

Romania: the evolution from communism to democracy

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Abstract

The Second World War has left profound trails on Europe. The end of this war determined a new territorial configuration, but, more importantly, the change of the political regime for the eastern half of the continent. Concerned with the establishment of areas of influence agreed post-war, the great powers have forgotten the fate of the countries occupied by the Russians, and in these conditions, the political situation and destiny of those countries has been altered for nearly half a century. In this context the communist doctrine was to become the only official ideology of the post-war regime established in Romania. This dark period ended with the revival of democracy. This paper is intended to highlight the changes that Romania has suffered during the six decades since the establishment of communism up to the Euro-Atlantic integration

Key Words: *great powers, influence, territorial configuration, communism, democracy.*

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The return to normality of the Romanian society modernity's own political-ideological and cultural parts was the main objective of the political class, after the removal of communism. Also, the events that followed the 1989 have caused social and cultural restoration of political ties, of Romania with the West, with its own values of civilization, and thus it became possible to integrate the country into the euro-Atlantic space. The object of the work reflected the establishment of the Communist regime, the radical transformation of Romanian society concerned with human rights under the impact of the collapse of the dictatorial regime, but also the efforts of the Association and of Romania's integration in the European way. The brief historical presentation, both for Europe and for Romania aims at analyzing events and political effects of factors from both internal and external perspectives. Political instability, which has generated favorable context ascents of totalitarian regimes is the axis around which the world was divided between capitalism and communism.

William Jennings Bryan claimed: *"Destiny does not take the chance of your choice. Communities are what they are because of the choices they have made already, will be what it will be because of the elections which they will do in the future. We are really free if what we do is driven by our own sense of what we think we need to be, our own solutions. People need to ask for the right to make choices just as they must assume responsibility for what happens to them"* (Mathews, 1999: 92).

But, the fragile situation in the world after the Second World War, no longer offered people opportunities to choose from. The games were dictated by the major world powers and were based on the principle imposed by Stalin: *"Who wins a territory, imposes his social system. Each wants to introduce its own social system where his armies won"*. Thus, one can say that the major Western powers have been concerned over the establishment of zones of influence, than the destiny of countries who have entered the Russian occupation or nature of socio-political regime imposed in the eastern half of the old continent. In this

context, Romania reached the currency negotiations between Churchill and Stalin. *"Understanding of the spheres of influence was extended and consolidated in October 1944 in Moscow, when the same prime minister of the United Kingdom proposed to Stalin stating the share you need to return the Western allies and Russia early in each Balkan country"* (Cioabă, Georgiu, Nica, 2004: 7).

Romania's entry under the dictatorial regime is done gradually and in sync with the European situation. Throughout the 20th century, Romania has passed through several stages of political evolution: If at the beginning of the 20th century and by the 1930s it was noted for strengthening its democracy, keeping the traditional alliance with France, after 1930, along with the beginning of the reign of Charles II, democracy goes into decline, because between 1938-1940 the authority of the same King was installed. Ion Antonescu coming to power (16 September 1940), marks the passage of Romania's military dictatorship regime until 1944. The coup of 23 August 1944, and Antonescu's Government removing it, but the attempt to return to democracy failed, due to the political-military situation existing in the world and especially in the eastern part of the European continent. Although Romania wanted to negotiate peace with the Anglo-Saxon powers, the decision of the three great powers was the clear winner: former satellite states of Germany were under negotiations with the Soviet Union. As a result the Communist dictatorship won the power in Romania, and will last until 1989.

"Romania's occupation by Soviet troops, facilitated by the coup of 23 august 1944, which was attended by officials and the Communist Party, gave this marginal political group the chance to escape from Siberia and Soviet Communist history or nursing homes directly to the leadership of the country. The conquest of political power within just 2-3 years at that time-in fact a continuous string of kicks administered to its own allies (National Liberal Party, National Peasant Party) with the approval and the support of occult or directly political commissars of the Russians, including by falsifying political elections of November 1946, framings, challenges, abuses against democratic parties, to justify their ban on death" (Cioabă et. al., 2004:

149). During a brief period, between August 1944–November 1947, being guided by the Soviet occupiers, the Romanian Communist Party has prepared extensively for the replacement of the "Real Coalition", made between the Communist Party and the democratic parties, by a fictional coalition, dominated by the Communists and thus for seizure of power.

Although the elections are falsified, the Communist Party is "playing", and in the next year the suppression of opposition parties begins. On July, 29, 1947 the National Peasant Party is dissolved, and in November 1947 its leaders, Iuliu Maniu and Ion Mihalache are sentenced to life imprisonment, in a faked trial. Liberals are excluded from Government, after voting on a motion of censure and party leaders were arrested. The left wing of the Social Democratic Party was preparing to incorporate the Romanian Communist Party and Social Democratic Party members, who did not wish to accept the Communist ideology, were persecuted as class enemies, sharing the fate of Liberals. So the last part of the former democratic State institution, the monarchy, was abolished on 30 December 1947, when King Michael was forced to abdicate the throne, and the entire royal family was exiled. With the abolition of the monarchy they proclaimed the popular Republic as the form of State.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, representative and leader of the party, since 1945, required the Soviet model in all areas. After Gheorghiu-Dej's death in 1965 at the rule of the country followed Nicolae Ceausescu, when there were noticed some rebound towards the USSR, but a policy rule could not be and was not breached: avoiding the collapse of ideology. The Communist ideology, as Belinski argued: *"Severe, cold and dark as the reason, but at the same time, the poem, inspired by the exciting and full of sympathy as love, spirited and somber as well as strong and heroic faith, such as a deed of valor"* (Besançon, 1993: 86), shaped the Romanian society and the necessity for the formation of "new man".

The profile of the ideal man has as a main attribute consciousness promoted policy, what distinguished him from the

man commonly known in history until then. As Nicolae Ceausescu at the Congress said *"The socialist new man, builder of socialism and communism was supposed to be master of the highest achievements of science of human knowledge, to characterize the high political and moral visions through his passion for hard work and creative thinking and the audacity in the justice and truth through his socialist ethics and principles of equity through, bravely and tenaciously defending the revolutionary conquests of the integrity and sovereignty of the motherland to the cause of communism in our homeland"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 194).

What is more, the communist man was superior because he was no longer viewed as a commodity, as in the capitalist society, where he was forced to sell their labor force. The new society has removed the private property of the source of the seeming inequality and exploitation of man by man. At the same time human superiority was due to the new atheism. For Communists, atheism was a *"common scientific knowledge about the natural world and life that rejects any belief in the supernatural"*. Marxist atheism was in turn higher than atheist beliefs of Marx's predecessors. *"Beyond the limits of the atheism -18th century Marxist atheism does not stop the criticism of religion in terms of its institutional role and the servants of cults, but mores delves into the essence of religion, revealing social roots and nostology , its essence of class and social function it pursuing. At the same time philosophical atheism Marxist presumes an attitude of polemic towards mystical-religious representations, indicating concrete ways for the liberation of the people under the influence of the opium of religion"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 185-195).

Considered by the Communists in the early years of struggle for political power as the main ally of the working class, the peasantry was shortly after the seizure of power by the Communist Party a heterogeneous class of private property of incompatible in practical terms and doctrinaire socialism demands. Presented as the foundation of the propagandist unshakable ally of the proletariat, dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry could not maintain without transforming the socialist agriculture. This phrase was in fact the dispossession

of property of private peasants over land and resources. This collectivization was replaced with the property of cooperative but apparently that is all under the possession of the state. Ideological justification of forced collectivization of the serfdom was abolished and was based on the same liquidation of serfdom was abolished poor exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the villages. Based on these principles - Gh. Gheorghiu Dej stated: "*We support poor peasantry; we make alliance with mean peasantry and maintain a continuous fight against rich peasantry*" (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 164-175).

The proletariat was the only class that has given communism propaganda at least. "*The vanguard of the unique workers' Party and proletarians of the workers, Romanian Workers Party is attached as the sole authentic representative of the working class, which can fulfill the role of this class and therefore the role of the leader in the proletarian state*" (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 161).

Using this tactic since 1946, the "comrades" of the proletariat were abandoned in succession by the Communist Party and later of the Workers Party, once the goals of the communist dictatorship were achieved. The objectives of the class have been permanently redefined, passing it from one area to the other. Opponents of socialism were looking not only in the sphere of social-economic and political, but also in that of culture or ideology, even inside the party. The majority of the serfdom was abolished and eventually forced collectivization started in 1949, many of them losing their life in prison. Intellectuals have become the subject of forced indoctrination by imposing the single party ideology in the sphere of culture, and they shared the fate of victims of prisons and camps for re-education of class enemies of the proletariat. Along with taking the state leadership of the communists, censorship gets ever greater proportions, are forbidden renowned writers such as Mircea Eliade, Tudor Arghezi, Lucian Blaga, and for a brief period even the star of Romanian poetry, Mihai Eminescu.

Fear of Security policy in Romania, the police formed after the Soviet model, has held the country relatively unified,

although intense class struggle convicted in propaganda could not be removed. The border between private life and militant life was devoid of accuracy. The ordinary license was condemned, and encourages moral criticism only from top to bottom. The condemnation from the bottom up was dictated when getting ready in the corruption of persons under disgrace. The self-accusation represented the supreme form of discipline within the party. In the 1980s, the Romanian Communist party becomes crowd party, and in its structure it integrates approximately 66% of the workers; 80% of the members came from the ranks of young people, and the share of women in the party rises to 36%. At the end of 1988 Nicolae Ceausescu stated: *"the Communist Party has shown, through his entire activity, as is the vital center from which radiates light and heat that gives life, the most advanced consciousness of our people"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 134-136).

In this perspective of the Communist Party, being a party crowd ought not to be based solely on elements of workers, but also on all its livestock, to be the expression of the entire working class politics and of the whole nation.

Romania's foreign policy has been marked by the fact that for 45 years has been located in the Soviet zone of influence. This caused the closeness to the privileged and sister states and severing relations with the West. Ideological integration was achieved primarily through acquisition of Soviet political and social model, and secondly by framing the Romanian Communist Information Bureau from October 1947 to April 1956. Being the founding member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and being part of this community to winding up, in the 1991, Romania made economic integration into the Soviet structure. The military integration is achieved by the Warsaw Pact, which existed in the period from 4 May 1955 until the collapse of communism on 31 March 1991. So for Romania it interrupted for a long period the alignment to the Western values.

However, there are some elements that distinguish countries like Romania located behind the iron curtain. Although

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceausescu came to lead the country in terms of the affirmation of the Soviet military power as the most significant in the area, there were moments in which Romania has not been subjected to the orders dictated from Moscow. In 1958, through skillful negotiations lead with the Soviet Communist leaders by Dej, the Red Army withdraws from the territory. Another time was in which Romanian rulers signaled the uselessness of the Warsaw Pact. Not forsaken him, but Romania has participated in yearly maneuvers meant to underline the presence and authority. Romania no longer participated in the intervention in august 1968 against Czechoslovakia and even condemned Moscow's intervention in this country. That's why Adam Ulam remarked: *"in 1964-1965, Romania was the only State in the world that can boast the following combination of accomplishments: he was allied with the Soviet Union, was the girlfriend of China and the Communist State whose diplomatic and commercial relations with the West were amended and in expansion"*.

But the despotism of Ceausescu took the party of society, public opinion, from the West, has prompted even isolation from the USSR and its satellite states, leading in 1989 in a collapse that led to the collapse of the Communist regime. Attempting to modernize the communism, Gorbaciov started in Moscow the "perestroika" and "glasnost" reforms that led to the weakening of communism and its collapse in Eastern Europe.

The revolution meant failure. In Romania the onset of the Revolution takes place in Timisoara and is strengthening around the events that are not of the nature of politics, in the strict sense of the word. The commotion caused by the protests on 17-21 December 1989 led Ceausescu to organize a rally in the capital against the acts of vandalism in Timisoara. The rally was not one of support but was one against the communist leader. Confrontations between demonstrators and police on the streets of Bucharest have degenerated. Until that night, such incidents are not clocking shocking than in Timisoara. The arrest and execution of the Ceausescu husbands and the large number of

deaths have fueled numerous speculations about the veracity of the events. There is speculation that the revolution would have been a fake. On the evening of December 22 was the first truly political event of the revolution: the press release to the country of the Council of the National Salvation Front. At this time the army makes a covenant with demonstrators, and the Romanian Television transmits enthusiastic messages of participants in the revolution. Proclamation to the country consecrated the end of the totalitarian political system. So they formulated the fundamental principles of organization and operation of the future political system. *"As the program suggests: 1. eliminating the role of leader of a party and the formation of a pluralist democratic system of government; 2. the organization of free elections (...); 3. Separation of powers (...) in the State and all political leaders for choosing one or maximum two mandates. No one can claim power for life"*(Cioabă et. al., 2004: 296-304). Now the main objective is the integration into the Euro-Atlantic space. *"The entire foreign policy of the country is meant to serve the promotion of good neighborly relations, friendship and peace in the world, then it is in the process of establishing a United Europe, the common house of all nations of the continent"*(Cioabă et. al., 2004: 340). The first part of the year 1990 was characterized by a veritable avalanche of recordings of parties to court. From January until the end of March when the election campaign was triggered for the elections of 20th May 1990-the first elections under the rule of liberal pluralism after December 1937, there were on target and recorded 61 matches. Over the course of about 10 months, until October, the number of political parties in Romania got to 101. The activity of political parties in the early years was influenced by the lack of democracy, the absence of free with assault over several decades until, non-existent forms of specific manifestation of civil society. The sudden appearance of party pluralism has produced a profound change which has affected the entire population.

The first President of Romania, Ion Iliescu, democratically elected, was viewed with suspicion by the

Westerners, watching him as a kind of communism reconverted. But Romania's steps towards democracy were not stopped. The Romanian Constitution is changed in 1991 and it is consecrating the democratic rule of law. In 2003 the Constitution is ratified, settling all existing democratic rights all over the world.

The European Union through the European Council which took place in Madrid in 1995 determined that the negotiations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe should start after the Intergovernmental Conference, immediately after opinions and reports regarding the candidate countries will be drawn up. 1996 had a double significance from the point of view of Euro-Atlantic integration. Internationally, it began reconfiguring the structure and decision-making mechanisms of the EU in the perspective of new members, and NATO was preparing a decision on enlargement. Internally, there were presidential and parliamentary elections next year, and the prospect of integration was a priority on the election agenda of all political formations. The Association Agreement signed on 1 February 1995 includes provisions for raising political links and boosting economic, social, cultural and financial cooperation. The Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement signed on 30 June 1995 on the European Union's program was opened to Romania and came into force on 1 August 1996. In order to oversee the implementation of the Association Agreement and to prepare the accession of Romania mechanisms have been created-community. There were irregularities that were based on aspects of democracy and the rule of law, the legal system, enabling insufficiency of the protection of human rights and minorities, the European Council decided to incorporate the Concepts of December 1999 as Romania's accession negotiations to begin in 2000. Carrying out the process was provided over a period of five years and the ratification of the accession treaty by all EU member countries were to take place in about two years.

As a result, Romania was not received in the first wave of accession along with former Communist countries in Eastern

Europe in 2004 and became a member in 2007, along with Bulgaria. In terms of membership in NATO, it took place in 2004, by Romania participating in military operations in several areas such as Afghanistan or Iraq along with the allies.

Romania's transition from communism to democracy was achieved in successive steps, and democratic evolution became noticeable since 2004. The process of transition in Romania was ended in 2007 when it was received in the European Union. As part of the "great family" of the European States, Romania has a safe route of democracy, being in a line again with Europe and with its own values of civilization.

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Acknowledgement

This work was supported and financed by the Center of Post-Communist Political Studies - CEPOS STUDENT GRANT 2014 awarded within the Fourth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny, 4-5 April 2014, Craiova, Romania.