

**Rădulescu-Motru, Constantin. „Cultura română și politicianismul”.
In: *Scrieri politice*. București: Nemira, 1998.**

At the beginning of the 20th century, in 1904, a innovative and intriguing book, entitled "Cultura Română și Politicianismul" (The Romanian Culture and Politicianism) appears, as a result of a complex academic research, written in a critique manner by one of the most prolific Romanian academics of that time, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru. The book promises to reanalyze, in a critical perspective some parts of the Romanian society, slowly developing at the beginning of the century, with a strong emphasis on the cultural and political aspects, and also on the solutions at those phenomena that affected the society of that time.

Better known among his academic fellows than by today's social science students, the name of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru hides a very interesting story.¹ The author, after ending his studies returns home in Easten Europe, as he will make along the book a parallel between east and west, he finds that East caught up in a developing process, with lots of mainstream and underground/backstage personalities ready to serve and protect the country, whom he brightly surprises in this book with all their ideas, plans and misery.

The book is three times revised, from 1904 until 1910, and unfortunately, giving its more then a century existence, still vibrates at the problems of the post '90s Romanian society, which has been characterized by cyclical evolutionary processes based on the spiritual traits of its people. The book is structured in: a note on the edition, an introduction study, the author's bibliography, a preamble, an introduction and seven chapters, build up like a short essays montage in which he describes,

¹ He was born in Butoiesti, Mehedinti, on 2nd February 1868, and around his paternity have flew interesting rumors of a blood relation with a very important religious personality of that time, Eufrosin Poteca. The child of a wealthy family, who was send by his family to study, first, in important local and national educational institutions, from where he receives, just a part of his law and philosophy knowledge and, after that, abroad, where he discovers a new world, a more developed one, that he compares his country with. During his college years, he is discovered by some of his professors, and with their help he improves not only his theoretical knowledge, but also has the chance to see visit some western cities, as Vienna and Munchen. Rădulescu-Motru has improved his academic skills in Germany and France, where he meets academics as Theodor Ribot, Charcot and Wilhelm Wundt, and whose ideas he integrated in his system. He dies in 1957 wronged by the communist system.

analyzes and offers solutions to the political and cultural problems of our "now and then society", comparing everything in a pessimistic touch, with the feeling he had felt during his staying in the western countries, urging himself and the rest of the people to have faith till the end.

In the first chapter, the author briefly analyzes the Romanian society of that time, pointing out the interest for the way in which the national economic, political and moral institutions are revitalized. The presentation is combined with his interest for the effects of such phenomena as culture, pseudo-culture and civilization over the national political stage, giving the book not only a critical-descriptive and complex appearance, but also a very unique, not seen such an attitude before, as to the social science predecessors of the second half of the 19th century.

In order to better understand the meaning of the concepts illustrated here, the author starts by explaining what the term of "politicking" supposed to mean at that time. Therefore, in his vision, "in the process of crafting the political rights some of the citizens of a state tend to, sometimes successfully, transform the public institutions and services out of means of achieving the public interest, as it should be, in means of achieving personal interests". Situation that happens, as the author underlines, predominantly, in the democratic regimes, where the people can be persuaded to do as their political representatives want them to.

He starts to define the notions of culture, pseudo-culture and semi-culture from his own roots – the Romanian society, which was before the revolutionary events at the half way of a road to a unique and complex culture, the author observes how it turned back ways and had preferred imitating trends, in all society fields, lead by the corrupt politicians which had burden, even more, the peasants, as the largest category of people. Disagreeing with the French influence over the society leaders and also with the country only following the instructions of the leading empires in order to be taken into account, the author introduces a world system theory, presenting how his nation every commodity, in large quantities, is shipped to the western headquarters through the Black Sea harbours which were, only namely, ours.

In the second chapter, the author describes the concept of culture by associating it with different contemporary perspectives as the ones of Heinrich Schutz or Wilhelm Wundt. He emphasizes on the development of a nation within the intellectual and technological evolution, and repeats, again and again, parts of other theories that will support his view. This time not only Wundt, but also James-Mark Baldwin or Herbert

Spencer play there own parts in explaining that the culture is not formed out of the material objects, but formed of the internal particular traits of the societies.

The time of poetry has passed away, as the author says, but the complex perspective of the culture that starts with the individual, who " taken by himself, would be a creature without meaning, if in the social life he would not associate and contribute to the existence of spiritual goods, to the culture he belongs to", emerges from within this creature in the entire society. The author shows his disagreement over the 1848 revolutionary class attitude and conceptions which are running and gaining more and more political power, but also show his "laissez-faire" attitude towards the process of culture maturity which offers the possibility of developing its own unity, the cultural unity of the people's conscience.

Rădulescu-Motru explains his ideas from several points of view, in parallel, from the psychological and philosophical perspectives, continuing with the sociological and the political ones and giving also references to the darwinist perspective. He concludes that the national culture is imported from abroad, bought from an excellent retailer, but its not a true culture, an everyday inspiring material of the people's conscience.

In the third chapter, Rădulescu-Motru presents in parallel the europeans beyond the seas, the Chinese - "machine people" are unable to do more than the plain, and so they remain in their own technological misery, while the western European societies, from the Ancient Greece, up to the contemporary empires, are blooming, packing it up and shipping it out to the four seas, creating therefore a world-wide map for the body and a civilization meant to be copied by the primitive people, which brings lots of resources in the headquarters of the fully individualized cultures. He also argues about the life rate of civilization and culture, about other international politics challenges as possible dangers because of the rise of the Asian societies, and the international trade.

In the four chapter, the largest and the most complex part of this book, the author supports the Romanian researchers who should describe our society by comparing it with the western, oriental or other overseas territories, rather than supporting the foreign researchers, unable to fully perceive the complex nature of what the author considered as an emerging culture. Traveling fast from inside the cabin of his mind train, the Romanian traveler sees the very well planned agricultural system of other nations, sees where his fellow citizens performed, not so well, their buyer-

seller roles in this field and how on his shoulders the corrupt politicians have build up their fortunes and the future generations misery.

Running from a corner of the old continent to the other, like a runaway son, the author goes beyond the Christian ethics describing the multi-religious very complex landscape, the believes of the countryside christian people governs their everything, and the complex spiritual dispositions that make the difference between culture and civilization. Not being a big fan of the 1848 emerged political class, or of its trap speech and its solving problem manners, he denounces the young national leaders educated in the western law and engineering faculties that had succeeded in changing the destiny and the soul of the nation, holding it captive in its old bad habits.

In the fifth chapter, the Romanian provinces are seen as an Sybaris citadel, that falls under its own misery, becoming slave of the western lifestyle, but which does not internalizes the technological, artistic and cultural ideas brought from the west, though "paradoxically the author reaches the conclusion that in the Romanian society, all – justice, public institutions, even the art world works only through an individual abstract", that almighty someone to helps them get the best in their social and private lifes. And when nothing could be done anymore, the foreign aid saves, for a time, the situation, the dreams and hopes of the people who take for granted `unconsciously` the hand that helps them, seeking momentary pleasures and not long term developing strategies, all under the 1848 liberty and fraternity principles.

Since the author's soft ironic remarks towards the political situation are scattered all over the book, the critical description of the last five national history decades is pointed out towards not only replicating what we are now calling public policies of the western countries, but also paying attention to the national features during this process. Therefore, in the sixth chapter, Rădulescu-Motru states two types of explanation at the question of how the national society got richer after the 1848, and those are: one for the naives, as the effect of the reforms, and a sly one, as the effect of the foreign investments and loans who have chained like tentacles the country's resources.

Seeding unsustainable hopes and hatred in the minds of the peasants, chapter seven shows how the social classes became one, the class whose members desperately search the political power. Rights and principles became the catwalk of the corrupt politicians speeches, who seek to associate themselves and become stronger. Partly they gain rights and universal suffrage, but the Romanian society is not totally wretched

and exactly like in the happy ending novels, the Prince Carol I and his group of support offered a reason to the spiritual consciousness of the people, giving hope for the future.

In conclusion, the book is evolving in cyclical ways, as parallels between everything, between East and West, primitive and evolved, civilization and culture aware of their own national personality nations, the old Romanian provinces organization and the new one, between the religious groups and beliefs, demands and priorities, everything pointed out on a dark background vision over our country's past and present evolution, until almost the end, when the almighty inquiring, by nature, critic, who says that the century of the poetry has ended, shares a fairly positive attitude towards what the future may bring to our country, missing slightly his contemporary fellows appreciation.

His nationalist views are complemented by the internalization of some western ideas, and the author also uses plenty of articles to support his views which sometimes are tiring, but still offer a complex perspective over how the world works, analyzing and predicting, in general, the causes, the problems and solutions of our going down political class and society. Without developing his political system ideas, he builds up a more philosophical-social science perspective over what happened then with the things around him, not knowing that over more than a century the evolution of events will make his ideas look fresher than ever. And as Cristian Preda said "When the summary of his views on politics were not placed under the label of philosophy of culture, sociology or pedagogy (which his commentators have done both during the inter-war and post-war period), Motru was read as an author who had just accidentally contacts with politics. "

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