to offer guidance to trade union activism in the country⁴⁴ (while also taking a harsh critical stance on corporatist ideas⁴⁵). In June of the

⁴⁰ Idem, "Legislația muncii în cadrul politicii sociale", in G. Tașcă et al., *Un deceniu de politică socială românească*, București, n. p., 1930, pp. 208-227.

⁴¹ Idem, *Le socialisme juridique et son influence sur l'évolution du droit civil en France à la fin du XIXe siècle et au XXe siècle*, Paris, Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1923.

⁴² Dumitru Drăghicescu, *L'Idéal créateur: essai psycho-sociologique sur l'évolution sociale*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1914.

⁴³ See above, chapters 2 and 4.

⁴⁴ H. Pas, "Politica socială și sindicalismul", in *Politica socială* 3: 55, January 26, 1935, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Alexandru Frangopol, *Contra corporatismului (răspuns d-lui profesor M. Manoilescu)*, București, n.p., 1935, issued from within the circle of Mirescu's journal.

same year, Ioanițescu-Dere takes a new departure in terms of the discourse on social reform advanced by the periodical by invoking as a model the patterns of the “organization of national labor” in Nazi Germany.⁴⁶ Shortly thereafter, the obsolescence of democracy is contrasted by an author to the promises of fascism and dictatorship,⁴⁷ in a manner slightly contradictory to a later article by D. R. Ioanițescu meant to vindicate the genuine democratic character of right-wing nationalist parties, by opposition to the falsification of democratic creeds within the stream of the Left.⁴⁸ All throughout this very abrupt process of ideological refashioning, the all-pervading topic of the “protection of national labor” serves as the privileged engine of discursive transformation. Making its appearance during the spring of 1935,⁴⁹ it is rapidly embraced by the notorious anti-Semitic publicist N. Porsena with utmost dedication.⁵⁰ The reluctant flirtation of *Politica socială* with the corporatist idea gets silenced hand in hand with its gradual adjustment to the nationalist predicament. This can be invoked as a proof for the incongruence between the defining vision of social

⁴⁶ D. Ioanițescu-Dere, “Organizarea muncii naționale în Germania. Conducătorul (*Führer*-ul) și bărbații de încredere”, in *Politica socială* 3: 75, June 22, 1935, pp. 1, 3.

⁴⁷ G. Dulca, “Democrație, fascism, dictatură”, in *Politica socială* 3: 88, November 7, 1935, p. 3.

⁴⁸ D.R. Ioanițescu, “Dreapta’ și ‘stânga’”, in *Politica socială* 4: 104, May 1, 1936, p. 1.

⁴⁹ G. Dulca, “Protecția muncii naționale”, in *Politica socială* 3: 67, April 20, 1935, p. 3.

⁵⁰ N. Porsena, “Români și străini”, in *Politica socială* 3: 78, July 20, 1935, p. 1; Idem, “Aplicarea proporției”, in *Politica socială* 3: 81, August 1, 1935, p. 1; Idem, “Norma etnică”, in *Politica socială* 3: 82, September 14, 1935, p. 2; Idem, “Cota minoritarilor”, in *Politica socială* 3: 83, October 3, 1935, p. 1; Idem, “Românizarea profesiilor libere”, in *Politica socială* 3: 84, October 10, 1935, p. 1; Idem, “Asimilarea etnică”, in *Politica socială* 3: 92, December 7, 1935, p. 1.

reform assumed by the periodical and the quintessentially right-wing corporatist notion of structuring economy, society and politics on the basis on vertical lines of solidarity. It can also suggest, nevertheless, that, as much as it existed, the concern of Ioanițescu's journal for the virtues of corporatism was driven by ideological motives different from those of the nationalist Right.

PART III

Social Policies between the Corporatist Drive and the Left

Underlying the emphasis placed upon the discourse of Left-liberalism in the frame of the typology of liberal advocacies advanced in part I, there stays the search for a conceptualization of the historical process by which the institutions of social protection were first accommodated in the Romanian landscape. Such an objective can only be attained by the means of a critical approach to the only available influential view on the development of welfare devices in the country over the period predating the installation of communism, itself resting on the notion of socialist and communist politics – together with worker trade-union militancy harnessed to the same political trends – acting as the only significant agents of change in the field and having to confront the strategy of stubborn resistance alternating with reluctant concessions deployed by the dominant parties and ideological groups of the time. It is to note that the way out of these interpretative constraints was opened by the effort of reconstituting the full scope and entanglements of the corporatist idea – issuing from the related project of measuring the modernist credentials of fascism and of the right-wing culture in the same national context –, whose results were recorded in part II. It was shown in that connection, indeed, how the corporatist model of professional representation – envisioning the organizations of the professions to function as vertically-branded bodies

meant to perform various economic, social and political roles and to eliminate the factors of divisiveness nurtured by syndical activism – stood as a genuine participant to the debates about the framing of social policies during the interwar age and as a meaningful competitor of syndicalism on these grounds. Moreover, the explorations into the origins of corporatist pleading led to uncovering a movement of the professions with non-proletarian constituencies – dominated by white collar elements but tending to speak in the name of the entire middle class when making its case for a peculiar interpretation of corporatism – , deeply involved with the domain of state policy indicated and completely overlooked by previous historical accounts (in resonance with the patterns of historical writing mentioned above).

A new picture of the emergence of the welfare state along the Romanian historical path arose from these discoveries, with the conceptualization thus proposed resting on three basic and interrelated contentions. First, Drăghicescu's inquiries into institutional schemes and economic practices targeted at the multilayered redistribution of incomes across the social body – tailored to the Romanian conditions in the altering environment of world capitalism – have to be seen as constituting just one specific voice of a widespread local argumentation about the need to make the essential liberal wisdom presiding over the fundamental state framework (gradually) more sensitive to social concerns (the ambitious liberal socialist project of the respective theorist being predicated upon a welter of more modest pleadings vindicating the mere adoption in the context of a score of arrangements increasingly accepted in the West and worldwide – at least after the inauguration of the International Labor Organization in 1919 – as requirements of modern social life). Second, besides being set primarily in relation to the different Left-liberal

stances advanced by political factions drawn from the echelons of virtually all mainstream parties – with socialist politics accordingly relegated to the status of an opposition pressure acting meaningfully upon the course of events but secondarily important in terms of its unfolding –, the growth of welfare institutions, social policies and labor legislation has to be analyzed by reference to the demands coming from structures of professional representation giving voice to all social segments (the organizations of the middle classes emerging, eventually, as more prominent actors of the process – appropriately in accordance to the prevailing makeup of society – than the worker syndical bodies staying under close socialist supervision). Third, acknowledging the corporatist theory to have acted as an integral part of the game in the domain of pioneering Romanian social policies easily yields into ascertaining it as in fact a factor influencing the developments involved of a somewhat greater impact than the competing, syndical doctrine (such a statement inviting a sustained consideration of the post-war – and primarily western – neo-corporatist practices and arrangements, together with the theorizing developed in conjunction with them, for the sake of making sense conceptually of Romanian realities evolved up into the period of the Second World War).

The prevalence of the corporatist drive in the story of the first encounter between local society and the global demand for alleviating the pains of economic modernization was conjoined with the general tendency of leaning towards the Right affecting the entire social and political system over the last pre-communist decades, being also facilitated by the belated survival of traditionalist structures into the modern age. Chapter 6 shows how the two processes were interlocked along the relevant layer of change, placing the corporatist departure taken by the professional associations in 1929-1930 in continuity with

the resilience of institutional forms and modes of articulating social interests originated within the horizon of guild organization (dismantled in 1873 but reinstated in a different guise at the beginning of the XXth century, only in order to be once again declared dead in 1921 and to succeed in staying alive – however hidden behind the façade of a new legislative vision – up to the early 1930's). Thus propelled from the bottom-up – starting from within the world of professional associations and building upon the searches for the appropriate model of state mediation in the relations between capital and labor –, the calls for corporatist restructuring were augmented by the top-down process of ideological importation, inaugurated in 1926 and drawing heavily on the Italian fascist innovations of the sort. The combined force of the two kinds of developments eventually set the tone for the public debate on the topic during the following period, culminating with the experiments in the field of the 1938-1944 political regimes of the Right and marked by the proliferation of still more strenuous negative stances taken towards both the (Left-)liberal and the socialist varieties of syndicalism.

Repeated hints to the left-wing discourse of disagreement with the gradual ascendancy of the corporatist option over the syndical one were made above in the book. Chapter 7 comes back to the subject, by dwelling on the most sophisticated approach of the sort advanced in Romania before communism. As patterned in successive works by the theorist of cooperatism Gromoslav Mladenatz, this one betrays undeniable limitations imposed by the increasing mood of conformity with the politics of right-wing nationalist authoritarianism which stamped itself upon the public space after 1933. Such a shortcoming has as its other side the subtlety of the critique enmeshed in elusiveness, which refers only obliquely to the local realities, instead taking its main

substance from a comparative survey of the contemporary experimentations with the corporatist model across Europe. The emphasis is placed, here, much rather on the proven incapacity – nourished by muddled indetermination – of the regimes involved to operate the radical breakthroughs demagogically promised than on the perspective of revolutionary disruptions issuing from the same ideological programs. It is shown that no genuine overcoming of class-based divisiveness resting on the vertical integration of occupational roles into national economic bodies possessing of higher virtues of outward effectiveness and internal solidarity can be realistically expected to come from the attempts to implement the favorite proposal that the Right has for dealing with the intricacies of capitalism. Instances of theoretical inconsistency are moreover found to abound alongside the chronic vacillations pertaining to the record of corporatist practice, in this connection the strictures of Manoilescu being brought into focus on a par with an international selection of doctrines.

Keen to underscore the separateness of corporatism and fascist politics, Mladenatz belongs together with several figures mentioned in previous chapters and prone to take seriously the possibility of moderate interpretations, non-authoritarian applications and temporary instrumentations of the conception otherwise heralded by its consecrated Romanian representative to loom implacably over the century in a sheer totalitarian guise. Beyond this, the empathic engagement of the left-wing thinker with the different faces and (partial) embodiments of the ideas criticized is due to their perception as participating to the more general syndrome of the crisis encountered by the capitalist form of economic life, more acutely inviting questions regarding the prospects for its thriving in the particular frame of liberalism. Diagnosing

corporatism as essentially – and reassuringly – an attempt to save capitalism by divorcing it from the liberal order, Mladenatz argues that no break with the capitalist order is likely to arise from this corner. Such a conclusion does not prevent him from continuing, up until the last years of the Second World War, to take for granted that some concessions to the expanding wisdom of planning or dirigisme – of which cooperatism itself is partaking – are required in the dire circumstances. When ascertaining how widely this belief was held at the time in the country, across the ideological dividing lines, we get a good background for measuring the significance of the last pronouncement in the field that the theorist could give over the short span of time elapsing from the end of the war to the installation of communism. Subscribing optimistically to the burgeoning liberal revival in the West that he contemplates, he provides a penetrating postscript to the story covered above, in chapters 2 and 3.

Corporatism in the Romanian Tradition: Top-down and Bottom-up Lineages

The corporatist theory exposed by Mihail Manoilescu most consistently in *The Century of Corporatism* of 1934 is deemed to lack a genuine tradition behind it. International scholarship has referred to it as pertaining essentially to the intellectual context of contemporary Europe as a whole – and as mainly addressed to foreign audiences –, denying to it any national roots of significance¹ (otherwise relying heavily on it for the sake of forging the neo-corporatist theorizing meant to diagnose and advocate peculiar welfare arrangements of the postwar world²). Local fascism has itself been depicted for long as displaying only limited interferences

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- ¹ Philippe C. Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu and the Political Consequences of Delayed-Dependent Development on the Periphery of Western Europe”, in Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940. A Debate on Development in a European Nation*, Berkeley, University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978, pp. 117-139.
- ² Idem, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, in *The Review of Politics* 36: 1, 1974, pp. 85-131; Wyn Grant, ed., *The Political Economy of Corporatism*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1985. Also Victor Rizescu, “Taming a Regressive Utopia, Shaping Its Dystopian History? Corporatist Theory and Practice across the 1945 Divide”, in *Polis. Revistă de științe politice* (n. s.) 5: 1, 2017, pp. 233-242

with the corporatist ideas and politics,³ to the same extent as older and recent comparative surveys of the latter trends have always tended to disregard the milieu of the ideologist reputed for his tight articulation of protectionist economic views and corporatist political conceptions.⁴ Romanian scholarship, otherwise, has never proceeded to treat the activity of Manoilescu in the field – promoted within the folds of his journal *Lumea nouă*, founded in April 1932, and of his National Corporatist League, initiated in November 1933 – as more than one (rather marginal) incarnation of right-wing politics, failing to relate it consistently to developments in the interrelated domains of social policies and of the structures of professional representation (thus perceiving syndicalism alone as a genuine modern design for the representation of professional interests).

Staying in continuation to other interventions meant to disclose the real scope of corporatist advocacies and practices in pre-communist Romania – by relating them to their syndicalist alternatives, but also to the interplay between the politics of professional representation and the growth of social policies approached in general terms⁵ –, the present article traces the two sources of the tradition staying behind the figure of Manoilescu, with a view to clarify the meanings of their interconnections. Certainly,

³ Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania. Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1969 [1951], p. 231.

⁴ Gaetan Pirou, *Néo-libéralisme, néo-corporatisme, néo-socialisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1939, pp. 73-124; Matteo Pasetti, ed., *Progetti corporativi tra le due guerre mondiali*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2006; Antonio Costa-Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, London, Routledge, 2017.

⁵ See above, chapter 5. Also Victor Rizescu, “De la emanciparea muncii la protecția socială: politica reprezentării profesionale în România la începutul secolului XX”, in *Polis. Revistă de științe politice* (n. s.) 4: 4, 2016, pp. 175-184.

corporatism – of the modern style – was propagated here top-down, by the means of intellectual imports derived from the flow of political development set on the drive to right-wing radicalization in interwar Europe. It also emerged, however, from bottom up, getting first incubated within the welter of grass-roots associational movements of the professional groups and acquiring specific ideological expressions in this context, before being translated into public discourses with a wider impact. For sure, the merger of the two lineages of Romanian corporatism – identified to have taken place on the threshold of the years 1932-1933 – is no less significant than their previous separateness.

1

It is precisely in 1926, at a time when the capital-labor relations started to be refashioned in Italy according to the corporatist model,⁶ that one can encounter the first testimonies of the Romanian acquaintance with the Italian developments involved. They came in the journal *Cuvântul*, and in the footsteps of previous articles advancing a favorable assessment of the political experiment underway in the sister Latin country, praising the “constructive ideology of fascism”⁷ in order to then recommend the periodical as staying “under the aegis of Rome” (by opposition to the ideological visions emanating

⁶ L. Rosenstock-Franck, *L'économie corporative fasciste en doctrine et en fait. Ses origines historiques et son évolution*, Paris, Librairie Universitaire J. Gambler, 1934, pp. 49-115; Gianpasquale Santomassimo, *La terza via fascista. Il mito del corporativismo*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2006, pp. 101-105.

⁷ Pamfil Șeicaru, “Ideologia constructivă a fascismului”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 481, June 16, 1926, p. 1.

from the democratic Paris and the communist Moscow).⁸ The fascist refashioning of syndicalism is here depicted as “conducive to a victory in the war of economic restoration”, provided that fascism itself has to be understood as a synthesis between an attitude of dedication to the welfare of the masses and a wise intimation of capitalism as a necessary endowment of society.⁹ The design of the corporatist state is recommended by the influential journalist Pamfil Șeicaru as a fetter against endemic corruption, on account of the fact that “the whole of the productive categories constituting the nation cannot be bribed” in the same fashion as the minority of politicians whose aggrandizement is the real meaning of democratic parliamentarianism”.¹⁰ At the beginning of the following year, Șeicaru comes back to the topic, giving a rejoinder to a criticism of corporatism formulated in the great daily newspaper *Universul* and instead advocating the design as a necessary corrective to the parliamentary state undergoing a crisis.¹¹ Soon thereafter, in February, the director of the periodical, Titus Enacovici, vindicates the corporatist state as enabling a better organization of national defense, further defining it as “emerging spontaneously from the confrontation between the view of the bourgeois state and that of the socialist one”,¹² in order to then restate his support for the idea when commenting, in April, upon the *Carta del Lavoro* of 1927

⁸ Idem, “Fascismul Cuvântului”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 496, July 3, 1926, p. 1.

⁹ Ion Biciolla, “Sindicalismul fascist”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 500, July 8, 1926, p. 1.

¹⁰ Pamfil Șeicaru, “Statul corporativ”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 523, August 4, 1926, p. 1.

¹¹ Idem, “Stat corporativ?”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 667, January 23, 1927, p. 1.

¹² Titus Enacovici, “Apărarea națională reclamă statul corporativ”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 681, February 10, 1927, p. 1.

and asserting that “Mussolini places economic production on appropriate bases”, shaping his policies “in between the school of bare individualism and non-interventionism and the one of collectivism and statist interventionism”.¹³

After launching his own newspaper *Curentul* in 1928, Pamfil Șeicaru continues to underscore the transmutation of syndicalism into corporatism as staying at the center of the fascist political experiment, thus explaining in March 1929 how “fascism rests on a great social experimentation”, in so far as “the former revolutionary syndicalist Mussolini creates the conditions for a new balance of antagonistic forces in society”.¹⁴ Earlier, in May 1928, the periodical had advertised “the third congress of the fascist syndicates”, expressing the conviction that “the present century can only be dominated by the corporatist economy, in the same way as the previous one was dominated by the capitalist one”, the revolutionary change leading from one economic form to another being understood as based on “placing capital and labor on the same footing”.¹⁵ It is to note that the two forums with a right-wing orientation were both nourished by the irradiations of the journal *Gândirea*, founded in 1921, adopting a nationalist traditionalist stance in 1924 and coming under the directorship of the traditionalist ideologist Nichifor Crainic in 1926. However, it was Crainic’s own newspaper *Calendarul* – launched in January 1932 – which antedated with several months Manoilescu’s *Lumea nouă* with a genuine sustained dedication for promoting the cause of corporatism.

¹³ Idem, “Statul corporativ. ‘Charta Muncii’”, in *Cuvântul* 3: 746, April 29, 1927, p. 1.

¹⁴ Pamfil Șeicaru, “Experiența fascistă”, in *Curentul* 2: 418, March 15, 1929, p. 1.

¹⁵ (unsigned) “Al treilea congres al sindicatelor fasciste. Dl. Mussolini despre sindicalismul Italian”, in *Curentul* 1: 116, May 10, 1928, p. 5.

From the very beginning, Crainic takes here as a matter of fact the failure of party-based politics,¹⁶ in order to then clarify that „the new form of public life” which he envisions “can only come from replacing the state of the parties with the state of the guilds”.¹⁷ The journal rejects trade unionism with a socialist slant as a perversion of genuine professional representation, teaching the workers that “only together with all the other professional organizations they will manage to obtain an effective representation of their interests, and only in such circumstances true syndicalism will prevail”.¹⁸ There is advanced a strenuous claim for refashioning the electoral system according to corporatist principles,¹⁹ which are themselves presented as constituting a third option, between liberalism and socialism.²⁰ The existing version of parliamentary state is shown to act as an instrument for draining economic resources for the sole benefit of the political class²¹ and political parties are contrasted negatively to professional bodies²² – being also depicted as “reflecting in the field of politics the atomistic tendencies of the century which

¹⁶ Nichifor Crainic, “Falimentul partidelor”, in *Calendarul* 1: 16, February 9, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁷ Idem, “Spre statul breslaş”, in *Calendarul* 1: 32, February 25, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁸ Radu Dragnea, „Muncitorii și organizațiile profesionale”, in *Calendarul* 1: 16, February 9, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁹ Dragoș Protopopescu, „Cerem votul breslelor”, in *Calendarul* 1: 41, March 5, 1932, p. 1.

²⁰ Roger F. Nicolescu, „Liberalism, socialism, corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 158, September 14, 1932, p. 1.

²¹ Nichifor Crainic, “Lichidarea politicianismului parazitar”, in *Calendarul* 1: 42, March 6, 1932, p. 1.

²² Idem, “Partide și brelse”, in *Calendarul* 1: 49, March 14, 1932, p. 1.

brought them into being”²³ –, with the implication that “the parliament has to be the institution of the producers and of the professions, not of the political parasites”.²⁴ A part of the strategy pursued for accomplishing this goal consists in urging professional groups to stop acting as “mere annexes of the parties” and to “build their own civic consciousness, such as to become the real public opinion in the country”.²⁵

The fresh Iron Guard convert Mihail Polihroniade then delivers here elaborate series of articles dedicated first to the presentation of the Italian political system, with an emphasis upon its corporatist dimension (published from August to November 1932, focusing on Italy but also pointing to the current developments in Germany and to the evolution of the Nazi party following the elections of July 31, 1932²⁶) and then to the corporatist doctrine itself (issued between May and June 1933).²⁷ After disclosing the premises of the corporatist view in relation to the overall fascist program,²⁸ the exploration moves on to consider in greater depth the economic implications of the latter, showing in this connection that “the corporatist system allows for

²³ Radu Dragnea, “Întregimi sociale și fracțiuni politice”, in *Calendarul* 1: 39, March 3, 1932, p. 1.

²⁴ Idem, “Mistificarea reprezentanței profesionale”, in *Calendarul* 1: 28, February 21, 1932, p. 1.

²⁵ Idem, “A doua opinie publică”, in *Calendarul* 1: 35, February 28, 1932, p. 1.

²⁶ The series opened with Mihail Polihroniade, “Fascism”, in *Calendarul* 1: 138, August 25, 1932, pp. 1-2. It was drawn to an end with Idem, “Concluziuni”, in *Calendarul* 1: 215, November 10, 1932, pp. 1-2.

²⁷ Opening with Idem, “Corporatism”, in *Calendarul* 2: 372, May 19, 1933, p. 1; ending with Idem, “Concluzie”, in *Calendarul* 2: 401, June 24, 1933, p. 1.

²⁸ Idem, “Premisele statului corporativ”, in *Calendarul* 1: 162, September 18, 1932, pp. 1-2.

disciplining and harmonizing social life and economy under the direct control of the state”²⁹ and warning against the tendency of thinking about fascism as “non-innovative in the economic field, as a political regime based on capitalism or even as a capitalist reaction”.³⁰

One can easily contrast this with Manoilescu’s original attitude – expressed in *Lumea nouă* – of prudently asserting that “the future state will have to allow for the appropriate national integration of social-economic categories”,³¹ of warning against those “superficial thinkers” subscribing to “a full identification of Italian fascism with corporatism” – due to the fact that “the only version of generalized corporatism existing in contemporary states is the fascist one” – and of arguing that “in agrarian countries like Romania, corporatism can only take peculiar forms, allowing peasant interests to assert themselves”.³² As late as 1934, in his main book on the topic, he conjoins a basic departure from liberal democracy – thus looking forward to a new type of political regime “replacing equality by justice and liberty by organization”³³ – with the determination of relegating the Italian fascist model to the inferior status of “subordinated” corporatism – on account of employing “the corporations as auxiliary organs, subordinated to the state”³⁴ –, by comparison to the “pure” one that he

²⁹ Idem, “Sindicate și corporații”, in *Calendarul* 1: 166, September 22, 1932, p. 2.

³⁰ Idem, “Economia fascistă”, in *Calendarul* 1: 173, September 29, 1932, p. 1.

³¹ Mihail Manoilescu, “Anticipare”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 1, April 1932, p. 2.

³² Idem, “Corporatism românesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 1: 3, June 1932, pp. 3, 5.

³³ Idem, *Le siècle du corporatisme: doctrine du corporatisme integral et pur*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1934, p. 111.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

advocates (and which envisions the welter of corporations as constituting the ultimate source of public authority).

An (always unstable) fusion between the National-Corporatist League and the fascist Iron Guard on the same political platform is forged in 1936-1937, with Manoilescu paying homage in *Lumea nouă* to the fascist leaders Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu, Ion I. Moța and Vasile Marin³⁵ and contributing to the Iron Guardist periodical *Buna vestire*,³⁶ but also with members of the other trend giving corporatist pronouncements in their own journal,³⁷ as well as in the one entirely dedicated to promoting the creed.³⁸ At the level of abstract theory, this conversion is sealed by Manoilescu's appeal to the design of the single-party state – exercising a control over the corporatist structure of society – as to a necessary intermediate stage on the road to the integral and pure corporatism desired.³⁹ An evasive statement on the question is given

³⁵ Idem, "Cartea Căpitanului", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 10-11, 1936, pp. 453-459; Idem, "De la Lord Byron la Ion Moța", in *Lumea nouă* 6: 1, 1937, pp. 3-5.

³⁶ Idem, "Mussolini și evreii", in *Buna vestire* 1: 28, March 25, 1937, p. 1; Idem, "O nouă constituție", in *Buna vestire* 1: 32, March 30, 1937, pp. 1, 3; Idem, "Românismul partidelor și românismul corporațiilor", in *Buna vestire* 1: 92, June 17, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

³⁷ (unsigned) "Spirit corporativ", in *Buna vestire* 1: 9, March 3, 1937, p. 1; Petre Șt. Creștinu, „Finalități corporative”, in *Buna vestire* 1: 40, April 8, 1937, p. 2; M. Dorneanu, "Corporatismul se impune pretutindeni," in *Buna vestire* 1: 97, June 24, 1937, p. 5.

³⁸ Mihail Polihroniade, "Capitalism și democrație", in *Lumea nouă* 7: 1-2, 1938, pp. 25-27.

³⁹ Mihail Manoilescu, "Partidul unic", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 7, 1936, pp. 319-323; Idem, "Partidul unic, instituție politică a regimurilor noi", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 12, 1936, pp. 513-517; Idem, *Le parti unique. Institution politique des régimes nouveaux*, Paris, Les Oeuvres Françaises, 1937.

by Codreanu in January 1938⁴⁰ – before the beginning of the Carolist persecutions against the fascist party –, later to be proudly appropriated by Manoilescu in December 1940 – under the regime of the National Legionary State –, in the journal *Chemarea vremii*.⁴¹

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Corporatist advocacy on the Italian model took place against the entrenched legislative framework of professional representation, as it had developed in Romania since the end of the XIXth century, in correlation to the shaping of social policies. The process involved the abolition of traditional guilds by virtue of a government decree of June 1873. Nevertheless, the state of disarray installed in the economic segment of craftsmanship and small commerce ensued soon thereafter in efforts of institutional reconstruction, predicated on the model of (quasi-)mandatory corporatist associations of a public character and taking inspiration from German, Austrian and Hungarian policies and legislation, a vision grounded first in the 1902 Law for the Organization of Professions and then in the 1912 Law for the Organization of Professions, Credit and Social Insurance.⁴² While

⁴⁰ (unsigned) “Un interview cu dl. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Omul nou. Spre corporatism. Guvernul. Minoritățile”, in *Buna vestire* 2: 271, January 26, 1938, p. 1.

⁴¹ Mihail Manoilescu, “Știința economică față de statul legionar”, part IV, in *Chemarea vremii* 14: 29, December 19, 1940, p. 5.

⁴² B.M. Missir, coord., *Legea pentru organizarea meseriilor și regulamentul privitor la aplicarea ei, precedate de dezbaterile corpurilor legiuitoare și de proiectele de legi anterioare*, București, Atelierele Grafice I.V. Socecu, 1905; *Lege pentru organizarea meseriilor, creditului și asigurărilor muncitorești*,

abolishing the provisions of the latter in order to implement the conception of syndical freedom – thus setting itself within the paradigm of the French law with the same content of 1884 and of the vision promoted by the International Labor Office of the League of Nations⁴³ – the Trancu-Iași regulation for the creation of professional syndicates of 1921⁴⁴ established a line of policy which was certainly exposed to the pressures aiming at the politicization of syndical organizations, coming from the Left.⁴⁵ To the same extent, it was unable to curb down immediately the welter of guilds and corporations erected within the previous legislative framework. Instead, the period that followed up to 1933 witnessed the contradictory coexistence between the development of professional associations created under the new provisions and the agonistic survival of the guilds and corporations established on the basis of the pre-war arrangements.

The phenomenon was partly due to the difficulties of legislative unification in the field among the provinces brought together in Greater Romania, with the Hungarian and Austrian regulations of a (semi-)corporatist nature dating from 1884, respectively 1907, continuing to stay in place in Transylvania, respectively Bukovina, and the situation in the formerly Russian province of Bessarabia

cu modificările ulterioare, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Bucovina” I.E. Torouțiu, 1931. Also Constantin C. Numian, *Breslele vechi și breslele noi*, Pitești, n. p., 1915.

⁴³ *La liberté syndicale*, vol 1: *Étude internationale*, Genève, Bureau International du Travail, 1927.

⁴⁴ “Lege asupra sindicatelor profesionale”, in *Monitorul oficial* 41, May 26, 1921, pp. 1419-1425.

⁴⁵ George Strat, *La liberté syndicale en Roumanie*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice și Editură “Curierul Judiciar” S.A., 1927; N. Ghiulea, “Les syndicats ouvriers en Roumanie”, in *Les documents du travail* 9: 97-98, May-June 1925, pp. 107-136.

constituting a void terrain that invited vacillating experimentations. Besides, in the Old Kingdom itself, the corporatist bodies continued to perform, as they had been entrusted by the law of 1912, their responsibilities in the field of professional training, also continuing to act as the basic units for the organization of social insurance (originally set as such under the supervision of a Central House of Professions, Credit and Social Insurance that was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and constituting the matrix from which the Ministry of Labor eventually emerged). Accordingly, the much delayed unification of the systems of social insurance throughout the country by a law of April 1933⁴⁶ – predated by the law for the establishment of the Chambers of Labor in October 1932⁴⁷ – meant the third successive death of the corporatist structures on Romanian soil, after the moments 1873 and 1921 (the bodies of a corporatist nature confusingly tolerated up to that moment being dismantled for good by a decision of the Ministry of Labor in July 1933,⁴⁸ with the mission of administering professional education shifted to the Chambers of Labor and the structure of insurances reconstructed on a nation-wide base in the framework of the Ministry of Labor). At the time, the public space was marked – as shown above – by growing advocacies in favor of the modern corporatist economic and political

⁴⁶ *Lege pentru unificarea asigurărilor sociale*, ed a IV-a adnotată cu jurisprudență și indice alfabetic, București, Ed. Librăriei “Universala” Alcalay, [1937].

⁴⁷ „Lege pentru înființarea camerelor de muncă”, in *Monitorul oficial* 238, October 11, 1932, pp. 5887-5893.

⁴⁸ “Decizia Ministerului Muncii nr. 30524 din 4 aprilie 1933 cu privire la desființarea breslelor din Vechiul Regat și trecerea atribuțiilor asupra altor organe”, in *Codul muncii*, ed. de D. Constantinescu, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1939, pp. 21-22.

design. Other demands for abandoning the wisdom of syndicalism in favor of the vertically branded structures of representation were advanced, otherwise, precisely from within the horizon of professional life described.

Indeed, no matter how confusing – and entirely neglected by the specialized surveys of the field taken in the pre-communist period as well as during the later ages⁴⁹ –, the realities of legislative and institutional contradiction depicted above went into the open with a movement giving voice to the bodies lingering since 1921. This one came to be translated into an advocacy for the official re-entrenchment of the corporatist type of professional representation with the foundation of the journal *Gazeta meseriilor*, in 1929. Led by M. Roșu and C. Arsenie, the periodical was inaugurated in January of that year with elusive calls for the “organization of labor”,⁵⁰ followed, over a period of several months, by articles on the subject devoid of a clearly distinguishable orientation.⁵¹ It only clarified sharply its stance in December, with an article that took a retrospective look at the developments after 1921, disclosing the legal and institutional inconsistency of the coexistence between “the professional organizations based on the principle of

⁴⁹ I. Răducanu et al., *Zece ani de politică socială în România, 1920-1930*, București, Eminescu S.A., 1930; Emilian Bold et al., *Concesii și restricții în legislația muncii din România, 1920-1940*, Iași, Universitatea “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 1980; Ilie Marinescu, *Politica socială interbelică în România. Relațiile dintre muncă și capital*, București, Ed. Tehnică, 1995.

⁵⁰ M. Marinescu, “Organizarea muncii”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 1, January 27, 1929, p. 4.

⁵¹ Șerban Casetti, “Introducerea asigurărilor sociale în România”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 3, November 11, 1929, pp. 1, 3; M. Barasch, “Legislația muncii în România. Mișcarea legislativă de după război”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 4, November 18, 1929, p. 1.

the freedom of association (syndicates or professional associations) and those based on the principle of mandatory association (guilds and corporations).⁵² After taking several other vacillating inroads into the problem,⁵³ the journal announces in July 1930 the “bankruptcy of syndicalism”, maintaining that “the guild, harmonizing the interests of the employers and the workers, is to be preferred to the syndicate, that cultivates the cult of contestation”,⁵⁴ in order to then host a call for the convocation of a “congress of the guilds”,⁵⁵ to report about its proceedings taking place on September 28-30, 1930 and to advertise the creation of a General Confederation of the Guilds with that occasion.⁵⁶

Disclosing the phenomenon of the life after death enjoyed by the old corporatist institutions from 1921 to 1933 only sheds light on a segment of the legislative and institutional intricacies marking the domain of professional representation in interwar Romania. Another part of the story is constituted by the case of the General Union of the Small Entrepreneurs and Craftsmen from Greater Romania (*Uniunea Generală a Micilor Industriași și Meseriași Patroni din România Mare*), created on the basis of a special law of October 1921 (thus circumventing

⁵² (unsigned) “Corporații și bresle. Ce politică facem?”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 8, December 16, 1929, 1.

⁵³ Eugen Dascălu, “Politica socială și muncitorească”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 10, December 30, 1929, p. 6; M. Marinescu, “Bresle, corporații și camera de meserii”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 23, April 1, 1930, p. 11.

⁵⁴ M. Roșu, “Falimentul sindicalismului”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 40, July 28, 1930, p. 1.

⁵⁵ C. Arsenie, “În preajma congresului breslelor”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 44, August 25, 1930, p. 1.

⁵⁶ (unsigned) “Constituirea Confederației Generale a Breslelor. Congresul de la 28, 29 și 30 septembrie. Discursurile rostite”, in *Gazeta meseriilor* 1: 52, October 20, 1930, pp. 1, 3.

the provisions of the Trancu-Iași law but nevertheless evolving within the horizon created by the latter and therefore staying in opposition to the interest groups gathered around *Gazeta meseriilor*). Launched in March 1922, its periodical, entitled *Glasul micii industrii*, originally invokes the friendly collaboration with “those committees of the existing corporations which had understood the role” that the new body was expected to play,⁵⁷ in order to then take in May 1923 – under the signature of the president Alexandru Samoil himself – a negative stance on the outdated corporatist institutions, blamed for their obsolescence, denounced as venues of corruption and moreover shown as legally incongruent with the provisions of the law of professional syndicates (nevertheless clarifying that the conception presiding upon the foundation of the Union was meant to offer to the small industrialists precisely an alternative – of a different order – to the same general regulations for the structuring of professional life).⁵⁸ Other critical departures of the sort would follow.⁵⁹

Both the movement of the old corporations and the organization of Samoil arose from within the social and economic segment of craftsmanship and petty industry, and their vision of professional representation was certainly different from that of the worker constituencies supporting syndical activism in connection to the socialist and communist political trends. A genuine clear-cut crystallization of a corporatist discourse set in plain opposition to the politics of the Left on the issue can only

⁵⁷ (unsigned) “Scopul Uniunii”, in *Glasul micii industrii* 1: 1, March 1, 1922, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁸ Al Samoil, “Inutilitatea corporațiilor. Ele funcționează și ilegal”, part II, in *Glasul micii industrii* 2: 18, May 28, 1923, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Idem, “Apărătorii corporațiilor. Bastonul magic al d-lui A.V. Gâdei”, in *Glasul micii industrii* 2: 23, July 2, 1923, p. 1.

be discovered in the period, however, within the fold of a movement of the professions dominated by white collar elements: the General Confederation of Professional Associations, created in June 1930 – but tracing back its origins to 1929 –, expressing the views of organizations created on the basis of the principle of free association and benefitting in the beginning from the support of the Union of Small Entrepreneurs.⁶⁰ Led by I.D. Enescu, the president of the Society of Romanian Architects, it had as a (more longer running) offshoot the Confederation of the Associations of Intellectual Professionals, initiated in February 1933. Issued from 1930 to 1934 by the first of these two confederations, the journal *Drum nou* operated a revolutionary departure from the paradigm of corporatist theory and politics set in continuation to the traditional arrangements, its stance being predicated, indeed, on the modern conception of dissociating professional representation from horizontally branded class strife, thus demanding the demolition of parties-based parliamentarianism and its replacement with a new kind of parliamentary representation drawing on the more fundamental fact of professional affiliation. This one was intended to “redeem the fatherland from the leprosy of politics”⁶¹ and to get “crystallized and consecrated the organic realities, liberated by all parasitism”, provided that “the nation can only obtain its definitive and

⁶⁰ (unsigned) “Marea întrunire publică a Confederației Generale a Asociațiilor Profesionale”, in *Glasul micii industrii* 9: 3, July 15, 1930, pp. 3-4.

⁶¹ I.D. Enescu, “Ideea corporativă”, in *Drum nou* 3: 13, June 21, 1932, p. 1. See also Idem, “Mica industrie și încurajarea construcțiilor”, in *Glasul micii industrii* 9: 2, July 15, 1930, p. 1.

complete expression through corporatism”.⁶² The call was driven, moreover, by the desire of purging society of budgetary parasitism and chronic corruption and cleaning economy from suffocating political interference (highlighting to this extent that “state interventionism is not a necessity of economic life, but on the contrary, [...] is a consequence of the politicization of our entire economic structure”, having as a result “the forced labor of the great masses of the people for sustaining the political clientele”).⁶³

The confederation of 1930 also constituted the context from which the first political party with a corporatist program emerged: the Citizens Block for the Salvation of the Country, founded in June 1932⁶⁴ – considerably in advance of Manoilescu’s National-Corporatist League –, led by the schoolteacher Grigore Forțu, intent on “taking over state power and ruling away immediately all political parties”⁶⁵ – thus cleaning “the field of the heather of politics [...] such as to allow the Confederation to build the state of tomorrow on this ground”⁶⁶ – and eventually turned to supporting a fascist discourse in conjunction with the Iron Guard (in the same fashion as Enescu was to join the National

⁶² Idem, *Corporatism și partidism*, București, Ed. Secției de Studii a Confederației Asociațiilor Profesionale, 1932, pp. 30, resp. 29.

⁶³ Idem, “Etatism”, in *Drum nou* 2: 16, August 16, 1931, p. 1. Also I. Ghiulea, “Economia științifică împotriva economiei dirijate”, in *Drum nou* 4: 2, January 15, 1933, pp. 1, 3; Ferdinand Koșca, “Naționalism economic”, in *Drum nou* 4: 23, July 9, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Grigore Forțu, “Blocul Cetățenesc pentru Mântuirea Țării. Chemare”, in *Drum nou* 3: 12, June 15, 1932, p. 2.

⁶⁵ (unsigned) “Lozinca momentului”, in *Drum nou* 3: 13, June 21, 1932, p. 2.

⁶⁶ (unsigned) “Blocul și confederația duc acțiune comună”, in *Drum nou* 3: 15, July 15, 1932, p. 2.

Christian Party, created in 1935). The overall right-wing politicization of the movement of professional associations came partly from its cohabitation with the newspaper *Calendarul*, with members of the two groups participating to common ventures⁶⁷ and with Crainic mentioning Enescu, in 1937, as “the first militant for the corporatist idea in Romania, acting within the movement of the free professions”.⁶⁸

It is at this juncture that one can certify the existence of a deep intertwining between the process of the grass-roots emergence of corporatism in Romania and that of its entrenchment by virtue of ideological imports. It is also of significance to notice how *Drum nou* depicts Manoilescu in September and November 1932 as a newcomer to the field of corporatist advocacy – whose stance is moreover suspect in so far as he is embracing the doctrine “after rejecting it as a childish one two years before”⁶⁹ and dares to “place the beginnings of corporatism in Romania just six months beforehand, at the moment of his conversion”⁷⁰ –, or else how *Calendarul* welcomes him sarcastically in February 1933 as somebody who “has got enrolled in the young Romanian

⁶⁷ Nichifor Crainic, “Conferințele noastre despre corporatism”, in *Drum nou* 3: 24, November 28, 1932, p. 2; the same article in *Calendarul* 1: 225, November 29, 1932, p. 1; (unsigned) “Critica democrației. Conferința d-lui prof. Dragoș Protopopescu”, in *Drum nou* 3: 25, December 12, 1932, p. 2; (unsigned) “Reacțiunea creatoare a corporatismului. Conferința d-lui Mihail Polihroniade”, in *Drum nou* 4: 1, January 1, 1933, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Nichifor Crainic, *Programul statului etnocratic*, București, Tipografia Ziarului *Universul*, [1937], p. 7.

⁶⁹ (unsigned) “Manifestări corporatiste”, in *Drum nou* 3: 18, September 1, 1932, p. 2.

⁷⁰ (unsigned) “Un succes”, in *Drum nou* 3: 22, November 1, 1932, p. 3.

corporatism movement”.⁷¹ One can encounter Enescu defending his primacy in the field in March 1938, in the National-Christian journal *Țara noastră*, by opposition to *Lumea nouă*.⁷² For sure, such a vindication of a pioneering role should have better been advanced not on his own behalf, but in the name of the entire movement of the pretty entrepreneurial and white collar professional associations carrying the legacy of the traditional guilds and of their turn-of-the-century partial reincarnations into the age of modern corporatist ideology and practice.

Before getting translated into a program of overall political reconstruction pertaining to the larger constellation of the interwar Romanian Right and staying in resonance with the contemporary European political trends of the kind, the corporatist model was articulated in the local context as a design for the representation of professional interests, participating in this capacity to the shaping of social policies, in interrelation to both the liberal and the socialist understandings of syndicalism.⁷³ It is only by highlighting thus its role as an integral component of the national pedigree of the welfare state that one can disclose the full meaning of Mihail Manoilescu’s theories and of their international impact.

⁷¹ Mihail Polihroniade, “*România, stat corporativ* de Mihail Manoilescu”, in *Calendarul* 2: 303, February 23, 1933, p. 1, commenting upon Mihail Manoilescu, *România, stat corporativ: de ce și cum trebuie transformat statul nostru*, București, Tipografia Modernă, 1933.

⁷² I.D. Enescu, “Corporatismul românesc”, in *Țara noastră* 17: 6, March 26, 1938, p. 175; (unsigned) “Istoricul corporatismului românesc”, in *Lumea nouă* 7: 5-6, May-June 1938, p. 155.

⁷³ Victor Rizescu, “Începuturile statului bunăstării pe filiera românească. Scurtă retrospectivă a etapelor unei reconceptualizări”, in *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* 28: 1, 2018, pp. 35-56.

Competing Voices of the Drive to Planning? The Cooperatist Engagement with Corporatism in Romania

Published in 1935 (one year after the first French edition of Manoilescu's main work on the topic), a Belgian survey of the corporatist turns recently taken by the economic and social policies of various countries and of the related ideological developments – sustained by a pleading for the same design drawing its main inspiration from the trend of social Catholicism¹ and written against the immediate background of the constitutions with corporatist credentials adopted by Portugal in 1933 and by Austria in 1934, in the footsteps of the paradigmatic arrangements introduced in Italy since 1926 – goes as far as to consider the Bulgarian case (alongside Brazil) – thus invoking the decree for the organization of the professional groups of September 1934, issued by the dictatorial regime of Kimon Georgiev Stoyanov² –, but fails to pay any attention whatsoever to Romania. This attitude of neglect would in fact be replicated by other comparative researches

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¹ Georges Jarlot, *Le régime corporative et les catholiques sociaux. Histoire d'une doctrine*, Paris, Flammarion, 1938.

² Albert Muller, *La politique corporative. Essais d'organisation corporative*, Anvers, Les Editions Rex, 1935, pp. 151-154.

of the time, undertaken by either qualified supporters³ or qualified critics⁴ of the corporatist doctrine and of its partial applications. In spite of this, the country exhibited at the time two political organizations promoting the doctrine in question – Grigore Forțu’s Citizens Block for the Salvation of the Country (founded in 1932) and Manoilescu’s own National-Corporatist League (initiated in 1933) –, in continuation to the discourse launched in 1929 by a movement of the (mainly) white-collar professional associations, demanding the refashioning of the parliamentary system on the basis of professional representation as a cure against political parasitism.⁵

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Over the postwar period, the tendency of disregarding the local context of Manoilescu’s theory of corporatism has persisted, in stark contradiction with the emphatic invocation of the same ideas as exemplary for the general drive towards (semi-fascist) authoritarianism taken by East-European political regimes across the interwar age,⁶ as significant – in conjunction with the theorizing on protectionist policies of economic growth advanced by the same author – for understanding the long-term and world-wide career of the analyses of backwardness and of

³ François Perroux, *Capitalisme et communauté de travail*, Paris, Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1937, pp. 27-176.

⁴ Gaetan Pirou, *Néo-libéralisme, néo-corporatisme, néo-socialisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1939, pp. 73-124.

⁵ See above, chapter 4.

⁶ Andrew C. Janos, “The One-party State and Social Mobilization: East Europe between the Wars”, in Samuel P. Huntington, Clement H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society. The Dynamics of Established One-party Systems*, New York, Basic Books, 1970, pp. 204-236.

the strategies of development,⁷ as a privileged reference for the conceptualization of neo-corporatist practices connected with welfare state devices in the settings of advanced democratic societies – studied by comparison with their counterparts in developing nations⁸ –, and even as having a heuristic value for delineating the hidden corporatist nature of communist social-economic structures.⁹ The local critical discussions of the corporatist design – advanced mainly within the ideological camps of liberalism and of the Left – have to be seen, of course, as an integral part of Manoilescu's context, and it emerges that the most sophisticated and consistent approach of the sort – involving a wide comparative horizon – was advanced by the theorist of cooperatism Gromoslav Mladenatz. The present article is meant to clarify the contours of this approach, disclosing its meanings as indicative for the general relation between cooperatism and corporatism in Romania and for the way the two trends of theorizing were related to the predicament of a gradual – however unclear – drive to economic planning throughout the 1930's.

In a "history of cooperatist thought" published in 1935 (as the revised version of a book first issued in 1931, with a French translation at Paris in 1933 and two subsequent Spanish translations, in Mexico and in

⁷ Joseph L. Love, *Crafting the Third World. Theorizing Underdevelopment in Rumania and Brasil*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996.

⁸ Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?", in *The Review of Politics* 36: 1, 1974, pp. 85-131. Wolfgang Streeck, Lane Kenworthy, "Theories and Practices of Neo-corporatism", in Thomas Janoski et al., eds., *Handbook of Political Sociology. States, Civil Society and Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 441-460.

⁹ Daniel Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism: Notes on Romanian Development", in *Theory and Society* 9: 2, 1980, pp. 363-381.

Argentina), Mladenatz sets the baseline for his engagement with the topic by explaining how the supporters of cooperatism, hitherto confronted “with just two social systems” – namely “liberal capitalism on the one side, and socialism on the other” – now have to tackle the demands of “new social and economic systems, either already functioning or in the course of being implemented”.¹⁰ He further explains how, therefore, “the predicament of the time that cooperatism has to face is the one of understanding to what extent it can accommodate itself with the new economic and political regimes in the contexts of which it has now to exist”. In other words, the task incumbent upon the theorist is to find out whether “cooperatism can exist at all in the frame of the Soviet system, or else in that of fascist corporatism, of Hitlerist national socialism or of the Catholic type of corporatism which is currently being entrenched in Austria”.¹¹ Acknowledging that “originally the promoters of these systems manifested their hostility towards cooperatism”, he takes account of the fact that “as time elapsed, this attitude has changed, and we can see how the new forms of organization of national economies allow now a narrower or a larger space for cooperation”. Accordingly, there is a need for examining, in particular, “the problem of tailoring the cooperatist units to the corporatist system of fascist economy”.¹²

The engagement is broadened in two books delivered by Mladenatz in 1937 – dealing with “the status of the economic enterprise in the actual economy”, in order to address in the end in greater detail the problem of the “small enterprise” and, hence, of cooperation in a

¹⁰ Gromoslav Mladenatz, *Istoria gândirii cooperative*, București, n. p., 1935, p. 198.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203, 216.

changing economic world¹³ – and, respectively, in 1943, this time inquiring into the purported emergence of a set of altogether “new foundations” for economic science. The first work pays special attention to examining the economic and political regimes of Italy, Germany and Austria – and especially their genuine or self-styled corporatist dimensions –, with the other one surveying the field again by dropping out the Austrian case and including, instead, those of Portugal and of Vichy France (all the five cases being treated on the basis of both first-hand information and secondary sources). An expanded edition of the second book, published in 1945 but apparently prepared for publication before the end of the Antonescu regime in August 1944, maintains the text intact¹⁴ while adding to it a generous section accounting for recent – and mostly corporatist – theories and trends of thought, including Manoilescu’s views.¹⁵

Delineating the powers and responsibilities assigned to corporations – as “state organs with a national coverage bringing together employers’ and employees’ syndicates” – in the official declarations of the Italian fascist regime (and pertaining to the field of social policy as well as to those of politics and economic policy), Mladenatz is drawn to the conclusion that “up until now, at least, one cannot speak properly about a political organization on corporatist foundations of the Italian state – to the extent that “power is vested into the Grand Fascist Council, itself an emanation of the party that gives expression to the nation” –, and neither about the structuring of economic life on corporatist bases – in so far as “the economic functions of the corporations are not

¹³ Gromoslav Mladenatz, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, București, Independența Economică, 1937, pp. 73-109.

¹⁴ Idem, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, București, Independența Economică, ed. a II-a, 1945, pp. 5-101.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-164.

mandatory, being moreover only vaguely defined by the legislator” and “the corporation is not a self-governing economic unit, but a state organ”. Hence, the regime can best be placed under the label of “state corporatism” (not a genuine one), while “fascist economy cannot be characterized as subjected to programmatic planning”, the label most suited to it being that of “dirigisme”.¹⁶ In fact, as he adds, “present Italian corporatism does not emerge as an economic system in the proper sense of the notion”, but only as a regime where “national economy is expected to be subjected to the control of political power, by the means of some special institutions giving representation to both capital and labor”.¹⁷

The claims of Italian fascism to have overcome class conflict are examined by taking as a point of departure the fact that the official publications “deny or disregard the existence of antagonist social categories” and “emphasize the need of forging relations of collaboration between capital and labor within the enterprise”, to the extent that “entrepreneurial activities are defined as social functions, and as such subordinated to the interests of the national community”.¹⁸ This vindication of accomplishing social harmonization advanced by the defenders of the regime is rejected, however, in light of the fact that “fascism does not bring any innovation in the domain of property relations within the enterprise”, thus not altering in any way “the idea of private property” and adding nothing to “the established forms of enterprise – the capitalist private enterprise, the cooperatist enterprise and the various types of public enterprise”.¹⁹ Maintaining that “state intervention does not in actual fact go beyond what we encounter

¹⁶ Idem, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, pp. 43-48.

¹⁷ Idem, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, pp. 38.

¹⁸ Idem, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, pp. 55, 57.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

nowadays in other national economies that do not claim to have a revolutionary character”,²⁰ the Romanian analyst subscribes to the authoritative view of Louis Rosenstock-Franck – shared by other authors as well – regarding the functioning of fascism as a disguise for oligarchic rule.²¹

Nazi Germany is found to fit in the main into the conclusions of the investigation devoted to Italy, thus exhibiting the tenets of “an exchange economy controlled by the state”, with an “anti-liberal, but not an anti-capitalist nature”, however displaying a greater amount of state intervention into the domain of the private enterprise.²² The Nazi party program of 1920 is acknowledged as offering – in spite of its largely naïve and unsystematic character – “enough revolutionary elements marking a genuine break with the liberal-capitalist regime”, being also shown, nevertheless, to be used by the political regime installed in 1933 rather “as a guideline for targeting long-term objectives”.²³ The corporatist trappings of the system amount to virtually nothing, with the notion itself gradually dropped out from the official discourse due to its association with the subversive idea of de-centralization.²⁴ The Nazi state is ready to allow the (largely decorative) existence of corporations, but “not the emergence of a national economic order with a corporatist nature”.²⁵ As patterned by the theorist of Austrian origins and with Catholic theoretical leanings Othmar Spann starting with the first,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50; L. Rosenstock-Franck, *L'économie corporative fasciste en doctrine et en fait. Ses origines historiques et son évolution*, Paris, Librairie Universitaire J. Gambler, 1934, p. 392.

²² Mladenatz, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, pp. 61, 64.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁵ Idem, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, p. 67.

1920, edition of his book on “the true state”,²⁶ the “universalist” conception of corporatism based on the principle of the “organic articulation of all elements participating to economic life” – while at the same time treating as of secondary importance “the reform of the economic unit, or of the enterprise” – has fallen into disgrace by virtue of being implicitly “opposed to the vision of a centralist state, not to say anything about a ‘total’ state absorbing all functions of the national society”.²⁷ The same condition of marginality is shared by the rival economic school led by Werner Sombart and resting on the notion of “German socialism”,²⁸ itself envisioning “a national life – and a national economy for that matter – shaped and ruled in an authoritarian manner by the state”, but “organized in a non-homogenous and non-dogmatic fashion, allowing thus a welter of economic forms to flourish”.²⁹

As practiced in Austria under Dolfuss and in Portugal under Salazar, but also in France under the regime of Vichy installed in July 1940, corporatist experiments are all indebted to the teachings of social Catholicism, revolving around the Papal encyclicals of 1891 (*Rerum Novarum*, delivered by Leo XIII) and 1931 (*Quadragesimo Anno*, coming from Pius XI and reinforcing the principles established by the former document). The respective principles are described by Mladenatz as “not amounting to a unitary system of social economy”³⁰ and moreover as upholding at the same

²⁶ John Haag, “Othmar Spann and the Quest for a ‘True State’”, in *Austrian History Yearbook* 12: 1, 1976, pp. 227-250.

²⁷ Mladenatz, “*Noile fundamente*” ale științei economice, pp. 118-119.

²⁸ Love, *Crafting the Third World*, pp. 107-111.

²⁹ Mladenatz, “*Noile fundamente*” ale științei economice, pp. 137-138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

time the value of individualism and the need for social protection, while “leaving to the state to decide what precise meaning such notions must be given”.³¹ As for the last objective, the Catholic social doctrine “emphasizes the great importance of initiatives coming directly from the people concerned, which have to manifest themselves by the means of free associations composed of either workers, or employers, or the representatives of capital and labor together”.³²

Staying in continuity to this vision, the Austrian regime “plainly approves of free competition in the economic field, as long as its scope is constrained by moral imperatives and by the imperatives of the state”, assigning to the state “the role of a regulator alone”, rejecting strong versions of interventionism and providing for a “law of subsidiarity” according to which “the organization and control of economic activities have to be in the main the responsibility of autonomous associations”.³³ Discovering that in Austria “the economic enterprise has suffered even less [than in Italy and Germany] essential alterations” and underscoring “the greater scope allowed for cooperatist enterprises” here, the Romanian theorist is keen to argue that the alleged “Catholic corporatism” embraced by the Austrian state “cannot be characterized as real corporatism”.³⁴ The Portuguese case is found as somewhat different, to the extent that, although the official discourse – inaugurated by Salazar’s speech on the “new state” of July 1930, before being translated into the articles of the March 1933 constitution – points to the forging of a structure resting heavily on the “associations developed from within civil society” – and in this connection assigns important functions to the organizations

³¹ Idem, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, p. 65.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

with a cultural character, alongside the economic ones –, in practice “there are only slight visible differences between this regime and those of Italian fascism and German national socialism”.³⁵ The experiments in the field of Vichy France are discovered as rather incoherent, not matching their corporatist self-definition – mainly due to the fact that the bodies forged with the objective of assembling a corporatist structure “do not enjoy rights of economic self-government”, besides not being built “upon strict professional lines” – and indulging into mere statist policies without a particular profile.³⁶

Alongside Spann, Sombart and Manoilescu, the French economist François Perroux – later involved, during the postwar period, in policies of development in Latin America while entirely abhorring his past dedication to promoting the vision of corporatism in interwar Europe³⁷ – is given the largest coverage in Mladenatz’s survey of (mostly corporatist) economic ideas. It is highlighted the emergence of Perroux in the Vichy context as a quasi-official voice of the inconsistent searches for building a corporatist order,³⁸ with the bulk of the analysis falling, nevertheless, upon his earlier inquiries into the topic. These are based on dissociating a larger understanding of corporatism – as a regime that creates a framework for the smooth collaboration between capital and labor on the basis of state arbitration and fully within the capitalist system – from a stricter one – pointing to an evolution moving beyond the confines of capitalism and resting on the notion of the “community of labor”, itself a particular interpretation of the notion of corporation, conceived as a public institution giving equal representation to capital and labor and entrusted with

³⁵ Idem, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, pp. 39-41.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

³⁷ Love, *Crafting the Third World*, pp. 111-112, 265.

³⁸ Mladenatz, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, p. 146.

the control of prices on the market.³⁹ As for the second understanding, Mladenatz is of the opinion that the type of organization envisioned by Perroux “can be qualified as corporatist, as it currently happens, only on the basis of extending very much the meaning of the term”.⁴⁰ As for the first one, we must underscore the way it clearly anticipates the prevailing meaning of corporatism coined – starting with the 1970’s – for designating neo-corporatist practices of intermediation in the spaces of functioning or emerging welfare state arrangements.⁴¹ Nevertheless, at the moment 1945 the Romanian commentator likes to show how, “for attaining his objectives, Perroux does not appeal to state power, but instead to the conscience of those involved, asked to immerse themselves into a ‘communitarian civilization’”.⁴² This basically sets the French theorist in the same category with the Swiss corporatist projects – and to the experiments undertaken in their footsteps – briefly examined by Mladenatz, discovered as predicated on bottom-up developments, as manifesting “a clear hostility towards the authoritarian and totalitarian forms of state” and altogether as “representing the democratic type of corporatist economy”.⁴³

2

Manoilescu is summarized and assessed by Mladenatz with a stark reference to two particular issues: that of the

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-141; Perroux, *Capitalisme et communauté de travail*, pp. 7-24.

⁴⁰ Mladenatz, “*Noile fundamente*” ale științei economice, p. 151.

⁴¹ Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”; Leo Panitch, “The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies”, in *Comparative Political Studies* 10: 1, 1977, pp. 61-90.

⁴² Mladenatz, “*Noile fundamente*” ale științei economice, pp. 151-152.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

relationship that capital and labor are supposed to establish in the frames of the corporations and that of the role assigned to the state within the envisioned order of an “integral and pure corporatism”, which is meant to accommodate the non-economic professional bodies on a par with the economic ones and to reshape the structures of political power anew as entirely emanating from the welter of corporations.⁴⁴ The first problem is settled by disclosing the unequal positions assigned to the employers’ and, respectively, workers’ syndicates within the institutions of the corporations designed by Manoilescu, quoting the latter to the extent that “guiding the collective economic activity is much rather a responsibility of the employers’ syndicate than of the corporation at large”. This involves a departure from the Italian conception that vindicates a relation of equality between the two types of syndical organizations within the corporative bodies.⁴⁵ The conclusion is, here, that “the system of Manoilescu is deficient precisely with respect to the question which is of greatest concern for us, namely the economic one”, an observation that holds true as long as one is dedicating to upholding the statement that “a basic feature of the corporatist system is precisely the accommodation of the interests involved by observing the principle of solidarity”.⁴⁶ The second problem is addressed by drawing primarily on the “program for reforming the Romanian state” on corporatist lines designed by Manoilescu in 1933 as an official document of the National-Corporatist League,⁴⁷ found as “lacking of precision precisely with respect to

⁴⁴ Mihail Manoilescu, *Le siècle du corporatisme: doctrine du corporatisme integral et pur*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1934, pp. 91-98.

⁴⁵ Mladenatz, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, p. 125.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁴⁷ Mihail Manoilescu, *România, stat corporativ: de ce și cum trebuie transformat statul nostru*, București, Tipografia Modernă, 1933.

the important issue of the relations between the state and the corporations". This is shown by the fact that, while stating that "national life is to be organized entirely by the corporations", it does not clarify "which attributions hitherto bestowed upon the state are to be preserved by it, supposedly outside the domain of national life".⁴⁸

Although nicely sarcastic, this evaluation is much too elusive for allowing us to understand fully Mladenatz's opinion about the relevance of the corporatist model in the Romanian setting. No reference to the local experimentation with the respective model – cast in a right-wing, authoritarian nationalist garb –, during the Carolist, National-Legionary and Antonescu regimes is contained in the volumes of 1943 and 1945, while the one of 1937 only refers in passing to the corporatist leanings of the law of 1936 for the reorganization of the professional chambers and for the creation on this basis of the Higher Economic Council meant to establish the framework for a bargaining between capital and labor under state arbitration.⁴⁹ This legislative act is taken as indicative for "a powerful tendency towards the establishment of mandatory professional organization",⁵⁰ but no insight into the participation of the corporatist idea to the development of social policies in the country is given in this connection.⁵¹ It seems, in fact, that what actually matters for the defender of cooperatist ideas is

⁴⁸ Mladenatz, "Noile fundamente" ale științei economice, pp. 127-128.

⁴⁹ *Lege pentru înființarea Consiliului Superior Economic și organizarea camerelor profesionale*, ed. a II-a, cu modificările din 19 februarie 1937, București, Ed. Librăriei "Universala" Alcalay, [1937]; Emilian Bold et al., *Concesii și restricții în legislația muncii din România, 1920-1940*, Iași, Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 1980, pp. 134-167.

⁵⁰ Mladenatz, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, p. 105.

⁵¹ See above, chapter 5.

not to formulate a clear-cut refutation of such local developments, but to disclose the rather benign content hidden by the revolutionary rhetoric of the corporatist projects, together with their practical ineffectiveness. Indeed, shown as belonging together with a larger category of economic visions pointing to a “third way” – different from both liberal capitalism and socialism –, they are discovered as merely “united by the idea that the antagonisms between the two economic factors of capital and labor have to be somehow neutralized”.⁵²

The attitude towards the corporatist design forged within the camp of cooperatist advocacy in Romania could have only been predicated on the broader and long-term attitude taken by the representatives of the same trend of social and economic theorizing towards the issue of professional representation of the syndical type, itself correlated with the overlapping syndicalist and, respectively, cooperatist engagements with the objectives of social policy. The international wisdom in the field of the early XXth century had established that, “as the consumer cannot dispense himself from the producer and the other way round, or, in other words, as each of us must be a syndicalist and a cooperativist at the same time, we must find means for conciliating these two types of interests”.⁵³ A Romanian sympathetic critique of revolutionary socialism taken from a liberal standpoint and advanced in the same period – as a preamble for a sweeping engagement with the need to broaden liberalism towards embracing social concerns⁵⁴ – indicates

⁵² Mladenatz, “*Noile fundamente*” ale științei economice, pp. 161-162.

⁵³ G. Mutschler, *Coopératives et syndicats*, Paris, Marcel Rivière, 1912, p. 34.

⁵⁴ N. Petrescu-Comnen, *Studiu asupra intervențiunii statului între capital și muncă*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1910.

cooperatist practices and syndical activism as intertwined positive outcomes of the reformist socialist zeal⁵⁵. The connection between cooperatism, social policies and the politics of professional representation would remain close throughout the interwar period in the country. This is shown by Mladenatz's own participation with an article about cooperation to a collective volume delineating the activities of the Ministry of Labor over its first decade of existence, together with related developments⁵⁶ at a time when, in a manner telling for the continuous interplay between the two trends of social reform, Albert Thomas – the influential director of the International Labor Office of the League of Nations in the 1920's and a guiding figure for the Romanians working in the field – was celebrated in France as a leading exponent of the cooperatist movement.⁵⁷

Staying in the footsteps of other interventions on the topic,⁵⁸ Mladenatz takes deeper searches into the problem of the relations between syndical institutions and cooperatist enterprises in 1931, when giving the first edition of his book on the history of cooperatist theory. Showing how, in France, “cooperation in agriculture has grown from within the syndical agrarian organizations” and how, on the other hand, “the consumers' cooperatives must be seen as constituting for the workers a continuation of syndical activities”, he underscores that “this must not lead us to a confusion between the two types of activities

⁵⁵ Idem, *Câteva considerațiuni asupra socialismului și asupra roadelor sale*, București, Tipografia “Gutenberg”, 1909.

⁵⁶ Gromoslav Mladenatz, “Cooperația”, in I. Răducanu et al., *Zece ani de politică socială în România, 1920-1930*, București, Eminescu S.A., 1930, pp. 257-266.

⁵⁷ Ernest Poisson, *Le coopérateur Albert Thomas. Un quart de siècle de vie militante*, Paris, Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1933.

⁵⁸ Vasile G. Osvadă, “Sindicate și cooperație”, in *Societatea de mâine* 1: 4, May 4, 1924, p. 96.

of concern for the working class, in terms of their basic principles and social functions”.⁵⁹ This is because “the syndicate is exclusively a class-based organization”, bringing together “the members of a profession, or of an industrial branch, or even only the workers of one single enterprise”. On the contrary, “consumer cooperatives require the participation of an as large a segment of the population as possible in order to succeed” and, as such, they “move beyond the interests of a profession or even the interests of the working class at large, serving instead the interests of all those who, by disregarding commercial profit, are intent of obtaining consumer goods at just prices”.⁶⁰ Although referring, in the same book, to the British trend of “guild socialism” as envisioning “the collaboration of the worker syndicates with cooperation in the very process of production”,⁶¹ Mladenatz would later come back to the issue in 1934, in order to argue that, “employing different methods, the syndicalist and the cooperatist types of activities must also maintain their autonomy from each other”, thus showing how “the syndicate is a professional organization, while the cooperative has a broader circle of adherents and it cannot be confined to one single guild or economic category” and maintaining that “the syndicate is an instrument for fighting, but cooperatism is an activity that induces into the body of the present economic regime the preconditions of a new economic system, such as to shape the solidarity of all laboring elements”.⁶²

⁵⁹ Gromoslav Mladenatz, *Istoria doctrinelor cooperative*, București, Oficiul Național al Cooperației Române, 1931, pp. 91, 157.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166; G.D.H. Cole, *Self-government in Industry*, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1918.

⁶² Gromoslav Mladenatz, “Cooperația muncitorească”, in *Revista de studii sociologice și muncitorești* 2: 3, March 1934, pp. 11, 12.

All strands of corporatist advocacy emerging in Romania in the 1930's like to present the project as a cure for the divisiveness of class-based syndicalism,⁶³ by the same token rejecting cooperatist designs together with the entire vision of left-wing agrarianism and particularly blaming the patterns of cooperatist economy established in the country since the end of the XIXth century as venues of budgetary draining.⁶⁴ More conciliating views, pleading for adjusting cooperatism to the requirements of nationalist corporatist politics, are occasionally expressed,⁶⁵ but the two discourses tend to evolve as locked in a sharp conflicting relationship. Mladenatz himself criticizes in 1933, in the left-wing newspaper *Adevărul*, the conception of a parliament resting on professional representation alone,⁶⁶ in the context of other departures of the sort taken by the periodical.⁶⁷

⁶³ Radu Dragnea, "Muncitorii și organizațiile profesionale", in *Calendarul* 1: 16, February 9, 1932, p. 1; Mihail Polihroniade, "De la sindicate la corporații", in *Calendarul* 2: 372, May 25, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Nichifor Crainic, "Stat țărănesc", in *Calendarul* 1: 132, August 19, 1932, p. 1; Idem, "Naționalismul și cooperația", in *Ortodoxie și etnocrație*, București, Ed. Cugetarea, [1937], pp. 220-232; Mihail Manoilescu, "Contradicția țărănismului", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 6, June 1936, pp. 271-274; Ilie Rădulescu, "Piei Satano din cooperație", in *Porunca vremii* 6: 827, August 14, 1937, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Mircea Pienescu, "Cooperativele și corporatismul", in *Lumea nouă* 2: 2, February 1933, pp. 85-92; Sever Carpișanu, "Cooperație și corporatism", in *Lumea nouă* 5: 12, December 1936, pp. 521-524.

⁶⁶ Gromoslav Mladenatz, "Dualismul politic. Sufragiu individual și sufragiu social", in *Adevărul* 47: 15293, November 11, 1933, pp. 3-4; *Adevărul* 47: 15294, November 12, 1933, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁷ N. Batzaria, "Asociații profesionale și partide politice", in *Adevărul* 47: 15321, December 14, 1933, p. 1; (unsigned) "Absurditatea corporatismului", *Adevărul* 47: 15259,

Later, however, the political and ideological trend of agrarianism would tend to assume a confusing strand towards the issue of corporatism, vacillating between attitudes of rejection and of approval. Thus, in 1936, the National Peasant Party leader Ion Mihalache is reported to have argued, at a meeting of the professional sections of his political organization, that “the task of redressing the economic situation of the country can only be accomplished by the cooperatist movement in collaboration with the professional associations, but this cannot be done in the frame of the parties-based state, requiring, instead, the building of a new, corporatist state”.⁶⁸ We can also find him in the same year, nevertheless, rejecting the corporatist model as part of an attack upon the national-Christian ideology and quoting in this connection an Italian testimony according to which, in the fascist state, corporatist politics is “only an attempt at democratizing the dictatorship, after the destruction of political parties”.⁶⁹ And we also discover him in 1940, touching upon the topic when participating to a collaborative assessment of the cooperatist devices and practices in Romania – together with the agrarianist ideologue and politician I. Răducanu and the Danish expert M. Gormsen –, thus referring to the policies taken by the Roosevelt administration in the USA and invoking the (quasi-)corporatist outlook of the anti-crisis strategy employed by the American president in the industrial domain, alongside a wide appeal to cooperation in

October 3, 1933, p. 1; (unsigned) “Cooperatism și corporatism”, in *Adevărul* 47: 15278, October 25, 1933, p. 1.

⁶⁸ I. Petrescu-Costești, *Cauzele politico-sociale din jurul crizei actuale. Conferință social-economică*, Bârlad, Atelierele Grafice “Nicolae Chiriac”, 1936, p. 17.

⁶⁹ I. Mihalache, *Țărănism și naționalism*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice “Bucovina” I. E. Torouțiu, 1936, pp. 6-7.

agriculture.⁷⁰ Manoilescu takes a delight in pointing to such inconsistencies.⁷¹ It is against their background that we have to place the strenuous attempt at clarification advanced by Mladenatz, together with the double-edged attitude on the subject adopted by the cooperatist theorist T. Rădulescu-Thanir,⁷² when relating the demands of his project of economic reconstruction⁷³ to the realities of a growing nationalist politics, trying to accommodate his doctrine with the corporatist conception of Nichifor Crainic⁷⁴ and later rejecting the conception of Manoilescu in conjunction with the fascist doctrine of the Iron Guard in the economic domain.⁷⁵

The extensive treatments of the topic of corporatism taken in Romania after the adoption of the Carolist constitution of February 1938 – meant to create the baseline for establishing a political order of the kind – tend to be either enthusiastically faithful to the tenets of the Italian example,⁷⁶ or cautious to ponder the relative merits of the German and the Italian models of institutional organization and economic policies,⁷⁷ or else eager to argue for the necessary wise adaptation of

⁷⁰ I. Mihalache et al., *Problema cooperației române*, București, Independența Economică, 1940, p. 28.

⁷¹ Mihail Manoilescu, “Dl. Mihalache e corporatist”, in *Lumea nouă* 2: 9, September 1936, pp. 560-561.

⁷² See above, chapter 4.

⁷³ T. Rădulescu-Thanir, *Neocooperația: economie automată, îmbogățire mutuală*, București, Tiparul Românesc, 1936.

⁷⁴ Idem, “Neocooperația, corporatismul și statul etnocratic”, in *Alianța economică* 1: 9-10, September-October 1937, pp. 9-21.

⁷⁵ Idem, “Antiburghezie și legiunocrație”, in *Alianța economică* 2: 1, January 1938, pp. 1-17.

⁷⁶ I. Angelescu, *Așezământul corporativ. Principii. Organizare. Realizări. Legislație*, București, Atelierele “Luceafărul”, 1939.

⁷⁷ Vasile Marghescu, *Funcțiunea economică a statului contemporan. Sinteza organizării politico-economice a fascismului și a national-socialismului*, București, n.p., 1941.

totalitarian politics to the local conditions.⁷⁸ However (unavoidably) unclear about the way the insights derived from his comparative survey apply to the circumstances of his country, Mladenatz certainly appears as a dissenting voice. His position can be better characterized when related to another one displaying the same kind of skepticism regarding the revolutionary implications of the corporatist discourse. The constitutional jurist Tudor Drăganu takes a leaf from the pluralist theory of the state offered in the early XXth century by Léon Duguit,⁷⁹ writing in 1940 as a qualified supporter of the doctrine made official by Carol II – in order to be then held in (ineffective) esteem by the Legionaries in power and by Antonescu –, but arguing that “corporatism is not evolving such as to become a system close to what Mihail Manoilescu calls ‘pure corporatism’, that is a political system where the only source of legislative power is represented by the corporations”. Instead, all the countries experimenting with the idea display, in fact, the image of professional representation functioning as only an adjunct to “various political factors”.⁸⁰ When shedding light in this fashion on each other, the two authors emerge as united by the perception that a century of corporatism would never come about.

⁷⁸ Costinel C. Jornescu, *Corporatismul și dreptul românesc*, București, Imprimeriile “Curentul”, 1940; Ion V. Vintilă, *Statul corporatist*, București, Universitatea din București, Facultatea de Drept, 1941.

⁷⁹ Léon Duguit, *Le droit social, le droit individuel et la transformation de l'état*, Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1922, pp. 105-152.

⁸⁰ Tudor Drăganu, *Corporatism și stat corporativ*, Sibiu, Tipografia “Mercur”, 1940, pp. 147-148.

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In 1935, Mladenatz introduces his brief considerations regarding the demand of pondering the compatibility between the doctrine he serves and the rising trends of economic theory and practice by acknowledging that “the cooperatist system, as we conceive it, is itself meant to obtain an organization of the economy, being of course sustained by peculiar aims”.⁸¹ One year before, when issuing together with Ion Răducanu a book surveying the “present economic trends”, he discovers as their common denominator a tendency towards “dirigisme”, supposedly resonating with the tendency towards the prevalence of “a collectivist and anti-materialist spirit” underscored by his colleague.⁸²

When taking over again, in 1937, the task of elucidating the meanings of the transformations underway in the economic sphere, he starts by rehearsing the prevailing opinion according to which the world is moving towards “the end of the liberal-capitalist economy” and the corresponding “emergence of a new economic regime”, an expectation shared even by many adepts of liberalism.⁸³ The answer to the question is then anticipated – on the basis of dissociating between “liberalism”, “capitalism” and the broad patterns of “individualism” as they apply to social and economic life – by the statement that “one can only notice, for the time being, a move away from economic liberalism”. The diagnostic is further detailed by the clarification that not the generalization of unmediated state administration of the economic enterprises is the most conspicuous trend,

⁸¹ Mladenatz, *Istoria gândirii cooperative*, p. 201.

⁸² I. Răducanu, G. Mladenatz, *Curente economice actuale*, n.p., n.p., 1934, pp. 46-47, 16-17.

⁸³ Mladenatz, *Întreprinderea în economia actuală*, pp. 11, 14.

but that of the “control of economic life” by the political authority, or else of the state “aiming at subordinating particular economic activities to the general interest”.⁸⁴ Corporatism fits into this general model, contributing to the shaping of “a powerful state interventionism, set on the course of putting in place a system of planned economy, without, however, any design of demolishing the capitalist regime, but on the contrary, with a view to strengthening it and helping it to avoid the downfall”.⁸⁵ The label of “dirigisme” is vindicated again by Mladenatz, in 1943 (and in 1945) as the most appropriate description for the transformations accounted for. The notion of a “break between capitalism and economic liberalism” is itself restated, this time with the qualification that “although the criticisms in focus here are mostly concerned with the methods of economic liberalism, they also bear upon the status of the capitalist regime”.⁸⁶

Of all the competing social and economic trends proceeding together with cooperatism in the larger fold of the drive to some version of planning or dirigisme – or beyond them, into the realm of the full socialization of economic life –, the one that captured the attention of Mladenatz most consistently was certainly that of socialism. We can find him in 1919, pondering the chances for extending the emerging Romanian cooperatist movement from its privileged agrarian area of manifestation into that of urban economy and acknowledging in this connection “the parallelism between the socialist and the cooperatist doctrines, which demand together the socialization of the means of production and exchange”, in order to show how “the only thing that sets them apart is the dedication of the socialists to the idea of class

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 41.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸⁶ Idem, “Noile fundamente” ale științei economice, pp. 17, 21.

struggle, to which the cooperatists oppose the doctrine of harmonious understanding”.⁸⁷ This stays in plain conjunction with utterances coming from other theorists of the time, like the economist I.N. Angelescu in his sweeping comparative survey of the interplay between cooperatism and socialism in Europe, published in 1913, arguing for the obsolescence of the revolutionary types of socialist pleading and establishing the conclusion that “cooperation forges a harmonious relation between classes”, thus “on the one hand contributing to the destruction of those which are not able any more to perform a positive role in the modern social-economic organization and on the other hand setting limitation to the aggrandizement of others”.⁸⁸ Otherwise, the representatives of the cooperatist camp can departure from the vision of local socialism on the agrarian issue – based on the theory developed by Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea and demanding the unhindered play of the capitalist patterns in this economic segment even at the cost of peasant proletarianization, thus preparing the transition to socialism on the path of full-blown capitalism –, as shown by an intervention taken in 1911 by Ion Răducanu.⁸⁹

When placing the subject in a longer historical perspective, in 1931, Mladenatz tries to clarify the position of his doctrine as staying in between socialism and liberalism, starting by pointing how “almost all the precursors of the modern cooperatist movement consider this one as hard to distinguish from the systems envisioned as based on the socialization of the economy”

⁸⁷ Idem, *Mișcarea cooperativă în orașele noastre*, București, Institutul de Editură “Reforma Socială”, 1919, p. 6.

⁸⁸ I.N. Angelescu, *Cooperația și socialismul în Europa*, București, Stabilimentul de Arte Grafice Albert Bauer, 1913, pp. 708-709..

⁸⁹ I. Răducanu, *Cooperatismul și socialismul față de chestiunea agrară*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice “Eminescu”, 1911.

(thus conceiving of “the cooperatist regime as virtually identical with the socialist one”). On the contrary, as he goes on to show, “a part of the actual founders of the modern cooperatist movement [...] manifested themselves as stark adepts of liberal economic thinking”, to the same extent as “the Marxist leaders of the socialist movement branded the cooperation as an institution embodying the principles of economic liberalism”.⁹⁰ Appending in the same book a 1927 article on “the problem of cooperation in relation to socialism and capitalism in the Romanian scholarship on social-economic matters”, he ponders again the virtues of a middle road in economic theory and practice and the role of cooperation as part of these searches.⁹¹ In light of the circumspect character of such interventions, it seems that Mladenatz was not contradicting himself too much when, giving a book-length treatment of the topic of “socialism and cooperation” in 1946 – during the period of the transition to the communist regime – he devoted a whole chapter in an accommodating manner to characterizing the cooperation as “the socialism of the transition period”,⁹² thus asserting that “cooperation has been adopted by virtually all socialist currents, including that of communism, as a vehicle for the transition from capitalism to the new economy, but also as one of the instruments employed for building the new society”.⁹³

In the 1930’s, the searches for an economy based in one way or another on planning are widespread across the ideological spectrum, with much the same vocabulary

⁹⁰ Mladenatz, *Istoria doctrinelor cooperative*, p. 117.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-198.

⁹² Idem, *Socialismul și cooperația*, București, Independența Economică, 1946, pp. 131-161.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

displayed by theorists of fascism⁹⁴ and by left-wingers from the camps of agrarianism,⁹⁵ socialism⁹⁶ or socially minded liberalism,⁹⁷ with few voices arguing the opposite case, on classical liberal grounds.⁹⁸ The rhetoric of the sort is heightened in the period of the right-wing dictatorships,⁹⁹ being also supported with the help of translations from the relevant international literature.¹⁰⁰ The international search for new forms of organizing the economy was itself very widespread at the time,¹⁰¹ even British economists otherwise dedicated to upholding the values of political liberalism being drawn to underscore that, “in the course of the last few years, the western world [...] has begun to ask whether Russia – and Italy too – may not be right in their insistence on national planning, however wrong they may be in their aggressive repudiation of the overriding claims of freedom”.¹⁰² Arguing that “the new dirigisme seems to target a [...] more precise objective [than old-style interventionism], namely the adoption of central plans for organizing production such as to avoid crises and to eliminate their

⁹⁴ Mihail Polihroniade, “Economia dirijată”, in *Calendarul* 2: 486, September 30, 1933, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Virgil Madgearu, “Economia dirijată”, in *Viața românească* 26: 7, April 15, 1934, pp. 2-18.

⁹⁶ Ioan I. Mirescu, *Proletariatul și economia dirijată*, București, Șantier, [1934].

⁹⁷ D. Drăghicescu, “Liberalismul și economia dirijată”, in *Libertatea* 2: 13-14, July 5-20, 1934, pp. 193-194.

⁹⁸ I. Constanțiu, “Psihologia economiei dirijate”, in *Libertatea* 3: 13-14, July 5-20, 1935, pp. 203-205.

⁹⁹ I.I. Tatos, *Conținutul dirijat al economiei românești*, București, Independența Economică, 1939.

¹⁰⁰ Karel Englis, *Economia dirijată*, București, Cartea Românească, 1938.

¹⁰¹ A. Siegfried et al., *L'Économie dirigée*, Paris, Felix Alcan, 1934.

¹⁰² Basil P. Blackett, *Planned Money*, London, Constable and Company LTD, 1932, p. 3.

effects”, an authority of the field considers that “the vast majority of the systems of reorganization can be placed under the label of corporatism, in so far as they are mainly based on the idea of articulating together the demands of the producers and those of the consumers”.¹⁰³ Can we then characterize the critical involvement of Mladenatz with the philosophy and politics of corporatism from the standpoint of cooperatism as nothing else but the full expression of a divide between Left and Right within the larger fold of the (multilayered) drive to embracing economic planning over the last pre-communist years in Romania?

Mladenatz’s very depiction of corporatism as a muddled attempt to save the capitalist system at the cost of sacrificing liberalism – moreover marked by contradictions and inconsistencies and suffering from an oligarchic bias – might offer a key for calibrating the answer. It can be revealed to us, indeed, as resonating well with the evaluation advanced in 1934 by the French Gaetan Pirou – featuring often as a reference in the pages of the Romanian author –, intent on showing how, “served by the decadence of liberalism, the cause of corporatism also derives strength from the unpopularity of statism”, with the qualification that corporatism “is the representative of a conception about society as rather static and not dynamic, rather conservative and not progressive” and “an instrument for subjecting the consumer to the producer, the worker to the employer and the social to the national”.¹⁰⁴ This comes as a preamble for a latter survey of corporatist theory by the same analyst – by placing it, now, alongside the

¹⁰³ Laurent Dechesne, *Le capitalisme, la libre concurrence et l'économie dirigée*, Paris, Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1934, pp. 161, 150.

¹⁰⁴ Gaetan Pirou, *Le corporatisme*, Paris, Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1934, pp. 23, 65.

contemporary “neo-socialist” advocacy of Marcel Déat, Barthélémy Montagnon or Hyacinthe Dubreuil on the same boat of the strivings underway for reforming the capitalist order –, set in conjunction to expressing a preference for the “neo-liberal” solution but also anticipating the postwar denunciations of corporatism as a “false remedy” against the ills of statism advanced in the same country before the emergence of neo-corporatist theorizing.¹⁰⁵ Most clearly associated with the American Walter Lippmann – and with his pleading for the “principles of a compensated economy” as opposed to the misleading “principles of a directed economy” championed by the mainstream interwar defenders of planning¹⁰⁶ –, the new variety of liberal thought invoked was supported in France by Louis Rougier under the label of “constructive liberalism”,¹⁰⁷ as an ideological foundation for his rejection of the “economic mystiques” bordering on the totalitarianisms of the day (including the corporatist ones), but also as a stage on the path of theoretical clarification leading to the “ordoliberal” take-off in postwar Europe.¹⁰⁸

Staying fully within the fold of this last development, the German Wilhelm Röpke – engaged for long with the

¹⁰⁵ Idem, *Néo-libéralisme, néo-corporatisme, néo-socialisme*; Raoul Audouin, P. Lhoste-Lachaume, *Le corporatisme, pseudo-remède contre l'étatisme*, Paris, Editions SEDIF, 1962.

¹⁰⁶ Walter Lippmann, *The Method of Freedom*, London, Allen & Unwin LTD, 1934, pp. 45-60, 38-45.

¹⁰⁷ Louis Rougier, *Les mystiques économiques. Comment l'on passé des démocraties libérales aux états totalitaires*, Paris, Librairie de Médicis, 1938, pp. 84-88.

¹⁰⁸ Jean-Michel Ycre, “Les sources catholiques de l'ordolibéralisme allemand: Röpke et la pensée catholique sociale allemande”, in Patricia Commun, dir., *L'ordolibéralisme allemand. Aux sources de l'Economie sociale de marché*, Cergy-Pontoise, CIRAC, 2003, pp. 163-172.

economics of fascism¹⁰⁹ – gives in 1942 a characterization of corporatism as self-contradictory – due to its very lack of determination in dealing with the shortcomings of liberal capitalism – that can be read as expanding upon the earlier ideas of Pirou, when branding the defenders of the doctrine in question as looking forward to discover “some way of jumping into the water without getting wet”. The design involved is shown as “the pet idea of all those whose speech is neither yea nor nay, who would like to express freely their aversion to liberalism and individualism without acknowledging collectivism as the logical consequence, who are looking for a third way without much understanding the details of the economic life and the biology of society”. There is given a further explanation to the extent that, while “the professional and business associations offer promising possibilities and, properly integrated into the entity of the state and economy, they produce much that is good, [...] one cannot render them a worse service than to assign them functions which are bound to corrupt them as well as the whole body politic”.¹¹⁰ Towards the end of his book of 1945, Mladenatz gives a cursory coverage of the (broadly defined) school illustrated by Lippman, Rougier and Röpke – deemed as supporting the notion that “the way to be followed rests on a combination of liberty, order and progress” –, also making reference to a Romanian work of the same year, published in the same series and presenting the British 1942 Beveridge plan for social

¹⁰⁹ Wilhelm Röpke, “Fascist Economics”, in *Economica* (n.s.) 2: 5, 1935, pp. 85-100.

¹¹⁰ Idem, *The Social Crisis of Our Time*, transl. by Annete Jacobson and Peter Schiffer, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1950, p. 93 (original edition in 1942).

insurance.¹¹¹ One can see here an indication regarding the path Mladenatz's thinking was heeded to take, had it not been diverted by the installation of communism. The deeper meanings of his involvement with the challenge of corporatism from a cooperatist standpoint and within the horizon of the drive to dirigisme prevalent in the 1930's emerge as better clarified in the light of this.

¹¹¹ Mladenatz, "*Noile fundamente*" ale științei economice, pp. 158-160; M.A. Lupu, *Planuri de securitate socială*, București, Independența Economică, 1945, pp. 17-195.

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However much the dimension of social-economic and legal-institutional reformism targeting the challenges of modernization, state construction and nation building has featured over the long run of historical time as inbuilt into the grand ideological visions competing for higher audiences in the public spaces of countries like Romania, there is certainly a need for a careful consideration of development projects elaborated in such places under a separate rubric of study. For sure, particular issues arising from the condition of relative backwardness – and most often correlated to short and medium-term objectives – have always tended to take precedence over bodies of abstract theory addressing seemingly timeless dilemmas regarding the nature of the human species in the discourses of local ideologists, and contextualized debates revolving around clearly circumscribed questions put deeper imprints on the national constituencies than philosophical disagreements cast in universalistic languages.

Still, one cannot disregard the significance of the analytical difference between generalizing statements pertaining to the domain of ideological orientation and specialized stances of a recognizably more pragmatic character when setting forth to draw a detailed map of the broad cultural dynamics upon which the continuous search for public policies was predicated in the respective settings. Observing the difference mentioned also implies a focus on clarifying the precise connections established between the two types of endeavors. Hence this book, that opens towards a research on the public policies of pre-communist Romania through an examination of the ways in which the various projects of development and reform of the period got entangled with the major liberal, left-wing and right-wing advocacies advanced in the same milieu.



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