

PHILOSOPHICAL-POLITICAL IDEAS
IN THE WORK OF CASSIU MANIU

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Abstract. The present approach resonates with the commitment expressed at Cassiu Maniu's funeral ceremony (1943) and later reaffirmed by Marin Pop (in 2011), consisting in the in-depth study of his philosophical-political work. The present initiative is therefore a form of recovering this content of ideas through focused research [here] of four individualizing theoretical-ideological approaches: *Principii de filosofie politică – Principles of Political Philosophy* (1906); *Știința ca mijloc politic – Science as a Political Instrument* (1909); *Despre putere – About power* (1922) and *Program politic și partid politic organizator și concentrator filozofic-național ne trebuiesc – A political program and a political organizer party and a philosophical-national concentrator are all we need* (1927).

Keywords: *Cassiu Maniu, political philosophy, political science, Romanian political thinking*

Fertile passivism and Theseical vocation

The initiative contouring, defining and individualizing Cassiu Maniu's personality (1867-1943) allows us to place his work inside the ideological construct of Romanian philosophical-political thinking, taking into account the prevalence of metaphors with mythologizing role and the valorisation of Nicolae Iorga's project¹ (with a completely different view from the critical attitude he showed towards Iuliu Maniu, Cassiu Maniu's brother) to establish, historically, the place and purpose of these *legendary* individualities. We can all agree from the start on the fact that, in the case of the Cassiu Maniu, he is neither *Apollon*, nor *Orpheus*, but Theseus, concerned, as he confessed, with untangling the thread of Ariadne in order to find the best solution and detect openings in/from the *labyrinthic* world of science, agreed upon up-to-the-end, as well as an

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¹ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria unei legende. Iuliu Maniu [History of a legend. Iuliu Maniu]*, "Datina Românească" Print, Vălenii de Munte, 1934.

“organic body of truth”². From the *intentions of the silent man*, as N. Iorga noticed, this attitude of fertile passivism is materialized [here], on the one hand, in Cassiu Maniu’s option to dedicate himself exclusively to a career of lawyer, university professor and political philosopher, refusing to (*actively*) engage in post-1918 Romanian political life; on the other hand, in the decision to dedicate himself to the effort of laying truth at the foundation of politics, through an ideologically *fecund* construct of “elevation to the theory of political wisdom and skill in the art of applying science as a political means”³. Cassiu Maniu’s *silence* and non-involvement in the active manifestations of Romanian political life find justification in the meditative resignation of his period of fertile *silence*, as a precursor stage for the process of *thinking* with the purpose of deliberately delivering viable and deeply structured philosophical-political systems on ideatic grounds.

Obituaries dedicated to Cassiu Maniu, (published at his death, which occurred “in Sibiu, city of asylum” on August 21, 1943) by the journal *Luceafărul* (new series, Year III, September 1943), insist on calling him a venerable professor and underlining the outstanding personality of a vocational intellectual, perfectly illustrating the name of spiritual father⁴ used by his young disciples. The intentions of the *silent man* – as Iorga called him – (“all of a sudden, all was *silence*” – we note – “and Professor Cassiu Maniu sent our minds on the road” confessed Corneliu Coposu⁵) – demand to be linked to the register of an *action-policy silence* shown as a *fertile* theoretical concept in/from the university sphere, as the timing of this commemoration is marked by “deep honesty and fair appreciation, in contrast with the *silence* (we note) of Professor Cassiu Maniu’s last year of life”. The message in the pages of the *Luceafărul* magazine insisted on the imperative need to establish a sort of posthumous justice, by organizing homage manifestations with a justifiable appreciation of Cassiu Maniu’s “complicated” personality as a scholar, learned diplomat and philosopher, great literary and political man – a patriot dedicated to fulfilling the desiderata of the nation and recognizing his meritorious, sustained, didactic and political activity. The message represents, in fact, an invitation to the rightful restoration and praise of his undeniable merits, a debt of conscience, necessarily resumed (much closer to us, in 2011) by Marin Pop and expressed by his addressed call to “value a lesser-known personality of Sălaj, who did not benefit from the attention of historians concentrating on the life and activity of his much-better known brother, Iuliu Maniu” by fulfilling “the debt of saving from oblivion”⁶ Cassiu Maniu, the prestigious philosopher and politician.

² Cassiu Maniu, “Știința ca mijloc politic” [*Science as a Political Instrument*], in *Political and Literary Magazine*, Year II, no. 6, 1 September 1909, pp. 165-166.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

⁴ Olimpiu Boitoș, “Cassiu Maniu”, in *Luceafărul*, new series, Year III, September 1943, p. 267.

⁵ Corneliu Coposu, “Povestea unei vieți sbuciumate care s-a împletit cu istoria Ardealului asuprit, Cassiu Maniu: jurist consacrat, savant cu renume, profet național și mucenic al vrerilor românești” [*The story of a tumultuous life, interwoven with the history of oppressed Transylvania, Cassiu Maniu: lawyer, scientist with a well-established reputation, national prophet and martyr of the national will*], in *România Nouă* (Cluj-Napoca), no. 134, August 1, 1937.

⁶ Marin Pop, “Cassiu Maniu (1867-1943) – personalitate sălăjeană mai puțin cunoscută” [*Cassiu Maniu, lesser-known Salajan personality*], in *Caiete Silvane*, no. 77, June 2011, pp. 29-31.

Cassiu Maniu is descended from an elite family, deeply imprinted (intellectually and humanly) by Simion Bărnuțiu and Demetriu Coroianu, but also the precursor and promoter of a *new generation* (the eldest son of Judge Ioan Maniu), *predestined* to an existence of sacrifice, foreshadowing his vocation, on a cultural-literary level (as successor of George Coșbuc, in the position of president of the literary society in Năsăud; later, Secretary of the Astra division in Șimleu), through the content and by the message of a first prize-winning work – *Între trup și suflet* [*Between body and soul*]. The space of *between* will be mastered and controlled by Cassiu Maniu, precisely by displaying the attributes of theoretician of the philosophy of law and political science – “which may not have had other followers in the country beyond the mountains”⁷ – by assuming a fundamental role in the evolution of the named disciplines and of the cultural life of Transylvania, through an empathic relation with the real world and familiarization with concrete, conflicting, tense and dynamic situations, but also through theoretical research, dedicated “to the necessities of national life, such as the philosophy of law and political science, disciplines of priority in the ascension of the people on the scale of civilization, of ensuring the elementary right to a national life”⁸.

The immutable concern is reconfirmed by Marin Pop who, insisting on collaborating with Cassiu Maniu in the *Revista politică și literară* [*Political and literary magazine*], considers him “one of the precursors of political science”, precisely by the constant reaffirmation, through studies and articles, of the “necessity of placing Romanian political science on the solid foundations of universal political science, emphasizing a set of governing principles based on the subordination of the political element in relation to global society”⁹.

A graduate of the Faculty of Law of Vienna and Cluj, Doctor of Law (March 19, 1892) with a lawyer’s caesura obtained in Budapest (1897), defender in court of Romanians and Romanian newspapers (see, in this regard, the Cluj trial, filed against Ștefan Pop, editor of the newspaper *Libertatea* [*Freedom*], on September 19, 1906), Cassiu Maniu will publish in the newspaper *Tribune*, the article “An unfair, illegitimate and non-legal idea: the idea of a Hungarian national unitary state”, which will result in his immediate arrest, formal trial, sentencing to one year in prison (April 1, 1903 – May 1, 1904, in Vác) and payment of 100 crown fine, as well as a two-year suspension from the bar. In 1907, Cassiu Maniu addressed six letters, written in French, to the writer Björnsterne Björnson, in which, basing his arguments on documented evidences, he claimed the rights of the Romanians on the whole territory “between the Tisza and the Dniester” and enumerated the indignities to which they were exposed by Hungarian authorities. The letters prove their action strength, the impact is immediate, Björnsterne Björnson obtains a special audience with King Edward VII, the arguments of the document-epistles winning him as a supporter of the cause of Transylvanian

⁷ Olimpiu Boitoș, *quoted work*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Marin Pop, *quoted work*.

Romanians. The immediate effect of this epistolary appeal is Cassiu Maniu's second arrestation, with the same type of trial and an identical punishment (December 1, 1909 – January 1, 1911). The authenticity of ideas in Cassiu Maniu's letters is confirmed by the reaction generated by publication of the article "Two sister nations, linked by suffering" (a text drafted in prison and published in *Sweti Martin*, January 1, 1910): the Meeting of the Slovak Women sends a delegation to the prison where Cassiu Maniu was imprisoned, to thank him and reconfirm their common martyrdom.

Together with Iuliu Maniu (President of the Governing Council) and his sister Cornelia (Sister Cecilia) Cassiu Maniu participates in the Assembly of Alba Iulia, on December 1, 1918, demonstrating the destiny of a family supportive of the historical destiny of oppressed Transylvanians and guided by belief in the fulfilment of the ideal of unity and union of all Romanians. Later, retired ("modest and *silent*" – we note¹⁰) from political life, he will occupy, from October 1, 1919, the Chair of the Department of Politics in the "King Ferdinand" University of Cluj and, from 1920, the Chair of Philosophy of Law, devoting himself to in-depth research, translations from Giovanni Battista Vico, Goethe and Michelet, fulfilling his vocation as "scientist in the purest sense of the word, a passionate and scholarly theoretician"¹¹.

Țara noastră [*Our country*] (Year X, no. 37, November 23, 1930, pp. 1298-1299) publishes, for "the in-depth knowledge of a complicated thinking personality", *Cassiu's Doina* (displaying a legendary aura), which confirms, for the author, valences of "great scholar/philosopher and diplomat (...) / but also great literate", attributes of the one who, although "he might have been Prime Minister", opts for withdrawal (*silence* – we note) from the tumult of the world ("he does not go to the coffee shop"); who "always studies his books" and "keeps his mind only on the University". Admired and appreciated by foreigners, in synchronous relationship with the West, as a university professor he is involved in the formation of righteous generations, of "true shoots", in the line of the spiritual-messianic vocation. Cassiu Maniu's profile remains marked by harmony and melodicity ("he knows how to play the violin, harmonica, flute or whistle"), therefore, by a *silence* transmitted by the sound of the active/*fertile* echo produced and propagated at the level of the arteries/*threads* which make up the bundle of exits from the sterile labyrinth, devoid of any method, but concerned with the scientific-ideological foundation of the Romanian political field.

Principles of Political Philosophy (1906)

A *prison text* (epigrammatic, harmonious, similar in form and background to a compendium structure, vast as thematic reporting, but not overloaded¹²), written "in the year of Cassiu Maniu's unjust political conviction" in the Vác

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Olimpiu Boitoș, *quoted article*.

¹² Cassiu Maniu, *Principii de filosofie politică* [*Principles of political philosophy*], Typography "Carmen", Petru P. Barițiu, Cluj, 1906, p. VIII.

prison, the work *Principles of political philosophy*, although the product of a period of unfair cloistering in a hostile environment, has representative ideological openings for the signs and objectives of a future horizon, prefigured by “pretence social forms in which the objective knowledge of the universe will be able to develop in increasing freedom and security”.

A text-response in-the-present-for-the-future, the work should be read under a doubly incidental angle. The first one aims to recover a fund and a method of preliminary-encyclopaedic discourse (via D’Alembert), resonating to the actualized need of the present to re-establish politics as a science of superior morality. The second affirms the need to “provide a perfectible response to the organic defect perpetuated throughout the nineteenth century”, the systemic dysfunction characterized by suspicion, political scepticism, moral and social convulsion, by an appeal to political philosophy as an area “which owes you an answer, if not infallible, at least a little bit comforting”¹³ of existing reality. What takes precedence is the recovery and the valorisation of the epicentre of power – *social conscience* – through the release of the conceptual *principle* of utopian imprints and chimeras, through the exercise of the power to think, to will, and to embody the triple substance¹⁴ irrigators of political philosophy whose purpose is “to make human life brighter, happier, and more enduring”¹⁵. The introductory notes of the volume let one see the reach and scope of the domain, its effect of correction, remediation, applied thinking and active involvement of a complex of ideas subordinated to exigencies “centring on concepts more sublime than those of Plato’s thought, through practical thinking” but also by a saving appeal, necessary and useful in the context of (personal) oppressive confined spaces. But, more than that, as defined by personal messages from the time of the writing of this paper, political philosophy is a manifesto, a subjective reaction, a form of resistance and an ideatic confessional-combative formulation. The structural formula developed by Cassiu Maniu starts with the recognition of *truth*, pulling a large set of landmarks, a swivel-deductive reasoning out of the defined *directing principle*: the revelation of political consciousness in connection with the issue of nations and peoples (with reference to the double register of *pain* and *pleasure*); the imperative deferred to the politics of developing organic and dynamic social forms; the affirmation of the idea of national unity as a construct derived from the principles of scientific knowledge; the correlation between the genesis of politics and the time of emergence of national politics¹⁶.

The XI chapters, each one devoted to a *principle*/essential concept of political philosophy, show a methodological, encyclopaedic arrangement of core themes of the field, displaying 201 *principles* of interest distributed in the form of subchapters. Much more than just conceptual essentialization, Cassiu Maniu opts for a way to enter into an (ideatic) dialogue with pivotal texts in the field, in order to add his own comments, explanations or details, and to relate the

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. IV.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. VI.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. VII.

theoretical substance with the reality of the Romanian context, in a fair dosage of the particular-universal.

The introductory chapter is devoted to *Nature*, which Cassiu Maniu subordinates to *pleasure* (the natural law of individuals and perfect social forms, which produce surplus-pleasure), in establishing a comparison between social-natural organisms and the nations themselves, a register managed by the unity of language, work, education and spirit, emphasizing the principle according to which *true nature* derives from the interest of the individual referred to *the law of the pleasure of self-arrangement of nature* (a scale with different degrees: love; pleasure; spiritual inner peace of mind; order and mastery of things in nature; refinement and primacy; pleasures of the self and the other; diffusion of light; respect for such a well-founded nature¹⁷). If tyranny and anarchy are deviations from the natural order, phenomena produced by the degradation and decomposition of *pleasure*¹⁸, the concept of *pleasure* is accepted with the sense of specific functioning mechanism, beneficial to the whole organism – which imposes a distance from any form of corruption, of impure and perverted shades. From Aristippus and Epicurus, to La Mettrie, Condillac, Diderot, Rousseau, Th. Reid or C. Clarke, Cassiu Maniu pursues the concept of *pleasure* which he invests with a distinct meaning from that of hedonism, voluptuousness, delusion, greed; and defines it by isolation and delimitation from the concepts of natural mechanics, sensualistic psychology, *common sense*, and by the simple principle of harmonizing things and creating natural order. He resorts, in Newtonian fashion, to the primacy of simple *nature*, in harmony with itself¹⁹, in order to develop a correspondence between *pleasure* and internal beauty, proportionality, symmetry, perfect order, pleasant states and higher self-consciousness; and more than that, to agree with the ideas of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Wollaston and Butter regarding *the ethics of truth and the moral sense*.

The principle of *Law* is “subordinated to the spiritual empire in nature”, a placement “generated by/through spiritual co-operation”, an interdependence with the stated purpose of regulating/normalizing external relations. By definition, for Cassiu Maniu, *Law* represents “the spirit for natural organic life by the pleasant arrangement of the functions of the society”²⁰; *pleasure* leads (in the process of forming states) to the creation of the law and contributes to maintaining the rule of law. Cumulatively using theories issued by J. Locke, Rousseau, Saint-Simon or Spencer Herbert, Cassiu Maniu considers *Law* as a product belonging to “the organic work of nature”, which contributes to the conservation of the strength of members of a social organism, as a force reporting to “the most pleasant positioning of an organ in nature”²¹. Deductively, the nation is a society of people bound by the same laws; the government is considered as the structure which is called to appoint generals, who manage the collective interest and

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

ensure the security of the state; the state of “issuing taxes”, a construct – a synthesis of collective active and passive interests, obligations, assets and liabilities, distinct from but not opposed to the individual; the ideal and the interest of the collective are clearly assigned to “the state instituted by pleasure for uncorrupted nature”²².

With regard to the inventory and classification of *Laws*, Cassiu Maniu considers that the good *laws* are only those based on *universal* pleasure – an assertion constituted by the synthesis of three philosophical orientations (ideal-realistic, sentimental and sensualist) that converge towards attributing a positive sense to *pleasure*, with a role in the preservation of the body (through public and private hygiene laws), of the species (the law of the production and consumption of goods) and of the soul or the intellect (through the law of liberal-natural and Christian education)²³ – *principles* which, in their turn, become objects of *law* – the culture of the body, the culture of the species, the culture of the soul/the intellect.

In assessing the *State*, Cassiu Maniu formally appeals to the geographical criterion, in order to deduce from “a lucky climate” – “inside and outside, the state has the force to defend itself and to avoid the existence of oppressors and the oppressed”²⁴ – conditions of establishment of the national state. Accepting the same Newtonian reflexes, Cassiu Maniu considers that “as gravity governs the planetary system, in the rule of a state the law of universal pleasure prevails”. The measures issued by the state for achieving universal *pleasure* must be included in a set of elements capable of facilitating the realization of the required imperative, by: introducing positive sciences about man as a field of compulsory university study; “removing all articles formed by temperance meetings from trade”; (scientific) fulfilment of state debts – with emphasis on *justice* and *virtue*; setting up art schools, alongside humanities; replacement of the study of foreign languages by/with the study of the following disciplines: sociology, philosophy of history, history of culture, history of philosophy and ethics; implementation “of self-instruction”; promoting all ideas and actions that develop the citizens’ organic consciousness; investing a government composed of scientists with the aim of a “state existence without artificial organisms” and with the prerogative of fulfilling the functioning harmony of the social organism²⁵. At the foundation of this model Cassiu Maniu places an ideal Ciceronian type, valorising the consensus of righteousness and utilitarianism²⁶, developing a pragmatic structure whose application is to be found in the formation of a new government, functioning as an organic and statistical landmark which performs the role of “knowledgeable forum of income and losses”, vested with “positive responsibility in ensuring the well-being of the citizens”²⁷.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 25-28.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

The individual (decisional factor, social core extending into the problematic of identity/alterity – and the “person to person report”), *Family* (here in the sense of a “structure homogenizing pleasure and the absorption of potential energy necessary in the organization of the social system”²⁸) and *Education* (the primacy of understanding and communication with a special focus on “learning the language of the family,” and the cultivation of personal freedom and free development, for the determination of the national culture²⁹) represent the cross-linked *principles* considered by Cassiu Maniu as pivotal and crucial structures for the reconfiguration of the Romanian political situation.

The chapter dedicated to the *Nation* explicitly sets out the content of ideas with which Cassiu Maniu invests political philosophy, as a formula for reporting to the greatest social power – the national consciousness – an area of manifestation within which “foresight provides progress, easing the way for the character of the individual and of the national organism”³⁰. Structurally, the chapter shows the personal context of writing the work and states, explicitly, the author’s interest and research object: reporting and using political philosophy as a research tool, a pivot for the theme of *national consciousness, a directing principle* confirming its purpose and place only by anchoring the Romanian model in the area of the universal. The task of political philosophy (similar to state philosophy, it consists in the cultivation of the virtues³¹, of natural conscience and wisdom, of beautiful morals³², operating with maxims taken from religion and highlighting the harmony of the law of self-pleasure of nature³³) is “to awaken, to develop self-awareness to such perfection that it may become a national philosophical, that is, scientific self-consciousness, in order to result in the greatest unity and harmony of national consciousness”³⁴.

Undisguised by *the principles* of political philosophy, *Life* accepts, through the above-mentioned field, “the most direct way towards the happiness of mankind, through the formation of natural/national, independent and unitary organisms”³⁵. *Heroism* assures, in its turn, through the vehicle of political philosophy, “the happiness of all generations” by combining three necessary-fundamental directions – defence, preservation and exaltation of the nation³⁶.

In a conclusive-lucid inventory, Cassiu Maniu diagnoses the causes of attenuation “of the instinct of spirituality”, considering as sources generative of/responsible for the given situation, “the inability of the nation to execute the philosophical principles of politics”, the lack of unity and the absence of an organic connection, as well as the blurring of the feeling of mutual sharing (reduced to a reflex of imitation/mimicry) and of blocking intellectual detente/movement³⁷. Cultivating

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 58.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

originality and *genius*³⁸ are added as possible solutions to ensure personal or national optimism, *self-confidence* (at individual and state level), as a reality capable of being fulfilled, politically and philosophically, by anchoring the individual/nation within the framework of freedom and universal happiness³⁹, but also through the effort of finding the necessary pace “for guaranteeing the uninterrupted progress of the nation”⁴⁰.

Science – Means and Political Purpose (1909)

Published in *The Political and Literary Magazine* (Year II, no. 6, September 1, 1909, pp. 165-166), the article-study *Science as a political medium*, can be considered as a synthesizing manifesto, a condensed – articulated prefiguration of the systemic-directing guidelines specific to the political thinking of Cassiu Maniu, by decreeing the evidence according to which science, as “a whole organ of truth”, has a role and a pivotal place in the political field, “contributing to the awakening of yearnings towards perfection”.

The text confirms a reading of the ideal substance dedicated to the field, by approaching that “scientific activity” able to underline the importance of science, as a political means applied by Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, Holbach, with expressed resonance with the perspective emitted by Schleswig-Holstein (“Die Politik als Wissenschaft”) or by Thiers (in the volume dedicated to the French Revolution). Starting from these ideal constructions, Cassiu Maniu integrates into the space of the Romanian political thinking, by preserving the fundament and adapting the form, a triple operant formula: the awakening of reason, the opportunity to feel the effect of awakening from illusion and dream, by “putting truth in the service of politics” and pleading for the valorisation of “political wisdom”⁴¹; treating and remedying the flaws/vices of the political system, in a time of grace belonging to thinkers (tenacious and independent *philosophers*) and through the contribution of “sharp critics”; asserting the need to systematically substantiate an architecture of Romanian political science, not isolated, but fixed on the solid base of universal political science⁴².

Cassiu Maniu operates a decisive change of emphasis in politics, from *art* to *science*, thus overtaking the context of a reality that requires urgent solutions, counteracting the expansive resources of Slavism or a lucid/equidistant position on German detente, a display “of orderly purpose in relation to heterogeneous elementary powers”. The studied context demanded a revision of the synthesizing valence and, subsequently, the contextual-particular application of political science to the actual situation, by means of implementing the logic behind the theoretical knowledge in the field. The imperative transmitted by Cassiu Maniu was to consolidate and perpetuate the “expositions on the cardinal political and civil

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

⁴¹ Cassiu Maniu, “Știința ca mijloc politic” [Science as a Political Instrument], in *Political and Literary Magazine*, Year II, no. 6, 1 September 1909, p. 165.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

liberties” drafted by those who studied Law in order to apply what they had assimilated in theory, confirming their mission of “political education” and their aim of developing political culture, and thus demonstrating the ability to organize, through science, (an essential condition for the existence of a high-political culture) a free movement (impossible to achieve in the absence of political organization, free affirmation, independence of law and electoral freedom or an organic administration in its own right), covering the whole spectrum, from the “modest frames of communal and municipal life” to the coordinates and serious problems of a global world.

Cassiu Maniu’s primordial assertion, according to which, “this is how [*through education* – we note] science becomes a political instrument in the moral meaning of the word. For the purpose of any science and any activity should be the unconditional realization of the moral order”⁴³, which cannot be easily separated from the prevalence of political anthropology, a field is considered to be decisive for the reach of political science.

About power (1922)

The (published) text of the *public conference read at the Romanian National Party’s Studies Circle, on February 18, 1922* (“by Dr. Cassiu Maniu, Professor of Politics at the University of Cluj”)⁴⁴ demands to be commented considering its double significance/theoretical perspective: the first refers to the dedication derived from the valences and ideological substance that irrigate the conference text, expression of the homage gesture of “brotherly love”, which completes/finalizes the portrait of an elite generation (addressed to “*the eminent lawyer, Professor Dr. Emil Hațieganu, Dean of the Law faculty of the University of Cluj*”); the second intends to fix the ideas of the philosophical-political system proposed by Cassiu Maniu in the research area dedicated to a pivotal concept of the field – *power*. The thematic framework marked by the text is that of decreeing politics as “the science of organizing freedom and happiness”, with power and morality as corollary. With an Aristotelian starting formulation by the meaningful option of transporting morality into politics and by adopting the theory of moderation, Cassiu Maniu’s text is placed in the concentric radius of an appropriate mechanism for integrating moral power into the politics of nations and states. The context is one that illustrates the evolution of politics from experiment to a practical formula of adaptation to the demands of a reality imprinted by ethics, by raising awareness of the relevance and primordality of the ideal, the devotion and the moral-organic action of the nation. These three-phased benchmarks are equivalated by Cassiu Maniu with the primacy of social-universal harmony, having, as a reflex, a kind of soul solidarity and a political attitude, natural products of the national spirit: “the spirit of universal harmony, that is to say, the moral national spirit, performs political solidarity”⁴⁵. In fact, the asserted ideological-theoretical construction concerns the necessity of

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 166.

⁴⁴ Cassiu Maniu, *Despre putere [About power]*, Cartea Românească, Cluj, 1922.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 5-6.

applying in the space of the Romanian political thought a particular dynamic, managed by *transcreation*, a process guided by a *heroic, energetic, vigilant, clever elite*, predictable and clairvoyant, able to *practice a broad Romanian politics, active, creative and fruitful*⁴⁶.

Cassiu Maniu decodes the layers of philosophical significance, decomposes the summary construction of the idea, valorises the generous context of the interpretation of the term and recognizes the central position of *power* in/from the area of political language, in order to extract from the metaphysical substance of authority itself the essence of the concept: “authority (...) is a principle, a general law (...). Power in its political and ordinary meaning is the constituted, organized and visible manifestation of this idea of authority”⁴⁷. To the theoretical sources (delegated power from above, exclusive emanation of the people or result of the rationally produced social interest having as corollary the “monarchy of legitimacy and absolutism”, in elective and popular mode or mixed constitutional regime), Cassiu Maniu attaches the objectual essence of power, characterized by the ability to express, concentrate and convince the organic forces of society to regulate public and civic life⁴⁸.

Without departing from the philosophical context, Cassiu Maniu wilfully resort to an inaccurate (philosophical) phrase applicable to the practical-political – *separation of powers in the state* – which he subsumes to the governing equation according to which “each disposes of a part of sovereignty”, the practice stating “three separate social functions with a common purpose”, that of balancing social forces and establishing order within the limits determined by law; because outside the Constitution as “organized, scholarly and regular mechanism” and the Law, “there is no power but arbitrariness and anarchy”⁴⁹. In search of a working model adapted to the reality of the moment, Cassiu Maniu advocates power that is not absolute (neither transient nor a generator of uninterrupted revolutions), nor subordinate, but totally disarmed: “it can be a place for elective power, if it knows how to bring the necessary security”. In the opinion of Cassiu Maniu, the triumph of the good, synonymous with the moral conception, is “the only axiom useful to civil society”. Its implementation demands the projection of a cultural state having a centre of civilizing force, focused on the moral idea and the moral virtue⁵⁰.

*Political programs and an organizing and concentrating
national-philosophical political party, this is what we need (1927)*

The programmatic reference text⁵¹ explains, through a didactic-university approach-receipt, (from) the university lectern, the importance of harmonizing

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁵¹ Cassiu Maniu, *Program politic și partid politic organizator și concentrator filozofic-național ne trebuiesc [Political programs and an organizing and concentrating national-philosophical political party, this is what we need]*, Institute of Graphic Arts “Viața”, Cluj, 1927.

the political construction (program) with the landmarks of a theoretical-action architecture, perceived, on the filiation of Cassiu Maniu, as force with a synthesizing impact and with a philosophical-national purpose, for the establishment of a political party, structurally rethought on a new foundation.

A civilizing project able to annihilate and counteract barbarism caught in alarming perpetuation, the intervention of Cassiu Maniu proposes and supports the accomplishment of the desire for national perfection, as a realistic objective that co-implies the concentration and liberation of the generous energy of the human side of humanity and nationality (because the law of humanity and nationality is subsumed by the laws of spirit and moral manifestations). Detente has the ability to combat and abolish despotism and political immorality or the practice of appealing to impersonal ideas, through a process of conversion of dynamic soul experiences into political results, accompanied by direct, pragmatic reaction – “the triumph of the public good over the common evil”. Political priority is given to those political parties that, by materializing “political ideas and principles of absolute value”, have the capacity of specific awareness for general landmarks: peace, internal and external security, freedom, happiness, guarantees of progress and the future of the nation. Cassiu Maniu uses the primacy of a condition of absolute value, expressing the interdependence of party ideology and the national political program: “a party must have a political philosophical and scientific conception at its base, which is in complete agreement with the fundamental principles of political uplift of nation and state”⁵².

A shortcoming of the political parties was the absence of a philosophical-founding substrate, which had to be added to a political program with a synthesizing and declarative role, summing up the cardinal tendencies, traditions and aspirations of the “political wisdom of the nation”, attributes found and validated in the “expression of the sense of humanity and national honour”, in enhancing national aspirations, in establishing, respecting and fulfilling all national rights, desires and interests. A priority condition of party activity would be the transposition of the principle *the right man in the right place*, in a harmonizing context with triple valences consisting in the coordination of the functions of the state and of the citizens and in a wise political organization – by concretizing a set of relevant political ideas: the independence of Greater Romania, based on the solidarity of ethnic sources, on “the most complete rapprochement of all Romanians”; concord (by “introducing in the political order” the ideas of justice, truth, beauty, good, right, homeland, civilization and propriety); peace keeping. Organic as structure – “we are a body, a soul must guard it” – the project does not tolerate the stagnation and maintenance of a given state of affairs, but militates for the development of a process of educating the spirit, for the formation of a new, powerful, reigning national party, with a precise and energetic philosophical-national program – the *national philosophical party*, accumulating beneficial traits, capable of organizing, demonstrating skills of overcoming regionalisms and abilities of guarantor of unity, moral resistance and material prosperity⁵³.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5.

In methodological-didactic acceptance, Cassiu Maniu points to the conditions and circumstances indispensable to the political activity of setting up the new party, based on a moral code, as the subject and object of political ethics (of recognizing and respecting the absolute, human, citizen and national wishes – proving impartiality, sincerity, steadfastness, courage and humility), whose prerogative was the duty to “discover the supreme political presuppositions and to bring them into the system, and to develop the rules and ideals that follow”. Logics and political ethics, considers Cassiu Maniu, are the first requirements of “political work”, crucial for the establishment of roots and for getting rid of an atrophied, limited, uncivilized and amoral mentalities by restoring order, by regeneration and an energetic will, by a political and philosophical approach fulfilled by delivering an “identical moral code for all Romanians”⁵⁴. The ideal becomes the absolute model for the preparation of a new generation, a resonant part of a moral, purifying, fruitful political current, guarantor of unity and public agreement, having as guiding principle “the genius of morality and virtue”: “morality, law and religion are simultaneous and solidary. Any politics that separates them is an antagonist of human progress and happiness. Against this kind of politician, we must organize the consciences of the best citizens of the state, establishing a new political party with a political program”⁵⁵.

The correction of disorder in/from the national consciousness (of semi-barbarism, of pseudo civilization and the non-legal) demands the clarification of fundamental specifications of public law and the establishment of constitutional life norms, ensuring the correct functioning of the mechanisms of organic life of the state, by organizing social power in the spirit of its times, not only through a separation of powers in the state, but also by “perfect understanding between all the organs of public power”: the sphere of public freedoms would be extended in parallel with “the progress of the people in education and morality”⁵⁶, by forming and affirming an elite of specialists in public – constitutional law.

Cassiu Maniu insists on two compulsory directions for the formation of the new party: the first, that of affirming a unitary and robust national spirit, which harmonizes religious and social feelings with philosophical and political ideas, by avoiding chaos, by combating anarchic, conflicting tendencies and by counteracting political poverty; the second option requires an exit from the corrupted sphere, by renouncing the satisfaction of the physiological needs – from/in the series of harmful energies, negative selfishness and sensualism are individualized – and by valorising the act of philosophical fulfilment, by returning to “high self-consciousness, to the sublimating salvation of the spirit, both in the individual and in the social organism”⁵⁷. In the register of a biological typology expressed by the idea of the “power of individual will” (strong individuals, weak individuals, sick individuals), Cassiu Maniu advocates the need for “the defeat of the lower wills through higher cultivated wills”, representing the product of the “labour energy of the free spirit, rational and

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

contemplative “and the result of the application of ‘progressive means’, belonging to the general culture, the culture of self and manifest spirituality: in such social and political conditions in which self-consciousness is free to spiritualize, for the gradual rationalization of our mentality, the interests of the nation and of the individual are protected and indulged. Where there is self-indulgence, peaceful political harmony follows”⁵⁸.

Synthesizing, Cassiu Maniu systematizes the program of the new national political party, on a philosophical, organizational and conceptual level, in a set of 9 guiding points: concord and order resulting from social-political harmony, consistent and peaceful; integration of the following, “absolutely necessary” concepts, in the political order: morality, justice, good, truth, honour, law, homeland, civilization and propriety; enhancing awareness regarding respecting the identity of the rights and interests of all Romanians; orientation of policy and administration towards consolidating the country’s finances; solving the monetary problem; the primacy of national cohesion; creation of social progress institutions; due importance given to education; codification of the responsibility of public services⁵⁹.

National, *major* politics, insists Cassiu Maniu, is the one that respects and fulfils the wishes of the whole nation, being the faithful expression of the “great and original features of the Romanian nation”: love of ancestors, cultivation of language, love of country, love of religious faith, respect for heroes and their spirit of sacrifice, appreciation of the laborious vocation and sobriety of the Romanian peasant, demonstrating the capacity to overcome a limited regionalism, concise political thinking (“there must be no hidden things between brothers, only sincerity”), by cultivating correct relations of national unity, founded on justice, equality, freedom and fraternity⁶⁰.

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⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 9.