

**Social-Democrat and Communist
Perspectives on Development in
Pre-communist Romania
The Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu
Pătrășcanu Case**

By

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Submitted to
Central European University
History Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2008

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ABSTRACT

This thesis evaluates the socialist and communist perspectives on social-change and development in pre-communist Romania, focusing specifically on the theoretical writings of Serban Voinea and Lucretiu Patrascanu. I argue that far from being divergent, as it is usually asserted, the two perspectives on development and social-change are comparable up to a point when they become almost identical. Thus, the theoretical differences between the two visions are rather rhetorical. The communist perspective rejects the socialist one because, the way it is formulated leads, in terms of political strategy, to the collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The theoretical writings of the two Marxist historians are analyzed and evaluated within a certain key. Both Voinea and Pătrășcanu were producing or advocating not only histories but *ideological histories* regarding the social-change and development of modern Romania. In their writings, they were keen to provide a certain interpretation of the Romanian economic, social, political and cultural realities. This certain interpretation was expected to justify the political programme of the parties they represented.

This strict correlation between *theory* and *practice* is somehow justified and legitimized as they were both ardent followers of Karl Marx, a thinker and a socialist revolutionary. Historical materialism was the driving force of their interpretative framework. The differences between the two perspectives presented in this paper are not to be grasped if one reads these authors strictly from the theoretical standpoint of their writings. In sum, their theoretical paradigms are unintelligible if not related to the scope of the political action they had concomitantly envisioned.

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Introduction*

In a letter to Karl Kautsky, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea claimed, rather bluntly, that at the time of his arrival in Romania “as a Russian refugee, not even the word *socialism* was known” there.¹ Though an exaggeration this statement nevertheless tells us something about the advent of socialism in pre-communist Romania. It also tells us much about the impact the writings and the political activity of this ‘Russian refugee’ had on the already existing socialist nucleuses and working class associations of that time.

In 1875 Gherea was forced to leave tsarist Russia and settle in Romania, in large part due to his long-term involvement in the activities of the *narodnik* movement. His letter to Kautsky dates from 1894. Although the word socialism was not unknown in Romania upon his arrival, Gherea would become the first and most important Marxist theoretician of modern Romania.² In fact his writings were to shape the Programme of the Romanian social-democracy for many decades to come. His theories concerning social-change and development in nineteenth-century Romania are advocated and defended during the interwar years by the socialist theoretician Șerban Voinea. The communist leader Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu voices the most virulent criticism against the theoretical writings and political programme of the social-democrats. Despite his harsh criticism, his own version of the dawn of capitalism in Romania is not altogether different.

* All translations from *Romanian* to *English* in this thesis will be provided by the author.

¹ Dobrogeanu-Gherea quoted in Michael Shafir, *Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, INC., 1985), 12.

² Z. Ornea, *Viața lui C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea (The life of C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea)*, (Bucharest: Compania 2006), 12-13.

This thesis will evaluate the socialist and communist perspectives on social-change and development in pre-communist Romania, focusing specifically on the theoretical writings of Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. It will be shown that far from being divergent, as it is usually asserted, the two perspectives on development and social-change are comparable up to a point when they become almost identical. Thus, the theoretical differences between the two visions are rather rhetorical. The communist perspective rejects the socialist one because, the way it is formulated leads, in terms of political strategy, to the collaboration of the socialists with the bourgeoisie. Are these different strategies drawn from almost common theoretical frameworks? To make this argument more clear a few things need to be settled from the onset.

The theoretical writings of the two Marxist historians are to be analyzed and evaluated within a certain key. Both Voinea and Pătrășcanu were producing or advocating not only histories but *ideological histories* regarding the social-change and development of modern Romania. In their writings, they were keen to provide a certain interpretation of the Romanian economic, social, political and cultural realities. This certain interpretation was expected to justify the political programme of the parties they represented. With regards to the practical and immediate implications of their writings they were, as we shall see during the thesis, very explicit.

This strict correlation between *theory* and *practice* is somehow justified and legitimized as they were both ardent followers of Karl Marx, a thinker and a socialist revolutionary. Historical materialism was the driving force of their interpretative framework. The differences between the two perspectives presented in this paper are not to be grasped if one reads these authors strictly from the theoretical standpoint of their

writings. In sum, their theoretical paradigms are unintelligible if not related to the scope of the political action they had concomitantly envisioned. Why is this important? Because one sees the theoretical divergences between the two but does not see the substantial differences that might justify the allegations they have so fervently thrown at each other. This is when practice is called to make sense of their disputes, as it complements the theory.

Theoretical differences did exist but in my opinion they were not, as I have already mentioned, substantial ones or ones that should be taken at face value. The communist perspective rejects the gist of the socialist theoretical apparatus only to (re)frame it differently, slightly shifting the emphasis or highlighting unequally common aspects of the same problem. The reason is comprised in the need to justify a different political strategy or to condemn the hitherto available one. This tells us that from the communist perspective, the political strategy to be adopted is just as important as the scientific theory. This implies that if needed, the theoretical interpretation, no matter how valid, can be changed in order to justify the required strategy of the moment. Required by the new ‘objective’ conditions uncovered by an ever-changing historical reality.

This paper’s special focus on the writings of Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu has further justifications. In order to state my case I could have just as well limited myself at opposing the writings of Pătrășcanu to those of Gherea. This attitude would have been substantiated by the fact that Șerban Voinea’s contribution as a Marxist sociologist is rather limited to the reiteration of Gherea’s theories. Unable to defend himself during the interwar decades due to objective reasons (Dobrogeanu-Gherea died at

the beginning of the 1920s) the task is assumed by Șerban Voinea. He will be a staunch supporter, it is worth mentioning, of Gherea's theories for the rest of his life. Thus what can be regarded as Voinea's contribution should be understood as rather the advocacy of Gherea's heritage to the Romanian social-democracy of the interwar years.

Although in his ideological history Pătrășcanu argued against Voinea seen as “a disciple of Dobrogeanu-Gherea” and as the main doctrinaire of the interwar socialists, the idea of opposing Patrascanu to Voinea rather than to Gherea is not groundless. It was the material uncovering the interesting biographical trajectories of the two that inspired me to measure the Marxist perspectives advocated by them. In other words, it was the research material that I have gathered which convinced me that I have a Voinea-Pătrășcanu case and not a Gherea-Pătrășcanu one. What makes things even tougher is that, as it will be shown in this paper, Voinea was an advocate of Gherea just as Pătrășcanu was a follower of Lenin. Just a few years before his death, Voinea will literally state that Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's theoretical analysis suffers as it is mechanically reproducing Lenin's interpretation of the Russian case. Voinea was right in his criticism, as it will be shown in the present thesis.

I chose to study their case once I realized that Voinea and Pătrășcanu were as similar in their backgrounds as they were different in the positions they were to adopt in the face of like circumstances. Representatives of the same generation which emerged around the year 1900 the Marxist theoretical and practical stances they were to adopt are revealing to the study of pre-communist Romania. Just as I considered it necessary to work with a double-edged theory/practice instrument in order to make sense of their writings, so I find it necessary in this thesis to pay close attention to their biographies in

order to make sense of the divergent attitudes adopted in the face of those like circumstances.

A debate *per se* between them, it has to be mentioned from the onset, did not exist in the epoch. This is the reason why I chose to talk about *perspectives* rather than *debate(s)* although the conflict between the two Marxists can also be analyzed within the realm of what might unanimously be regarded as a debate.³ Voinea delivers his theorethical work in the 1920s. As a social-democrat he is summoned, or rather feels himself obliged to defend Gherea's interpretation against the strong criticism from the right, and accordingly to draw the future programme of the social-democrats in the face of Greater Romania's new political and socio-economical circumstances. Pătrășcanu's analysis of the advent and evolution of capitalism in modern Romania gains consistency and recognition only after the Second World War. In his ideological history that focuses on the *Romanian phenomenon*, Pătrășcanu argues against Gherea's theories and Voinea's way of interpreting them by accusing the socialists of "opportunism" and "treason".

Voinea will indirectly allude to these accusations two decades later when, from the microphone of Radio Free Europe, he will try to rehabilitate Pătrășcanu. The communist theoretician, after having faithfully served the communist cause in Romania, was eventually purged by the members of his own party at the beginning of the 1950s. Voinea was the first and likely the sole advocate of Pătrășcanu's case in the context of destalinization. Voinea will speak about Pătrășcanu's role in the Communist Party of Romania and of his theorethical contribution as a Marxist during two radio broadcasts.

³ To be more explicit a debate Voinea-Pătrășcanu as the 1920s debate Voinea-Zeletin did not exist. See Daniel Chirot, "Neoliberal and Social Democratic Theories of Development: The Zeletin-Voinea Debate Concerning Romania's prospects in the 1920s and its Contemporary Importance" in Kenneth Jowitt, Editor, *Social Change in Romania, 1860-1940, A debate on Development in a European Nation*, (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1978), 31-52.

He will not make any reference to Patrascanu's accusations. Saying that Pătrășcanu's theoretical work suffers from the mechanical reproduction of Lenin's thesis obviated Voinea's need to directly answer to his allegations.

In sum a simple chronology underlies the organization of this project's narrative. In the second half of the 1920s, Voinea published his major work advocating what he considered the still valid interpretations of Gherea in a debate with an apologist of the national-liberals. Then, Pătrășcanu criticized Voinea's standpoint in the first half of the 1940s when he published the books conceived during the 1930s but written mainly during the war. Finally, arrested in 1948 and sentenced to death in 1954, Pătrășcanu was 'rehabilitated' by Voinea during several radio broadcasts at the beginning of the 1960s.

While the historical context has been addressed, in looking at these perspectives on social-change and development in interwar Romania, I have decided to mobilize the term *pre-communist* because its meanings are not precisely confined to the interwar years. My decision is justified by the dense theoretical approach of the two perspectives under discussion. The ideological histories represented by the two Marxist intellectuals deal with the transformations suffered by the Romanian society within a time span of more than a century. Since the emphasis of this thesis is on the theoretical perspective, it only makes sense to speak of 'pre-communist Romania' and not of 'interwar Romania'. Both Voinea, through Gherea's lens, and Patrascanu, influenced as he was by Lenin's study of the Russian case, were concerned with providing an ideological history that would legitimize a certain political strategy. They thus advocated the need for a *long term* analysis of the social transformations suffered by the Romanian society in its road to

modernity. This is the political strategy they are trying to legitimize, in the interwar years, drawing on their ideological histories.

Further justifications of my usage of the term *pre-communist* instead of modern or interwar Romania will be addressed in the theoretical framework of the thesis. In the same section I will also explain why I use the terms *social-change and development*, instead of, for example, *modernization*.

The first chapter will provide the reader with the historical context which shaped the two perspectives on social-change and development in question. Thus the opening chapter will clear the way for thorough investigation of the theoretical perspectives represented by the two thinkers. The emphasis will be placed on the personal biographies of the two Marxist intellectuals with special attention paid to the political formations they represented and how these parties fitted in the political scene of interwar Romania. I will thus look at how they became familiar with Marxist thought, what drew them to socialist activities, why they parted ways after the formation of the Communist International, and the outcome of this early decisions. There is a feeling that the two Marxist intellectuals and their ideas did not integrate in the political and cultural landscape of interwar Romania. During the war it was the integral nationalism and the idiom of the ‘national essence’ that monopolized the scene and not the internationalist doctrine of Marx.

The second chapter will analyze Voinea’s theoretical contribution as a Marxist historian. Gherea’s theories, under the harsh criticism of Ștefan Zeletin, an apologist of the national-liberals, were defended and presented as still being valid by Șerban Voinea. Although he mostly reiterates Gherea’s theories, it is worth evaluating the impact the political strategy formulated by Voinea had on the Social-Democratic Party during the

interwar years. Within the boundaries of this section I shall also touch upon Pătrășcanu criticism of the socialist perspective on development presented by Voinea.

The third chapter of the thesis will scrutinize the communist perspective as comprised in the writings of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. After the previous section examined the way he regarded Voinea's perspective, I will now look at the differences in Pătrășcanu's interpretation of the Romania case. It will be shown that the communist perspective envisioned by him is very close to the socialist one.

1. Perspectives on development in pre-communist Romania

In spite of his efforts to foster the emergence of a committed socialist movement through his theoretical writings and political activity, Gherea failed. Five years after his letter to Kautsky, most of his comrades and friends had left the party. They not only disowned their socialist beliefs but joined the reactionary party of the national-liberals. In the absence of a real capitalist development they believed that any socialist activity was absurd.⁴ They thus joined the National-Liberal Party, the principal agent of modernization in modern Romania.

A look at the liberal project and the criticism it raised, especially from the socialist camp, represented by Gherea, is more than necessary at this point. Since within Gherea's paradigm both Voinea and Patrascanu will operate, it is necessary to present it from the onset of the thesis.

The liberals were the artisans of the 1848 Revolution in the Romanian Principalities, Walachia and Moldavia. Identified as the generation of 1848 they

⁴ Shafir, 12.

gradually managed to monopolize the local political scene and, through an articulated foreign policy, to advocate the autonomy and later the independence of the Principalities.⁵ Concomitantly they triggered an accelerated modernization process. As a response, a strong criticism was formulated by a cultural society – Junimea⁶ whose members were “exponents of modern-style conservative doctrine, inclined not to traditionalism but to the gradual, organic evolution of Romanian society along the lines offered by the western models.”⁷ They argued that the Western model mechanically and hastily adopted by the liberals does not fit with Romanian realities. In other words, the advanced institutional framework of the West, when applied to the local backward realities, lacks any sort of substance. ‘Forms without substance’⁸ was the expression they used when referring to the western-like institutions imported from the west by the liberals. Their criticism is important because it represented the platform for subsequent strains of criticism that would be formulated up to the communist take-over in 1948.

Dobrogeanu-Gherea would (re)consider the concept of ‘forms without essence’ from a Marxist perspective. In his opinion the members of the Junimea circle, although right in their criticism, did not realize that the 1848 revolutionaries only expressed the “deep social forces that imposed the transformation” of the Romanian society.⁹ These social forces are the expression of the impact western capitalist modes of production had on the Romanian backward society of the nineteenth century. According to Gherea, the belated advent of the capitalist era in the Romanian Principalities led to the need for a

⁵ Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774-1866*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004), 285.

⁶ *junimea* – youth.

⁷ Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, (Budapest: CEU Press, 2001), 54.

⁸ Titu Maiorescu, *Critice (Critiques)*, (Bucharest: Albatros, 1998), 111.

⁹ Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoîobăgia. Studiu economico-sociologic al problemei noastre agrare (The New-Serfdom. Economic and sociological study of our agrarian problem)*, (Bucharest: Soccec, 1910), 30-1.

pragmatic policy formulated by a revolutionary class. Albeit their unawareness, the liberals represented that class. They were not only a couple of “enthusiastic young fellows,” as presented by the Junimea, but also a revolutionary class with a great sense of the historical epoch in which they lived.¹⁰ Let us pay closer attention to Gherea’s ideological history.

The treaty of Adrianopole, signed with the Ottoman Empire in 1829, represents the beginning of the capitalist era in the Principalities. From that moment on, the social and economic transformations that took place were the result of the influence exercised by the interest of the western capitalists in the Principalities’ resources of raw materials. In exchange they would offer manufactured products. As Gherea believed, the revolutionaries of 1848 were indirectly seeking a way to rationalize this commercial exchange with the west. Their need to officially settle the scores regarding the autonomy and the independence of the Principalities represents the result, Gherea argues, of this impact that the western capital had on the local realities.¹¹

The 1848 generation’s attitude, more precisely the import of the western institutional model is also justified, as Gherea asserts, by the urgency to preserve the national identity of the Romanian people. Being geographically “surrounded by three great states,” the western model was necessary because it helped achievement of political independence and it preserved the national identity of the Romanians.¹²

Adopting the western framework proved, as K. Jowitt showed, that the national-liberals understood that the Principalities “must first be intelligible in an institutional

¹⁰ Gherea, 30.

¹¹ Ibid., 32-3.

¹² Ibid., 39-40.

sense to powerful countries in a position to recognize or ignore them.”¹³ Gherea argues that although at the time “neither the objective nor the subjective conditions existed for the political and social construction of capitalism”¹⁴, the institutional framework was introduced due to the contacts established between the Principalities and the capitalist West. Gherea was drawing on Marx and his now classical affirmation that the advanced countries only represent the future of backward states.

But it is precisely this uneven relation between the more advanced societies and the backward ones that determines the special road that any latecomer would follow on their way to the establishment of the capitalist modes of productions. As Gherea argues, the Romanian Principalities modernized differently. The process of social-change is directed from above and some of the phases of capitalist development are burned or skipped in order to catch up with the more developed West. The relations of productions in economy will constitute a combination of old and new, of capitalist features and feudal ones.

This hybrid is more obvious in the agrarian sector of the economy. Instead of eliminating this anomaly, the revolutionary elite of 1848, the national-liberals, preserved these reminiscences of the past, hampering thus the real capitalist development. Through their agrarian reforms they legalized a newserfdom of the already burden Romanian peasantry. This is the central point of Gherea’s work. Since he allegedly only had time to study the agrarian aspect of “the vast social issue of our country,” his focus was exclusively on the agrarian question.¹⁵

¹³ Kenneth Jowitt, “The Sociocultural Bases of National Dependency in Peasant Countries” in *Social Change in Romania 1860-1940*, 21.

¹⁴ Gherea, 28-9.

¹⁵ Gherea, 8.

The exponents of the 1848 Generation and their disciples became a reactionary force by creating, through laws and legislation the *newserfdom*. Moreover, controlling the economic sphere and the political scene they behaved as an oligarchy hindering the activities of the genuine bourgeoisie and thus the progress of capitalism in Romania. These theories will be reiterated by Șerban Voinea and rhetorically contested later by the communist perspective represented by Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. There are reasons to believe that the theory of Gherea regarding the *newserfdom* was not criticized for itself as it was criticized for its logical outcome – the concept of *oligarchy*. This concept also deserve our attention since those who criticized Gherea tried to construct their theories starting from the need to prove the inexistence of such an oligarchy.

Gherea believed that the political structure of any society mirrors or at least should mirror its social and economic configuration. In the Romanian case since the landlords represented the majority, they should have dominated the political realm. The political oligarchy, “more or less a closed” entity, should have represented their interests. But the local realities contradict the norm. The admission process was not limited to the class of the landlords, but to the representative of any social class that would accept the rules of the political game shaped by the 148 revolutionaries and their heirs.¹⁶ The theory of the oligarchy would be further developed by Lotar Radaceanu in the 1920s.

Rădăceanu would portray the oligarchy as a “group of professional politicians who, because they are indispensable, envision themselves as being the absolute rulers in a bourgeois State, endowed with great resources and important economical attributions.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., “Geneza oligarhiei române” (“The Genesis of the Romanian Oligarchy”), in *Opere complete, Vol. V (Complete Works, Vol. V)*, (Bucharest: Ed. Politica, 1978), 177-79.

¹⁷ Lotar Rădăceanu, Șerban Voinea, *Oligarhia română. Marxism oligarhic. (The Romanian Oligarchy. Oligarchic Marxism)*, (Bucharest: Domino), 62.

According to both Radaceanu and Voinea, the National Liberal Party does not represent the bourgeoisie or its interests. On the contrary the liberals, and to some extent the conservatives, are equally responsible for the Romanian belated capitalist development and as they worked for the maintenance of the *newserfdom* system.¹⁸ The solution was seen, as we shall see, in the collaboration of the proletariat with the democratic bourgeoisie against the liberal oligarchy.

The harshest criticism of Gherea's law was formulated by Ștefan Zeletin in the middle of the 1920s. It was against the writings of Zeletin¹⁹ that Voinea felt obliged to defend Gherea's heritage to the social-democrats. Zeletin argued that the liberal oligarchy represents the Romanian bourgeoisie and thus blamed the social-democrats for being reactionary. His advice to the social-democrats was to learn from the lesson of the Generous, and give up ant socialist stances. In a country where the Romanian bourgeoisie still has to accomplish its mission, any socialist activity was considered reactionary.²⁰

Despite this harsh criticism, Zeletin's ideological history, as Voinea would point out, contains a lot of contradictions and in fact reiterates some of Gherea's arguments. His attempt to prove that Romania goes through identical phases of Western capitalist development lamentably fails, as I will show in the chapter dedicated to Voinea's writings. As Voinea rightly asserted, Zeletin's ideological history is called to justify the oligarchic rule of the liberals, by presenting them as a historical necessity and thus clearing them from any blame.²¹ In this respect, Zeletin's history can be regarded as an

¹⁸ Șerban Voinea, *Marxism oligarchic. Contribuție la problema dezvoltării capitaliste a României. (Oligarchic Marxism. Contribution to the capitalist development of Romania)*, in *Ibid.*, 346-47.

¹⁹ Ștefan Zeletin, *Burghezia Română. Originea și rolul ei istoric. (The Romanian Bourgeoisie. Its Origin and Historical Role)*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006).

²⁰ Ștefan Zeletin, *Neoliberalismul (The Neoliberalism)*, (Bucharest: Ziua, 2005), 238-42.

²¹ Voinea, 330.

ideological history by excellence. This is how Voinea referred to it: "...I have reached the conclusion that the *science* that tries to discover the necessary links between distinct phenomenon, that tries to ease the understanding of social evolution, does not represent an analytical tool anymore, but also a fighting weapon."²²

The communist perspective represented by Patrascanu opposes both ideological histories above mentioned. He considered Zeletin's interpretation outrageously schematic and rejected the special law of Gherea with a somewhat similar condescendence. In his opinion, as Voinea also argued, Zeletin's theoretical inquiries were all the more intolerable as they were trying to justify, using Marx's method, the abuses of the Romanian bourgeoisie. Patrascanu, on the other hand, did not believe in the existence of an oligarchy as a separate class that obstructs the genuine bourgeoisie.²³ According to his theories, this is a construct of the social-democrats in order to justify the collaboration with the alleged genuine bourgeoisie against the alleged oligarchy.²⁴ This did not stop him from interpreting the social-change and development of modern Romania in the same key as Gherea and his disciple, Serban Voinea.

2. The postwar developmental schools and the recovery of the local debates

These local perspectives on development were recovered with the emergence of the various developmental schools in the west within the historical context of the Cold War. Since the communist model was also promoted by the Soviet Union as a modernization paradigm, suitable for the countries situated at the periphery of the world-system that were eager to overcome their dependency status, the Western governments

²² Ibid., 335.

²³ Lucretiu Patrascanu, *Un veac de framantari sociale (A century of Social Unrest)*, (Bucharest: Cartea Rusa, 1945), 8-10.

²⁴ Ibid., *Probleme de Baza ale Romaniei (Basic problems of Romania)*, (Bucharest: Socec, 1945), 267.

feared the spread of communism ideology and practice in Third World countries. In this context Marx's work was rediscovered, and with it the Marxist debates of the pre-communist era in Eastern Europe. As one scholar rightly perceived:

Since the Second World War, the social sciences have shown a pronounced tendency to become developmental... the archetypal triad 'ancient-medieval-modern', a way of thinking about the history of Western society, has tended to give way to 'traditional-transitional-modern' – an attempt to conceptualize *all* societies in developmental terms. In short, modernization has become a dominant concern of contemporary social science. History, economics, political science sociology, and psychology appear to be converging upon a theory of modernization as one of the central structures of our thinking about man and society. Here lies one of the explanations for the recent renaissance of interest in Marxism(...) The reason why the quest for a theory of modernization has contributed to the revival of interest in Marxism is easily stated. When social scientist embarked upon this quest in the mid-twentieth century, they found that Marx and Engels had preceded them by a century or more.²⁵

During the 1950s and up to late 1960s, when the above quoted lines have been written, the dominant developmental school was the *modernization* school. The 1970s were dominated by the *dependency* school, a response to the modernization paradigm. Beginning with the late 1970s and during the next decade another school emerged – the *world-system* school.²⁶ It is from the positions of the dependency and world-system schools that Chirot, among others, recovered the theories and concepts of Gherea in particular, and the debate between Voinea and Zeletin.

Daniel Chirot even traveled to Romania at the beginning of the 1970s, as a 'student' of Immanuel Wallerstein. Drawing also on the theories of Dobrogeanu-Gherea, he used the world-system interpretative paradigm to assert that the specificities of modern

²⁵ Robert C. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company INC, 1969), 92-3.

²⁶ Alvin Y. So, *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories*, (Sage Library of Social Research, vol. 178, Sage Publications, 1990), 12.

Romania's capitalist development were generated by its constant dependency status within the Ottoman system and, beginning with the Treaty of Adrianople within the western capitalist system.²⁷ He later analyzed the Zeletin-Voinea debate from this perspective.

The main assumption of the dependency and world-system schools, with Chirot also operates, is that the influence of capitalism, does not automatically produce or generate, as the adepts of classical Marxism and liberalism believed, economic progress and social welfare. On the contrary, it may simply generate dependency and stagnation, despite the fact that social-change and development processes are indeed taking place. This is where the modernization school, which draws on the classical economic theories, is contested.²⁸

As I mentioned in the first part of the introduction, the need to discuss perspectives on 'social-change and development,' and not for example *modernization*, is that is not an automatically generated process under the impact of Western capital on the more backward societies of the West. What penetration by capitalist modes of productions of the backward, feudal economies generates is social-change and development of different sorts rather than modernization *per se*. In most cases, as scholars argue, it creates *dependency*, a center-periphery economic relation which may gradually lead to a political dependency and to the transformation of the peripheral societies in economic colonies of the more powerful center.

The result is thus not necessarily welfare or an articulated modernization process as the center's elites are not interested in the periphery's need to achieve modernity, but

²⁷ Daniel Chirot, *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Formarea unei colonii balcanice (Social change in a peripheral society. The creation of a Balkan colony)*, (Bucharest: Corint, 2002).

²⁸ So, "The Dependency Perspective" in *Ibid.*, 91-109.

in the perpetuation of a state of economic dependency – the center extracts raw materials from the periphery at a low cost and offers in exchange expensive manufactured goods.²⁹ Therefore, the solution to trigger a genuine modernization process is advocated by Chirot in the case of Romania – a closed economic strategy. An autarchic political regime can promote and organize such a strategy. As Wallerstein argues, totalitarian politics as in the case of the Soviet Union, “is neither a distortion nor logically a surprise” as it is merely a model taken up by “a weak state trying to become a strong state, thereby changing the economic role of this region in the world-economy.”³⁰

The stake of the debate Zeletin-Voinea is thus seen by Chirot as revolving around the concern for the best economic strategy to be adopted. The way this debate is recovered by the members of the postwar developmental schools was, as I shall later argue, misleading because it focuses exclusively on the economic aspect and thereby misses the broader historical picture. This rather unilateral approach does not thoroughly emphasize other aspects beyond the self evident correlation economic strategy - political regime. Without offering much explanations Chirot would later reconsider his views after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Because he had seen the shortcomings of the autarchic system fostered by the communist elites, he came to believe in the validity of an open economic strategy.³¹

As it will be shown in this thesis, the socialists’ desire to rid the political scene of the oligarchic rule was more acute than the need to propose an open economic strategy.

²⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, (New York, Academic Press, 1974), 67-68.

³⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Unthinking Social Science. The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 166.

³¹ See Chirot’s *Preface* to the Romanian edition of his book *Social Change in a Peripheral Society*, *Ibid.*, 5-14.

This would be best illustrated in the collaboration of the socialists with the authoritarian regime of King Carol II and their acceptance of the King's corporatist economic strategies. If Voinea rejected the closed economic strategy it was rather because it only benefited the liberal oligarchy.

The communist perspective did not receive as much attention as the socialist one. A thorough examination of Pătrășcanu's contribution as a Marxist economist and social historian is provided by Joseph L. Love comparative study of underdevelopment.³² Joseph Love argues that "Pătrășcanu struck an intermediate position between those of Gherea and Zeletin on the degree to which Marxism had to be adapted to explain the peculiar features of Rumanian development."³³ Love provides an insightful analysis although rather descriptive, of Pătrășcanu writings. Love's study does not touch upon the similarities of the socialist and communist perspective.

Victor Rizescu is one of the few who did analyze, although not thoroughly, the 'dispute' between Pătrășcanu and the disciples of Gherea. He concluded that "the only communist theoretician of the interwar pre-communist phase deliberately parts ways with the entire sociological sound expertise"³⁴ initiated by Junimea and further elaborated by Gherea. Moreover he argues that Pătrășcanu, by "simply rejecting as a Marxist heresy" the socialist theory of the oligarchy, "sacrifices the sociological acumen in favor of the revolutionary tactics"³⁵. In my opinion, Pătrășcanu did not part ways with this sociological trend in spite of his criticism and diatribes towards his rivals. The similarities

³² Joseph L. Love, *Crafting the Third World. Theorizing Underdevelopment in Romania and Brazil*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 51-8.

³³ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁴ See Victor Rizescu, "Marxism și oligarhie, sau sociologia înapoierii înainte de comunism" ("Marxism and oligarchy, or the sociology of backwardness before communism"), *Preface* in Lotar Rădăceanu, Șerban Voinea, 20.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

between the socialist and communist perspectives presented in this paper are striking. Just as the socialists, Pătrășcanu would identify the coexistence in the agricultural sector of the capitalist features with the remains of the feudal past. Just as Gherea and later Voinea, he would argue that this state of affairs deliberately preserved by the liberals obstructs the organic development of capitalism in Romania. Finally just as the socialist he would talk about the need to organize, around the Romanian proletariat, the progressive social groups, parts of the bourgeoisie included, in order to end the bourgeois-democratic revolution initiated, although soon betrayed, by the 1848 Generation. This is not to say though that Pătrășcanu adopted the socialist point of view.

He did not feel threaten by the possibility of being labeled as a socialist. More so as it was Lenin's writings that Pătrășcanu was emulating, as Voinea would declare later without alluding though to the similarities between the Pătrășcanu's writings and Gherea's. I shall dwell on this point in the chapter dedicated to Pătrășcanu's writings. Now, it suffice to say that by drawing on Lenin's writings Pătrășcanu could criticize the Romanian socialists and at the same time easily advocate similar theories. How was this possible?

Gherea was not the only member of the Second International who argued about the different patterns of development available in the case of backward countries. Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, Engels or even Marx, in his later years³⁶, talked about the distinctive features of backward countries that are caught in the orbit of the more advanced capitalist societies and states of the West. Lenin publishes in 1899 *Development of Capitalism in Russia* while Rosa Luxemburg publishes in 1913 her

³⁶ See Teodor Shanin (Editor), *Late Marx and the Russian Road. Marx and 'the peripheries of capitalism'*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

work on the *Accumulation of Capital*. Both works represent an “analysis of the increasing dependence of the advanced capitalist states on the less developed parts of the world for the realization of surplus value.”³⁷ The contemporary contribution to the field draws very much on their writings as evident in the case of Immanuel Wallerstein.³⁸

Lenin and Gherea developed their theories within the historical context of the Second International dominated by the German social-democracy. Troubled by the urgency to adapt Marxism to the agrarian societies of South-Eastern Europe and to implicitly formulate a socialist political strategy that would address a rather inexistent working class, the local socialists looked to the successful German socialists for advice.³⁹ Gherea was one of the very few intellectuals that took Kautsky’s advice and attempted to adapt or construct a Marxist theory that would justify the political programme of socialist movements in backward societies. As we shall see, Lenin’s interpretation of the Russian case was very similar.

Ignoring these aspects of international socialism, to use the title of G. Haupt’s book, and thus not reading Patrascanu in the proper key can be misleading. Simply because he blames the Romanian social-democrats, must the communist theoretician necessarily adopt the exact opposite interpretative paradigm? This attitude is best illustrated in the interpretation provided by Rizescu who wrote that: “Alongside Zeletin, Patrascanu is the only sociologist of the modernization process who believes that the development of Romania can be tracked from ‘the substance to the form’ (“de la *fond la forma*”), on the basis of an authentic capitalism...”, moreover, the same scholar believes

³⁷ *Marxism Volume I*, Edited by Margaret Levi, An Elgar Reference Collection, 1991, xv.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, xviii.

³⁹ See Georges Haupt, “Model party: the role and influence of German social democracy in South-East Europe” in *Aspects of international socialism, 1871-1914: essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 48-80.

that by rejecting the theory of the oligarchy Patrascanu subscribes to the theory of Zeletin “with regards to the identity between the phases of development specific to Romania and those of the West”.⁴⁰ This paper will prove the contrary.

Western Marxists realized that the local debates on development and social-change could be recovered and reframed as the prehistory of the developmental theories they promoted. The two perspectives analyzed hereafter are an interesting contrast, and certainly a novel comparison within academic literature. In light of the postwar developmental schools, the writings of Voinea and Pătrășcanu represent a *mélange* of all three schools. Sharing the optimism of the modernization school, they nevertheless work with the tools that we now regard as the patrimony of the dependency and world-system school. In accordance with these theoretical tools, they tried to formulate a certain political strategy.

Their histories must be regarded as ideological histories. Theory is rather constructed or melted into a certain political strategy than elaborated for its own sake. Voinea and Pătrășcanu were not the only ones in that epoch to follow this pattern. As we have seen, Zeletin was another author who attempted to combine theory and practice, in the process highlighting the most desirable *mélange*. Instead of just adopting the socialist paradigm and asserting that in the Romanian case a closed economic strategy might work better he preferred to construct an artificial theoretical framework in order to prove the legitimacy of the status quo. Zeletin’s history is probably the best illustration of an ideological history in pre-communist Romania. He was not the only one though.

During the 1930’s, Mihail Manoilescu, an advocate and theoretician of *corporatism* produced his own interpretation of social-change and development of

⁴⁰ Rizescu, 19.

Romania, his own ideological history, during the 1930s. Philippe C. Schmitter's remarks regarding the writings of Manoilescu are revealing in our need to understand this trend of the epoch. This is what he had to say with regards to Manoilescu's contribution as an economist and social historian: "...Manoilescu was clearly more an ideologue than a theorist in the simple sense that he tended to deal 'projectively' with social, economic and political relationship as they *should be* – or better put, as they *should become* – rather than with the realistic analysis of how and why they actually were... In short Manoilescu was very much the product of what I have elsewhere called 'the ideological bias, wishful thinking and oversimplified rhetoric of the Thirties' stemming from Europe as a whole and not Romania in particular".⁴¹

Why was it not enough to argue in favor of a certain economic and political strategy without "twisting the historical facts," to use Chirot's words? Economics, much like science, does not need to distort the past in order to come up with an explanation for the present.⁴² Why are there so many victims of this historical genre? Were they not aware that they were manipulating the historical facts? Why were all of them so ready to accuse one another of being 'reactionary' or, in the case of the Marxist historians, of being 'Marxist heretics'? What was at stake?

With regards to the two perspectives that I am interested in, I will answer these questions in the following sections. A short answer can nevertheless prove useful now. Both Voinea and Pătrășcanu were promoters of ideological histories but it has to be

⁴¹ "Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu and the political consequences of delayed-dependent development on the periphery of Western Europe" in K. Jowitt (Editor), 118-119.

⁴² This assertion is best illustrated, as Victor Rizescu also remarked, by another economist and social historian of the epoch: Eugen Demetrescu, *Influența Școalei Economice Liberale în România în Veacul al XIX-lea (The influence of the Liberal Economic School in Romania in the 19th Century)*, (Bucharest: Domino, 2005), 9.

acknowledged that unlike Zeletin, they operated within what can be considered as a consecrated paradigm. As we have seen, Gherea was both preceded by important Marxists and consciously ‘recovered’ by Western Marxists after World War II. Voinea and Pătrășcanu both worked within the same interpretative framework. At stake was the proper organization of the proletariat during the years of Romania’s integral nationalism.

The socialist and communist perspectives were both articulated in times of social unrest, economic instability, and political uncertainty demanding immediate solutions. Practical concerns usually took precedence over scientific inquiries as theory was called to justify any means that could have fostered the revolutionary transformation of the Romanian society.

Chapter 1: Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu – Marx’s disciples in interwar Romania

1. Greater Romania and the advent of integral nationalism

The highly polarized political scene of interwar Romania left little room for the political parties of the two Marxist intellectuals. A short look at the main cultural debate of interwar Romania will ease our understanding of the place occupied by Voinea’s and Patrascanu’s writings within that framework. The reviewing of the main debate of the epoch and implicitly of the political trends they shaped will facilitate our understanding of the political strategies the two Romanian Marxists were advocating.

Greater Romania was, to use Roger Brubaker’s analytical tools, an “unrealized nation-state”. Interwar Romania was “destined to be a nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation, but not yet in fact a nation state...”⁴³ Thus as Irina Livezeanu contended in interwar Romania “integral nationalism” and its acceptance “as the ideological framework for politics at large”⁴⁴ would become reality. The ‘national essence’ idiom was manipulated by the official political and cultural figures in order to construct a certain idea of the nation.⁴⁵

This is the historical context that influenced and to a certain extent shaped the Marxist discourse after the formation of Greater Romania.

⁴³ Roger Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 63.

⁴⁴ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*, (Cornell University Press, 1995), 14.

⁴⁵ Katherine Verdery, “National Ideology and National Character in Interwar Romania” in *National Character and Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe* edited by Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery, (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995), 102.

Interestingly enough these rather academic or intellectual debates had direct implications for the social and political development of Greater Romania, as they revolved around whether Romania “was destined to follow the same path of development as Western Europe” or if it should “sought guidance in the autochthonous past”.⁴⁶ At stake was the consolidation of the newly created state.

Another aspect that forged the need to strengthen the newly created state through a national ideology was represented by the threats and claims raised by bolshevism across Romania’s borders.⁴⁷ Because of the threat of bolshevism, the socialists and the communists were regarded as equally dangerous by the state’s secret police.⁴⁸ For the socialists the enemy was the liberal oligarchy. Political alliances were sought by the socialists in order to overthrow the powerful party of the liberals. For the communists the whole establishment was destined to be dismantled. The Komintern regarded Greater Romania as an ‘imperialist’ state. The Romanian section of the Third International was asked to advocate Moscow’s policy regarding Bessarabia according to which its union with Romania was not to be recognized.⁴⁹ But first let us look at the advent of socialism in modern Romania.

2. Socialism in Modern Romania

Socialism ideology in precommunist Romania did not manage to gain preeminence mostly due to the agrarian character of the country.⁵⁰ One can identify three periods in the evolution of socialism in Romania prior to the communist take-over in

⁴⁶ Keith Hitchins, “Orthodoxism: Polemics over Ethnicity and Religion in Interwar Romania”, in *National Character and Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, 135.

⁴⁷ Katherine Verdery, “National Ideology and National Character in Interwar Romania” in *Ibid.*, 104-105.

⁴⁸ Sorin Radu, *Ion Flueraş (1882-1953). Social-Democraţie şi Sindicalism. (Ion Flueraş 1882-1953. Social-Democracy and Trade-Unionism)*, (Bucharest: Nemira, 2007), 224.

⁴⁹ Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 400.

⁵⁰ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate. O istorie politică a comunismului românesc (Stalinism for all seasons. A political history of Romanian Communism)*, (Iasi: Polirom, 2005), 61.

1948.⁵¹ It is important to work with a chronology in order to understand the dilemmas of the Romanian Marxists who had to formulate their demands in an environment that, because of objective reasons, rendered their presence rather redundant. In this respect not even the interwar Marxists Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, despite the progress registered by the capitalist development in Romania, could escape the stigma of ‘rootlessness’ which undermined the first socialist party at the turn of the century. More so as the interwar years saw the emergence of ‘integral nationalism’ in Greater Romania.

First we should take into account the period epitomized by the figure of Dobrogeanu-Gherea who managed to organize the Romanian Social-Democrat Workers’ Party during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The ‘treason of the Generous’ marked the end of this period.⁵² A second age of Romanian socialism was crystallized under the influence and leadership of Christian Rakovsky who significantly contributed to the resurrection of the Romanian social-democracy. Rakovsky, to avoid a new act of ‘treason’, directed the activities of the socialists “to the formation of trade unions, so as to provide a proletarian base different from that of the dissolved Romanian SD Party, which had mainly consisted of intellectuals and members of *petit bourgeoisie*”.⁵³ 1910, the year of the political (re)formation of the Romanian Social-Democratic Party, is also the year when Gherea’s “The Newserfdom” was first published. This book shaped the political strategy of the social-democrats. Șerban Voinea would invoke the authority of Gherea in settling theoretical disputes even decades after 1948.

⁵¹ See “Marxism in Romania: the early stages” in Shafir, 9-20.

⁵² “The handful of intellectuals who adhered to socialist ideas in the 1880’s were known as the ‘Generous’, to indicate the abdication of relatively privileged social positions to building a more egalitarian society(...) many of the intellectuals(...) joined the Liberal Party in 1899, in an act later to be known as the ‘treason of the Generous’.”, Shafir, 12.

⁵³ Rakovsky quoted in Shafir, 15.

During these periods the Romanian socialists were in close contacts with the international Marxist leaders. Gherea as we have seen, corresponded with Kautsky who encouraged him, just as he encouraged the other leaders of the south-eastern socialist parties, to adapt Marxism to the local conditions. As for Rakovsky, he was one of the major figures of the Socialist International.⁵⁴ Due to this close ties with the Socialist International, its shameful demise in the advent of the Great War and the experience of the trenches could not but affect the Romanian social democracy.

Soon after the success of the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Communist International (Komintern) the Romanian Social-Democratic Party was torn apart by a violent factionalist struggle between those who wanted to adhere to the Komintern and those who still remained faithful to the ideals of the Second International. Those who demanded immediate affiliation to the Third International eventually managed to take control over the party's organization and publications. A congress held in Ploiești during October 1922 cemented the foundations of the Communist Party of Rumania, Section of the Communist International.⁵⁵ The socialists who refused to join the communists, would activate in an alliance with the social-democrats of all the newly incorporated provinces, except Bessarabia. Thus up to 1927 when these factions fusion to form the new Social-Democratic Party, the socialists gathered under the banner of the Federation of Socialist Parties of Rumania.⁵⁶

Șerban Voinea and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu not only witnessed but also participated in the conflicts that split the Romanian socialist movement for the second time in its short

⁵⁴ Stelian Tănase, *Clienții lu' Tanti Varvara (The Clients of Madame Varvara)*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2005), 11.

⁵⁵ Keith Hitchins, *Rumania*, 398-99.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 401.

history. Although they were both educated in the spirit of the second age of Romanian socialism, at the school of the Second International, the split of the party also marked the their definitive break up. Voinea remained with the social-democrats while Pătrășcanu sided with the communists.

In fact, as he would declare later in his autobiography, Voinea was the theoretical spokesman of the resistance against the affiliation of the Romanian SD Party to the Third International.⁵⁷ For Voinea, the Bolsheviks, far from being the messengers of the triumphant Russian Revolution, represented the radicals that sabotaged the it. He shared Gherea's opinion, who argued just before his death that the socialist revolution, if fostered in a society that lacks the "objective conditions" might "develop regressively, towards medieval society, towards primitive communism".⁵⁸

But what determined Voinea and Patrascanu to choose different factions in the dispute that followed the formation of the Komintern in March 1919? What drew them to socialism in the first place? What made them give up the comfort of their wealthy families and adopt 'generous' stances? To answer these questions is to trace the beginnings of socialism in Romania and moreover to see who were its main agents.

3. Șerban Voinea and the attraction of socialism

"I came to socialism through Marxism", Voinea would later declare in his short autobiography. "From 1914 I approached the party, holding several conferences on theoretical subjects and taking part in the activities of socialist circles. I joined the party in 1917 in order to contribute to the clandestine resistance against the occupation."⁵⁹

Voinea gives a more detailed and suggestive account of how he became a socialist in his

⁵⁷ Arhiva CC al PCR (Romanian Communist Party's Central Committee's Archive), D6/ 1973, 296.

⁵⁸ Gherea quoted in Shafir, 10.

⁵⁹ CC Archive of RCP, 296.

memoirs, written in a rather romantic tone. Thus we find out that what determined him to join “the movement” was “neither the class interest, which mobilizes the workers, nor the ideological commitment that in general determines the intellectuals to join the socialist movement... then what motivated me to join the movement in the midst of war, under the German occupation and to ‘activate’ clandestinely?”⁶⁰ Voinea asks himself? The answer comes after a couple of pages when he evokes the “Potemkin episode” as his “first contact with socialism... It appeared under the form of some tall sailors with blond beards who killed their officers and who defied the tsar and frightened the population of Constanța and the Romanian government”.⁶¹

In the same epoch, while in a famous restaurant in Bucharest, his father showed him Rakovski, “a beautiful man” as he recalls “wearing a neat beard, with sparkling black eyes...” at whom he gazed with awe. “My father did not love him” Voinea recalls “neither him nor the ideas of this wealthy and elegant man, who confronted the established order by placing himself in the vanguard of any violent street demonstration that took place in Bucharest.”⁶²

The next socialist figure he meets is a close collaborator of Rakovski, Entchiu Atanasof, a “comrade” representing the Union during a strike at the factory Voinea was working back then as a clerk. This was, as he states, his second contact with the movement. This time he would play a more important role. He secretly sides with the workers’ demands by advising the representative of the union on how to deal with the patronage. As in the case of the Russian “tall sailors” or the “sparkling” black eyed Rakovsky, Voinea is impressed by Atanasof, “this well build muscled man, with his

⁶⁰ Ibid., 301.

⁶¹ Ibid., 305.

⁶² Ibid., 306.

collarless unbuttoned shirt that revealed his hairy chest...”⁶³ Atanasof would tell Voinea “the truth about the 1907 peasant uprising” and the way it was brutally suppressed by the liberals. His whole system of values would soon be shaken. The conversion is complete after Voinea reads one of Engels’ brochure and Kautsky’s comments about the Erfurth Programme. These would provide him the basis of a “coherent political conception”.⁶⁴

Șerban Voinea would remain during the interwar years true to his socialist beliefs. As he would state later, “Since the 1919 programme of the party, which I myself wrote... up to the resolutions issued between 1944 and 1947, I did not speak or write but as a Marxist social-democrat.”⁶⁵ During the interwar years, when he was not in the country he was abroad representing the Romanian socialists to different congresses in Vienna, Marseille, Bruxelles, Hamburg etc. During 1923 and 1929 he would be in France working with the French homologues of the Romanian social-democrats as an assigned delegate.⁶⁶ His major theoretical contribution to Romanian Marxism, *Oligarchic Marxism* (1926) is elaborated there.

Fascinated as a young man by the founding fathers of Romanian socialism, he retrospectively idealizes as we have seen any of his earlier glimpses to the dangerous world which his father “did not love”. His underground activity during the Great War and his interest in socialism is that of a ‘generous’. He gives up the comfort of his father’s world in order to enter the perilous socialist one. It is the world of socialism that fascinated him beyond words and the life of its representatives that he would try to

⁶³ Ibid., 307.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 310.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 296.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

emulate. The account about the ‘true 1907’ persuaded him to find the ‘truth’ about his parents’ world. Patrascanu’s case is not altogether different.

4. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and the Russian Revolution

For the future communist leader the submission to the dangerous world of socialism was more abrupt. His father was ostracized by the Romanian officials and by the society at the end of The Great War. D.D. Pătrășcanu was accused by the authorities of having collaborated to the German financed newspapers.⁶⁷ Just as Voinea, Pătrășcanu is the representative of a wealthy family. They could have just as well remained among their fathers’ world and make a name for themselves in an atmosphere they already knew to well. Pătrășcanu’s mother was the descendant of a noble family while his father, also raised in a boyar family, was an appreciated intellectual. A close collaborator of Garabet Ibrăileanu and Constantin Stere, Pătrășcanu’s father, D.D. Pătrășcanu was a writer and an author of school manuals.⁶⁸

Banned from the public life of the postwar epoch, D.D. Pătrășcanu’s tragedy augments the already erratic high school student, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. At that time, as he would later remember during an interview, he was troubled by the anti-Semitic manifestations that occurred in his class and school; anti-Semitic manifestations that were moreover tolerated if not sometimes even encouraged by the administrative board. He denounced the abuses witnessed in his school and later in that period sided with the workers that were violently repressed during the first major strikes inspired by the Russian Revolution. These stances would cause his one year expulsion from all the

⁶⁷ Tanase, 397.

⁶⁸ Lavinia Betea, *Lucretiu Pătrășcanu. Moartea unui lider comunist (Lucretiu Pătrășcanu. The death of a communist leader)*, (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2006), 14.

schools of that epoch. He would later declare: “I believe that this incident contributed to my decision to join the movement.”⁶⁹

With regards to the public opprobrium directed toward Pătrășcanu’s father, Voinea recalls: „Lucrețiu could not take the injustice done to his father and because of that he told to anyone who wanted to listen to him: if that is the case, I shall become a Bolshevik. And he did become one.”⁷⁰ He would later regret his decision. According to another recollection of Voinea, during the 1946 Peace Conference held in Paris, Pătrășcanu said that he envies him for remaining a social-democrat after the split that took place within the movement in 1921.⁷¹

If retrospectively Pătrășcanu disavows his choice, at the time of the Russian Revolution he was most fascinated by it. Just as Voinea, Pătrășcanu has his own magic moment to reiterate in order to translate his version of how he embraced socialism. The whole passage deserves our attention:

“I was sixteen. The dawns of a new world appeared and I understood that a new historical era is emerging. I started to monitor the events with unbridgeable passion... I then experienced an array of very intense sentiments: of effervescence, but also of angst that I am not old enough to take an active part, to play an important role in that epopee which started to reveal itself in front of my eyes. Indeed, this was the intimate feeling that I experienced, waiting for the revolutionary movement to expand its radiation into the world: the regret that I was too young. I was convinced that all of humanity’s social, political and moral problems are over and that the times of heroic struggle for justice and truth, for the fate of the many, reached an end. This was the essence of my regret.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Ion Biberi, “De vorbă cu L. Pătrășcanu”, în vol. *Lumea de mâine (interviuri)* [“Talking with L. Patrascanu” in *Tomorrow’s world (interviews)*], (Bucharest, Forum, 1945), 77.

⁷⁰ Voinea, CC Archive of RCP, 324.

⁷¹ Ibid., 326.

⁷² Ion Biberi, 73.

As in Voinea's case, Patrascanu needed his own spiritual moment to urge him to leave behind his father's world. This family episode could have also served just as an excuse. Pătrășcanu was already, prior to that affair fascinated by the underground world of the Russian revolutionaries. Apart from Dostoevsky's novels, Pătrășcanu's favorite was Stepniak's *La Russie souterraine*: "the book which would later shape my entire lifestyle... a book full of genuine heroism and truth."⁷³ Stepniak, as Pătrășcanu knew was the pseudonym used by Serghei Kravchinski, a Russian anarchist. In August 1878 he assassinated, stabbed to death more precisely, General Mezentsov who was at that time the head of the Tsar's secret police.⁷⁴

Captivated by the underground world described by Stepniak, Pătrășcanu would be one of the founders of the Romanian section of the Komintern. During the 1920s, along with his many assumed identities as a Bolshevik revolutionary⁷⁵ he would pursue his doctorate in economics, philosophy and statistics in Leipzig, Germany. The 1930s would consecrate his status as one of the most important local communist leaders. In 1933 he was one of the organizers of the violent Grivița strike. This affair forced him to take refuge in Moscow which he eventually left just in time to escape The Great Terror. Between 1936-1938 the old guard of the Romanian section will be purged, the famous Christian Rakovsky included. Pătrășcanu was one of the few who survived. During the war he was placed by the rightist military regime of Ion Antonescu in domicile arrest. However due to his family background and to his refined status as an intellectual, he was

⁷³ Ibid., 72.

⁷⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags. Anarchism and Anti-Colonial Imagination*, (New York, London: Verso, 2007), 71.

⁷⁵ 'Andrei Moldovan, Andrei Bercu, Radu Boldur, Coca, V. Dragomir, Fisher, N. Grigorescu, Ghiță, Ion C. Ion, N. Lescenco, V. Mălin, Mihalcea, Miron, Mironov, M. Andreescu, Titu, I. Vrabie, Măcin' - are only a few of his many pseudonyms. See Marin C. Stănescu, *Moscova, Cominternul, Filiera Comunistă Balcanică și România (1919-1943)*, [*Moscow, The Komintern, The Balkan Communist Network and Romania (1919-1943)*], (Bucharest : Silex, 1994), 155.

considered by the authorities as rather inoffensive. While in arrest he dedicated his time to the study of the ‘Romanian phenomenon’. When the war ended, after playing a key role in the Act of the 23rd of August, he delivered his own ideological history. Until his arrest in 1948, under false accusations of Titoism, nationalism, anti-soviet attitudes, reformism etc, he was the Minister of Justice. He was executed in 1954.⁷⁶

The absence of any solid study on the beginnings of socialism in Romania that would also touch upon the more sensitive, hard to quantify, personal justifications of those that contributed to the emergence of Marxist ideas in precommunist Romania, enables us, at this point, only to speculate on the real motives that triggered the interests of Voinea and Pătrășcanu in socialist Marxism. Nevertheless, in the light of the available material we can draw a few conclusions. Both Voinea and Pătrășcanu were at first attracted rather spiritually by the possibility of a better world. As Voinea in fact declared it was not the “ideological commitment” that showed him the way. It was rather the mythical figures of those otherwise human figures and the message they advocated that fascinated both Voinea and Pătrășcanu. The somehow religious fervor with which words like ‘the cause, the idea, the movement’ were entrusted, draw them to socialism. The prophecy of a better world, disseminated world-wide by the Russian Revolution, was the main thing that attracted Pătrășcanu.

For many, like Voinea and Pătrășcanu, Marxism is not “only a science and a political strategy, but it equally represents a faith, a religion. Its force rests here.”⁷⁷ In Voinea and Patrascanu’s cases this attraction would prove challenging as they were

⁷⁶ For a short and insightful analysis of Pătrășcanu’s case in Romanian Communism see the chapter “Conspiratorul” (The Conspirator) in Tănase, 393-433.

⁷⁷ N. Berdiaev, *Originile și sensul comunismului rus (The Origins and The Significance of Russian Communism)*, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1999), 108.

doomed from the very beginnings to thoroughly embrace both dimensions of Marxism in the most incompatible historical context. Not only did Greater Romania lack a conscious proletariat but as a newly created state it saw the emergence of integral nationalism. In this atmosphere, despite their ideological histories, in which their effort to adapt Marxism to the local conditions is obvious, their ideological internationalism and universalism did not penetrate the mainstream political and cultural debates of the epoch. Confronted with a double edged exclusion, from their father's world and, as we shall see, from the society they strived to improve, Voinea and Pătrășcanu, along with parties they represented, would fail to convince the masses they sought to organize.

5. The Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Romania during the interwar years.

During the 1920s, the tense diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Romanian government resulted in the banning of all communist activities in Romania. The Moscow instrumented uprisings in Bessarabia convinced Bucharest that communism represented a threat on the territorial integrity of the Romanian state. Thus in 1924, after the Komintern supported the uprising in Tatar Bunar, southern Bessarabia, the Romanian government banned the Communist Party of Romania. Until the end of the Second World War, the communists would have to breathe the subversive air of the underground. This situation made them excessively dependent on the Komintern directives.⁷⁸ During the interwar decades, the tight subordination to the Soviet directives “forced Rumanian Communists to take positions on critical national issues that ran

⁷⁸ Tănase, p. 79.

counter to the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the population, including the working class.”⁷⁹

The Romanian social-democrats developed a different tactic. True to the ideals of the extinct Second International, they continued to draw on the strategy shaped by Dobrogeanu-Gherea’s theories, still valid, as Voinea argued, after the structural changes of the 1918 momentum (the universal vote, the agrarian reforms of the 1921-22, the incorporation of new provinces etc). The Romanian Socialist-Democratic Party would look for political allies among the newly incorporated provinces’ bourgeoisie in order to overthrow the liberal oligarchy which had its headquarters in the old kingdom. An alliance with the peasantry was also considered necessary as the Romanian proletariat was still an almost insignificant social force. Moreover, as Pătrășcanu would also argue, the need to eradicate the feudal remains in the agricultural economic sector rendered essential the contribution of the peasantry.⁸⁰

Both parties though remained marginal. If in the case of the Romanian section of the Komintern the situation was understandable, for the social-democrats it was the more puzzling as Romanian socialism already had a history of fighting for the local working class’ rights. Although they managed to gain some preeminence, organizing the unions and voicing their demands in Parliament, they nevertheless missed the right opportunities to win over the masses probably also because the Social-democratic Party (SDP) was during the wars “at pains to differentiate itself from the Communists...”⁸¹

Was it the internationalist dimension of their doctrine which could not resonate in a setting engulfed in the cultural and political manifestations of integral nationalism?

⁷⁹ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 400.

⁸⁰ Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 371-75.

⁸¹ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 401.

Was it a bad time, as Zeletin would say talking about the reactionary nature of any socialist activity directed towards the Romanian bourgeoisie which still had during the interwar years a “historical role” to play?

It was all this and more. It was also the tactics adopted by the socialists. The tactics later denounced by Pătrășcanu as “reformist, opportunist” due to the collaboration with the bourgeoisie. As it will be shown in detail during the next section, the obstinacy with which the social-democrats advocated the need to get rid of the so called oligarchy led to an unyielding policy that would eventually damage the internal cohesion of the party. Just as the Communist Party was constantly under the threat of being torn apart by the inherent factionalist struggle of the underground, the SDP was shaken whenever the need to look for allies among the genuine democratic and bourgeois parties was advocated.

The first alliance with the bourgeois instrumented by the socialist leaders was the 1928 electoral alliance with the National Peasant Party. An important faction of the party, under the leadership of Litman Ghelerter refused at that time any kind of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, no matter how effective in the fight against the oligarchy. Ghelerter was in the past part of the so called centrist group that sympathized with the Bolsheviks. Given his radicalism vis-à-vis the 1928 electoral alliance his faction is excluded from the party.⁸²

During the 1930's no major alliances occurred between the socialists and the other democratic and bourgeois parties. It was the deceptive collaboration with the National-Peasant Party that determined the socialist leaders to be more circumspect in siding with the Bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, running alone in elections during the years

⁸² Radu, 200.

before the war the Socialist-Democratic Party also proved disastrous. The party gradually lost grounds in the face of the bourgeoisie and the rightist movement, the Iron Guard.⁸³

In sum, as Hitchins observed during the interwar years “the decline in socialist political fortunes, which was also marked by a drop in party membership, was caused mainly by discouragement over the failure of the party to bring about any significant improvement in the conditions of the working class.”⁸⁴ To this it was added, during the 1930’s, the effects of the economic crisis and the tensioned international political context which fostered the emergence of right wings movements. As a scholar remarked the Great Depression and “the misery and hopelessness” of the 1930s resurrected the post-1917 “revolutionary hopes”.⁸⁵

The emergence of the right-wing movements during the 1930’s were regarded as a “preventive counterrevolutionary” from the right to the communist threat, as the same author asserts quoting the case of Italian fascism. Thus in most of the East European countries “dictatorship became the rule” all the regimes following “extreme nationalist economic policies, with state-run modernization programs that tended to exclude ethnic-national minorities and to treat neighboring countries as adversaries.” Greater Romania would experience the ‘royal dictatorship’ of Carol II.⁸⁶

The socialists and the communists became in this context the target of heavy campaigns of the rightist press. The differences between the socialists and the communists were erased and both partisan groups were accused of acting not out of

⁸³ Ibid., 232.

⁸⁴ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 402.

⁸⁵ Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis. Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998), 300.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 301-2.

“profound convictions” but out of “snobbism”. Socialism was again regarded as an ‘exotic plant’ which threatened the national and territorial integrity of the Romanians. Anti-Semitic accents were also present in the pamphlets. Communism was not an articulated doctrine and political practice in Romania but a creation of the Jews who would “sell us tomorrow to the Russians.”⁸⁷ Further disillusioned by the ‘non aggression pact’ signed in 1937 between a former ally, the National Peasant Party, with the Romanian extreme right movement, the SDP would lose the last democratic elections of Greater Romania. Running on separate slates for the most part of the 1930s, the social-democrats would not be represented in the Parliament until 1946, when the communists will ask for their collaboration.⁸⁸

The Communist Party of Romania would share a similar, though more tragic faith. Due to the underground character of the party and the secrecy that surrounded its actions directed by the Komintern, the membership of the party would reach its peak in 1936. It was rather the fascist threat and the elaborated campaigns of the Popular Front that raised the number of the party members to around 5,000 in that period.⁸⁹

The communists radically opposed the nationalist policies of the official institutions and this also added to its incapacity to gain broader popularity among the masses. Comprised of mostly ethnic minorities from the newly incorporated provinces, unhappy with the ‘imperialistic’ and nationalistic policies of Greater Romania’s governments, the Soviet Union would represent for the local communists the ‘homeland’ state both in territorial terms as in ideological ones. Patrascanu, as many others would

⁸⁷ Tănase, 251.

⁸⁸ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 402.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 400.

take refuge in the Soviet Union after his involvement in the major strike of the 1930's at the Grivița Railways Workshops.

The 1920's registered the complete isolation of the Romanian communists due to the tense diplomatic relations between Romania's government and the Soviet Union over the Bessarabian question. Besides the Bessarabian question, at the party congresses of 1924 and 1928 the local communists were instructed by the Komintern officials to vote the principle of self-determination for the national minorities of Romania and endorse the secession of Bukovina and Dobrudja from Greater Romania. The predominance of ethnic minority figures at the top of the party and the anti-nationalist policies they were promoting, the strong advocacy of the soviet radical policies "held view in Romania" as Hitchins rightly observed, that "the party was a foreign organization which put the interests of the Soviet Union ahead of those of Romania."⁹⁰

Towards the end of the 1920's though the communists managed to exercise political influence through their legal organization – the Worker-Peasant Bloc, a mass organization necessary in the Marxist-Leninist view as it complemented the underground and subversive dimension of the party. This front organization advocated, following the Russian model, the alliance of the proletariat with the workers against the bourgeoisie. The existence of this front organization was short lived though as the state's secret police was aware of its ties with the local communists and implicitly with the Komintern. Thus in 1933, the year of the Grivita strike greatly infiltrated by communists 'professional revolutionaries', the Romanian government banned its activity.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 401.

The 1930's affected the communists just as it affected the socialists. Although tremendous sums of money were spent during the Popular Front campaigns against the emergence of fascism, the communists, in spite of their advocacy for disarmament and world peace, were further marginalized. If the 'preventive counterrevolutionary' right and the cultural politics of integral nationalism surpassed the communist discourse by gaining the acceptance of the masses, the Soviet officials did the rest. The Moscow trials or what became known as the Great Terror greatly affected the Romanian section. The old Guard, of the Rakovski epoch was purged, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu being one of the very few who survived.⁹²

The Hitler-Stalin pact and the dismantling of the Komintern, the local authoritarian regimes of the Second World War, which prompted the incarceration of all the local communists, all these contributed to the further alienation of the local leaders and activists. The party soon lost touch with the Romanian proletariat. If it was not for the Red Army after the end of the war, the less than one thousand local communists would have found it very hard, if not impossible to (re)organize themselves and to gain the support of the masses.⁹³

6. The perspectives on development promoted by Ș. Voinea and L. Pătrășcanu.

Voinea and Pătrășcanu found it hard to promote their ideas in this tense atmosphere. The Romanian intellectuals of Greater Romania were tormented by the prospects of the political unification process that followed the peace settlements of the Great War. As in the Polish case "culture was to be the medium of awakening, in all

⁹² Tănase, 408.

⁹³ Stelian Tănase, *Elite și societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej 1948-1965 (Elites and Society. The Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej Government 1948-1965)*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006), 56.

classes and regions, of national and civic consciousness, of attachment to a common homeland.”⁹⁴ The Romanian elite’s obsession with its place in the European culture⁹⁵ was now counterbalanced by the manifestations of the autochthonists. Discourses about the Romanian specificity, the Romanian soul etc, as K. Verdery argued were gaining considerable ground, especially during the 1930’s. In emphasizing the unique and special dimension of the Romanian spirit the existence of an organic European civilization is questioned.⁹⁶

As Chirot rightly observed, in Romania as every where in the region and on the continent, these cultural rightist stances created “a great deal of anti-modern nostalgic literature and some powerful rightist and nationalist political movements, but it produced very little social science”. Moreover “the logical conclusion of this kind of thinking was fascism”. And those who “cared more for precision in analysis than for poetry... intellectuals on the left, were left homeless”.⁹⁷ Both Voinea and Pătrășcanu were swimming, it seems, against the current. Their histories, as we shall see were trying to deconstruct the idiom of national essence. The perspectives they advocated depicted modern Romania as the result of the local capitalist development. Institutional centralization was needed in order to assure the efficiency of the new relations of production.

Pătrășcanu would even manipulate the idiom of the Romanian phenomenon in order to deconstruct the ideological basis of Greater Romania’s integral nationalism. He would talk about the “true 1848” and consequently would try to deliver a ‘true’ study of

⁹⁴ Jerzy Jedlicki, “Polish Concepts of Native Culture” in Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery, eds., 1.

⁹⁵ Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania. Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, (Archon Books, 1969), 339.

⁹⁶ Nae Ionescu quoted in Z. Ornea, *The Romanian extreme right: the 1930s*, (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1999), 75.

⁹⁷ Chirot, *Neoliberal and Social Democratic Theories of Development*, 36.

the Romanian phenomenon. He and Voinea would equally fail as they would bare the same stigma of 'rootlessness'. Their situation is comparable to that of their predecessors with the difference that during interwar Romania, the difficulty of promoting socialist views in an agrarian country combined with the integral nationalism of the mainstream cultural and political elite.

Chapter 2: Șerban Voinea and the heritage of C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea

For the Romanian social democrats and for Șerban Voinea in particular Dobrogeanu-Gherea's theories regarding the *newserfdom* and the Romanian *oligarchy* were essential. In this chapter I shall look at the way Voinea defended Gherea's theoretical heritage against Zeletin and the way this debate was later recovered by Daniel Chirot. I will prove that Chirot failed to see the gist of Voinea's argument. This approach, through Zeletin criticism and Chirot's recovering of the Zeletin-Voinea debate, will help me to better depict the nature of Voinea's *Contribution*. Towards the end of this chapter L. Pătrășcanu would be summoned to measure the significance of Voinea's writings. This will prepare the field for the next chapter that focuses on Patrascanu's writings and more specifically to his alternative to the socialist perspective.

This organization of the present chapter has further justifications. As Voinea also asserted, his *Contribution*, "has only the purpose of proving the inaccuracy of Zeletin's theories."⁹⁸ In this respect Chirot contended that "Voinea did not so much propose a counter-theory as reject Zeletin's arguments one by one" using Gherea's tools.⁹⁹ In other words if Patrascanu delivered a couple of independent works regarding modern Romania's capitalist development, Voinea limited his *Contribution* to the reiteration of Gherea's theories in a dispute with Zeletin. The defense was nevertheless innovative as Voinea formulated the political strategy of the Romanian Social-Democratic Party within a new historical context, that of Greater Romania. Patrascanu would formulate an

⁹⁸ Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 132.

⁹⁹ Chirot, *Neoliberal and Social-Democratic Theories*, 32.

identical strategy. In sum the structure of the present chaptered is mainly justified by Voinea's scarce contribution as a Marxist thinker.

The first part of the chapter will focus on Voinea's reiteration of Gherea's theories against Zeletin, and the way Chirot recovered this debate of the 1920's while the second half would analyze the political strategy drawn by Voinea and Patrascanu's response to it.

1. Șerban Voinea, Gherea's advocate against Ștefan Zeletin.

Voinea was not attracted by the theoretical dimension of Marxism as we have seen in the previous chapter but after the death of Gherea at the beginning of the 1920's he would become the most important advocate of his theories.

While in Paris as a delegate of the Romanian Federation of the Social-Democratic Parties he writes *Oligarchic Marxism – Contribution to the Problem of Capitalist Development in Romania*, in which he defends the heritage of Dobrogeanu-Gherea against the strong criticism of Ștefan Zeletin. In this section I shall argue that Chirot failed nevertheless to recover the main arguments of Voinea's *Contribution*. Thus, a closer look at Chirot's expose will implicitly lead to a proper understanding of Voinea's writings and of their impact on the political strategy of the Romanian social democrats of the interwar years so harshly criticized by Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu.

Șerban Voinea asserted that Zeletin "was doomed from the very beginning to constantly contradict himself, because he tried to comprise in a daring synthesis two entities that eliminate each other like water and fire: Marxism and the Oligarchy."¹⁰⁰ Zeletin's ideological history is not convincing. Voinea would argue that it is filled with

¹⁰⁰ Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 331.

contradictions and anachronisms supported by a misreading of not only Marx but also Gherea.

The object of contention between Zeletin and Gherea was the *oligarchy* grouped around the National-Liberal Party. For Gherea and later Voinea the oligarchy did not represent the genuine Romanian bourgeoisie as for Zeletin it did. As we have already seen, Romania's specific path of capitalist development, in the orbit of western capitalism, generated in time the creation of an oligarchy that after it reached a certain plateau it stopped being progressive and began to hinder the activity of the genuine Romanian bourgeoisie, which formed itself in the meantime. In order to dismiss such a claim, Zeletin understood that he had to deconstruct Gherea's entire argument which logically demonstrated the ominous role of the liberal oligarchy.

Zeletin failed nevertheless, in my opinion to justify the 'oligarchic rule' of the liberals and to deny the conflict of interests between the oligarchy and the 'genuine' Romanian bourgeoisie. As Voinea argued the conflict between the genuine bourgeoisie and the liberal oligarchy became more evident after the 1918 momentum when the bourgeois from the newly incorporated provinces joined the institutional configuration of the old kingdom. This is where Voinea continued the theories of his socialist master. Against Zeletin he contended that there was a conflict of interests between old kingdom's liberal oligarchy and the provincial bourgeoisie. Voinea thus identified the structural changes occurred after 1918 while Zeletin ignored them. This is what Chirot in his account of the debate, as we shall see, seemed to have ignored as well.

Zeletin accused Gherea of getting his cues from the reactionary Junimist formula 'forms without substance'. This is why Gherea failed in providing a scientific account of

our capitalist development. As an alternative, to justify the ‘historic role’ of our liberal oligarchy, Zeletin would concentrate his study on the analysis of the bourgeoisie¹⁰¹ and not on the analysis of our capitalist development per se. He analyzed the capitalist development through the analysis of the local bourgeoisie. Following this logic he failed in deconstructing Gherea’s theories.

In sum, Gherea examines our capitalist development and concludes that it is different from the western norm. The oligarchy is the product of this structural differences. Zeletin will start from the other end of the rope to join Gherea’s main argument somewhere at the middle. For him the oligarchy is a bourgeoisie and it has a ‘historical role’ in particular because of the belated capitalist development of Romania, triggered by the influence of western capitalism. As Voinea argued, Zeletin, although claimed to reject Gherea’s analysis he embraced it in order to legitimize the presence of the Romanian liberal oligarchy. It was the belated local capitalist development and its uneven relation with the west, Zeletin seemed to have contended, that rendered as necessary the presence of the liberal oligarchy.¹⁰²

Zeletin claimed to be the first historian to assume that the local capitalist development was triggered by the integration of the Principalities in the world’s economic market. He also claimed to be the first to assert that the 1848 revolution did not represent the initiation of the modernization process as this was initiated earlier by the 1921 treaty of Adrianopole.¹⁰³ Gherea, as Voinea observed, already proved that in his

¹⁰¹ In this sense Voinea asserted that “In the first place we should observe that Zeletin confounds in his study the *bourgeoisie*, which is one thing, and *capitalism*, which is another... he talks about ‘the invasion of our country by the foreign bourgeoisie’... in reality it is *capitalism* and not the *bourgeoisie* that invades us.”, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 339. Zeletin replied by asserting that “to follow the origin and development of our bourgeoisie means to follow the origin and development of Romanian capitalism.”, *Neoliberalism*, 7.

¹⁰² Zeletin, *Neoliberalism*, 11-16.

¹⁰³ Zeletin, *The Romanian Bourgeoisie*, 39-40.

Newserfdom. Zeletin completely ignored in Voinea's opinion Gherea's previous research on the matter. This allowed Zeletin to make no differences between the socialist and Junimist perspectives.¹⁰⁴

In Zeletin's opinion the 1848 revolutionaries were forced by objective circumstances to assume the central role of ruling the state and that of the "tutor of a bourgeoisie class". Moreover, internally, the revolutionaries had to fight against the social apathy of the peasantry and the other unarticulated social classes, unaware of their historical role. In the same time, economically they had to put up a fierce resistance against the expansive western capital. In the absence of a central authority they assumed this role and thus transformed itself in a modernizing elite, oligarchic in outlook due to the local specificity. The emergence of a state bureaucracy and of a military elite was instrumented as a necessary prerogative for the need to rationalize the economic and political relations with the more developed capitalist west.¹⁰⁵

It is within this context that the liberal oligarchy would work to achieve its ultimate role – the creation of a bourgeoisie class that would represent the Romanian national ruling class. On this particular point Zeletin was not clear as he sometimes presents the liberal oligarchy as only the "the tutor of the Romanian bourgeoisie" while other times the oligarchy is presented as the social base of the local bourgeoisie or even the Romanian bourgeoisie by excellence.¹⁰⁶ Gherea did not deny the historical necessity of the liberal elite, he even proved the progressive role of the 1848 revolutionaries but he made it clear that due to our belated capitalist development, due to objective reasons, this elite becomes somehow corrupted and assumes reactionary stances, by not tolerating the

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter I "A new comer" in Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 135-42.

¹⁰⁵ Zeletin, *The Romanian Bourgeoisie*, 164-71.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 165.

emergence of other bourgeois-liberal centers of power. The presence of this other centers is all the more obvious after the formation of Greater Romania.

2. Daniel Chirot and the recovery of the Zeletin-Voinea debate from the world-system perspective.

It is within this new historical context that Voinea's *Contribution* should be understood. Looking at how the debate Voinea-Zeletin was recovered by Daniel Chirot will help us understand the real stake of Voinea's writings. In my opinion Chirot did not properly recovered Voinea's concepts. As much as he praised Zeletin's theories he ignored or failed to understand the stake of Voinea's *Contribution*. Chirot projected into the past the dilemmas and apprehensions of his own time regarding social-change and development in peripheral societies.

From the position of the world-system developmental school Chirot asserts that there are three issues that deserve attention: "Are there similar stages of development through which all societies pass as they change from agrarian to industrially based economies(...)? Are open or closed strategies of economic development more suitable for developing countries?(...)" and "can democratic government work in developing societies?"¹⁰⁷ In the next pages Chirot would analyze Zeletin and Voinea's positions on each of the above mentioned crucial issues. In the end he concluded that "on the whole, Voinea understood Romanian history better than Zeletin. His political ideology is certainly more appealing than Zeletin's – at least to a typical Western sociologist. But it was not realistic."¹⁰⁸ Zeletin on the other hand although "twisted the historical evidence"¹⁰⁹, "correctly captured the political thrust of Neoliberalism, understood the

¹⁰⁷ Chirot, *Neoliberal and Social Democratic theories of Development*, 31.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 52.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 43.

need for economic closure, brilliantly analyzed the predominantly reactionary nature of Romania's literary culture, and presented a Marxist view of history.”¹¹⁰

Chirot's conclusions are based on wrong premises. As we shall see Voinea does not advocate in favor of an open economic strategy but is the enemy of the monopole exercised by the liberal oligarchy in the economic sphere in a historical context radically different from the realities of the old kingdom. Moreover Voinea's emphasis on democratic rule is justified by the need to offer a fair representation of this radically different realities. He talks about the rights of the peasantry and of the urban workers, of the national minorities and the bourgeoisies of the newly integrated provinces and their need to be properly represented by the central authorities. In sum, Serban Voinea does not oppose a closed economic strategy but the mercantilist policies carried out by the liberal oligarchy in its own benefit.

Chirot also asserts that “Voinea could only mock the possibility... that a bourgeois oligarchy could carry out a program of closure effectively. The Romanian bourgeoisie, said Voinea, should not be confused with dynamic capitalists. Rather tariffs and closure would permit the inefficient, corrupt Romanian capitalists not only to survive without improving their methods, but also to continue paying low wages...”¹¹¹ Voinea did not refer to the Romanian bourgeoisie but to the liberal oligarchy that should not be compared with the “dynamic capitalists”. This is the major difference with which Voinea operated. Where Zeletin saw a genuine Romanian bourgeoisie Voinea saw the liberal oligarchy, two entities which were not to be confused. A genuine Romanian bourgeoisie did exist but its actions were hindered by the liberal oligarchy. This is the main difference

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 50-51.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 45.

that Chirot seems to ignore. It is the positions of the liberal oligarchy that the socialists feared the “tariffs and closure” economic policies would perpetuate not of the Romanian bourgeoisie. This is why Voinea asks for a true democratic rule. Let us take a closer look at Voinea’s arguments.

The only section of his *Contribution* that deals with the difference between an open and a closed economic strategy is when he argues against Zeletin’s assumptions regarding the phase of mercantilism.¹¹² According to Voinea “Nothing from what Zeletin presented as ‘the phase of mercantilism’, is not mercantilist in nature.”¹¹³ If Zeletin is trying to prove its existence it is because this perspective “finds the agreement of Vintila Bratianu” and his National Liberal Party.¹¹⁴

Ignoring this distinction between the ‘genuine’ local bourgeoisie and the liberal oligarchy, Chirot can easily appreciate that Voinea “joined with romantic reactionaries in considering domestic capitalists a corrupt, artificial, worthless class.”¹¹⁵ He lingers in this error to argue that Voinea was “frightened” by the “softness” of a local, peripheral capitalist class and thus advocated the need for an open economic strategy. Needless to say that Voinea was “frightened”, if at all, not by the local capitalist class but by the liberal oligarchy which acted like a capitalist class but in effect hindered the development of the genuine capitalist class. A genuine bourgeoisie that existed nevertheless in opposition with the liberal oligarchy. As K. Jowitt also observed, “Serban Voinea noted that instead of making the financial capital available to industrialists, the Romanian

¹¹² Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 214-230.

¹¹³ Ibid., 230.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 242.

¹¹⁵ Chirot, *Neoliberal and Social Democratic Theories*, 45.

liberal oligarchy introduced ‘political despotism in the economic domain’ by treating the budget and state as its holding”’.¹¹⁶

The solution was seen by Șerban Voinea in the implementation of “the rule of law”. A legal state of affairs would eliminate the liberal oligarchy and thus strengthen the economic and political positions of the ‘genuine’ bourgeoisie. But Chirot again fails to measure the real stake of Voinea’s idea of democracy. As a representative of the world-system developmental school, Chirot believed otherwise. The whole passage deserves our attention as it will help us analyze one of the central points in Voinea’s writings:

Voinea’s approach to the issue of democracy was both morally decent and wrong. Voinea felt the workers and the peasants, if properly organized into a democratic state, could help solve Romania’s problems. If they were joined by the enfranchised ethnic minorities, they could build a stable coalition that would keep the peripheral status tolerable while Romania waited for socialism from Western Europe(...) Like Gherea, Voinea simply failed to follow the logic of his insights into the nature of peripheral societies far enough. Waiting for socialist revolutions in the West was one solution - and a comfortable one at that - but fantastic. A solution that did not depend on magic was economic closure and forced industrialization.¹¹⁷

The concept of ‘democracy’ is relegated by Chirot to the status of a “*minor issue*”¹¹⁸ (that troubles contemporary sociologists) in comparison with the other two, listed earlier. But for Voinea, who advocated Gherea’s ‘law’ and who analyzed the conflict between the liberal oligarchy and the emergent genuine Romanian bourgeoisie, the concept of ‘democracy’ was of a paramount importance. Only a real democracy would clear the way for the ‘genuine’ bourgeoisie. He thus called not only for the alliance of the workers with the peasantry but also for the collaboration with the bourgeois and

¹¹⁶ Jowitt, 16.

¹¹⁷ Chirot, *Neoliberal and Social Democratic Theories*, 50.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

against the all powerful liberal oligarchy. Before looking at Patrascanu's critique of the political strategy entailed by this theory let us pay closer attention to Voinea's writings.

Voinea rightly observed that Zeletin's study ignored the social and political configuration of modern Romania, significantly altered by the 1918 Great Union of the Old Regat with the other historical provinces.¹¹⁹ The radical agrarian reforms and the universal suffrage guaranteed after the war for all male citizens created the legal framework for the Romanian capitalist development. But the abuses of the liberal oligarchy did not reach an end even after this radical break with the past. Moreover Voinea argued that contrary to Zeletin's belief the liberal oligarchy of the old kingdom implemented the agrarian and electoral reforms only because it feared the spread of Bolshevism.¹²⁰ The liberal oligarchy, in Voinea's opinion, continued to falsify the elections and exercise a strict control over the industrial production by managing the financial sector. Zeletin ignored the economic configurations of the newly incorporated provinces and thus failed to understand the contribution of the social classes active there. It is exactly within this new historic context that Voinea would formulate his "morally decent and wrong" approach to the "issue of democracy", to use Chirot's words.

Zeletin was right in arguing that only an oligarchy can conduct the social-change and development process in a peripheral society, although it is hard to make sense of Zeletin's need to "twist the facts" in order to justify such a policy. Instead of rejecting Gherea's paradigm altogether it would have been wiser for him to just formulate a different solution given the 'monstrous system' described by Gherea. Because it is precisely on this point that Gherea fails to rise himself to the heights of his sound

¹¹⁹ Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 373.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 369.

analysis. As Henry L. Roberts implied it is somehow illogic to think of the Romanian capitalist development to be a ‘specific’ one, that is different from the western model, and argue in the same time that the remedy can nevertheless come from a western like solution. In Roberts opinion “Gherea is responsible for the Social Democrats’ unrealistic assumption that the peculiar form of oligarchic, bureaucratic capitalism which dominated Romania was an accidental feature on the body politic, to be removed like a wart.”¹²¹ But the context is changed after the 1918 moment and Voinea is right in taking into account the contribution of the new provinces and thus talk about the reactionary role of the liberal oligarchy.

Voinea believed that the new provinces bring a significant contribution at the social level. The peasantry of the incorporated territories, unlike its counterpart in the old kingdom, were economically and politically in a better situation. The same could be said about the working class and the bourgeoisie of the new provinces influenced as they were by the activity of the Austrian-Hungarian socialists. At a political level the parties of the new provinces, Voinea argued, were not determined to tolerate a state of affairs in which they would be the subjects of the old kingdom’s oligarchic rule. In a like manner could be regarded the situation of the national minorities which are unwilling to tolerate the nationalist manifestations emanated from the center.¹²²

The solution proposed by Voinea was seen in a “constitutional regime” that would lead to the “democratization of the country”.¹²³ At stake was also the capitalist development in Romania since the thoroughly development of capitalism can only take

¹²¹ Roberts, 280-81.

¹²² Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 373-74.

¹²³ Ibid., 374.

place in a liberal and democratic state of affairs.¹²⁴ The role of the Romanian social-democrats was thus to ease the way for the complete development of local capitalism and to prepare the working class for the future advent of the socialist society. Until then, Voinea emphasized, the collaboration of the Romanian proletariat with the peasantry, the national minorities and the bourgeoisie represented a necessary prerequisite. This strategy would be later advocated by Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu who would also reject Zeletin's arguments that labeled the peasantry and any socialist activity as reactionary.

Chirot's account of the Zeletin-Voinea debate is also misleading regarding Voinea's theory about the socialist revolution in the West. For Voinea as for Gherea, a socialist revolution in a backward country was suicidal. Despite the revisionist theories deployed in the need to understand the Romanian capitalist development, Gherea remained true to the thesis of classical Marxism – a society needs to go through a few necessary stages before undergoing a socialist revolution, otherwise it might “develop regressively, towards medieval society, towards primitive communism.”

In the socialist perspective promoted by Voinea little attention, if at all, was paid to whether Romania should follow a closed or rather an open economic strategy. Nowhere did Voinea argue against the economic closure and rapid industrialization just as he did not argue in favor of an open economic strategy. He just rejects Zeletin's arguments regarding the liberal oligarchy as for him the liberal oligarchy was “truly reactionary” and could not in the least be regarded as “bourgeois-democratic” formation.¹²⁵ Voinea rejected, as already mentioned, the overall control exercised by the liberal oligarchy and the mercantilist policies that could have only benefited its clients.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 349.

¹²⁵ Voinea, *Oligarchic Marxism*, 346.

In sum, for Voinea and the socialists the issues regarding the best economic strategy were secondary. What preoccupied them was the need to eliminate the liberal oligarchy or at least to counterbalance its influence. A large union with the peasantry and the bourgeoisie was the political strategy at hand. More so as the right to vote represented now a significant weapon in the hands of the peasantry, a social class which constituted the great majority of the country.¹²⁶ Within this new historical context the task of the socialists was the organization of a democratic regime in order to guarantee the proper capitalist development of Romania. By the beginning of the Second World War the SDP randomly collaborated with the bourgeoisie, specifically with the National-Peasant Party and even tacitly consented to the authoritarian regime of Carol II. Important leaders of the party also closely collaborated with the regime.

3. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu against the disciple of C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea

After we saw the political strategy formulated by Voinea in his dispute with Zeletin it would be interesting to see what was the outcome of that strategy formulated towards the end of the 1920s. Lucretiu Patrascanu is now called to help us fully grasp the socialist perspective on development and social-change promoted by Serban Voinea.

The communist leader formulated the same questions when confronted with the socialist theory and practice as Voinea did with regards to Zeletin's works. Patrascanu was not sure if the political strategy of the socialists imposed itself naturally and out of necessity given their interpretation of the local capitalist development or if the theory was just a construct that was called to justify an already envisioned opportunist tactic.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Ibid., 369.

¹²⁷ Pătrășcanu, *Basic Problems*, 267.

Either way Dobrogeanu-Gherea is to blame for the shameful outcome of the political strategy envisioned by Voinea.¹²⁸

In Patrascanu's opinion Gherea's research was not correct as "it misinterpreted the relation between the economic fond – the nature of the production relations and of trade, and the superstructure of the Romanian society."¹²⁹ As we shall also see in the next section, Patrascanu did not embrace the 'forms without substance' formula because he believed that capitalist modes of production and trade were already a reality at the time when the western institutional model was adopted by the 1848 revolutionaries.¹³⁰ Thus for Patrascanu the forms had substance from the very beginning.

If we are to talk in terms of 'forms without substance', Patrascanu contended, it is because at the time of the adoption of the western institutional model our capitalist development was still going through its first phases. A real bourgeoisie was not yet formed but this is not to say that an oligarchy, a special class, was formed instead. "In fact" Pătrășcanu asserted, "the whole discussion that revolves around the concept of oligarchy is based on a confusion: a confusion between the ruling class and its political apparatus." For the communist leader the oligarchy is nothing but the "political apparatus" of the Romanian bourgeoisie.¹³¹

He nevertheless stated that a distinction has to be made between the liberal bourgeoisie and the one represented by the National Peasant Party, the socialists' main ally. "The liberal bourgeoisie is interested in the all powerful monopolist capital and of the great finance, which it possesses. The national-peasant bourgeoisie who controls

¹²⁸ Ibid., 268.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 264.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 265.

¹³¹ Ibid.

neither the great banks, nor the commanding centers of the national economy, fights on the capitalist arena and within capitalism against the positions occupied by the monopolist capital.”¹³² Patrascanu’s arguments are rather confusing. He seems to accept Voinea’s argument that the liberal oligarchy controls the main decision centers but he deliberately stresses the nature of the fight waged by the national-peasant bourgeoisie against it: “in the capitalist arena and within the capitalist system”.

For Pătrășcanu that was just a fight between two factions of the local bourgeoisie, and not one that opposed a ‘genuine bourgeoisie’ to a liberal oligarchy. The national-peasant faction deceptively adopted democratic and progressive stances in order to gain the support of the urban proletariat and of the peasantry, but “the democratization of the country was not the work of this faction of the bourgeoisie, for the simple fact that the bourgeoisie alone can not promote(...) democratic life forms...”¹³³ But Pătrășcanu was wrong in revising the socialist perspective. It was true that Voinea, drawing on Gherea’s heritage, despised Bolshevik tactics and accepted the parliamentary game, and in this sense his party could be considered reformist but what he had in mind was only a temporary collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the oligarchy. Pătrășcanu would advocate the same tactic in his writings.

Voinea did not believe that the bourgeoisie can be democratic in its essence. But he deemed it necessary to collaborate with the other “faction of the bourgeoisie”, in order to rule out the liberal oligarchy. Because of the weak proletarian base of the party, and due to the subversive character of the Communist Party which made it impossible for the socialists to work with, an alliance could only be imagined with the strong National

¹³² Ibid., 269.

¹³³ Ibid., 270.

Peasant Party. More so as this party was representing those new social forces of the most important province – Transylvania. Even in this context, Patrascanu exaggerates the degree of the collaboration between the two parties. Only during the 1928 elections did the socialists sign an electoral agreement with the National Peasant Party.

The confidence placed by the social-democrats in the democratic stances of the National-Peasant Party, the belief that the bourgeoisie, as a social class, could be truly democratic, are all the results of the artificial construct of an oligarchy. Moreover, what seems to have determined Pătrășcanu to condemn the Romanian social-democracy was the collaboration of some socialist leaders with the regime of Carol II, the “enlighten despot”.¹³⁴ At this point Pătrășcanu touched on a sensitive issue. Important leaders of the SDP did collaborate with the royal dictatorship of Carol II. And although they were expelled from the party there were reasons to believe that the party itself supported, through its press, the regime of Carol II.¹³⁵

Pătrășcanu’s arguments are not convincing. He does not seem to criticize the political strategy drawn by Voinea but the fact that the socialists were not determined in implementing that strategy throughout the interwar years. “Only one just theoretical formulation, but without practical consequences” Pătrășcanu wrote with regards to the political strategy formulated by Serban Voinea. Patrascanu believed in the “indisputable truth” advocated by Voinea regarding the necessary alliance between the working class and the peasantry. But the social-democrats, although they managed to formulate a they failed in organizing the two social classes. If the socialists, in practice closely followed their theoretical precepts based on “wrong premises” (by collaborating with the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 267.

¹³⁵ Radu, 259.

bourgeoisie, or even with the dictatorship all in order to rule away the liberal oligarchy), in the single correct theoretical point, the practice failed to follow the theory, Patrascanu ironically asserted – “the social-democrat party(...) diminished the force of its unique theoretical truth...”¹³⁶

In sum, Voinea’s *Contribution* to the study of social-change and development in pre-communist Romania, despite its polemic character managed to reframe Gherea’s theories within the new historical context of Greater Romania. He is right in observing the fragile nature of Zeletin’s ideological construct. The study not of the capitalist development of modern Romania but of the emergence and evolution of a local bourgeoisie, of a social class in other words, helped Zeletin to state the perfect identity with the western case. Voinea made an even stronger case in arguing that Romania’s “prospects in the 1920s”, to use Chirot’s words, have to be considered in the light of the structural changes that occurred in the Romanian society after the 1918 episode.

Voinea would have scored even higher probably had he managed to thoroughly build on this above mentioned issue. On the contribution of the newly incorporated provinces he significantly touches only in the last chapter of his book. An in depth analysis of the social and economic impact of the new acquired regions on the configuration of the old kingdom, would have strengthen his argument against Zeletin’s criticism. The liberal oligarchy would have more clearly appeared as an entity that hindered the local capitalist development. Moreover it would have made it much more easier for Chirot’s postwar analysis to identify the important issues in Voinea’s *Contribution*. Chirot’s way of recovering this interwar local debate represents nevertheless the proof that a better

¹³⁶ Pătrășcanu, *Basic Problems*, 270.

conceptualization of this forgotten disputes over Romania's processes of social-change and development is necessary.

As for Pătrășcanu's considerations regarding the socialist perspective advocated by Voinea, they do not fail altogether in being convincing. He is correct in identifying the weakness of the socialist perspective that revolved around the concept of the oligarchy. The later sociological considerations regarding the *oligarchy* would side with Pătrășcanu in stating that the existence of a so-called liberal oligarchy could not be proved.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, his arguments against Dobrogeanu-Gherea's 'law' and the political strategy drawn by Voinea from it, are not convincing. As we shall see in the next section Pătrășcanu, in constructing his own ideological history, would work within the same paradigm as the one employed by the socialists.

¹³⁷ Henri H. Stahl, *Gânditori și curente de istorie socială românească (Thinkers and Trends of Romanian social history)*, (Bucharest: University of Bucharest Press, 2001), 232-34.

Chapter 3: Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu against C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea's theories and Șerban Voinea's political strategy.

In this chapter I shall confront Pătrășcanu interpretative framework with that of Gherea, advocated by Voinea. It will be shown that Pătrășcanu operated within the same interpretative paradigm. The most obvious proof was the almost identical analysis of the agrarian relations of precommunist Romania. Since the interpretative paradigm was similar the political strategy asserted from the theory was also similar. In other words if at a theoretical level Patrascanu embraces Gherea's assumptions at the practical level he comes close to Voinea's *Contribution*. Differences did exist nevertheless and this is where Voinea will be called to help us understand the origins of the perspective promoted by Patrascanu.

Thus, in the first part of this chapter I will focus on Patrascanu's ideological history of modern Romania and emphasize the resemblance with the socialist perspective, also touching upon the agrarian sector of precommunist Romania. This will allow us to move to the analysis of Patrascanu's political strategy, at which point the resemblance with the strategy promoted by Voinea is striking. It will be shown nevertheless that as Voinea declared Patrascanu was emulating Lenin's study of the Russian case. Henry L. Roberts analysis of Lenin and Gherea's views on belated capitalist development, will help us understand the nature of the differences, both theoretical and practical, that existed, despite the numerous similarities, between the socialist and communist perspectives. As Roberts concluded in his insightful analysis "Pătrășcanu relied upon the ideas of Lenin of 1900" in formulating his program.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Roberts, 292.

1. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and the advent of capitalist development in the Romanian Principalities.

The communist leader considered, as previously mentioned, that Gherea's 'law' was a "simplistic analysis of the influence that the western model had on the local social and economic realities". Moreover it was "insufficient" because it "ignored" or "underestimated" our capitalist development by focusing mainly on the impact that the western model had on the local base, on the relation between the "forms and the substance".¹³⁹ Moreover he blamed Gherea for the political strategy formulated by Voinea during the 1920's.

In the communist perspective the structural reforms instrumented by the revolutionary liberals were not reactionary in the sense imagined by the socialists. The agrarian reforms of the 1864 and 1921 were radical reforms which fostered the local capitalist development despite their reactionary traits. In other words the reforms did not, as Gherea believed, halted the local capitalist development by institutionalizing a *newserfdom* regime. How did Patrascanu proved this? By arguing that the advent of capitalism in the Principalities occurred at an earlier date; in the last two decades of the eighteenth century more precisely as a consequence of the Great Powers' economic expansion. The most affected sector at that time was the agrarian one. The serfdom regime replaced the feudal one. Within this context, the reforms initiated by the liberals after 1848, although reactionary, gradually dismantled the serfdom. Let us pay a closer look to Pătrășcanu's theoretical construct.

The treaty of Adrianopole signed in 1829, so unanimously regarded as the date when the capitalist development was initiated in the Principalities, "only continued,

¹³⁹ Pătrășcanu, *Basic Problems*, 264-65.

accelerated and extended the economic and social transformation that started long before and which already determined significant structural changes.”¹⁴⁰ As a proof Pătrășcanu mentions the 1921 revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu and the social unrest that followed it. For him this episode proves that beyond the impact played by the influence exercised on the local realities by the foreign capital, there were “internal forces – economics and social – that, before everything, determined the course taken by the Romanian people in the last one hundred years.”¹⁴¹ With this argument Pătrășcanu tries to shed light on the rather confusing socialist perspective which contended with the Junimea circle that there were neither objective nor subjective reasons to adopt the western model. Pătrășcanu alludes at the existence of the necessary conditions but he soon contradicts himself as he explains that it was the commercial expansion of the Great Powers, in search of raw materials that triggered the capitalist transformation in the Danube Principalities.¹⁴²

To strengthen his arguments of a genuine, autonomous capitalist development though, Pătrășcanu also identifies the beginnings of local industry, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moreover, as Zeletin before him, he tries to prove the initiation of a new historical era by arguing that at in the same period commercial and usury capital became reality.¹⁴³ The 1821 revolution represents in Pătrășcanu’s opinion the natural result of these transformations.

The structure of the Romanian society at that time was unable nevertheless to initiate a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Pătrășcanu talks about the absence of the “objective conditions”: “in a backward society, in which the production forces are still at

¹⁴⁰ Pătrășcanu, *A century*, 19.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43-9.

the beginning, where the pre-capitalist elements still dominate... the social elements that would formulate... the objectives of a bourgeois revolution, will lack the necessary force and consistency.”¹⁴⁴ But the prerogatives of 1821 were reiterated Pătrășcanu believes, by the 1848 revolution. Pătrășcanu entitles his section dealing with the 1848 momentum “The True 1848” holding that the official historiography tried to “destroy especially the revolutionary ideals and principles – without doubt a bourgeois revolution – but which nevertheless symbolized the fighting purposes, afterwards advocated by every local progressive movements and nowadays partially inscribed on the revolutionary flag of the proletariat and its allies.”¹⁴⁵

In his account of the 1848 revolution Pătrășcanu raised the same critique as Gherea¹⁴⁶ to the argument promoted by Junimea according to which the 1848 revolutionaries were only emulating the ideals of the French 1848 revolutionaries. Also arguing against Lovinescu, Pătrășcanu asserted that the „1848 revolution was the expression of a social conflict and not at all, only the echo of some humanitarian ideologies without an economic substrate’ as Lovinescu argues.”¹⁴⁷ Hence, in his opinion the truth about 1848 only reveals itself if analyzed in a close relation with the 1821 revolution: „the contradictions signaled by the 1821 revolution grew stronger after a quarter of a century as the forces wiling to eliminate them also increased. This is why the 1848 represents nothing else but the amplified continuation of the 1821.”¹⁴⁸

As in the case of the 1821 revolution Pătrășcanu’ is forced to admit that “the absence of a fundamental economic conflict between the Romanian bourgeoisie – in the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 112.

¹⁴⁶ Gherea, *Newserfdom*, 30-1.

¹⁴⁷ Pătrășcanu, *A century*, 163.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

structure and form possessed at that time – and the landlords”, in other words the absence of significant differences between the two conflicting ideologies generates the failure of the 1848 revolutionaries’ project: “the Romanian bourgeoisie at 1848 was progressive in character but not revolutionary in the real sense.”¹⁴⁹ Thus what followed was a compromise between the revolutionaries and the landlords that resulted in a limited reformation of the *ancien regime* that led to the formation of a hybrid institutional framework between 1848-1866. This regime will survive up to the beginning of the Great War, and as Gherea also believed, “bares the stamp of a hybrid mixing of feudal remains and bourgeois-capitalist institutions.”¹⁵⁰ Pătrășcanu also reiterates another feature of Gherea’s ‘law’ when he asserts that “the transformations that the revolutionary forces failed to impose from the bottom to the top, through adequate means, especially radical, were imposed from top to bottom through the gentle reformation way in the lukewarm atmosphere of the compromise, that took place between the men of the old and those of the new regime.”¹⁵¹ The communist leader then comes even closer to the socialist theories by focusing on the agrarian sector, as the most affected one of the economy by the 1848 compromise.

2. Pătrășcanu’s analysis of the agrarian sector.

The communist leader contended that the ideological camps that led to the compromise were directly interested in promoting limited reforms in the agrarian sector. In Patrascanu’s opinion the main feature of the agrarian system was “the coexistence of the capitalist modes of production with the relations of productions of the pre-capitalist

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 162.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 175.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 174.

past.”¹⁵² The radical reforms of the postwar years reflected the specific “opportunism” of the bourgeoisie. Even after those reforms of 1920-1922 the “past was not eradicated... as significant remains of the past continue to subsist.”¹⁵³

The main cause of the actual agrarian problem was thus formulated by the communist theoretician: “between the active production forces active in the Romanian agriculture and the relations of production, there are strong contradictions, a deep conflict, which renders permanent a latent state of crises, hampering the technical progress, keeping alive backward economic and social forces, subjecting the peasantry in its entirety to a regime of acute misery.”¹⁵⁴ Gherea’s interpretation was almost identical.

In his monumental work the socialist leader wrote: “We have a double agrarian regime, an unusual regime: on the one hand capitalist, on the other similar to a serfdom... in other words a ridiculous regime, absurd, unbearable... a monstrous regime... that if it existed for half a century, it is only because it presents extraordinary advantages for our economically dominating class.”¹⁵⁵ “The main feature of the Romanian agriculture?”, Patrascanu rhetorically asks his reader: “It consist of the combination between the capitalist modes of production and of the pre-capitalist past... the coexistence in the agricultural sector of two kinds of modes of production, belonging to two different historical epochs, this is what contributes to the specificity of the Romanian economy in relation to the economy of the western capitalist countries.”¹⁵⁶

What were the solutions proposed by Patrascanu? We have seen so far that his interpretation of the capitalist development and social-change of modern Romania was

¹⁵² Idem, *Basic Problems*, 97.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Gherea, *Newserfdom*, 96-7.

¹⁵⁶ Pătrășcanu, *Basic Problems*, 97.

similar to that contained in the socialist perspective. It would be interesting to see if his solutions are also similar?

3. *Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and the bourgeois-democratic revolution.*

In the previous chapter we touched upon the fact that the socialist political strategy formulated by Șerban Voinea was considered as valuable by Pătrășcanu. As in the socialist perspective Pătrășcanu argued that under the leadership of the proletariat the peasantry with the progressive and democratic bourgeoisie is called to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution initiated by the 1921 and 1848 social upheavals. Thus the proletariat represented the main agent of change because “the existing conditions that oppose in Romania the working class to the capitalist class, are promoting the proletariat as the main social force able to set off a fundamental change of the actual economic, social and political regime.”¹⁵⁷ But Pătrășcanu did not have a socialist revolution in mind but a bourgeois-democratic one.

The structural changes considered by the working class are not socialist due to the “historical realities” and the “existing conditions”. Pătrășcanu’s political strategy is the following: “the abolishment... of the reactionary institutions and legislation... the political, military and agrarian amnesty, the complete expropriation of the large landed property... the radical abolishment of all the working relations which still bare a serfdom feature... a democratic government... the abolishment of all measures directed towards the national minorities... a close friendship with the Soviet Union...”¹⁵⁸ The structural changes are not socialist in character, as Patrascanu immediately contended – “they

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 275.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 280-82.

represent nothing else than the realization of the claims and the slogans of the 1848 revolution, largely democratic, abandoned by the Romanian bourgeoisie.”¹⁵⁹

For the implementation of these solutions the proletariat is called to assume the leading role. If the alliance with the peasantry is necessary to eliminate the feudal remains in agriculture, the alliance with certain urban social groups, including parts of the bourgeoisie is also justified: “the proletariat... will certainly find allies in the fight for the structural democratization of the Romanian society also among the lines of the small urban bourgeoisie and the social categories closest to it.”¹⁶⁰ As in the socialist perspective, Pătrășcanu does not exclude the alliance with the bourgeoisie. He is nevertheless prompt in recognizing the misunderstanding that may arise from the collaboration of the bourgeoisie and thus justifies its political strategy by underlying the ‘specific’ nature of modern Romania: “it is a characteristic of our country – a characteristic shared with all the backward countries – where the duties and historical responsibilities of a social class must be carried out by another class. Where the bourgeoisie abandoned its own revolution, the proletariat is constrained to resume the historical process, and to its hegemony to perform, to hasten and to complete the historical process abandoned in 1848.”¹⁶¹

The alliance with the peasantry and with parts of the bourgeoisie is justified by the lack of “objective conditions, necessary for a socialist transformation.”¹⁶² The resemblance between Voinea and Pătrășcanu’s perspectives regarding the political strategy is obvious. However, as we have already seen, Pătrășcanu rejected the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 284.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 295.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 285.

¹⁶² Ibid.

explanation contended by Gherea in the formulation of a ‘specific law’. His obstinacy is at least illogical. Although he admits the existence of “strong contradictions” in the agrarian sector and the reactionary nature of the heirs of the 1848 revolution, the need to organize the peasantry and sections of the bourgeoisie under the rule of the proletariat in order to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution (and not to bring about the socialist revolution), Pătrășcanu does not embrace the ‘specific law’ of Gherea. He offers an almost identical interpretation of the local capitalist development and formulates a similar political strategy, but refuses the main explanation that, in the socialist perspective rendered everything intelligible – Gherea’s ‘specific law’. Voinea would offer a key to the understanding of this attitude, paradoxical for us today, embraced by Pătrășcanu.

In his radio intervention in favor of Pătrășcanu rehabilitation, Voinea touched upon two important things: the role played by the ex-communist leader during the Act of the 23rd of August and the theoretical writings of L. Pătrășcanu. Adjacently Voinea also touched upon the role played by Pătrășcanu in the Communist Party of Romania. It needs to be underlined that Voinea was trying to argue against the accusation raised at that time by the Romanian communists, led by Gheorghiu-Dej, against Pătrășcanu, within the context of destalinization. In his intervention Voinea argued that Pătrășcanu was convicted and executed under false accusations in 1954. As a proof Voinea depicted Pătrășcanu as a true Leninist both at a theoretical and at a practical level. Since this was the real stake of Voinea’s interpretation the theoretical writings of Pătrășcanu are dismissed rather lapidary. However some of Voinea’s remarks are useful in helping us understand Pătrășcanu’s theoretical and strategic attitudes.

In the following section we will verify Voinea's assertions regarding Pătrășcanu's works by turning to Roberts comparative analysis of Gherea and Lenin's writings. We will see that Pătrășcanu was drawing on Lenin in formulating his perspective. Since Gherea and Lenin's expertise on belated development was similar it will help us understand the paradoxical attitude of Pătrășcanu who adopted socialist theories but remained nevertheless a communist.

4. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu as the disciple of Lenin.

In his intervention at Radio Free Europe in favor of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's case, Șerban Voinea contended that Pătrășcanu's theories represent "an alignment to the Leninist thesis". Pătrășcanu's "main works are translating his need to present the communist phenomenon in Romania, as a normal result of the our country's development." By using the Leninist framework Pătrășcanu tried to "reverse the theory, unanimously accepted by the local sociologists, that the Romanian evolution was influenced by that of the industrial West."¹⁶³

Voinea was right in his criticism. In order to deconstruct Gherea's logic, Pătrășcanu needed to demonstrate that the western model was necessary not only because the Principalities were caught in the orbit of the more developed western states. Therefore Pătrășcanu argued that the capitalist development in the Romanian Principalities started even earlier than the date mentioned by the socialists. This allowed him to provide a slightly different interpretation of the structural processes that occurred in the nineteenth century. The "internal forces" advocated by Gherea, that triggered the capitalist development were augmented in Pătrășcanu's history to prove that the local 'substance'

¹⁶³ CC of RCP Archive, 331-32.

was somehow acutely demanding the western ‘forms’. Thus he could also refute the junimist assumption, also shared by Gherea up to a certain degree, that the adoption of the western institutional framework was unnecessary. On these assumptions the communist theoretician would picture the progressive role of the proletariat in contrast with the opportunistic outlook of the bourgeoisie.

The Junimist idiom was one thing he had to radically condemn. He thus pushed the advent of the capitalist development in Romania further back in time than the treaty of Adrianopole. By the time of the liberal reforms initiated by the 1848 generation the Romanian society was prepared at a grass root level to ask for and later to welcome the structural changes. But Pătrășcanu failed in sustaining his main argument. In the description of the post 1848 epoch he took his cues from Gherea’s paradigm in the need to explain the contradictions of our capitalist development. He then embraced the same political strategy as the one advocated by Voinea, who he condemned not for being wrong but for failing to implement it. However, although social-democrat in outlook it was indeed Lenin’s theories and especially his political attitude that Pătrășcanu was trying to emulate. Henry L. Roberts’ analysis will prove helpful in understanding Pătrășcanu’s case.

We have seen in the introduction that Gherea was not the only member of the Second International to revise the thesis of classical Marxism in order to understand the social-change and developmental processes of non-western countries, specifically of agrarian societies of south-eastern Europe. Lenin’s interpretation of the Russian case was not altogether different from that of Gherea’s. Henry L. Roberts analyzed in a mirror like manner their cases and asserted that “it is in the light of the uncertainties and

contradictions of Social-Democratic agrarian policy that Lenin's dynamic interpretation of Marxism is seen in all originality and paradoxicality."¹⁶⁴ A look at Lenin's "dynamic interpretation" of the agrarian problem will ease our understanding of Pătrășcanu's theories and political praxis.

Roberts rightly observed that Lenin was very clear in his need to "urge the spread of capitalism in the village precisely because it would intensify the class struggle". Thus Lenin argued about the necessity to "support small property not against capitalism but against feudalism... Speaking generally, it is not the business of the Social-Democrats to develop, encourage, fortify, still less multiply small-scale farming or small property... But in this case we want to support small property not against capitalism but against feudalism."¹⁶⁵ Lenin is even clearer about his intentions and the steps that must be followed when he contends that „There is nothing more erroneous than the opinion that the nationalization of land has something in common with socialism... the economic significance of nationalization does not by any means lie where it is very often sought for. It does not lie in the fight against the bourgeoisie relationships... but in the fight against feudal relationship."¹⁶⁶

Lenin believed, as Gherea also did, that Russia is a backward country that has to fight against its feudal remains before undertaking a socialist revolution: „first with the *whole* of the peasantry against the monarchy, the landlords, the medieval regime (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). Then with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited against capitalism,

¹⁶⁴ Roberts, p. 281.

¹⁶⁵ Lenin quoted in Ibid., 282-83.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 284.

including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one.”¹⁶⁷ Let us now return to Pătrășcanu’s arguments.

Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu made it very clear when shaping his political strategy, discussed earlier, that „none of this programmatic issues represent a socialist solution. Neither can it be socialist the expropriation of the great property nor the distribution of land to the peasantry... the achievements of all this points from our programme would only accelerate the democratization of our social life.”¹⁶⁸ Regarding the next steps Pătrășcanu operated with the same Leninist accuracy. During the first stage the organization by the proletariat of those social forces able to organize the complete dismantlement of the old regime, is highly recommendable as only “by eliminating this past can the premises of the future development become reality. This past represents... the elimination of the great property and the remains of the serfdom.”¹⁶⁹

After the achievement of this objective – the end of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in preparing the socialist revolution the proletariat would have to convince the peasantry to support the process of collectivization. “will the Romanian proletariat be able to convince the peasantry of the benefits of socialism?” Patrascanu asks his reader. His answer is affirmative since the peasantry “can measure with its own eyes the accomplishments of socialism in the soviet Union...” But to reach this stage the Leninist tactics have to be followed.

Pătrășcanu was willing just as Lenin was to foster and encourage the division between poor, middle and rich peasants as this would eventually lead to the abolition of the large property and implicitly to the eradication of the feudal remains. Moreover the

¹⁶⁷ Patrascanu, *Basic Problems*, 286.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 285-6.

class struggle in the village would intensify gradually with the penetration of capitalism in the village.¹⁷⁰ Pătrășcanu argued against the socialist perspective and emphasized that despite “the limited land reforms” of the last decades and thus of the still evident feudal remains in the Romanian village, capitalism modes of production did “infiltrate – deep in the agrarian sector of the Romanian economy.”¹⁷¹ In this regards Pătrășcanu advocated the need to support the peasant uprisings first against the landlords and then, under the leadership of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Pătrășcanu was eager to show that in the past the social democrats have failed to formulate such a policy. Another proof of their opportunism was thus evident in their attitude towards the peasant uprisings that occurred in the old kingdom.

In analyzing the Romanian peasant uprisings of the 1880-1907 interval, Pătrășcanu believed that they should be compared, in order to be understood, with the Russian case and not the western model. As in the Russian case “our agrarian upheavals contain a progressive character and thus anticipate the future transformations of the entire Romanian society.”¹⁷² And this is why they should have been encouraged and further supported by the Romanian social democrats. Instead, Pătrășcanu argued, the socialists did not instrument the union of the proletariat with the peasantry and thus missed a good opportunity to take advantage of the “highly conflicting class struggle” that emerged between the peasantry and the landlords.

Pătrășcanu blamed the socialist movements who were led by “a couple of intellectuals raised at the school of the Second International, in her opportunistic and

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., *A century*, 244-45. Also see Chapter II, “Old and new aspects of the agrarian problem” in Ibid., *Basic Problems*, 62-116.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., *A century*, 243.

¹⁷² Ibid., 248.

decadent epoch.”¹⁷³ Just as Lenin have supported the 1905 revolutionary upheavals so did Pătrășcanu in the case of the 1907 episode. Roberts comparison of Lenin and Gherea’s attitudes towards these social conflicts is revealing: “Gherea saw the 1907 peasant uprising as a tragedy, whose roots lay deep in the conflicts of Rumanian society; he hoped by his policy to rid Rumania of such dreadful and essentially negative *jacqueries*. Lenin, on the other hand, while aware of the retrograde elements in a peasant revolt, recognized it as a powerful tool for advancing the cause of the revolution.”¹⁷⁴

After the success of such conflicts which will also foster the end of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it is the duty of the proletariat to convince his former ally to give up the land he gained fighting against hi landlord. Drawing on Engels, Patrascanu asserts that the landed peasantry must be convinced not by force but by example and under the provision of a social aid.”¹⁷⁵ With this revolutionary strategy, prescribed to be undertaken in two times: the proletariat would first have to go “with the whole of the peasantry against the monarchy, the landlords, the medieval regime” to end the bourgeois-democratic revolution and then with “the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers” to foster the emergence of the socialist revolution, as Lenin prescribed. These processes were justified in theory by Patrascanu as we have already seen.

Voinea dismissed Pătrășcanu interpretation. The socialist leader argued that Patrascanu was wrong in considering that the advent of capitalism in the Principalities predates the 1829 momentum. In his opinion, Pătrășcanu confounded, “as many before him” the pre-capitalist modes of production with the capitalist ones. The capital raised

¹⁷³ Ibid., 264.

¹⁷⁴ Roberts, pp. 282-83.

¹⁷⁵ Pătrășcanu, *Basic Problems*, 285.

from commerce and usury, are not specific only to the capitalist era. It is the industrial capital, Voinea argued, that gives the real features of the capitalist era (“that represents the new factor, unknown in the past”) and this becomes a reality only long after the 1821 momentum. Hence Voinea concluded that “capitalism is insufficiently described by Pătrășcanu, and in this respect also Pătrășcanu proves to be a faithful disciple of Lenin”.¹⁷⁶

Pătrășcanu did not manage to gain preeminence within the realm of his party through his theoretical writings. On the contrary because of his status, a published intellectual and a popular figure he was unanimously regarded by his comrades “as a foreign body” in the party.¹⁷⁷ But as Voinea asserted and as we have seen so far, Patrascanu wrote as a faithful Leninist believer. Moreover he tried through his writings more than any of his comrades to theoretically justify the revolutionary role of the Romanian proletariat and thus implicitly to legitimize the existence of the Communist Party. For this he knew that he had to deconstruct Gherea’s theories. He failed in doing so. As we have seen in this thesis the two perspectives on capitalist development in Romania, and the solutions drawn from them, were not different.

It would be an exaggeration to argue that Pătrășcanu sacrifice ‘the sociological acumen’ of the Romanian left. As Roberts contended Pătrășcanu “was not Moscow-trained, and while his writings were based upon Lenin, they have a certain Western look... Much of his analysis of the Rumanian agrarian problem is sound and illuminating.”¹⁷⁸ As we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis we also have reasons

¹⁷⁶ CC of RCP Archive, 332-33.

¹⁷⁷ Ana Pauker quoted in Tanase, *The Clients*, 393.

¹⁷⁸ Roberts, 290.

to question his communist beliefs. However since we can only speculate on this matter it would probably be safer to assign this analysis to another project.

Conclusion

The two Marxist thinkers presented in this thesis operated within the same interpretative paradigm to render intelligible the local capitalist development. Moreover they advocated similar political strategies in order to foster the emergence of the socialist society. However the inherent tension contained within Marxism rendered impossible any collaboration between the two of them. It is the tension between the two dimensions of Marxism, the theory and the practice, that I am referring to.

Marx himself is portrayed by scholars as “a man of passion for social justice, a revolutionary who preferred revolutionaries to doctrine followers.”¹⁷⁹ It seems that whenever traditional Marxism - Marx the “man of intellect”, fails to clear the way for the emergence of capitalist development, Marx’s ‘dogma’ is revised, as the “man of passion”, the revolutionary is called to take action and disregard to a considerable extent the other feature of his personality. This vision of Marx represents the very starting point of the tradition known as ‘Western Marxism’. Western Marxists were and still are prone to assert that “despite its brilliance and influence, Marx’s theory is plagued by serious problems.” Moreover “Its own inherent weaknesses, subsequent historical developments in capitalist society, and the actions of purportedly socialist and communist political parties and governments have led Western Marxists to transform the theory they inherited.”¹⁸⁰

It would not be an exaggeration to regard Lenin as operating with the same distinction between Marx the man of intellect and Marx the man of passion. G. Haupt was very clear in this sense. In discussing the concepts of *war* and *revolution* and their

¹⁷⁹ Teodor Shanin, 33.

¹⁸⁰ Roger S. Gottlieb (ed.), *An Anthology of Western Marxism. From Lukacs And Gramsci To Socialist-Feminism.*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4.

relation with Leninism, Haupt argued that Lenin's "approach was concrete, his theorethical thinking neither preceded nor postulated action, but it organized that action in precise historical situations." Moreover, dwelling on the tensions between theory and practice, "It was not the orthodoxy of ideological considerations, but realism, a realistic policy demanded by the action, which determined his position and his assessment..."¹⁸¹

The two dimensions of Marx's personality – the intellectual and the passionate revolutionary, and consequently the two dimensions of Marxism steamed from this split personality, act or are expected to act as two interchangeable attitudes giving the ever changing historical perspective. In sum, as another scholar emphasized, Marxism "is not only a particular way of viewing reality and trends inherent in the world, it is also a program of practical strategy" as it always considers necessary "to have as firm a footing as possible in the political and social actualities of the current moment."¹⁸²

What does all this have to do with the two Romanian Marxist thinkers? In my opinion they epitomize this inherent tension between theory and practice. From this perspective I have tried to render intelligible the accusations addressed by Pătrășcanu to the Romanian social-democrats. Although both thinkers combined theory and practice in order to foster the success of their parties, they differed in terms of the degree to which they were willing to renounce the one in favor of the other.

Pătrășcanu conceived his ideological history keeping in mind that through it must transpire a certain political strategy. As Voinea argued Pătrășcanu wanted to prove that the communist phenomenon was the result of a normal social development. He tried to do this by presenting the advent of local capitalist development in the Romanian

¹⁸¹ Haupt, 134.

¹⁸² Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 146.

Principalities as emerging from the essence to the form. His arguments were not convincing though but his approach stands as a proof of his willing to twist the historical facts in order to hasten the advent of the radical break with the past.

Voinea on the other hand acted like a reformist socialist accepting the parliamentary game and condemning the subversive character of Bolshevism. This is not to say that he was a dogmatic. He acknowledged that in an agrarian society and in an atmosphere dominated by the manifestations of integral nationalism, an internationalist ideology was already from the start destined to undergo a sinuous path. He thus tried to adapt Gherea's theories to the new social realities of Greater Romania believing that the structural transformations will also help his party to succeed in attracting the support of the masses.

As Eric Hobsbawm stressed in the preface of a Georges Haupt's study: "Socialism was the aspiration to change the world through theory. And this raised what for Haupt was the crucial problem of the changing relations between – to cite the title of one of his books - *Programme and Reality*."¹⁸³ This relation between the two variables changed over time depending on the historical context. the two perspectives on development discussed here raised the same crucial problem for both Voinea and Pătrășcanu. The conflict between the two Marxist thinkers represents the conflict between *programme* and *reality*.

¹⁸³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Preface* in Georges Haupt, p. x.

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