Romania – with a surface approximately equal to that of present-day Great Britain – was always a part of the European continent, starting with its inclusion in the structures of Roman Empire, as a province called Dacia, 2000 years ago. Ever after, the country and its inhabitants participated to all great European historical processes – the formation of Romance peoples, the great migrations, the founding of medieval states, the European defense in the framework of the Late Crusade, the revolutions for social and national emancipation, the creation of modern states, the two world wars, the totalitarian regimes, the communism, the building of the democratic society after 1989, the entrance in the NATO and
the European Union etc. – preserving permanently important testimonies of this tumultuous history.

Romanians are Europeans like any others, no better and no worse. Until recently, they were very euro-enthusiasts, but they can soon become euro-realists or even euro-skeptics. It depends on European evolutions. They are normal, welcoming, but also suspicious, good and bad, hard-working people and lazy, happy and sad. During those times when they were not too isolated or living in fear, they felt as authentic Europeans, they contributed to the wellbeing of Europe, they thought well, even affectionately, of Europe and often expected to be rescued by Europe. Today the time has come for them to work again to build the Europe of the future and for its prosperity.

IOAN-AUREL POP
President of the Romanian Academy

“L’existence d’une nation est... un plébiscite de tous les jours,” said the Frenchman Ernest Renan at the famous Sorbonne conference of 1882. Hence it has been erroneously deduced that a nation is subjectivity expressed in everyday life and the aggregate will of individuals at a given time.

It is all that, but it is also much more than the above-mentioned thought. And whenever we realize this truth, it is time for celebrations or commemorations. One can see this most clearly in what the French historian said at the Sorbonne conference, and from which only the famous expression “the plebiscite” survives in popular consciousness.

A nation is therefore a collective entity on a large scale, consisting in the feeling of sacrifices made in the past and those that will be made in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarised, however, in the present, through a tangible fact, namely consensus, the clearly expressed desire to continue common life. National existence is, if you’ll forgive my metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as the existence of an individual is a perpetual affirmation of life (Dungaciu, 2018).

This is the wider context of the French historian’s argument. Belonging to a nation is indeed subjective but, as Renan suggests, an objectified subjectivity, raised and educated in the framework of a historical becoming.

Man, Gentlemen, does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a past of struggle, sacrifice and devotion. Of all the cults that of the ancestors is the most legitimate for they have made us who we are. This is the essence of any celebration and especially of national holidays. In the case of Romanians, the “cult of ancestors”, of those who “have made us who we are”, has its most poignant instantiation on Great Union Day, celebrated on 1 December, marking the unification of all Romanians within a single state.
This year, the moment is even more loaded with meaning: 100 years have passed since that date.

[...] Some remarks must be made to hopefully bring greater clarification to events that took place 100 years ago.

• As shown by the case of interwar Romania, and also of Germany after the fall of Communism, the consequences of accommodating a union or a reunification last about 20 years. It is a period in which political parties are balanced against economic and social forces in order to allow the take-off and the full fruition of unification or reunification. Germany has benefitted enormously from the reunification, becoming today’s undisputed political and economic leader in Europe. Although Romania had all it needed to become a leader in the region during the interwar period, it failed to capitalize on the union at just the time all the economic elements allowing it to do so were present.

• In spite of the difficulties encountered after 1918, there were no separatist parties in Romania, not even regional parties based on the geography of the former provinces united with Romania in 1918 (no “Transylvanian” parties, “Bessarabian” parties or “parties from Bukovina”). In reality, the political osmosis was extraordinarily rapid. Parties in new regions united with Romania (the Old Kingdom) were melting into the existing structures or uniting with them to form new parties. This element is extremely important today if we want to understand the legitimacy of the acts that culminated with the December 1, 1918 union. With the exception of marginal and extreme groups (in Bessarabia, where they were supported by Stalin’s Soviet Union), there was no challenge to the 1918 Union.

• The Romanian State, formed in 1918, overcame the challenges of history relatively well. There are institutions that have endured to the present day (including historical political parties) in a country diminished by just one-fifth, following the Russian occupation (after World War II, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Southern Dobruja – the Quadrilateral – were lost by Romania).

• The contemporary Romanian State claims its origins from that national achievement, choosing 1 December as its national day after the fall of Communism.

• Unlike Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the Romanian State has not split and this shows once more that at the level of ethnic, cultural and political cohesion, the Romania founded in 1918 – based on the unification of the Romanian principalities of 1859 – is today a unitary, relatively uniform, homogeneous
body in all respects (in the 2011 Census, 16,792,900 people declared themselves to be Romanian, accounting for 88.9 percent of the total population).

- There is no threat of regional separatism nowadays, despite the fact that a certain type of propaganda talks about such a possibility in the case of Transylvania. It’s obviously a case of false statistics and a political aberration. Currently, according to the census of 2011, 1,224,937 Hungarians live in Transylvania, around 18.915% of the region’s population (6,475,894 people). At the level of the whole country, 1,227,623 ethnic Hungarian inhabitants represent only 6.1% of the total population. The Hungarians are one of the ethnic minorities with a relatively high level of demographic decline.

- Looking back, we find that “the Decision for the Union of Transylvania with Romania”, which was adopted on December 1, 1918, was essentially achieved (Pop, 2018). Among its “fundamental principles for creating the new Unified Romanian State”, the National Assembly established “complete freedom for all cohabiting peoples” and “equal and autonomous justification for full religious liberty for all faiths in the State”. “Complete freedom” was explained clearly, without possible misinterpretation. For the authors of the resolution, it meant that entitled “cohabiting” peoples were able to “train, manage and litigate in their own language”, “to be represented in Romania’s legislative bodies”, and to be represented in the governance of the country. The term “autonomous” here is an adjective and refers to “all religious confessions in the State” and not just the minority confessions.

- As noted by academician Ioan-Aurel Pop, nowhere in the text of the resolution is there any reference to the autonomy of any part of Transylvania according to ethnic criteria. Moreover, the “historically autonomous lands” of Transylvania, including “the Saxon lands”, had been dismantled before 1918 by the “dual Austrian-Hungarian State (more precisely, by the Parliament and government in Budapest) in the second half of the 19th century”. Today, Pop continues, the largest minority in Romania, the Hungarians (who account for 6.1% of the country’s population), “can benefit from instruction in their own language on Romanian territory, from the kindergarten to the University, at undergraduate, Master and PhD levels”. The same Hungarian minority “can conduct administration in its own language everywhere where it holds a simple majority and where governing bodies, from mayors up to members of local councils, county councils, etc. use the Hungarian language”. There is no mixed habitation “in which minorities are not represented, according to their numbers” in Romania. The same Hungarian minority “can be judged in its own language where the conditions required by law are met. Any member of the Hungarian minority can speak in Hungarian in courts of law, making sure to include an appropriate translator, as needed” (Pop, 2018).
All the Romanian provinces were successfully assimilated, and 20 years after the fall of Communism, the economy is again growing strongly. The Romanian State remains a magnet for all Romanians left outside its borders after 1945, especially for the majority in the Republic of Moldova, who, in a very large proportion, hold Romanian citizenship or have applied for it. It is worth noting that the struggle for the independence of the Republic of Moldova (August 27, 1991) from the USSR was based largely on the Romanian symbolism of the region, which predated the Soviet occupation of 1940: the Romanian language, the Romanian tricolour (red, yellow and blue), the same national hymn as Romania and a common currency (leu).

DAN DUNGACIU

[Argument]

The imperative premise – assumed by the construction of the present volume – is aimed at applying a triple working mechanism, designed to meet the reporting requirements of the triplicate formula using the marks of political thought for the interpretation of historical phenomena. The rule of three coordinates/landmarks used – tracking (by sorting, re-filing and re-exposure) the deposited evidence, signals, interventions, studies and articles dedicated to the Great Union in the pages of Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations Journal by systematization and orderly re-layout; acknowledging the importance of the anniversary/existence of the national State through the recording of a reverential homage event (Romania – 100 years – 1918-2018), in its celebration as an un-syncopated act whose consequences of continuity and celebration in the pages of the aforementioned Journal converge towards the quotation of references found (now and always) in the effervescent points/vertices of an essential historical becoming/fulfilment; highlighting the dynamic program of a whole generation, through insistence on the process of maturing and maturity of Romanian historical and political thought.

The three directions, already set out, are cross-referenced in the endeavour of examining and opening the archive of the Journal, by harmonising texts/articles with studies directly interested in researching and evaluating moments of documentary-historical intensity. Hence, the appeal of the present volume to a double method – on the one hand, preserving the archive [open access, on the special website dedicated to the Journal] and preserving it in intact form (all texts published in the Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations allow – here – re-structuring, as tributaries to a certain applied technicality and re-positioning inside forms, interventions that do not modifying occur in the corpus/substance or ideation fundamental of the text, but only in its form); on the other hand, agreeing with Certeau’s proposal of valorising the process
of passage from the stage of documentation and information to the compilation of the book –, and assimilation of the archived act associated with the invitation launched by Ricoeur, enjoining us to remain concerned about the reproduction of the magnitude of the phenomenon.

The volume is intended to be a well-known journal-witness of the course of Romanian political thinking, confirming that the 1918 moment demands to be celebrated as a fundamental historical event, which imparts a prominent force to the continuing dynamics of the preposition from, potentiating it not only with the structural valences of the initial moment and the starting point, but, in particular, giving it the meaning of the plenary symbols of a historical act which, after 100 years, celebrates its establishment by reaffirming and confirming its fully-mature vocation.

VIORELLA MANOLACHE

[Introductory Note]