

BOOK REVIEWS

Dan Dungaciu, Viorella Manolache (editors)

100 Years since the Great Union of Romania, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, 409 p.

The volume brings together the special meanings of union in the approach celebrating the constitution of the Romanian state in Europe. Romania was a presence in Europe, in the European history, long before the December 1, 1918. The formation of Greater Romania was a fruit of political history, but not “a gift of fate” (Ioan-Aurel Pop). Thus, the volume interprets political thinking, political history and the historical-political symbols related to Greater Romania, within a special discourse, relevant to the wider academic elite. In the introductory text titled “Manifest Destiny? Romania in Europe”, Ioan-Aurel Pop emphasizes: “Romania is European in many respects, including its geographical position and its name” (p. ix). The argument follows a deep plunge into the distant and not so distant history, into the complexities of the constitution of the state, through the union of the historical Romanian Provinces. “The unification of Romanians into a national state comprised the following stages: 1) 1848–1859–1866: The union of Moldavia and Wallachia into a state officially named Romania and reformed according to Western principles; 2) 1877–1878–1881: The War for the Independence of Romania and the fight for international recognition of the absolute independence of the country; the union of Dobruja with Romania and the proclamation of the country as a kingdom; 3) 1914–1918–1920: The participation of Romanians and Romania in the First World War; the unification of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania with Romania; the international recognition of the Romanian unitary national state inside its historical borders”. (pp. xv-xvi)

An argument on “the metaphor of daily plebiscite” for the existence of the nation is brought to the fore by Dan Dungaciu (“1 December 1918 – The Unrealized Fruits of the Union of the Romanians”): “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”. (p. xxiii) In his view, we have here a Union, which equals a “project of resilience that never came to full fruition”, in the more general terms (*lato sensu*) of future development, but mainly in the *stricto sensu* terms of the concern 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”. (p. xxx)

Viorella Manolache reveals the significance of the information and analyses that form the contribution of the Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations to the theme of Romanian anniversary of a century since the great Union. The text aligns under the title “Romania: 100 Years since the Great Union (In the Pages of Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations)” the ideas of the prerogative associated to a special editorial project triggered by the Great Union “historic hour” when the historical political elite sustained the people in their aspiration towards a crucial ideal rendered possible by national will and political effort.

Part One of the volume, entitled “Before 1918: Context and Personalities” starts from the “Modern Romanian Constitutionalism” is an analysis conducted by Ion Bulei to reveal the significance of a period of constitutional modernization part of the liberal dominant trend of the 19th century – from Cuza’s Statute of July 2, 1864, which amended the Paris Convention of 1858 and up to the first Constitution of Romania, on July 1, 1866. However, there were other earlier constitutional preoccupations, such as “the Constitution of Cărvunari of 1822 or the projects of the nobility in the years 1827–1828, which we might call a kind of constitution, and the Organic Regulations introduced under the Russian occupation in 1831”. The constitutions were powerful educators to the nation in the spirit of political union under law, democracy and liberalism. “The 1866 Constitution established three fundamental principles: the principle of national sovereignty, according to which all the powers come from the nation, the principle of representative government, according to which the nation cannot govern solely through delegated powers, and the separation of powers: legislative, executive and judicial, which had to be independent of one another. Legislative power was exercised by the (bicameral) Parliament and by the Prince. Agreement between the three branches of the legislative power, the Assembly of Deputies, the Senate and the Prince, assured the functioning of the legislative element. The power of the judiciary was independent of the other two”. (p. 3)

Evoking the multilevel importance of the European personality of Simion Bărnuțiu, interpreted as an “avant-gardist” of the Great Union of 1918, Viorella Manolache emphasizes: “The apparently non-chronological method in Bărnuțiu’s *The Public Law of the Romanians* is justified by the pursuit of a method previously referred to – considering the Discourse of May 2, 1848 to be an essential part of the annexes on historical development and political relations, a document added to the acts and political correspondence drafted by Simion Bărnuțiu.” (p. 8) The conformity with the precise, knowledgeable and just law should be a guideline for the makers of history and for the Romanian union: “The Romanians’ natural rights are found in their personality, and their civil rights correspond to natural private rights. ‘True political right’ are the result of inviolable sacred laws and social pacts [...] and participates in the ‘uttering of the consensus and the public will of all in the national assemblies’ (1867: 106–107). The ‘majestic rights of each nation’ are born from the concepts that define it – as well as from the civil dictates of reason [...]” (pp. 14-15)

In the next chapter, Henrieta Anișoara Șerban identifies the rise of the national principle in the contributions of two great cultural and political Romanian personalities, Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu, contributors to the constitutions of Romanian identity and spirituality: “Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu are among the founders of Romania, and of Romanian spirituality. They supported national and humanitarian values, ideals, activities, and projects through their actions and work. These two great Romanian poets are examples of an essential contribution to the rise of the national principle. We honour and emphasize here their important works as well as their cultural and political activity as an affirmation of their axiological, idealist, national, and paideutic creed.” (p. 28) At anniversary moment, these two paramount Romanian personalities, poets and political role models, are celebrated as symbols of the ideal of national unity over the flow of time, representing an inspiration for patriotic attitude and Romanian nationalism enrooted in spirituality.

Roxana Pătraș and Antonio Pătraș call attention to a distinct direction in literary works and political texts, which, before World War I, depict the Romanian village as a place of poverty, misery, abuse, and crime. The authors describe it as “quasi-mystical”; we might understand it as dystopian, yet, as a place where the drive for change and the mentalities for development are forged. “Invariably, we are introduced to an incessant

and wearisome process of labour, whose aims – predetermined by an Orthodox mind-set – is not to be found or expressed here on Earth but in the afterlife. Yet, in the context of the dynamics of war, which brings about demographic mobility, new technical input and changes in mentality, the Romanian rural economy is substantially changed by the new distribution of land ownership.” (p. 42) This is the infancy of a political economy literature that analyses a state of affairs, but also captures the emergence of change. “As Ion Agârbiceanu attests, the process of change is irreversible. In order to survive, peasants have to understand not only the social function of land but also the role of their own mentality in an emerging and creative rural market. Finally, what all these texts say is that the war did more than merely implement the land expropriation law. War built a sense of community and a pragmatic understanding of labour well before Madgearu offered his theory of cooperation. [...]” (p. 61)

“The Roots and Early Development of Moldovan-Romanian Nationalism in Bessarabia (1900–1917)”, by Ionaș Aurelian Rus, investigates the Moldovan national movement and the mechanisms related to its emergence and structuring into a true mass phenomenon. In the words of the author: “The ‘old’ weak national movement, the premodern and aristocratic movement before 1900, can be said to have given way to the modern national movement of ‘commoners’, especially intellectuals, which emerged around 1905. Even this movement was rather weak before the Russian Revolution of 1917. Throughout the period a large majority of the Moldovan-speaking people felt that they were ethnic ‘Moldovans’ rather than ‘Romanians, with the percentage of the latter increasing over time”. (p.64) Ionaș Aurelian Rus emphasizes that the main factor is proto-nationalism and that this is responsible for the activation of the masses which led to increased national mobilization. The elites had no decisive role in forming or imposing an ethnic consciousness turning “peasants into Moldovans/Romanians”.

Part Two emphasizes the idea of Historical Frame: World War I and the Great Union and it is structured in three chapters signed by Ioan-Aurel Pop: “Romania during World War I”, “The ‘Great’ Union” and “Romania between the Wars”. The Great War gave way to a new political and state architecture for Europe, within which, the final fulfilment of Greater Romania was the result of the work undertaken then and in the previous centuries. (p. 84) The Act of 1 December 1918 (now, the national holiday) marked the end of a process, the creation of the unitary Romanian State. (p. 90) From 1919 to 1940, Romania’s major goals included maintaining the stability and order on the continent after World War I, preserving peace and security, and developing good neighbour relations in the region. In the early 1930s, Nicolae Titulescu (who was President of the League of Nations twice) was a symbol of these diplomatic goals and his activity expressed the principle: “When peace is under threat, one must not wage war, but organize peace”. (p. 99)

Part Three of the volume follows the main events and historical-political meanings of the Union and its posterity. Ion Bulei, in “History in the Context of the Centennial” interprets the historical moment of the Romanian Union in 1918, as fact and as experience, as spontaneous support and as expression of popular ideals. (p. 116) “The tactics of the Romanian elite, which were those of political opportunism, were successful. Clemenceau had raised his hat in front of the Romanian people, in front of its remarkable capacity of sacrifice (yet, not in front of Romanian politicians, before whom he had put his hat back on). The historian notes that Romanian politicians may not have been at the same level as the people they governed (how many of them are?). They were merely lucky.” (p. 119) Dan Dungaci approaches “The Union of Bessarabia with Romania – The Entrance into Modernity of the Territory between the Prut and the Dniester”. “The data we have examined show two things: firstly, the only European modernization project in Bessarabia in the 20th century was the Romanian one, carried out during the interwar period; secondly,

by quantifying the objective conditions of the region, both internally and internationally – extremely unfavourable to a process of national construction following a democratic formula – we can conclude, despite some (still) heavy perceptions, that the modernization project was fairly successful. Under these circumstances, describing the Romanian interwar period as the worst period in the history of the Prut-Dniester territory in manuals that (dis-)integrate history, in political discourse or elsewhere, is absurd, false and unacceptable. And this is from all points of view.” (p. 132) In reconstructing the image of the Romanian Crown in the Republic of Moldova, closer to our time, during the last three decades, Aurelia Felea investigates testimonies, systematizing and analysing the data from memoirs about public events involving members of the royal family. “The inhabitants of the eastern regions of Romania occupied by the Soviets, who were persecuted by the Communist regime, deprived of the achievements of their national culture and/or deported from their native places, closely associate and mix European values, Romanian-ness and Romanian royalty as central elements of the intellectual constructions that constitute and define their identity reference system”. (p. 149)

Jean-Noël Grandhomme emphasizes that while the French personalities interested in the Transylvanian Cause were rare, Ernest Denis, professor at La Sorbonne represented a remarkable exception. Gradually though, the French elite was more and more receptive to the Romanian national cause, and the article provides impressive and precise details concerning the interaction of the French and Romanian elites, including the role played in this chain of events by General Berthelot. The investigation emphasizes how France arrived to make the Romanian aspirations its own. (p. 168)

Nicolae Iuga evaluates the importance of the first Romanian newspaper in the history of Maramureş, entitled *Sfatul* (issued on Friday, 7 December 1918), after Transylvania and Maramureş proclaimed the Union with the Kingdom of Romania of exceptional historical, documentary value for events related to the management of the county that otherwise would have remained undocumented – “The Newspaper *Sfatul*, Part of the Romanian National Council of Maramureş County (7 December 1918–31 May 1919)”, pp. 171-186.

The study entitled “The Adhesion of the Co-national Populations to the Great Union in 1918”, by Stelian Neagoe proves, on the basis of the documents registering their political, diplomatic and juridical orientations at the end of the war, as well as through their speeches held in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate that the Great Union was sustained with great enthusiasm by the co-national populations of other tongues, brothers of Romanians sharing with ardour the ideal of national union. (pp. 187-212)

Ionaş Aurelian Rus starts from the analysis of the dissatisfaction of the Bukovinian ethnic Romanian population with the Austrian Empire at the end of WWI, triggering a unionist orientation even among the non-unionist Bukovinian Romanian inhabitants. Another interest is to reveal “the second image reversed” (the impact of the international system on the domestic politics of various countries), influencing the Romanian nation building in Bukovina and Bukovina’s union with Romania in 1918. (“The Union of Bukovina with Romania in 1918 and the Impact of Exogenous Shocks on Nation Building”, pp. 214-239)

“Feminism, Education and Assistance in Romania during the First World War”, by Anemari Monica Negru, (pp. 240-256) assesses the importance of the wide scope of activity of Romanian National Orthodox Women’s Society (a feminist association), pre-and during WWI.

The study of national space and national identity, the multitude of ways in interpreting the nation, especially in the interwar period, triggered the development of various scholarly disciplines and sub-domains, including anthropogeography or geopolitics, or, under the

French influence, human geography. (“The Imagining of National Spaces in Interwar Romania. The Emergence of Geopolitics”, pp. 257- 283)

In the Part Four of the volume, the study entitled “The Great Union of 1918 as a Symbol of Modern Romania’s Political Identity”, by Lorena-Valeria Stuparu (pp. 286-293) assesses the uniting function of symbol, meant to bring together elements and beings from different realms of existence: as the union of all Romanians from historical provinces, separated by different governments (especially by people who exercised leadership) but who shared an identity of language, belief and culture brought them into a single political entity. “If common language and faith are the cultural symbols of Romanian identity in all the historical provinces, the union of 1918 and the Constitution of 1923 are its political symbols”. (p. 293)

Approaching “The Principle of Self-Determination before 1919” (pp. 294-306) Gabriela Tănăsescu examines the principle of self-governance, which guided the negotiations at the Versailles Peace Conference through President Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” and the principle of self-determination used in The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and sustained by “official socialism”. The study shows that “the Bolshevik language of self-determination, the ‘Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia’, issued by Lenin on November 15, 1917, the demands of left-wing movements in Europe and The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in March 1918 – the first international agreement based on the principle of self-determination – led to a real ‘diplomatic and ideological revolution’” (p. 304), a true hallmark of the politics at the time.

Lucian Jora calls the attention on a paradoxical situation in his study entitled “The Versailles Peace Conference – A Century of Continuous Romanian-Hungarian Debates” (pp. 307-318): the past century proves that Romania and Hungary are good and well-integrated neighbours, in terms of both military relationship and economic cooperation (as members of the same military alliance and the same political and economic structure after 2018), while historical interpretation remains a divisive factor.

“The International Recognition of the Unification of Bessarabia with Romania” (pp. 319-326), by Mihai Racovițan and Radu Racovițan is a study dedicated to emphasize the role of the fall of the Russian Empire, as well as the different roles of Prime Minister I. I. C. Brătianu and Dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, a well-known politician and diplomat in the international recognition of the union of Bessarabia with Romania. Of main importance in this respect was Dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, leader of the Romanian delegation at the January 1920 Peace Conference.

“The Great Union of the Romanians in an International Context” is analysed in the chapter proposed by Cristina Vohn (pp. 327-338). The analysis indicates: “The 19th century, the century of the nations (...) created on the national principle. The cases of Italy and Germany are the most eloquent; these two states underwent several stages before the conclusion of the process that ended at the end of the Franco-German War of 1870–1871. And, like all political events and phenomena, these were replicated in Central and Eastern Europe after a delay of several decades. The creation of Greater Romania in 1918 was thus a natural continuation of the process of creating the nation states of Eastern Europe”. (p. 337)

Mădălina Virginia Antonescu investigates the “Contributions to the ‘Diplomacy of 1918 Great Union’, as Seen in Foreign Documents” (pp. 339-353). The paper considers under the phrase the “diplomacy of the Great Union of all Romanians” besides the official diplomacy exercised by the governmental representatives of the Old Kingdom of Romania, the individual and collective bodies recognized as representative for the Romanian national interest by foreign governments and investigates documents associated to their actions, emphasizing the complex character of the Great Union’s diplomacy.

“1 December 1918 in the Exile Press” (pp. 354-362) is represented by the factors alerting Western Europe to the threat of Soviet expansionism. Mihaela Toader sustains that the identity profile of the post-war exile is determined by the characteristic of fighting communism and for liberation of countries under Soviet influence, describing the main figures of the Romanian post-war exile present either in groups from the old democratic formations, or in groups of nationalist orientation, playing the role of a European awake consciousness.

In the last part of the volume, “Bessarabia (1918)/Republic of Moldova (2018)” Dan Dungaciu proposes “Sociological Evaluations: Potential Unionism, Passive Unionism, Unionism of the Heart and Unionism of the Mind” (pp. 364-373) grounded on the complete and nuanced sociological quantitative research dedicated to the unionist issue in the Republic of Moldova, FUMN SURVEY on the theme of uniting Moldova with Romania (GRAPHS), 11.08.2016, <http://fumn.eu/sondaj-fumn-pe-tema-unirii-r-moldova-cu-romania-grafice>. The investigation indicates and nuances the types of unionism from the left bank of the Prut: “(...) unionism is an area of sometimes pointless involvement, of deep emotions, of youth and hot blood, of ideas of urgency and the fact that everything must be done here and now, of a lack of patience and a sense of irrepressible historical mission. But also of massive conceitedness, generational vanities, resentment, and private idiosyncrasies. Let us not, therefore, expect unanimity ... Perhaps, just a little wisdom.” (p. 372)

Petrișor Peiu approaches in the next and last but not least study in the volume the topic of “Balancing the Costs and Benefits of the Projected Reunification between Romania and Republic of Moldova” (pp. 374-). The investigation places the accent on the “big picture” and proposes two models to appreciate the reunification of the two countries, the German and the Korean one. In the German model the reunion implied the constitution of a bigger market which became an engine of growth. The important investments made very soon after reunification by West Germany in the East Germany, the accent placed on exports and the consistency in following the macroeconomic policies reduced the development gaps. The researcher concludes that if Romania begins the reduction of development gap today, by the end of the first quarter of 2019 it would have generated savings of up to 20% in the reunification budget in 2020.

Although economy cannot be predicted with great precision, from the lessons of reunion in Europe, many of those still to be understood, we find that reunion is rather beneficial not only in terms of politics, society, culture and symbolic history, but also in economic terms.

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Gheorghe Dănișor

Însingurare. O filosofie despre istoria eșuată a umanității, (Estrangement. A Philosophy about the Failed History of Humanity), Editura Universul Juridic și Editura Simbol, 2019, 302 p.

The relation of the human being to her inner universe and to others, to society and to the world has, generally, two aspects, which are, both relevant and contradictory: the first, in which the others and the society are a natural and valuable extension of the self, or, the second, through which the others and society appear to the individual as, demanding and, possibly, burdensome, but sometimes beneficial “foreign” realities.

The preoccupations regarding the understanding of the human being, through processes of analysis and self-analysis, and through recognizing the other and the self in the other are aiming to “capture the true value of the logos” (p. 7), that is, both as *ratio* and as

sermo, as they formulate the perspective of interpretation proposed by Gh. Dănișor, in the recent book entitled *Însingurare. O filosofie despre istoria eșuată a umanității* (*Estrangement. A Philosophy of the Failed History of Humanity*). The individualism of the present time brings the human being to the condition of estrangement both in relation to the others and to (her) self.

According to our perspective, however, the irreducible problem is that we must recognize, in Aesopian spirit (see his fable about language), that both *ratio* and *sermo* are potentially (even when they are taken together, without a scision) sources of inter-human connection, at times and sources of separation, another time; we cannot identify a single part of the *logos* (the reason or its expression in discourse) as the determinant factor for cohesion and solidarity, full of responsibility and recognition between people, but it is necessary to identify the social *logos*.

The book proposes a research organized diachronically focused on the coordinates of Antiquity, the Middle Ages as well as modernity and postmodernity. Starting from logic as the basis of politics, we reach the noetic, the ontological-noetic good and the meaning of the good. Also, the Ancient Platonic thinking highlights the role of education (*paideia*). Through philosophy and *paideia*, the opening to *theoreo* leads to the *agathon*. Through contemplation, we access the field of ideas and archetypes that underpin creation.

The philosophical path is potentially the path to consciousness. The philosophical path through life is also described by the old counsel “Know thyself!” But knowing in relation to what? How we contemplate and what we analyse, if we eliminate the relation to the great ideas and archetypes, many of them, with a pronounced principled characteristic. There may be an absolute knowledge, without reference and comparative terms, but this knowledge produces just a type of information, which is not necessarily also meaning (socio-human relevance). The individual consciousness, as well as the collective consciousness, are structured and oriented by interpretation: by reference to principles, that is, by the assumed meanings, by referring to coherent perspectives, to the corpora of ideas and archetypes composing human culture. And here also, the principle and the archetype are joined by similarity: the archetype is also interpreted as a model, with the “force” of ethical, political and teaching meaning, as we have recently interpreted things within a typology of representations and images, in the human society governed by image.

However, the teaching “Know thyself!” refers not only to the philosophical gaze within, but also to the social, gnoseological, axiological, and ethical gaze, directed to “outward” and towards the present, past and future, too. Knowledge comes with power and responsibility, as well as with the adequacy of the relationship with the other, to the other and to the context. Besides, even if we follow the main interpretative approach, according to Plato, through knowledge, we arrive only at the “gates of the Good and in the vestibule of Goodness’ dwelling” (p. 29).

This benefit (to find oneself – at least – “at the gates of the Good”) is not the exclusive privilege of the philosopher, but it belongs to any man endowed with the intellectual capacity to realize the benefits of the *logos* and not only those of the relating and relationships, this being the advantage of the individual with philosophical inclination and capacities. With the clear meanings we also have a high probability of openness toward the area of responsibility, accountability, a concern with the consequences and finalities, that is, an openness toward ethics. This high probability is not guaranteed. But without this philosophical enlightenment of rationality in society, the ethical approach becomes irrelevant, and human rationality is reduced to calculation. The renunciation of *agathon*, which is for philosophers the ontological-noetic guiding principle, has as a consequence the impossibility of relation and binding.. Without referring to the principle, the relations become superficial

and easy to be broken, and, the social solidarity is frail. Then we see that everything is fragmented: each with her truth, each with her interest are ingredients that further alter the politics and further remove it from the spirit of the *polis*. This separation is destructive, because the goal disappears, the purpose of the actions". (p. 65) In our opinion, the separation is really dangerous, but rather because in the individualistic multiplication of the goals and finalities, which do not disappear, a logic of the type "purpose excuses the means" is created, doubled by the appearance of a "space" of the goals and purposes, a true "market" governed by an economic logic of demand and supply, which, in turn, leads to an increase in the share of goals and purposes that involve *immediate* gain, with solely *individual relevance*, here and now.

On the path of the investigation conducted by Gh. Dănișor we find even in the history of the philosophy the sources of rampant individualism and of insecurity. The chapter entitled "The sophists or the moment of fragmentation of the logos" focuses on the separation of the *physis* from the *nomos*, which is equivalent to the separation of the political from the natural things (p. 54), so that the thought does not really trigger the logos. This, the logos, implies a *plural cogito* (as opposed to what we find in the sophists and in Descartes), a dialogue of thought with itself (see the Aristotelian principle of the thinking that thinks itself) – p. 58. "The vice of the sophist age of thinking is that of supporting the word sufficiently, having the arrogance to eliminate the principles, as being useless, because they cannot be proven. According to the logic, the principles are improvable, but they are known directly" (see p. 59). Consequently, the sophists also renounced the importance accorded to the paramount principle – the Good. The rather non-principled thinking implies the politics-negotiation and even the politics-trade, shows Gh. Dănișor, with negative, non-principled and thus unfair consequences, for the whole society. Philosophical thinking and speaking have the purpose of capturing whatever there is, the "genus of the real" (Plato), the grounds and the fundamentals (a specific essence, *ti esti*, of which Alexandru Surdu also talks about) and that is the reason why the philosophical stake is that the road that passes through both well-founded thought and speech, to lead to the Truth. The solution of the social contract, anchored in the *nomos* area, in the area of the conventional, where one encounter conventions relatively emancipated from the principles, because they only follow rules, and allow for advantages, persuasion and, eventually, manipulation.

Hellenism contributed to the "failed history" by separating the interiority from the human exteriority. The emphasis on the relationship, which stems from the separation, neglects the essence: the unity between the *polis* and the *politeia*, the fact that "the *polis* is only a passing way of expressing that being-together-with-others" (p. 67), whose quality (respect for human individuality in social cohesion) depends on the unitary logos and out from it. The work of Ion Banu, titled *The Philosophy of Hellenism as Ethics* (1980) is beautifully used in a discussion about philosophical units of meaning and consonant structure with the plea for unity between individual intuitions and the rational and discursive structure on which depends being-together-with-others, which it is precisely the expression of the plenary logos.

The author demonstrates that the Middle Ages deepened the separation between *ratio* and *sermo*, which also generated the emergence of individualism in philosophy and law, a dissociation of the logos expressed socio-politically by excessive fragmentation, resolved afterwards by absolutism. If "The universal is an ideal (pre-existing form) embodied in things. This is the existential-noetic as a foundation" (p. 98), and the human's relation to the logos, universality and ideal state "makes" history. But this is a theoretical grounding with ethical potential. It is the aspect by which in the logos we also

have the dimension of the connection, that is, *lego*. *The embedding of ontology in logos* implies a type of openness, freedom and liberation, whose understanding and capitalization starts from this urge, by which everything gains in meaning and clarity, the relating reason approaching people to *agathon*.

Descartes is emblematic both for the “clear ideas” and for a philosophy of certainty, as well as for modern philosophical individualism. Gh. Dănișor demonstrates, in Kant’s footsteps, that “the specific Cartesian figure of truth will henceforth be certainty, the centre of which is the self-relation of the ‘self’ in ‘I think’.” (p. 107) In other words, the problem of Cartesianism is the self that triumphs over objectivity. I think therefore I am, is the maxim of modern individualism and the generator of the “closure of consciousness itself” and of a Leibnizian monadology, without any benefits for social cohesion. Kant, without cancelling the “I think therefore I am”, approaches the rational-action man, who gives (himself) the law and who, based on the individualism in the law, opens it toward the others, through the responsibility with which he invests it. Hegel engages the individual in the dialectics of an absolute Spirit, in a universal becoming, in the pursuit of freedom, and the fulfilment of freedom and the becoming of the Idea are not the “merit” of the individual, but only involve the individual. (p. 113-125) As a result, “Descartes’s man is an individual who isolates himself”, while “Kant’s and Hegel’s men wander in an objectivity in which they are merely an instrument for an achievement to which they regard with astonishment and no longer understand”, being both “far too subjected to the rational” and led astray from the *agathon*. The author notices that only Levinas specifies that “There is no freedom and, as a result, no understanding unless I consider the other as a form of an externalized self”, using “understanding as an act of original goodwill”, this being the chance of the complete man and not the conception of a “superman” (as a Nietzschean overrating of individualism), nor any form of the new totalitarian human being.

The critique of the contractual logic is a critique of the conventional logic oriented in one way or another by an interest, whose moral founding value can never be raised to the level of the main logic oriented by the *agathon*. Kant himself, in his contractualism, identifying the concept of “good will” is much closer to a necessary ontological foundation of morality. Comparing the Aristotelian and Kantian models of thinking as Anton Dumitriu does, Gh. Dănișor points out that the Aristotelian model is based on the intuitive secession of the essences (while the Kantian model is merely formal). Thus, the model opens the way to capture reality, towards understanding and here for the possibility of belonging and participation (p. 163). These are the ingredients of the undistorted social existence. What significance a conception really like the Rawlsian we may achieve, what kind of justice as fairness we may have, if it is independent of any claim of objective truth, asks the author, valuing an observation made by R. Dworkin. After all, a more careful analysis points out to a (circular) argument of the type “if equity is, equity must be”.

In postmodernism, the author’s interpretation aims to overcome the deconstructivist vision through wholeness-comprehension-understanding. Philosopher Gh. Dănișor relays in this sense to an aesthetics of *uitării* which occasions in Romanian language a play in words between gazing and forgetting: to interpret holistically, to comprehend and to understand implies to look and forget the self (reminding us both of Levinas and of the question of knowledge in feminism and situated knowledge at Donna Haraway, where the gaze evaluates the distances and reduces them). As a consequence, the gaze brings relating “in plain sight” as an “elevating art of patience”, a quasi-spontaneous and unifying tendency of the gaze, a return to the self by forgetting about the self. To be visible becomes a form of being for the other and a path toward ethical postmodernism. “The contemporary estrangement of the human being is the result of her inability to transpose into the rules

that inner disposition toward good deeds. This natural disposition must be realized and transposed into universal behaviour, highlighting the moral capacity of the human being. Rules must not be invented” (p. 193), because the Aristotelian feeling of the good as a natural thing will also involve reason, which, in collaboration with the feeling, will cause a certain vibration of the good and of the love (both active in *agathon*) to reach the other, to “touch” the other and to be specific to the human being, to the same extent, as if it started from her inner self. The individual consciousness remains an ethical-moral instance, in postmodernism, too, the author accepts it, but he thinks that this instance is weakened in postmodernism by the emphasis placed on *sermo*, on discursiveness. This results in a dispersion of norms in the contingency (p. 204), aspects discussed in the chapter entitled “Postmodern law”.

“Being-together-with-others” represents the centre of interest for this philosophical endeavour; “the unifying structure of life in society” is a social unifying logos, bringing together reason and feeling, good-will and education and whose role is to bring into the visible field of recognition the care, the freedom, the fairness, the loyalty, the authority, the sacred. Through education, people recognize the true nature of righteous beings, of the Good, and become more able to manifest freely for Good, that is, to confirm this habit of being good (as a *hexis*). Volunteering is just a confirmation of this human habit of professing the good in a selfless way (pp. 287-297).

The society has been and it remains relatively distorted in comparison to the ideals formed by contemplation, which lead to logos (“social logos”), accountability and recognition, that is, to a desirable type of sociality and existence. Relationship for good is a philosophical inclination of the order of normality, which becomes an event, only in the existence led for survival, “within the immediate realm of things and for security” (Lucian Blaga).

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Cristian-Ion Popa

Liberalismul și adversarii săi (Liberalism and Its Adversaries), Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, 2019, 411 p.

The book is a research of liberalism understood as constitutional order and economic reality, with various forms and characteristics, further defined against its main political adversaries, namely socialism and conservatism, with their diverse versions, since the 18th century and until the present times.

Guided by the Rawlsian idea of justice, as primordial value for the social institutions and truth, as the paramount value for political philosophy, the investigation is structured in three parts and an epilogue. The first part captures the specific of liberalism against socialism and welfare state, conservatism, republicanism and (neo-)republicanism. The second part approaches the relations between state and market considering the constitutional political rights and freedoms of the citizens, the question of the economic constitution in nowadays liberal democracies, the de-centralized governance, the liberal and socialist meanings of the public debt and the “will of the people” in relation to the “common good” and the so-called “tragedy of the commons”. The third part evaluates liberalism considering the challenges of globalization, the illiberal trends of populism and protectionism and the implications of the “post-national constellation” of states in the European Union. Finally, the epilogue discusses the crisis of the European values and the challenges of globalization.

The stake of the investigation is to define the legitimate range and scope of the collective power (and ultimately, to define the state and the government) over the individual activities, which, in turn, emphasizes the importance of the constitutional design, of the understanding of the trade and markets and of the distributive and redistribution policies, ensuring the rights, the liberties, the well-being and the public goods. There are no universal solutions for societies of welfare and fairness.

The author follows an impressive documentation and a genuine wealth of interpretations concerning freedom, the realities of free individual enterprise and the ideas concerning the reactions to freedom. The harmonious balance between the general welfare and liberalism is the main challenge in political science in modernity and contemporary times. As James M. Buchanan noticed in "Afraid to be free", "Even for the hard-core libertarians is difficult to defend totally unconstrained distributive results of the market processes and unrestrained capitalism, as norms of shared fairness" (p. 44). The profile of democratic dialogue is distorted by radical ideological positions involving intransigent goals and radical measures. Currently, republicanism could be understood as a postsocialist critique of contemporary capitalist society (p. 134), but it rejects the more extreme positions related to the idea that "property is theft", as well as the simplicity of a liberal perspective advocating the market as a facilitator of individual freedom, proposing to find the means to ensure social freedom, even through the intervention of state in economy and society, but in non-abusive and non-dominating legitimate forms. Thus, in order to preserve the individual freedom and to increase the general welfare, the extension of intra-social and inter societal cooperation is necessary, within civilizations that avoid atavism, animism, ignorance and the "lost paradise" illusions.

Could contemporary societies become "cooperative ventures of mutual advantage" and coherent architectures of rules and institutions that promote the interests of their members, as John Rawls recommends? Authors such as Buchanan or Hayek sustain the Constitutional Political Economy, the neoinstitutionalism vision, based on the interconnection between the order of rules and the order of actions, a development of the "science of legislation" found in *The Wealth of Nations* of Adam Smith, in the more recent works of Ronald H. Coase, Ludwig van den Hauwe, Jürgen G. Backhaus, Geoffrey Brennan, Jose Casas Pardo and others. The other direction is called the Welfare Economy (see also Victor J. Vanberg) situated in a "maximization paradigm", correlated with recommended state interventions in the economic process (p. 177). The fact that non-elected governmental officials make final decisions over those of the elected representatives should raise a supplementary concern for the constitutional limits through which society exercises constraint on the government, stopping any possible drift toward the practices of bureaucratic rents that threaten to transform governments and societies in Leviathans (p. 201).

Good governance of public goods, markets and free enterprise are equally important. Public-private forms of partnership are the key to good governance and they generate "success stories" only when they benefit from legitimate democratic institutional and constitutional frameworks regulating the centralization of the political authority (p. 273). Political theory and practice are therefore confronted with the challenge of institutional design adequate for large collective entities (see also the analyses of E. Ostrom). Local and global governmental developments and processes may conflict. As a consequence, political science envisions the necessity of a "global social contract", between the developed and the less developed societies to address the equity of a global trade regime, the eradication of poverty, the access to knowledge, the protection of intellectual property rights, the global equitable governance of the "environmental services" provided by the poor countries in the world efforts for the preservation of biodiversity, in slowing down global

warming, in the reduction of the carbon emissions etc. As the author shows, “The current debate on globalization has become so intense through its ‘stakes’, unlimited to economic welfare, but extended to the issue of mankind survival” (p. 299).

There is a darkened global horizon (Joseph Stiglitz), however, the author considers that economic liberalization remains the path toward both the reduction of poverty through the efficiency gain following increased specialization and efficiency in the division of labour, productivity etc. and against the accentuation of inequality via the “capture of the state” by the rich and powerful who tend to secure for themselves monopolist privileges (p. 333). “Eventually, the creative dialogue and the peaceful cooperation, not the fanatic monopoly nor the destructive confrontation among societies and cultures, are to improve the condition of people everywhere and this is the main answer provided by a philosophy of culture to the current ‘challenges’ of globalization” (p. 394).

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Ion Ianoși

Ultimul cuvânt: în dialog cu Alexandru Ștefănescu (Ion Ianoși – The Last Word: in dialogue with Alexandru Ștefănescu), Bucharest, Editura Trei, 2018, 204 p.

The dialogues presented in the book significantly entitled “The Last Word”, occurred between Alexandru Ștefănescu and the academician Ion Ianoși in the period January-November 2014 are a clear image of the creator and of the man, an essentialization of the thought and life lessons of the one who was “historian of ideas, theoretician, teacher, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, a trusted friend to all who stood by him” (p. 203).

Ion Ianoși’s work “from the theory of literature, to the historical-political interpretations of twentieth-century avatars and from aesthetics to moral philosophy and biblical exegesis” (p. 203) to which are added the autobiographical writings containing ideas related to the fields listed above (*Secolul nostru cel de toate zilele / Our all-day century* – 1980, *Opțiuni / Options* – 1989, *Idei inoportune / Inopportune ideas* – 1995, *Vârstele omului / The human ages* – 1998, *Cronica unei vieți / The chronicle of a life* – 2012) is a living proof of cultural survival in conditions not exactly favorable to the culture.

In addition to the original volumes and the prepared or prefaced books of philosophy, Ion Ianoși devoted much of his time to reading, rereading, interpreting and reinterpreting the first-class authors of philosophy (Goethe, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Șestov, Berdiaev, Noica, D.D. Roșca, Mircea Florian, Freud) and literature: Feodor Dostoievski, Lev Nikolaevici Tolstoi, Marina Țvetaeva, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, Liviu Rebreanu, Mihail Sadoveanu, Camil Petrescu, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, André Malraux.

Here, as Vasile Morar notes in the foreword (“Ion Ianoși – gânduri ultime”/ “Ion Ianoși – last thoughts”), “The dialogue is structured on themes and ideas, not on a counterfeit dramaturgy, meant to shock with unforeseen and unheard-of events. The chain of questions and answers gives, through content and tone, the philosophical and ethical stakes of the dialogue” (p. 8).

Indeed, the reader will be able to admire a fine art of the question that Alexandru Ștefănescu masters, the depth, the subtlety, the relevance of the questions due to which Ion Ianoși “is remobilized” (p. 20) after he believed that everything that had to be said was written in *My International. The chronicle of a life/Internaționala mea. Cronica unei vieți* (2012).

Thus the “red thread” of intellectual and cultural life marked by “left sensibility and adherence to the great literature” is withdrawn, underlying judgments and testimonies that give the title of chapters such as: “Ivan Karamazov personally fascinated me above all others”, “I had entered with my concerns in a ‘literary-centric’ culture”, “We all joined Francis Fukuyama utopia launched on the global victory of liberalism of North American type”, “Neurosis is the disease of the creators, in sight or barely hidden”, “The most unpleasant moments in my teaching job were when I had to give notes”, “In the six years years spent in Leningrad, until ’53, I was a witness to the madness of the ‘last Stalin’”, “My father and me were the only ‘communists’ in the family”, “I avoid, as far as I can, label Marxism as ‘extreme left’”, “In the nineteenth century, the clergy taxed the Jews as a ‘foreign body’ in the Christian environment”, “We were not forced, as in Moldova, to wear yellow stars”, “Modern literature most clearly illustrates its multiple relationships with political power”, “History can be invoked for adverse justifications”, “The most worrying phenomenon of the last period is the continuous reinforcement of the radical, nationalist and eurosceptic right”.

Regarding the “sensitivity of the left”, we can say that in his moral-political writings, between “right” and “left” Ion Ianoși operates a distinction according to the role of freedom and equality in these ideologies: freedom is a right value, and equality of the left. Between the “communism” of the early Christians and the atheist communism, he establishes more similarities and fewer differences, such as the “active mercy of the Christians towards the oppressed, the poor, those who suffer injustice”, even though the mercy, we can say, only makes sense in one society of inequalities. In a world where everyone would be just as happy, as healthy, as good, the pity would be meaningless. In such a world, the only feeling would remain love, and faith would be enough to guarantee freedom. Even though in this book the professor confesses “I considered myself an atheist. As I matured, however, I approached the wisdom of the great religions” (p. 33), those who have been his students, doctoral students, collaborators, friends know that Ion Ianoși generously fulfilled the facts of Christian love for anyone who needed his support.

Going through the passionate discussions on the themes of a scholarly life contained in this volume, difficult to summarize in a review, we understand what the honesty of confessing to living history means, recognizing the importance of the latter, and also the effort to objectify the description of the relationship between public life and private life: “Why record a life as countless others? However, the text has been integrated into some contexts, and I hope that these will at least awaken the interest of the forgotten reader. That is why I chose ‘chronicle’ instead of ‘memories’. (...) My person had been held captive by history – to history, it was appropriate to give its priority” (p. 20).

The work of Ion Ianoși, professor of philosophy and aesthetics at the University of Bucharest, writer and honorary member of the Romanian Academy was and is admired by a lot of readers. Even those who have criticisms or detentions about the option for the political left (but so noble and without a bit of hypocrisy, living by virtue of the principle of solidarity with the hard-core, of social and ethnic equality, of essential humanity) cannot fail to recognize them the value of the written work and the erudition, the exceptional quality of professor whose courses and seminars of aesthetics and the philosophy of culture have marked generations of students.

Now we remember some of the teachings of the professor, with humanistic load, current at any time: “Everything that deserves to be known and recognized as ‘living form’, in its indestructible and non-transferable uniqueness, approaches the ‘work of art’: a product, a man, a corner of nature, caught (and) in the impact between the object and the subject (the creative subject and / or the receiving subject), an impact that continually models and

remodels its components. It is very old, but also worthy of reactivation this aesthetic, artistic, poetic perspective on us, our life, our activities and our interrelations. It is a possible contemporary perspective, which is also retrospective and prospective. It combines the depth we are proud of with the breadth we forget. It supplements our rigor with greater freedom – of feeling, thinking, acting. It combines our quality as esthetician with our belonging to philosophy. Aesthetics must be assumed to a greater extent as a philosophy of culture, as axiology and as an ontology” (Ion Ianoși, *Opțiuni, /Options*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1989, pp. 185-186).

And because this is a book based on the discussions between two people, in which the reader is trained, we must also remember that: “The relations between two or more people are illuminated by an ideality that we perceive more eagerly” (Ion Ianoși, *Schiță pentru o estetică posibilă, /Outline for a possible aesthetic*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1975, p. 41).

Since a beautiful and profound book is a celebration of the author (s), and its reading enriches our lives, helping us to overcome even the most difficult times, we can also recognize ourselves in these touching phrases written by Ion Ianoși: “The feast is the matrix of our aesthetic experiences, in our daily existence itself; when we celebrate it, we assume spontaneously or consciously, every time, directorial worries and pleasures. Every feast has its ‘theatrical’ feel, it is interpreted and reinterpreted by man in the voluptuous knowledge and recognition of his states of fact and of feeling. ‘Theater’ thus amplifies its meaning, confirms the wisdom of ancient and ever-present poetic assumptions about ‘the world as a theater’, ‘life as a stage’, ‘man as an actor’” (Ion Ianoși, *Schiță pentru o estetică posibilă, /Outline for a possible aesthetic*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1975, pp. 42-43).

It is the merit of this volume of dialogues, that of fully restoring, with professionalism and human warmth, this complex personality of the Romanian culture.

Lorena-Păvălan Stuparu

Slavoljub Gacovic

Selected Works on the History of the Vlachs of Eastern Serbia, Belgrad, 2019.

Slavoljub Gacovic took up one big issue he had been researching for several decades. His research work belongs to capital projects. This endeavor is linked to the deep past, that is, history of ethnic groups and their patterns of life in eastern Serbia. The project covers the historical drama of a part of the Balkan Peninsula. Gacovic addressed everything related to people’s lives from the very beginning of organized life in the area he has been exploring. He covered much of what belongs to the culture and civilizational development of eastern Serbia. He has gathered all the existing knowledge about the population since it emerged and settled here.

In the second book of the fifth volume within this project entitled *Selected Works on the History of the Vlachs of Eastern Serbia*, Slavoljub Gacovic systematically and analytically explores, but also discusses, the problem of the Vlachs’ position and status, or – as he calls them – Romanians in Serbia. The book provides extensive material in the form of historical and other documents, records, but also different approaches, that is, a way of understanding and explaining the position and status of Vlachs in eastern Serbia. Gacovic applied an interdisciplinary approach to the topic. The book includes knowledge and data of various sciences and research. In this book, Gacovic demonstrated that problems, even contemporary ones, can be optimally studied and explored only through the application of different sciences and scientific disciplines. Based on this

attitude, Gacovic's book sets out layers of historical data, archaeological material evidence, linguistic insights, sociological research, legal, political and cultural approaches, with rich argumentation, as well as insights into different interpretations and considerations of Vlachs' position and status in eastern Serbia.

Gacovic placed particular emphasis on the problem of Vlach identity in the Balkans and in Serbia. In reviewing its identity, Gacovic published an abundance of material that served him in the analysis of a given topic. Undoubtedly, at the center of this research is the problem of Vlach identity in Serbia, which has been addressed based on the treatment of official policies in Serbia since the formation of modern Serbian state, that is, from 1804 to the present day. Identity issues and the problems arising from them are extremely sensitive to both individuals and ethnic groups, as well as to political conceptions that are established and formally implemented in a country.

In literature, as well as in practical political programs and their implementation, problems arise both from view and interpretation, but also from the implementation of political conceptions, that is, approaches and attitudes towards identity problems. Based on a review of the existing literature, as well as practical experiences, four approaches to the identity of Vlachs in Serbia are distinguished. According to the first approach, Vlachs are Serbs, only residing in a separate area. According to the second approach, they are Vlachs-Serbs with specific cultural patterns. According to the third approach, Vlachs are an indigenous people related to the ancient Balkan peoples. According to the fourth approach, Vlachs are Romanians living in eastern Serbia, who use a special dialect of the Romanian language. It is this fourth identity approach, that characterizes the Vlachs as Romanians, that Slavoljub Gacovic advocates.

In the book, the author gave an overview of all the approaches and each is widely presented but also critically reviewed. What is particularly characteristic of Gacovic, as he has applied in the previous volumes, is that he belongs to those scholars who, regardless of their attitude and understanding, present all the approaches thoroughly and accurately and give their views based on this exhaustive and thematic presentation, with arguments. Because of this, this book by Gacovic also takes on a polemical character. Specifically, Gacovic argues with other approaches. It is also likely that his approach will open controversy, that is, cause authors who do not accept his understanding and views to critically examine Gacovic's attitude and the arguments he finds in literature, but also the argumentation that emerges from exploring what constitutes the core of collective identity, in this case the identity of Vlachs as Romanians living in eastern Serbia.

When it comes to collective identity in ethnic groups, there is a question of the essence and content of the identity of those groups. The elements that constitute the identity of an ethnic group are: language, origin, native soil, history and culture. Within these elements of ethnic identity, there are also elements that complement each of these parts. Thus, for example, there are different dialects within a language, and even some words that are specific to a particular dialect. On the European soil, three great peoples are distinguished throughout history, which were formed on the basis of some common traits, and among these common traits, the most important are language, origin, soil and history. Peoples were created throughout history by uniting tribal communities. The three great peoples of Europe are the Slavs, Germans and Romans. There are, however, other peoples in the Mediterranean part of Europe, such as the Greeks. In the context of all these nations, specific groups have developed, marked as ethnic groups.

Within these ethnic groups, a more solid form of collective identity was formed, with elements already mentioned. Unlike peoples and ethnic groups, nations emerged later in Europe and are the result of two facts – the formation of powerful and territorially large

states; the formation of markets resulting from the exchange of goods, that is, the economy and the economic founding of states. The nation emerged as an artificial category, and within its identity, in addition to the aforementioned elements of ethnic identity, it received two more elements: statehood and citizenship. Nations in Europe are created after the French bourgeois revolution, and they are a direct product of both the strengthening and consolidation of the state territory and the market principle of economy.

Nations, as artificial creations, united or integrated similar ethnic groups. This similarity is most commonly associated with language and origin, and it was characteristic of the peoples from which they originate, as distinctive features, ethnic groups. With the formation of states and nations in political organization, there was a complication that was related to ethnic groups. Namely, the ethnic groups with the formation of the nation got their home country or the country in which they accepted some of the characteristics of their identity, such as language, origin, history and culture. It was with the formation of nations that the ethnic groups that found themselves in the territory of the new nation-states, on the basis of their home country, were called national minorities. This is one of the historical processes that provided Gacovic with an opportunity to regard the ethnic group that was in Serbia, in official policies, called the Vlachs, on the basis of the status of a national minority in Serbia, as Romanians, according to their language and origin, and to question their official name. For this claim, he obtains arguments in the form of theories, hypotheses, approaches, and material facts. The fact is that in all European countries dominated by one ethnic group, that group has become a nation. Every country tended to include all other ethnic groups within the majority and to thereby expand the nation. It happened that some ethnic groups voluntarily accepted the dominant ethnic group, that is, fused with the majority ethnic group, from which a nation eventually emerged. Naturally, the national policies of these countries often resorted to the process of assimilation.

The processes of assimilation took place in different ways. Thus, in some countries, this was done by granting certain statuses and privileges, and in others even by the use of force and violence. In this way, types of political rule and political orders differ in European countries. Precisely on the basis of approach to collective identities, international law codifications have emerged that prevent a forceful assimilation of ethnic groups into the majority group, which has declared itself the foundation of the nation.

Gacovic believes that since the formation of the modern Serbian state all policies in Serbia have had similar programs when it comes to the Vlachs, that is, the Romanians in eastern Serbia. According to him, all these policies sought to place Vlachs within the frame of the national Serbian corps and to treat them only according to differences related to cultural patterns. Gacovic also points out that such an approach in Serbia has led to the assimilation of Vlachs, i.e. Romanians, defining themselves as Serb-Vlachs. He believes that prominent scholars in Serbia have contributed to this, as have all those involved in the research of ethnic groups in Serbia. It was their statements and conclusions that led to the ethnic Vlach group in eastern Serbia being considered Serb by origin. What is overlooked in their research and findings is the problem of the Vlach language, which, according to Gacovic, is basically Romanian, meaning that it belongs to the Romance languages. Gacovic mentions authors who believe that the conclusions and findings of these prominent Serbian scientists of world renown should be questioned and reformulated.

The authors who have expressed such views, like Gacovic, do not dispute the value of research by these eminent scholars when it comes to Serbs and Romanians in eastern Serbia. Namely, they have contributed a great deal to the study of customs, religion, and cultural patterns related to Vlachs in Serbia. However, according to the authors who

believe that the Vlachs are Romanians in eastern Serbia, and also according to Gacovic, these prominent scholars have helped to assimilate Vlachs and to label them as Serb-Vlachs who only have some special patterns of culture. Gacovic shows this common opinion about Vlachs as Serbs in his own example. He says that on the occasion of the celebration of family patron saint in a Vlach family, a woman belonging to the Serbian nation, who, according to him, is highly ranked in Serbia, commented on a TV report concluding that Gacovic is an exceptionally smart man. The host of the celebration commented that Gacovic is a smart Vlach, when the guest responded: "No way, such a smart man cannot be a 'Vlach'". Gacovic showed with this example that there is a great deal of prejudice when it comes to Vlachs in eastern Serbia. He showed how the attitude towards Vlachs in everyday life is influenced by national political ideology and propaganda.

According to Gacovic, Serbia's contemporary politics, when it comes to national minorities, is testing three ways or methods. The first way is to try and insist that national minorities, in this case Romanians from eastern Serbia, assimilate and, in the process of assimilation, Vlachs should adopt their Vlach identity, only to gradually see that they have no use of that identity, and declare themselves as Serbs in the next step, to drown themselves in the multitude of the majority nation. In the process, it is important that their internal, home language should disappear, symbols, customs and cultural patterns be suppressed and that the Serbian language should be accepted as the only one in use. The policy of assimilation is about to show that national minorities exercise their rights, that their social status improves, and that they are eventually completely equalized with the majority nation.

Another method in relation to national minorities practiced in the world is the hegemonic political approach, which ends with the segregation of ethnic groups. This approach does not apply to the current policy in Serbia, but that does not mean that it is completely ruled out as a possibility. Of course, Gacovic points out that the application of the second method, which is hegemonic policy, can elicit different responses from a national minority, in this case Romanians in eastern Serbia. The author refers to Alfred Hirschman, who recognizes three options in relation to national minorities according to the hegemonic conception: assimilation that can be imposed, but also voluntary - when the national minority consciously decides to accept assimilation, this process proceeds quickly and does not lead to conflict. Regarding the Romanian national minority in eastern Serbia, Gacovic believes that a majority largely accepts the hegemonic policy of assimilation, and that this process takes place, firstly, by giving consent that they are called Vlachs and that their language is not Romanian but Vlach. Another approach is linked to the interests of national minorities that they often accept and thus become slowly integrated into the majority nation. In the third case, there is a part of the ethnic minority of Romanians in eastern Serbia who resist any kind of assimilation and who struggle for their place within the state of Serbia, showing that they are not against the logic of citizenship and acceptance of the state, but that they claim all those rights that are prescribed according to high international standards for the protection of national minorities and for guaranteeing their identity.

The third way or approach, *i.e.* method, is to accept national minorities by not embracing ethnic nationalist ideology, and adopting an ideology that stems from the concept of multiculturalism. This multiculturalist conception accepts citizenship as something that is common to all ethnic groups in the country, but at the same time cherishing rights that should guarantee ethnic groups a cultural identity. Also, multiculturalism recommends decentralizing the federal policy model and, through that decentralization, guarantees local autonomy. According to Gacovic, this would be the preferred method when it comes to the attitude towards national minorities, in this case the Romanian national minority in eastern Serbia.

Analyzing the position, status and recognition of the Romanian national minority in eastern Serbia, according to the “recognition policy” introduced by Charles Taylor into identity theory and practice, Gacovic distinguishes between a recognition that comes from above and a recognition that comes from below. When it comes to the recognition from below, it should be taken into account how one national group within itself defines its collective identity. According to Gacovic, if the inner life of the Romanian national minority in eastern Serbia is well and thoroughly considered, then Serbia’s policy should take care to determine and accept them according to that internal condition, which, among other things, is shown through language, origin, history and culture. The second process in recognition policy comes from above. It is nothing more than a view of the current policy, that is, the position of the state, which always aims to put the national minority by various means into a situation where its members choose their identities as dictated by the state interests. According to Gacovic, the state interest in Serbia is to present the ethnic minority of Romanians in eastern Serbia not as having a Romanian identity or origin, but to establish a separate, completely different identity, called Vlachs. Throughout the history of statehood in Serbia, it has been shown that, when it comes to the Romanian identity, policies were different: so, for example, in the censuses before World War Two, Vlachs in eastern Serbia had the right to declare themselves Romanians, but after World War Two, the state concept was primarily to recognize only the Vlach identity. Gacovic cites the census lists from 1948 to 2011 as an argument.

Slavoljub Gacovic emphasizes that Vlach national identity is nothing more than a mask used by Serbian nationalists and Serbian nationalism. According to him, the efforts of Serbian nationalists, but also those undeniable, loyal supporters and sycophants within the Vlach community, are aimed at suppressing the Romanian minority in Eastern Serbia. Nationalists are inclined to point out the dangerous claims that the members of the national minority in eastern Serbia are “always disloyal and dishonest”. Also, there are toxic views according to which members of the ethnic minority of Romanians in eastern Serbia are essentially people of corrupt character. What Gacovic particularly emphasizes is that all those who deal with the Vlach issue in Serbia, or, as he calls them, “Vlachists” are masters of intellectual dishonesty. Namely, “the historical perceptions of the past, which are lightly spoken, and that date back to the aggressive assimilation policy”, which are easily converted into a sacred dogma, and thus acquire non-repudiation, must not be called into question, and criticism is not accepted. The dogma with which these intellectual masters of dishonesty are constantly waving in public refers to something that is completely unacceptable, namely that the motherland of the Vlach national minority is Serbia, and that the Vlachs are an old people dating back to the Celts. In other words, they do not belong to the Romance world, and they are much older than the Romans, who settled in the areas in present-day eastern Serbia, where the Celts had previously lived since ancient times. These are all ways, according to Gacovic, which should cause the Romanian national minority in eastern Serbia to disappear completely over time.

The author paid special attention in this second book of the fifth volume to the political climate that followed the establishment of the National Council of the Vlach National Minority in Serbia and all the issues that emerged during the formation and later, which still cause much political and identity turmoil. Gacovic specifically analyzes the media coverage of national councils, as well as the media’s influence on the formation of the political climate when it comes to national councils. According to him, the media are not objective and often exclude access outside the official one. They only post views that come from current policy. The book also discusses legislation related to the election of national councils, as well as everything that stems from the electoral process,

from the formation of electoral lists, to the various influences of organized political entities or political parties.

In the fifth chapter of the second book of the fifth volume, entitled "On Electoral Lists and the Formation of Vlach National Councils", Gacovic deals specifically with the problem of politicization that accompanies the formation of electoral lists on the basis of which members of the Vlach National Council are elected. First, Gacovic points out that the National Council of the Romanian National Minority was established in Vrsac in 2002. According to Gacovic, the Council was supposed to be the umbrella council for the later formation of the Vlach National Council. However, in the 2009 Law, extreme politicization of national minorities issue was reduced by one instruction from the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights to political parties. However, according to it, political parties of national communities are allowed to register voters themselves and, even more shocking, third parties can also be registered in the electoral lists without their agreement.

In the context of this analysis, particular consideration was given to statements and events during the formation of the National Council of the Romanian National Minority in 2002 in Vrsac, as well as to the National Council of the Vlach National Minority in 2006 in Bor. The author also presented the manipulations during and after the elections for the Vlach National Council in 2010, 2014 and 2018. The actions of the Assembly of Electors held in Bor during the constitution of the National Council of the Vlach National Minority in 2006 were particularly considered and thoroughly analyzed.

One chapter of Gacovic's book focuses on the relationship of the communist regime to national minorities and the post-World War Two communist campaigns, which influenced the constitution of the Vlach national minority, as well as the process of standardization of the Vlach language in eastern Serbia. For this reason, Gacovic also addressed the socio-linguistic approach to the Vlach language in this chapter. The book also presents European charters relating to regionalization, minority peoples and their languages and how they are implemented in Serbia's official policy. The attitude towards minority peoples during the existence of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was also presented.

As an important segment in the formation and constitution of a national minority, the author mentions the system of education. The education system usually shows how a specific policy towards national minorities is understood and implemented. Gacovic presented and analyzed the results of national councils, then, publishing policy when it comes to publishing books in history and anthropology, which are extremely important for establishing the identity of minority peoples. In the last chapter of the book, the author presents the works Vlach and Romanian authors, as defined by him. Gacovic singled out the books of Vojislav Stojanovic, Miodrag Peric and Milena Golubovic and presented them from the aspect of theses, arguments and conclusions. Each of these studies is critically reviewed by the author in relation to his position.

It is indisputable that the second book of Slavoljub Gacovic's fifth volume, which is substantiated by extensive material and historical, linguistic and empirical arguments, will be the subject of scholarly interpretations, but also of critical and polemical considerations. Gacovic's books touch on some of the sensitive and delicate problems of the development of civilizations and cultures in the Balkans. These problems, as events from history irrefutably testify, are not only complex, but also full of ambiguities and puzzles. In fact, much of the life of the Balkan peoples is still not indisputably established and processed, in terms of history, civilization and culture.

The Balkans, as the first and the last Europe, is a place where different peoples, ethnic groups within them, and later nations formed during the 19th and early 20th

centuries, but also different religions and confessions, came together for centuries. From these encounters, over millennia and centuries, there were sometimes fruitful exchanges and additions, but often, and perhaps mostly – intolerance, exclusivity and difficult conflicts, even wars. Untreated and unresolved issues in any space, as well as in the Balkans, usually turn into various misunderstandings and conflicts. It is indisputable that violent policies have always produced grave consequences in the form of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. Historical experience has shown that, when it comes to identities, especially those that infiltrate personalities and ethnic or religious groups, that individuals and groups cannot accept and tolerate, cause feelings of injustice and humiliation. The consequence of injustice and humiliation is the emergence of radicalism, extremism and fanaticism. All those who impose violent solutions should think well when they do it to others, in order not to get these dangerous responses. Therefore, sensible state policies should seek opportunities and solutions that will not impose identity upon anyone, and that will ensure that this sensitive problem of collective identity is resolved by common agreement. Political agreement and consent are powerful tools for maintaining a community and for all members to feel comfortable and equal.

Čedomir Čupić