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The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics

Corruption and Development,volume 2, number 1, May 2002

While preparing the review of this number of RJSP - a journal published by the Civic Education Project Romania, with the support of the Romanian Society of Political Science - it crossed my mind that I should write two distinct reviews: one in Romanian and the other in English. This, in order to comply with a strange sort of splitting, a theory of the double truth sui generis, a theory that becomes palpable whenever talking about Romanian socio-political realities and the more so when the main topic is corruption.

I think we deal with a culture of corruption of the Romanian society within which I am involved, being a Romanian, practically and discursively, on the one hand and, on the other, we are confronted with the international theories and concepts that are related to the problems of corruption and development, theories for which we have only an outside view. The present lack of communication that exists between these two streams of ideas makes it very difficult for us to correctly lead an analysis. Besides this diptych inside-outside (which is probably another consequence of the precarious situation of the Romanian mentality), we can also name another one, belonging to the Romanian socio-political field: praxis-logos. The difference between words and deeds imposed itself so evidently in the Romanian society that skepticism became our second nature.

This is why I initially intended to write two reviews. I gave up the idea mainly for of the following two reasons. The first one is that not being a specialist, I had certainly done a "biased" reading. The second one would be the fact that the authors themselves try to overtake the dualities named above and to go beyond all the empty political discourses, from mass media through their pertinent and coherent professionalism. The place and valour of the socio-political studies are reestablished by their approach of the factual reality and by their methodology which focuses on suppressing this system of oppositions: inside-outside, theory-practice.

Now I would like to briefly resume the articles which this issue of the journal comprises.

In the first theme article, *The Dark Side of the State: 'Mafia' and 'National Interest' in Postsocialist Romania*, Oana Mateescu analyses two cases of corruption, noticeably different from one another, in a very specific mannner, described by the author herself as an "ethnography of the state - an anthropological investigation both of local bureaucrats and businessmen's practices and of political pronouncements at the central level (...) based on ex-

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KEY WORDS

Romania, politics, corruption, case studies

tensive fieldwork: (...) inteviews, (...) participant observation and analysis of central and local media reports and of official documents."

The 'Jimbolia' affair, which dwells on the contraband with petroleum products with Yugoslavia during the '93 - '95 embargo, proves, claims the author, that the discourses of those who represent the political power have no ground when stating that the corruption phenomena come from "the outside". Far away from being strange to the Romanian state, there are cases of institutional corruption, namely the use of position and of means of pressure for purposes that do not coincide at all with the public interest. The syntagm that best summarizes this flight from the reign of the law and also the mechanism used is exellently given by the author: 'It is in our national interest to break the law'. Unfortunately, we must say that the pertinent conclusions are not sufficiently supported by the mass-media analysis, which is almost exclusively based on a single paper.

The second case study is about a firm that seems to seize control over an entire city under the protection of bribed personalities from the political and administrative field and even from the police. A totally different kind of corruption is described here, whose genus proximus is *mafia*, understood as a parasitical organism of power that prejudices the state. The ethno-sociological investigation presented by the author is impressing, but so is the hushing up of all the names of public persons and firms. Not even the name of the town is given on account of "the sensitive nature of this material."

How can one not grin when the author claims that "these changes do not affect the thrust of the analysis"?

I would like to make myself well understood: I do not need more evident proofs than those presented in order to be convinced that such phenomena exist in Romania, and I do not want to criticize either the method or the conclusions reached by Oana Mateescu, who delineates a reality often difficult to render. What worries me is the author's attitude and the supposition that this attitude cannot be avoided. The text gives us the impression that the author lives in a terrorized country, a country systematically robbed by Corruption, from where she manages to smuggle out, with great precaution, an article of this sort while rightly accusing "the socially displaced law" and the helplessness of the social body. However, with or without the protagonists' real names, the facts remain the same and "the main thrust of the analysis is not affected". In addition to this, I think that, in this discoursive milieu, the names may not have such a great importance. There is still a rest, and this rest makes a great difference.

James A. Mitchell's article, *Corruption, the Electoral Process, and the Politics of Transition in Romania,* is an interesting mise-en-scène of "the relationship between an administration's track record in the battle against corruption and its prospects for re-election", in postsocialist Romania, with a prologue on the history of local corruption. Beginning with the assumption that "corruption is endemic in societies where there is no distinction made between public administration and private interest" and that therefore authoritarianism is

traditional in Romania, Mitchell states that Romanians literally have "a culture of corruption". This idea is relevant and fertile for new investigations that could delineate the subject much further.

With regard to the mise-en-scène mentioned above, I find it a little bit artificial, on account of the absence of a particular "character": demagogy. The politics of formal and sham alignments to different international norms and conventions is as traditional in Romania as is authoritarianism. It is a politic supported with mere mockeries of concrete actions that are nevertheless proclaimed everywhere. If not taken into consideration, it would remain behind the curtain directing everything right under the eyes of the attentive voters and the international forums.

Andrei Stoiciu's article, *Corruption: Policy Recommendation and Policy Exposure*, based on a solid empirical analysis of the most important Romanian media, during January 2002, highlights the fact that "the media discouse on corruption clearly reflects its own agenda" while describing and reflecting the theme of corruption. This discourse assumes neither the role recommended by the World Bank in its suggested strategies of fight against corruption, nor the one envisaged by the government, and not even the one the press itself often claims to be playing, that of "watchdog of democracy".

The lack of correspondence between the recommendations from the outside and the measures and initiatives of the authorities on the one hand, and their renderings in mass-media on the other, seems thus to be a key-problem in fighting corruption. A result of this is that the solution to the problem is a distant one.

Of the two research articles (*Mahala: The Slums of Bucharest - A Space of Urban Change*, written by Andreea Ogrezeanu and Mixed Times: On Informal Credit in Oltenia, realised by Puiu Latea and Ovidiu Chelcea), I would like to point out the second one. The authors manage to combine ethno-sociological investigation, historical perspective, and economic explanations of the informal credit phenomenon (which is called in the spoken language "a cumpara pe cont" sau "pe caiet"). They thus obtain a precise, vivid and at the same time witty image of Oltenia's socio-economic realities (and through legitimate extension, of the socio-economic realities of Romania).

A longer approach than a book review normally allows would deserve each of the two discussions: *National Corruption Day: A Theoretical essay on the Sources of Corruption,* authored by Mihai Varga, *and Globalization, Nationalism and Petite Imperialism,* written by Attila Melegh. I will only discuss the latter.

There have been many commentaries more or less based on the Hungarian Status Law. Professor and researcher A. Mellegh manages to avoid any parti-pris in analysing the political background for the Status Law and the controversies it generated. The author makes use of a more general perspective on political ideologies that takes into consideration the complex East-West relationships.

In my opinion, the theoretical source of this article (as well as the resources for future analyses) should be

looked for in the critical examination of the cultural-ideological and (geo)-political relations between "East" and "West" in postcolonialism, in a methodology similar to that used by Edward W. Said in his works, adapted, of course, to the realities of the region. This is in fact what the author does.

Offering thus this type of interpretation to Melegh's article, I think we should give up the claim to any pure scientific approach (understood as objectivity), as Ioana Bunescu does. Such a claim is not functional, but simply formal. There are cases (for example Arab-American-Palestinian relations or the interregnum in ex-Yugoslavia) in which objective and scientific points of view are meaningless, critical positions being preferred if they are open to dialogue. I would say that Ioana Bunescu, instead of continuing the discussion, really closes it. The very aim as Said understands it, that of cooperation among equals, liberated from any Occidentalizing and/or jingoistic rhetoric, is lost.

Melegh's article is one of the principal items among the socio-political analyses of the region. I would like to remark, as a conclusion, upon the symbolism of the situation: an article written by a Hungarian, published in Romania, in an international journal which focuses on socio-political realities. It is beyond any doubt that the future, whatever it holds, will belong to each and every country from Central and Eastern Europe in an equal manner.

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Andrei Oisteanu, The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture

Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001.

The issue of *cultural stereotypes* as result of the relation in between different identities proves to be of great interest for contemporary specialists in different social sciences. It is obvious that this topic could be successfully assessed by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, specialists in social psychology interested in it.

The recent years attest a deep involvement of many specialists of the above mentioned fields in various approaches that focus "cultural stereotypes". Even if their methodology and discourse are a bit different from one to another (depending on the researchers' background), the final tasks seem to be the same: to perceive the deep mechanism of creating cultural stereotypes, to see how and why they are or had been perpetuated at the level of daily practice, ideologies and other forms of discourse, to deconstruct them.

I assume this process started in the field of postcolonial studies, as an effort of reevaluating the main discourses that the West had about the Rest (to