

Philosophical Ideas and Political Speech. Case study: Vasile Goldiș

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Abstract. This research gathers ideas expressed throughout his political speech by Vasile Goldiș, political figure who had as goal, in his entire activity, the enlightenment of the Romanian people in what concerned their training and determination for the accomplishment of the great political projects.

Vasile Goldiș, through the main ideas of his writings, demonstrated openness towards universality, elaborated with determination and conviction the thesis of countries' absolution by using self-determination. According to him, historical national progress can be achieved only by accomplishing the ideas of national liberty and social equality.

The unity of the Romanian people was possible according to a civilizing and humanitarian principle: the nations' right to self-determination previously expressed through the United States' Declaration of Independence from 4th July 1776.

The options and political programs adopted for the Romanians' problems correspond to the history's reasons, to the natural rights of human beings and peoples.

The analyzed discourses are of great interest due to the capacity of concentrating arguments of philosophical, judicial, ethnographical and linguistic order. The history's analytical demarche is one of interpretative account, in the sense of emphasizing its laws.

Keywords: political speech, ethics, self determination, social equality, Romania

1. Introduction

According to the rhetorical theory, political discourse refers to the formation of several principles, of several values, of profound convictions, but also of several behaviors, all of them referring to the „purposes and abilities of ratios, of superior motivations, of superior volition and passions of people, but also from the subconsciousness level, the space of automatism, of cultural blockades, of our acquirements and customs, by all these they try to convey rational elements.” [1] The ideal orator has the capacity to mobilize people into action. How? Of course, they want to attire the publicans the experts' respect, i.e. they develop natural qualities through study and exercise, being aware of the fact that his personality is the successful key in public speech.

According to Cicero, the orator has to find, first of all, the ideas who should confer the persuasion power, who should organize and improve stylistically and finally to „utter them with dignity and elegance”. [2]

In this way, in his articles and political, historical, philosophical speech Vasile Goldiș was aware that the greatest acknowledgement comes from the fact that no compulsory decision has legitimacy if it had not been exposed to public debate. Only thus can the consensus be obtained, i.e. to create the premises according to which the rational argumentation and the systematic analysis should result in viable political decisions.

Vasile Goldiș is a political figure guided by ethics and by a Christian philosophy, which can be found in his active and constructive presence in that unique historical moment, the Great Unification and the making of the Romanian national state. The intellectual from Arad County wrote the appeals to “To the peoples from the world” and “Towards the Romanian nation”, which contributed decisively to the change of passivism with the idea of generalized political activism. What did he follow? Through the rhetoric of his discourse he aimed at the enlightenment of Romanian people regarding their political rights, their making and

mobilization for the realization of the great political projects. We will try to demonstrate, through an analysis of his discourse the fact that this obeys the classical rules of the genie.

2. Politics and the making of social reality

We embark in our research starting with the assertion that any story related to witchcraft has two sides: a beneficial, possibly innocent one, and a dark, evil one. Regardless of whichever of the two we talk about, one aspect is certain: the central axis of witchcraft is the pact with the forces of evil or, at least, their worship.

The ideas announced through the revolution from 1848, i.e. the political and judicial conception about nation are reinforced by the activity of Vasile Goldiș and of course, of other intellectuals. A national doctrine is foreshadowed, national doctrine which modified “the dim and eclectic image which reflected the Romanian nationalism in his romantic era, which oscillated between feeling, state of mind, ideology and politic program.”

The ideal of a new social reality is not broken of tradition, but life itself presupposes “a process which is constantly renewed thought the making of values, integrated in actuality, as prove of a cultural living, of its transposition, through actions in assets, in another condition and economic, politic and social determination.”[4]

As far as the Romanians from Ardeal (western part of Romania) are concerned, the problem they wanted to solve had to do with the destruction of Austrian/Hungarian monarchy and to the making of new modern national states. The idea of national state is imposed at the beginning of the 19th century as a “major myth becoming one of the most appropriating religions over the last two centuries.[5]

The idea of a Great Romanian irrefutable belonged to the XIXth century political imagery and beginning of the XXth one.

Vasile Goldiș , through the ideas that structure his writings showed openness towards universality, vocation for reflections over the basic principles of the world’s history as he confessed in 1924:” I am writing an article and I do not think I would be given the opportunity to expose systematically my beliefs referring to the social human organisms. Now, I implement only general truths on which my faith is based, and for the time being I let others find solutions to so many capital problems.

He is convinced that society’s history is ruled by objective laws which coordinate historical activities but the “fate of countless societies which lived in the world who lived what had been before and their lives would differ greatly but the main law of their human beings was and would be the one and only.” [7]

He believes that society evolves through the use of ratios, by using faith and universal values and the law imposes on social organisms a gradual evolution so that each people, ancestry, nation, state is governed by an idea oriented by the historical moment, having the purpose of unifying human collective and individual energies. Therewith he remarked the fact that the main idea of his era is a national one, idea that would result in the making of national Romanian state. By his philosophical interpretations Vasile Goldiș identifies the progressive sense, the sense of getting closer to the ideal. “All over the world peoples are born and perished.” Each life is a letter in the immense book of human fate. “[8] People express their existence as a creative creature of culture and civilization. According to him “culture is the one which determines the human/nature relations (...), through culture human beings is set free from the nature’s slavery.” [9]

Through the philosophical understanding of the historic principles, Vasile Goldiș based his political options and identified legitimate historic solutions for the Romanians’ great problems. Studies, articles and philosophical reflections, analysis of economic, politic, social events contemporary with him aimed at the scientifically making of general conception over history. It is also stated that the options and political programs adopted for the Romanians’ problems correspond to the histories’ ratios, to the natural rights of human beings and peoples. Thus, the realization of unity has historical reasons, is a consequence of the historical national and universal law because, as he put it, “history reminded to those strong people that it is not a permanent kingdom without those who have their entities in the peoples’ souls which here live and the light and heat and the feeling of the rich soul of life and power is the national freedom.” [10].

The conjunction between the philosophical reflection and the political action has essentially contributed to the dynamics of the historical moments of the Romanian people, marked the beginning of a new modern national state.

The manifesto "To the peoples of the world", published in the "Românul" newspaper, in English, French and Romanian, [11] determines for the big powers "the political situation of the Romanian people from Hungary and its determination to govern by itself" [12]. The manifesto was a privilege to reason the worthy aspirations of the Romanians from Transylvania to national self-determination, to assert the hoariness principles of the age, of Free State assertion, an independence of all peoples.

The manifesto is supported by an elevated philosophical idea, specifically by the nationality principle and by the natural right.

In order to be more persuasive it is structured and argued based on the Declaration of the Independence of USA from July 4th 1776. This is naturally, if we take into account that Vasile Goldiș taught American history during his period as a teacher at the High school from Brașov County. (1886-1889) [13]. The title of the manifesto denotes the fact that the national challenges were exposed to the public opinion of the world, a particular fact in the process of formation of the national states at the end of the First World War.

In the rhetoric of this manifesto we discover a "logic of the feelings", namely, our nationalist policy of the Hungarians governments whose aim was "our national destruction", by multiple methods and "artificial means": "useless settlement", "censorious process of learning Hungarian", "the invasion of the Romanian territory by hundreds of thousands of Hungarian scribbles". By its title, "To the peoples of the world", the manifesto aims the public opinion of the world and justifies in front of the civilized world the will of the Romanian people. Gravely, the Romanian nation from Transylvania declares that "under no circumstances they no longer want to live in a state connection with the Hungarian nation, but is determined to form on its own inhabited territory, its own free and independent state."

The supreme principle is that a people who burdens other peoples, can not be free, nor a nation can leave its own future into another's nation account, if it wants to nor a nation who wants to be able to truly live as a distinct nation, can not leave its own future into another's nation account. Hence, "To the peoples of the world" manifesto is vibrant, patriotic, logic and rational, because it expresses an obvious true: "" By announcing the peoples of the world its own will and determination, the Romanian nation from Hungary and Transylvania, invokes in its own behalf the support of the civilized world and the genius of the humankind freedom, declaring that it celebrates from that moment on, no matter what the big powers decide, it is determined to better die instead of suffering the slavery. The Romanian nation from Hungary and Transylvania, is continually hoping that in its struggle for freedom, it would be helped by the entire Romanian nation." [14]

Hence it was sensitive to the „civilized world's opinion" the Romanian political elite, wanted to assess its will. Through the manifesto, the Romanian nation makes a vow for the "embodiment of the perfect democracy".

According to the 1922 document, "on Vasile Goldiș' proposal, the Romanian National Council summons on December the 1st 1918, the Romanian people from the Hungarian state at the national assembly in the historical city of Alba Iulia". In this historical assembly, where ahead with all Romanian bishops were represented all social classes of the Romanian people and there were present over one hundred Romanian peasants, Vasile Goldiș, in his speech makes the history of one thousand years of suffering of the nation and suggests afterwards as a normal conclusion that the assembly proclaims the union of all Romanians from the Hungarian state with all territories occupied by them. This proposition of the National Council's president with all those points that strengthened the main base of the new united and national state, also stated by V. Goldiș, were received with unimaginable joy. Therefore, Ardealul, Banatul, Crisana si Maramuresul at 1st December 1918 unite with the motherland and in this day rebirths in all her majesty the Emperor Traian's Dacia, The Big Romania." [15]

On December 1st 1918, the intellectual from Arad delivers in the Great Assembly from Alba Iulia his famous speech in which he shows the national and social oppression made along centuries over Romanians, the implacability of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy deconstruction and the construction on its ruins of new

national states. The Romanian national liberty in Transylvania can not be conceived outside its union with Romania within the native borders inherited from ancestors.

A remarkable ideologist, fact proven by its bibliographic references that we encounter in his work, Vasile Goldiș developed “The solemn speech of Alba Iulia” from a philosophical, humanistic and rationalist perspective, awarding it with a democratic content, without any trace of chauvinism nor malicious nationalism. Developed according to the principles of the age, with a wide opening toward the future, the intellectualist from Arad accentuated the necessity of collaboration between nations. In every single phrase of his classical speech Vasile Goldiș, historically and philosophically motivates the act of the Unification through the idea that the modern civilization identifies the rights of the all peoples to a free national life.

The Unification is “identified by the objective course of modern history, by the convergence of the objective and subjective factors which configure the modern civilization”, an integrating concept that it would be invoked by Vasile Goldiș by telling that “The Civilization freed us”. In Vasile Goldiș’ conception, accomplishing the Unification, represents an action within the ideals and exigency of the modern civilization, an act of historical justice, consonant to the 14 Wilson’s principles: “The entire western intellect confessed their beliefs, this war is the war for the freedom of the nations, not for the sake of this nation only, but for the entire world’s interest, in the behalf of the humankind, who only in this way is capable of moving forward on the path of its own fulfillment. The history was the one which developed these ideas.” [16]

Through its famous speech, published in the „Românul” newspaper between November 20 and December the 3rd 1918, [17] Vasile Goldiș attests an essential idea, namely that the modern civilization can no longer tolerate the enslavement and the national oppression, as it can no longer tolerate feudal encumbrance and the absence of the political and civic freedom for the Romanians of Transylvania.

3. Conclusions

Nowadays, the magical thinking has not disappeared, nor has the people’s temptation to go past the transcendental barriers, in order to adjust, or at least predict their future. We got used however to such practices being conducted discretely, especially in villages, far away from the modern style of the city, because they carry the stigma of contemporary scientists, whose judgment is based on solid, tangible evidence.

Apparent, what Vasile Goldiș asserts, opposes with a retrograde policy. What is all about? In a time when in Europe the ideas about freedom, equality and fraternity were booming, it was all about operating on the forced denationalization of the Romanians. Strongly stating the thesis of the absolution of the nations through self determination, Vasile Goldiș laid on the line that historical national progress can only be accomplished by the pursuance of the national freedom and social equality ideas.

The Romanians unification was asserted in the behalf of a civilization and humanity principle: the right of the nations to self-determination previously proclaimed by the American president Wilson. From the solemn speech, it is highlighted the humanism and his trust in the human civilization, the belief that the organization of a democratic state and the implementation of the equality in rights of the all citizens, are and must be a tractate of historical progress.

Vasile Goldiș’ speech impresses by its grandness and the harmony of the phrases through masterly call to the historical truth and the social reality, through the concentration of the philosophic, judicial, ethnographical and linguistic arguments. Herein are ideas meant to clarify the history, to interpret it and to determine it in the sense of its laws.

We also mention the fact that both authors have an important and equal contribution to the economy of this paper. We initiated our analytical approach concerning the political speech of Vasile Goldiș and due to the fact that the year 2012 mark the 150th year from the birth of the scholar who patronizes the university represented by the authors who support this project.

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