

# Culture, politics, and identity. An analysis of the European Idea Review 1919 – 1928

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## Abstract

*Incipient forms of the Europeanist movement could be traced back in the Romanian history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The present study focuses on the European Idea Review, one of the most important publications of the interwar period. After closely examining the Review, commencing with the year 1919, and completing with the issues of 1928 as the last ones of its release, I concluded that four were extremely intriguing and captivating, and comprised the most debated themes that evolved in the Review. These themes relate to the post-war Europe, the Romanian culture and politics, the challenges in terms of the new international system architecture, the European unity project. I reached the conclusion that the Review had an informative and formative role in the Romanian society, and was a well-praised and popular initiative of a remarkable, culturally prodigious personality of European descent, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru.*

**Keywords:** European Idea, culture, politics, Europeanist movement, interwar Romania

## 1. Introduction

The European Idea, a theme encompassed to the History of Ideas research area (Duțu, 1999, p. 7), was a prolific debate topic in the Romanian political and cultural environment as well, with an ever enhanced intensity in the interwar period. As the present study reveals, starting with the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the intrinsic philosophical principles of the Europeanist movement became a current topic in the Romanian cultural and political life. Therefore, the researchers describe the European Idea Review as “a well-structured and essential ideological” publication whose content denotes “an ensemble of active and militant ideas, involved in the Romanian immediate present” (Marino, 1995, pp. 39-40). The European Idea Review’s role was to deepen the ardent debate

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concerning the European Question and the importance of the Romanian culture within the framework of the European one at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Since the European Idea Review was designed as a forum of debate, the purpose of this research is to explore the main topics grouped under four recurring topics encountered in the publication's pages between the first printed numbers starting the year 1919, to the final ones in 1928. The European Idea Review's main focus was to familiarize Romanian readers with the major epoch-making events that were engaging Europe into a new vision on the continent's role in the architecture of the new international system soon after the military conflagration which afflicted the European society in its most profound layers.

## **2. Argument and approach**

The research questions conducting this approach are the following: which are the main topics of debate structuring the European Idea in the Review?, and to what extent does the New Europe project meet the expectations of its citizens, and respond to the social reality of the interwar period? The research is focused on the Romanian political and cultural space. A large amount of the European Idea Review's articles highlights the original design of the League of Nations, or the establishment of the united Europe within whose framework, the Europeans are tied together in an organic bond, rejoicing the common cultural and historical legacy. The New Europe is described as an enormous organism, in full intellectual and technological expansion, a true universal peace laboratory.

From a philosophical perspective, the European Idea is a concept expressing a reality that positively influenced Europe and its evolution over the centuries from Ancient Greece to the Roman Empire, from medieval times to the contemporary European Union. In the course of time, the concept evolved from predominantly describing a geographical space at its dawn to gradually adding the facets of a spiritual space and a cultural identity, only later developing a political consistency. As a synthesis of all efforts, nowadays, the European Union is itself a unique political, social, and economic construct, an "a sui-generis" structure (Magnetite, 2005, p. 151), "a knowledge-based" Europe (Carp, 2006, p. 113) focused on the negotiation and cooperation dynamics, in a continuous change and movement, "an open technocracy" (Magnetite, 2005, 215), a form of political responsibility towards society, displaying multiple unconventional ways of doing politics, and horizontal instruments of political and social control.

In terms of methodology used in the present study, I proceeded to an analysis of the publication's nine volumes, starting with the first numbers in 1919 to the last ones, in 1928. After undergoing a close analysis of the structure of the Review in terms of page format, columns, editorials, authors, and most frequent discussed themes within its pages, I draw the conclusion that there were four major themes around which the debates accrued, the same themes that I

propose for further examination in the paragraphs to follow. To a closer assessment, these themes question the future of Europe after the World War One, the debate concerning the Romanian culture and the modernisation process of the Romanian society, the foreseen challenges of the international scene with the potential of threatening the fragility of the post-war Europe, and last but not least, the unity project of Europe understood as a path to prevent weaknesses and a way of strengthening European nations in one political, cultural, and economic body, initiative that will become a reality only after the second world conflagration. My qualitative analysis aims at the Review's role and its formative and informative approach, its capacity to develop cultural debates within the Romanian society, its ability to forge ideas, movements, changes, and personalities, developing around the four above-mentioned themes structuring the present study.

I consider that the contribution of the study to the European Idea research field is a direct insight into perhaps the most important cultural and Europe-oriented publication of the first interwar decade in Romania. The research was strictly conducted on the original Review numbers issued from 1919 until 1928, revealing a unique perspective on the political and economic realities of that time. On the research path, I encountered original points of view belonging to the authors of the Review, which I tried to capture in the following pages, enabling the reader to gain access to a distant past and social reality.

### **3. The European Idea Review and the personality of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru**

On the establishment of the publication, one can trace numerous alterations and especially a paradigm shift in the European conscience reflected in the political practices at the international and national level. The Romanian society underwent several adjustments, and changes could be reported in the political and cultural environment. The World War One brought a great upheaval in the young independent Romanian state, and the considerable turmoil evolved into the emergence of opposing schools of thought of political and cultural value. The European Idea Review was a publication that promoted from its very release the implementation of the modernising process aiming to integrate the country into the European project, since the interwar period accelerated and strengthened the desire and the negotiations between the European leaders to establish the foundation of the New Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

European Idea Review was a cultural weekly (initially issued almost every Sunday) to become later a monthly (under financial constraints) printed publication between the years 1919 – 1928, released in Bucharest, and founded

by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru<sup>1</sup>, as Editor-in-Chief. The publication was indeed remarkable for the themes it encompassed within its pages. Its aim was to “[...] familiarize the Romanian readers with the latest ideas and social transformations in Europe, but to keep an objective eye on the domestic affairs” (European Idea Review<sup>2</sup>, I (1), 1919). Before founding the European Idea Review, Rădulescu-Motru edited the New Romanian Review, a cultural magazine, between 1900 and 1902, to restart in 1908 until 1916.

Each issue of the publication was opened with an editorial contribution, signed most of the times by Rădulescu-Motru, who would choose the reflection topic of the week: on the human condition, the European citizenship, the virtue and the vocation of the politician and of the scientist, or the European conscience in the post-war context. A significant part of the publication was focused on the Romanian reforms that were enacted at that time: the education reform, the electoral reform, the calendar reform, or on the germinating new political ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The last pages gathered news from foreign countries, conferences and congresses, or the establishment of the League of Nations and its universal progressive role. The Review’s overt goal was to gradually expand its audience to a larger extent, so that “[...] in time to become an (informative, *author’s note*) instrument of our society’s educated strata” (EIR, I (1), 1919).

One of the most cultural meritorious and commendable personalities of the interwar Romania, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Editor-in-Chief of the Review, generates in his papers and books a complex network of principles assimilated to a philosophical thought system well reflected in his editorial contributions for the European Idea Review. *Culture* was a pivotal topic of Rădulescu-Motru’s reflections first debated in his book *The Romanian Culture and Politics*, ideas later developed in columns entitled “University and Politics”, “Note towards the intellectuals from inside and outside the political parties”. Studies such as *Vocation, the crucial factor in peoples’ culture* and *The soul of our people – Qualities and flaws* are writings focused on *culture* and *vocation*

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<sup>1</sup> Constantin Rădulescu-Motru (1868-1957) was a Romanian cultural personality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Philosopher, politician, and Romanian academician, he was awarded an Honours Degree in Law at the University of Bucharest in 1888 and another one in Philosophy in 1889. From 1890 he continued his academic studies in Germany at Munich and Leipzig. He received a PhD in Philosophy with the thesis: On the causality theory of Kant. Published work: Science and energy (1902), Romanian culture and politics (1904), The soul of our people – Qualities and flaws (1910), Race, culture and nationality in the History of Philosophy (1922), Lecture notes on Psychology (1923), The Energetic Personalism (1927), Vocation, the crucial factor in peoples’ culture (1932), Time and destiny (1940), Romanian ethnic. Community of origins, language and destiny (1942).

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter in citations only abbreviated as follows: EIR.

understood as *virtues*, two of the most important concepts extensively elaborated within the pages of the European Idea Review. As a consequence, the publication emerged in short time as a cultural and encyclopaedic guide.

It is worth mentioning at this point that, among other aspects, Rădulescu-Motru showed great interest in the European Question and the Energetic Personalism philosophy, regarding the building of human personality through education, its prominent active role in the public space, and its cultural production. From this angle, he defines what being a European implies as well as what being a Romanian does, reducing both identities to the definition of the human being:

It is difficult to define the human being since it has multiple facets in which it is a subject of scientific research. The human being is flesh and soul: not apart one from the other, but an indivisible unity of flesh and soul. (Rădulescu-Motru, 1996, p. 5)

Interesting and thought-provoking themes, such as the Latin origins, the Orthodox option of the Romanian people (Pecican, 1999, p. 89), the Romanian culture and its role were approached. Following the year 1918, a new theme adds to the political debate, that of the re-construction of Europe, a project in which Romania desires to share its efforts with the other nations. The supporters of the Europeanist movement express their option to converge common efforts to rebuild Europe, to establish the League of Nations, an organization that embodied at that time Utopian beliefs in a perpetual peace; to understand Europe geographically and politically, a space where innovation and progress were to be promoted, and a new set of governing practices was to replace the old-fashioned, anachronistic one.

#### **4. Analysis**

During the interwar period, history attests the establishment of the League of Nations which substantially influenced the evolution of the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The League of Nations is portrayed not only as an international organization, but as resembling more to a reunion of “the members belonging to the same soul family” (EIR, I (1), 1919). A large number of articles enthusiastically written in the European Idea Review make references to the League of Nations, which accounts for the enlarged horizon of the Romanian elite in relation to the new international system. Moreover, a new reality was imposing itself as a new paradigm: the universal voting right as a consequence of the active political pleas of the masses and therefore the emergence of the mass democracy phenomenon, which changed in a radical manner the political leader’s approach towards the newly formed expanded pool of electors.

#### 4.1. Organic solidarity

To favour the understanding of the post-war reality in Romania and Europe in its entirety, and the moment when the European Idea Review emerges as a unique publication of its kind in the Romanian public space, a few considerations connected to the context that significantly changed Europe are required.

“The Great War”, the military conflagration that outweighed in terms of military capabilities, human losses, tactics and strategies, corroborated with the spatial expansion of the tensions, is not similar with any other armed conflict known until that moment in time. As a consequence, the international system suffered radical changes as well. With the establishment of the League of Nations, founded on the rule of international law principles and collective defence, the European balance of powers that dominated the old continent’s politics for almost a century after the Vienna Congress (1815) was substituted for the collective security system provided by the Treaty of Versailles (1919).

In the pre-war years, a bipolar network of opposite alliances (Le Breton, 2006) was gradually shaped: the French-Russian alliance, later joined by Great Britain to counterpart the German-Austro-Hungarian block. This network of alliances made it difficult for Europe to maintain the balance of powers, for which the militarisation of Germany and its industrial power, the weaknesses of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy with respect to the minorities it encompassed, or the growing power of the Russian Empire, proved to be great obstacles.

While the conflagration was escalating, the two blocks of alliances provided increased potential of attracting other countries in the conflict. Therefore, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire joined Germany and Austria-Hungary, whilst Italy and Romania joined the Entente. The United States of America decided to abandon neutrality and joined the Entente in April 1917. An extra-European power, the United States of America counted to a great extent to the final success of the Western Alliance. Not only military, but also in terms of industrial and food supplies, the United States of America role in the world conflagration was decisive. A first particular feature of the World War One was the context in which an extra-European country took part in the conflict and became a pivotal actor in the success of the Entente.

At the end of the war, following the armistice declared on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918, the financial efforts to sustain the conflagration and the human losses transformed Europe in a profound, multi-faceted dynamics: socially, economically, and politically. The United States of America became the first world power outpacing Europe in terms of technological and industrial developments. Moreover, after a century of practicing and enforcing the balance of power, Europe entered an era of social and ideological unrest.

The Peace Conference held in Paris and the negotiations that evolved from January to June 1919, excluded two of the most important powers:

Germany and Russia. Two perspectives on the negotiation process should be highlighted at this point: Woodrow Wilson's<sup>3</sup> idealist vision on the international system, the President's of the United States of America, and Georges Clemenceau<sup>4</sup>, the French Prime-Minister. Two antagonistic approaches governed the peace negotiations: while France was seeking solutions in order to secure itself from Germany, principles such as the rights of peoples and ethical international politics appealed to the United States' official. The new international system inaugurated with the Treaty of Versailles acknowledged both the collective security and the self-determination principles that were embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations, the first international organisation.

The American President announced the founding principles of the League in a speech delivered in front of the American Congress on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1918. Woodrow Wilson presented the Fourteen Points separated into two sections, among which he specifically addressed as mandatory the following: the establishment of the League of Nations, the practice of an open diplomacy, free access to seas and oceans, a general disarmament programme, the removal of commercial obstacles, the settlement of colonial disputes.

The economic reality after World War One had deleterious effects on the European demography. Industry and agriculture were severely damaged while social movements initiated by groups afflicted by poverty or unemployment were evolving across Europe. The visible weakening of Europe both economically and socially endangered the supremacy the old continent used to have and threatened the political and international ascendancy of Europe. Central and Eastern Europe underwent territorial changes at the end of the war and, as a particularity, these put a new dynamics on the problem of national minorities. Another particularity or weakness (Le Breton, 2006, chap. VII) of the Peace Conference was the group of countries that demanded the revision of the Treaty of Versailles: Germany, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Even Italy manifested discontent regarding the control of the Adriatic Sea, while the Soviet Russia disapproved the new status quo of the Baltic States, Poland, and Romania.

In this changing context of world politics, intellectuals, vibrant personalities of the Romanian culture grouped around Rădulescu-Motru's new project, with the intention to articulate an open and constructive dialogue on

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<sup>3</sup> Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), President of the United States of America between 1913 and 1921, famously known for his Fourteen Points and the Paris Peace Conference negotiations. His idealistic views on an international organisation that could avoid terrible conflicts in the future led to the establishment of the League of Nations for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Georges Benjamin Clemenceau (1841-1929), French Prime-Minister between 1906 and 1909 and during the World War One, between 1917 and 1920. He played an important role in the Paris Peace Conference and the negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles.

European evolutions. The European Idea Review was founded at a time when Romanian society needed an in-depth cultural debate that brought reactions of both supporters of the Europeanist movement, and those that found themselves in opposition with these views. Radulescu-Motru's initiative and the editorial team of the Review benefited to a large extent from the political evolutions and the international scene of the post-war Europe in order to inaugurate the debate.

The contemporary view on the future developments after the great military conflagration was imbued with the enthusiastic feeling of the reconstruction of Europe, and the rediscovering of European common cultural values shared at that particular moment of history by the national states. By all means, the European Idea Review followed the same trend. Europe, in a homogenized unity, would have three focal pillars (EIR, I (14), 1919) according to the writings of the contributors to the Review, who envisaged Europe employing a universal language as the first pillar (preferably French, thought to be able to replace all the others), education as the second pillar (thought as a universal laboratory for producing happiness), and music as the third pillar.

Moreover, the contributors of the Review would bring to the Romanian public's attention the cultural events taking place in the largest cities of Europe. An example would be the Intellectual Union Conference of Vienna or Paris. Another such example would be the manifesto leaflet edited by Karl Anton Rohan<sup>5</sup> himself, extensively presented in the European Idea Review, highlighting "[...] the conscious spiritual unity of Europe" (EIR, VII (188), 1926), understood and theorised by academics as the Europeanist phenomenon. These philosophical principles would form the organic European community "[...] above all claim, above all desire" (EIR, VII (188), 1926).

As a general overview, the organic approach in the new society was omnipresent (Sebe, 2010, p. 12), and all productive forces were interdependent and closely tied together, both internally and externally: [...] the path towards new cultural creation does not stand in programmes, but in citizens, not in goals, but in spiritual attitudes, not in events, but in spiritual feelings. The community should be organically built (EIR, VII (188), 1926). In order to enhance the debate on the European spiritual unity, the European Idea Review printed within its pages an article of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*<sup>6</sup> that was disapprovingly contesting the differences between Eastern and Western Europe, concluding that

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<sup>5</sup> Karl Anton Rohan (1898-1975) was a writer and journalist of Austrian origin, author of the study *Heimat Europa. Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen (Homeland Europe. Memories and Experiences)*, published in Düsseldorf, 1954.

<sup>6</sup> *La Nouvelle Revue Française* was a French literary publication first issued in 1909. Among its famous editors were André Gide and Jacques Copeau. Other contributors: Anatole France, Paul Bourget. The review was banned from publication in 1940 and reopened in 1953.

the fake gap was nothing more than “[...] a cliché that had been used for too long” (EIR, VII (187), 1926).

Europe, as I could understand from a large number of articles, with its vast history and prestige, was imagined as the land where a particular human type, the *Homo Europaeus* was provided with the proper space to develop its most essential spiritual features. The Ancient Greek civilization, the Roman civilization, and last but not least, the Christian foundation, they all define *Homo Europaeus* (EIR, VIII (190) 1926). Each and every individual within the European boundaries, irrespective of the transient antagonisms, shares the above-mentioned features of the *Homo Europaeus*. This human typology, corroborated with “the maximum complex” (EIR, VIII (190), 1926) are part of a unique cultural space. “The maximum complex” is a notion attributed to Paul Valéry, by which one understands the intersection of successive development stages in the European history: the praise emanated towards Arts and Literature in Ancient Greece, the stability and organizational power of the Roman Empire, and the Christian moral standards. Not only does the vast culture and civilization, along with the European human typology, denote an organic understanding that Europeans themselves had shaped to represent their human and philosophical condition, but reveals also the true vibrations of a common spiritual experience. This well-reasoned argument is carefully expressed within the pages of the Review by Rădulescu-Motru who, in the article entitled *European Culture* issued on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1927, highlights that “[...] the Europeans have created their original culture as a result of their inner spiritual experience”. Therefore it appears that in times of great expectations, the European conscience was strongly aggregated.

Following the same path, Marian Ștefănescu, a renowned contributor of the Review, explores with a critical eye the influence of the “organic solidarity” (Duțu, 1999, p. 9), and the “European community” in one of his articles entitled *Spiritual unity*. Ergo, Ștefănescu’s notable contribution reveals, together with the theorized concept of *the community of origins, language and destiny* of Rădulescu-Motru, the Romanian elite’s mentality regarding the ideals that were animating Europe at that moment. Ștefănescu writes: “[...] the world does not subsist aimlessly, but according to a logic that pursues the achievement of the supreme spiritual unity, the universal harmony, in a gradual manner from individual souls to general ones” (EIR, I (5), 1919). The spiritual unity is frequently touched in writings within the pages of the Review. In an article entitled *Peoples’ spiritual unity*, edited on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920, readers find out that Europeans share a common destiny based on cultural foundation, on social and military experience, in other words, a common future for Europe would be therefore self-evident: “[...] the seeds of this solidarity are now planted in a fertile soil, that of common sufferings. The terrible social and economic crises,

along with the moral one, shattered the premises of our old continent.” (EIR, I (33), 1920)

Ergo a new international reality was easier to overcome by engaging in common efforts since solidarity does root in the common history of the European countries. Later, this solidarity will take the form of the European Social Model developed in the European Community project, as Francis Demier stated: “[...] Europe has developed a protection system without any equivalent in the world, which is identified with the European society” (Demier, 1998, p. 93).

#### **4.2. Romanian culture and politics. Virtues and reforms**

The Romanian cultural heritage debate contributes to the understanding of the Romanian elite’s ideals and aspirations after the World War One. The European conscience transcends in most of the articles of the Review. Many texts revealed Romanians as a central culture in the grand European one. As Laurențiu Vlad wrote, this self-perception unveils the beliefs in utopias and legitimates Romanians to express their opinions in respect to the future of the European civilization (Vlad, 1994, p. 7). At this point, the reader confronts with a double-faceted phenomenon: on the one hand, the expectations which the Romanian public had towards the Europeanist movement, and on the other hand, Rădulescu-Motru’s critical exposé regarding the long path Romanians had to overcome until a modernised society would be implemented.

In his study of great impact on the political and social environment, *Vocation, the crucial factor in peoples’ culture*, Rădulescu-Motru explains in great detail the intricate web of implications which *the idea of culture* has by governing a civilisation as a whole. In the following pages there are several examples of how the writers were able to project future analyses, and to open new perspectives for further research related to a great extent to the socio-cultural European life. Culture needs favourable conditions for emergence and evolution, “[...] spiritual conditions within the continuity and furtherance of the spiritual activities of a nation develop” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1932, p. 65). Culture is the apogee of the brightest moment which is part of the entire existence of a nation, ergo is an evanescent state which, in Rădulescu-Motru’s vision, should be maintained with the support of gifted people with special virtues, those who engage in a critical approach of their contemporary society.

In other words, for the Romanian philosopher, *the idea of culture* needs a special favourable context to develop, and just as special prodigious personalities. The person of special virtues is the one that constantly questions his condition and re-evaluates his formation, a process that was well described

by Wilhelm von Humboldt<sup>7</sup> as one of the three components of *the idea of culture*. For the German philosopher, inside the *Kultur* concept (*culture* in German language) one can distinguish *Zivilisation* (*civilization*, understood as material legacy of a nation), *Kultur* (*culture*, part of the generic concept, understood as an individual's superior interest in Arts and Sciences, both sublimating in a liberating process of? the human being from trivial materialism), and *Bildung* (which means formation, understood as furtherance on the culture path leading to perfection and fulfilment of the human personality).

There were obstacles standing in the way of the development process of the Romanian society to which the Review made references within its pages: the poor standards of the education system, the low level of political responsibility, the lack of novelty and innovation in science. The reform in education was a frequently debated theme, in relation to the organisation and pedagogical practices, to teachers and exam results. Change was expected from the political decision-making factors: to elaborate a grassroots reform in the education system, to regulate schools and universities in a more efficient manner. However, since reformation should spring from civil society as well, following the same path, Ștefan Zeletin questions the level of involvement of the Romanian elite in routine problems of the society. *The evolution of the Romanian intellectual nowadays: Philosopher? Sociologist? Economist?* (EIR, VI (166), 1925) is an article that argues on the need to establish a reform for the improvement of upper education. Zeletin proposes a re-evaluation of the Old University, which although “[...] bearing a romantic atmosphere, academics, laboratories, and personal publications were lacking” (EIR, VI (166), 1925). Zeletin places the Old University in opposition to the New University model, described by Wilhelm von Humboldt, a renowned philosopher and linguist, who became the minister of education in Prussia in 1809.

Von Humboldt was able to popularise a new model beside the Old University one, a completely new elaborated structure which was implemented in Europe from that moment onwards. His main principles made reference to the importance of establishing a direct connection between the researcher and the society he lived in, and the positive implications would have an educational curriculum designed for students in accordance with the context and the world they lived in. Von Humboldt highlighted the importance of investing educational resources in experts who developed their research findings in universities, the same ones who would then educate young students and researchers on the path

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<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Christian Karl Ferdinand Freiherr von Humboldt (1767-1835) was a Prussian philosopher, linguist, diplomat and statesman. His most renowned published work is *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen* (*Ideas to determine the limits of state's efficiency*), published in German in 1851.

of knowledge. The University as an institution was no longer perceived as a distinct body, separated from society, but as an institution of the modern world, which produced experts and researchers and shared the fruits of its activity with the members of society, making its results available and accessible to a larger number of people unlike in the past.

Another obstacle in the progress of the Romanian education system was identified by Rădulescu-Motru as being the political involvement in the reformation process. The Review encompasses articles dealing with this topic to a great extent, revealing this interference between the two spheres of activity. Here are some passages: “[...] the state does not watch the interests of the many anymore, the way it used to do. The post-war state has become a business trader, an industrialist” (EIR, VI (162), 1925), and there was the acute need to “[...] organise a university conscience, capable of giving directives in politics” (EIR, IX (203), 1927).

A connection is made at this point with another theme: political parties and politics. In the article *Our Political Parties*, Aureliu Ion Popescu, an important contributor and author, discussed the acute political crisis that was segregating the Romanian intellectuals of those times. Political parties were accused of being engaged in propagating “the nationalist feeling” instead of “an individual and national conscience of one’s personality” (EIR, VIII (189), 1926). But were those political parties capable of developing civic values to which citizens would adhere? Popescu highlighted that the political crisis built individual personalities lacking in civic horizons. How could one expect the successful integration in European politics given such a difficult context when “[...] our country’s politics lost with the death of King Charles I what one would define as leadership”, was the question of Rădulescu-Motru in the article *The political crisis* issued on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1928. Leadership does not refer to a single person, but to an entire ensemble of the elite, both in terms of intellectuals and practitioners of politics, a concept that would require the definition of a common action plan, a strategy to overcome obstacles standing in the way of a more favourable national destiny.

For a better understanding of the political context, I should broach the debate on the electoral reform undergone in Romania in 1926. As the political parties’ role enhanced in Europe in that period, the 1926 Reform’s stipulations were to maintain the political scene less fragmented. This particular reform and its effects were considered of pivotal importance in the transformation of the political scene and realities, due to the fact that it had the potential to transform political parties into the most important representatives of the popular political will. As Arend Lijphart wrote, the systemic theory paradigm, dominant at the moment in Europe, promoted the importance of political structures such as parties and groups of interest (Lijphart, 2002, p. 25). Therefore, political parties were engaged in organising the elections, gained access to the governmental

machinery and, in time, became the most influential actors of the political life of the country. Under the 1926 law, several election processes were organised in interwar Romania: the legislative elections in May 1926, July 1927, December 1928, June 1931, July 1932, December 1933, December 1937 (Mamina, 2000, p. 68). Authors wrote about the “exceptional favourable situation of all governs” once the electoral reform was enacted since the party that won 40% of the votes, would benefit of 190 mandates as an electoral bonus (Ivan, 1933, p. 27).

Political science experts theorised the electoral reform of 1926 as a formula by which governmental stability was enhanced. The reform supported the democratic process and had “[...] the unchallenged merit to establish a unique electoral regime for the Romanian state”, at the same time being “[...] an important supporter of the democratisation process in the Great Romania” (Preda, 2002, p. 88). However, the architecture of the electoral system provided by the 1926 law generated imperfections in electoral oscillations as well as anomalies regarding the fact that the political party designed to organise the elections was the one to win the ballot. All these particularities of the electoral system resulted in a particular political scene, which “[...] individualised Romania compared to other democratic countries in the interwar years” (Radu, 2004, p. 142).

To a further stage, the Romanian intellectual elite attracted widespread criticism. It seemed to Rădulescu-Motru that the elite had innumerable “flaws” (EIR, IX (204), 1927), and that Romanians lacked in organisational wisdom, which was “the most important intellectual conquest of our times [...]” (EIR, VIII (202), 1927). In the article *Call to intellectuals from inside and outside parties for organisation*, the author emphasises that Romanians were not familiarised with the “thrill” of practicing the vocational, virtuous politics. Rădulescu-Motru himself built a philosophical thought system around the concept of *vocation* understood as *virtue* since he theorised it as being the propeller or the engine of the human personality towards progress, “[...] vocation is not only connected to a certain skill, but it is related to the entire physical and moral entity of a human being” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1932, p. 12). Vocation and organisational wisdom are just as important, as the latter is the basis for vocation, enabling human personality to step forward to an advanced level, from the strictly common and productive personality to the creative one, in other words, organisational wisdom shapes vocational personality. The Personalism philosophy of Rădulescu-Motru, well explained in many articles in the Review and in his books, reveals a solution to re-structuring the Romanian culture and society, to leave behind certain flaws (Rădulescu-Motru, 1990, p. 14). The solution is to find virtuous personalities, enriched with vocational skills and organisational wisdom, superior individuals that “outweigh the ordinary activity of the productive personality” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1932, p. 79).

Certain flaws are addressed starting with the very first issue of the Review. A piece of advice is given to all readers, namely to separate sentimentalism from politics because, after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, “[...] we will reach the end of our <sentimental> politics, without really reaching the politics based on reality”, and in order to do that “just a slight push” (EIR, I (1), 1919) was needed. Having an objective eye on the surrounding reality, both national and international, is a must, by reason of “[...] he who wants to know and foresee things, must objectively study what is necessary, and to leave aside sentimentalism, which is solely and purely the moody reflex of individual conscience” (EIR, I (1), 1919). Objectivity means reaching an equilibrium state, emphasised Bucura Dumbavă in the article *Towards Light*: “[...] as the human being easily finds balance, [...] his enlightened body becomes invulnerable” (EIR, III (90), 1922).

A reforming impulse transcends from the pages of the Review. Therefore, one of the most interesting studies is entitled *Intellectuals*, signed by Rădulescu-Motru. The intellectual is “the one who incubates ideas”, “an apostle” (EIR, I (3), 1919). Moreover, “[...] the enriched personality wishes to keep updated, in other words to be among those who weave the realities of tomorrow”. For Rădulescu-Motru’s thought system the *Idea* itself is relevant, which at a metaphysical level, becomes “a path for intelligence”. The *Idea* shapes the foundation of every nation: “[...] each nation is the slave of an idea about reality elaborated by its intellectuals” (EIR, I (3), 1919). At this point in the study, it is necessary, for better understanding, to mention the elements that constitute the Romanian ethnic designed in three stages by Rădulescu-Motru’s thought system: the community of origin, the community of language, and the community of destiny. The one to which the enriched personalities contribute is the community of destiny, that “[...] streams from the greatest decisions a nation has to reach in its course of history” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1996, p. 47).

In order to familiarise the Romanian public with the political changes and challenges taking place in the rest of Europe, some of the political movements that were spreading across Europe at that time were presented in the articles: *The Humanitarianism*, edited by Zaharia-Brăilă, *Towards a new practical idealism*, *Philosophy in social struggle*, edited by Rădulescu-Motru, *About liberty* by I. Nisipeanu. “[...] Humanitarianism does not reward any nation, it only pursues the noble and practical aim to enhance harmony among peoples” (EIR, I (14), 1919); the new practical idealism which is “[...] this new belief of the modern world, appears to be the true spiritual revolution: it violently shatters the rigid, barren forms of the past built out of too much passive contemplation, [...], pedantic formality, [...], hesitant scepticism” (EIR, II (45), 1920); “in the intellectual endeavours, the coordination is being given by the philosophical thought systems” (EIR, II (53), 1920), which lead to a spiritual foundation, since without ideal and philosophy “[...] there could not be individuality, as

individuality means unity, concentration, identity, psychic polarisation” (EIR, IV (99), 1922).

The Review’s imperative was to focus on finding a new manner of practicing politics, a debate that would arouse the audience’s interest. On the one hand, politics was understood as Art: “[...] the political science is not the science of geometry. Out of the principles of politics one cannot draw conclusions in the same manner that conclusions are drawn from geometry’s principles” (EIR, I (8), 1919) as politics supervises human destiny and interaction with other individuals. Ergo, there are differences between the man involved in politics and the one who deals with other activities, a fact described in the article *The Scientist and Politics*:

The scientist leaves his workplace with his mind relieved, free of any prejudice, ready to accept what experience will prove him to be the truth; whereas the politician engages in propaganda filled with inner, national or class impulse that he desperately tries to legitimate by all means. (EIR, II (59), 1921)

It is therefore revealed that the authors of the Review were updated to the last scientific developments and publications, such as the two studies of Max Weber released in 1918 – 1919 as speeches at Munich University under the title *Science as a vocation and Politics as a vocation* (Weber, 2011). The meaning of vocation for Weber is “[...] more than a career (job) or a capacity (position), but a calling which requires a strong desire to accomplish a cause as a social duty” (Slate, 2011).

Further, the renowned Romanian sociologist Dimitrie Drăghicescu<sup>8</sup> develops the above-mentioned idea in his article, *Introduction to the Art of Politics*:

[...] the political topics are moral ones and should be understood from a spiritual perspective by the one that deals with them. The one involved (in politics, *author’s note*) should play an active role in society, treat political issues with keen interest (EIR, III (85), 1922)

as

“[...] the Art of Politics, as seen from the experience of various nations, is in essence, the art of adjusting society’s structure in all its activities

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<sup>8</sup> Dimitrie Drăghicescu (1875-1954), sociologist, socio-psychologist, politician, and Romanian diplomat at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He studies at the renowned Collège de France, and becomes a famous personality of European echoes. Published work: *The Romanian people’s psychology* (1907), *The creative ideal: psycho-sociological essay about social evolution* (1914), *Political parties and social classes* (1922).

according to the ideals of justice, morality, and progress” (EIR, III (85), 1922).

This is the reason why Romanian politicians are subject of criticism, as they did not embody these ideals. The disapproval makes reference to the fairness of legislative elections and political practices, the mimetic skills of politicians, which were lacking in what Rădulescu-Motru called “the Art of Politics”:

Romanian politicians are all the same, in every party, in every region. They are the product of lies, and they create our political life; [...] the Romanian state is the result of the European civilisation, however, a masterwork which is laid down on clay feet; our political mores and practices do not resemble the European state we live in. (EIR, III (88), 1922).

We understand the preoccupation of the editors for the universal vote, and the reasoning behind this was that the new mechanism of the Art of Politics embodied a symbol of the European democracy. “A talisman capable of miracles” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1904, p. 18) was the phrase Rădulescu-Motru used when writing about the new ensemble of political rights which defined a nation, since “[...] only liberty and political rights were lacking to the Romanian citizens to make a step in the same line with the most advanced nations” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1904, p. 20). In the article *Facing the universal vote*, Ioanițescu enthusiastically notes that “our politics enjoys more dignity” (EIR, I (19), 1919) once the universal right to vote was enacted. Vintilă I. Brătianu states in his article *Lessons of the universal vote*:

[...] the universal suffrage brought an awakening of the political life. After an isolation that lasted several centuries, the universal right to vote regains the basic solidarity of the Romanian people [...] in its most profound depth with the support of the electoral reform. (EIR, I (43), 1920)

The electoral reform was introduced by the Legal-Decree released on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1918, published in the Romanian Official Journal No 291. Article 1 of the Decree (Monitorul Oficial al României, 1918) stated that all Romanian citizens who reached the voting age could participate in the electoral process. The vote was mandatory, equal, direct, and secret. Despite the undoubted progress brought by the reform, a large part of the population was still being refused the right to vote, such was the case of women, and other social and professional groups, as were the magistrates, active army representatives, or citizens that were publicly declared bankrupt.

However, the electoral reform was being diminished in importance by the “imperfect nature of the political individual” (EIR, I (22), 1919). The elector was described as a special type of individual, still in its rudimentary evolution. Generally, the citizen does not know his true interests, in other words has no political ideals. Therefore, Romanian efforts to construct an Art of Politics encountered difficulties “[...] constantly dealing with several essential, ideological, social, political and psychological obstacles on its way” (Marino, 1995, p. 34). With the 1926 electoral reform, there can be traced changes in the elector’s statute, which is closer to that of a “national functionary” (Barbu, 1997, pp. 148-149), called by the political parties to exert his voting right. The new political actors, namely the political parties, become gradually the only structures authorised to interpret the national political will of electors, and the only political instruments to guide the political will of individuals.

### **4.3. International challenges and the European trajectory of the Romanian culture**

International challenges would have the potential to alter Europe’s destiny, the common project of unification, as well as the evolution of the Romanian culture and politics. I would proceed to a special reference to the League of Nations, the first international organisation with the universal vocation to re-gain and establish the lost European equilibrium, an international organisation described in the following pages. Along with the League of Nations, other projects with a similar pacifist message worth mentioning were developing at a smaller scale in the same time. The Review publishes these examples, such as the American Programme of General Disarmament, in the article *Organising peace* (EIR, VI (152), 1924), according to which the disarmament does not become mandatory, but useless; the Geneva Conference Programme, The European Intellectual Union’s Programme published in the article entitled *Toward a pacifist conscience of the world* (EIR, IX (207), 1928).

The international system established by the Treaty of Versailles was based on three principles (Le Breton, 2006, chap. VIII), namely: the principle of self-determination, the rule of international law principle, and the principle of disarmament. The first one enabled the establishment of new nations which resulted from the demise of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, the second principle was embodied by the newly founded League of Nations, while the third principle limited the conflict potential of a new conflagration in the future.

It is worth mentioning the innovative principle of the League of Nations, an international organisation that would organise the international political scene in accordance with the international public law principles. The first particularity was rather understood as a future weakness of the new international system (Le Breton, 2006, chap. VIII) since, until that moment, the political scene was

organised and balanced by alliances between states. As opposed to this, the League of Nations inaugurated the collective security principle that I choose to develop in the following paragraphs. Another feature of the Versailles system was that the initiator of the League of Nations, the United States of America, strongly engaged in the establishment of the new international organisation by the personality of the President Woodrow Wilson, did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the Pact of the League of Nations, preferring not to get involved in the European affairs. Another important partner, Russia, which restructured its politics after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, was another power excluded from the Versailles system. Later on, in 1934, on 18<sup>th</sup> September, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was admitted to the League, and became a permanent member of its Council.

The plenary session of the Paris Peace Conference agreed with the creation of the League of Nations on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1919, which entered into force on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1920 along with the Treaty of Versailles since the Covenant of the League is Part I of the Treaty of Versailles. The First session of the Council of the League took place on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1920 in Paris and, later, its headquarters were moved to Geneva. Established after the World War One by forty-two founding members and dissolved in 1946, the League of Nations was the first international organisation; it had a General Assembly that gathered representatives of all member states, a Council that initially included four permanent members (Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) and other member states elected by the General Assembly, and a Secretariat. In June 1920, the Permanent Court of International Justice was founded and subsequently came into force in September 1921. The League was based on the fourteenth point publicly announced by Woodrow Wilson stating the following: “A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike”.

The post-war years were described as a time for illusions, when the enthusiastic debate on the ethics and morality of international politics prevailed over the old-fashioned Realpolitik and balance of force in the international affairs. This led to an increase of scepticism among Europeans in relation to the new international organisation that was supposed to preserve peace and non-violently settle disputes among states. Even in the absence of the United States of America as an active part of the League of Nations, the Wilsonian doctrine dominated the European diplomacy after the war.

Henry Kissinger explains the differences between the Wilsonian view and the alliance system practiced in Europe until the Treaty of Versailles. The concepts of *collective security* and that of *alliance* find themselves in complete opposition. Kissinger highlights that the traditional alliance system in pre-war Europe was established against a specific threat, and gathered a group of states

designed to fulfil specific requirements in order to secure the national interest and the common interest of those states. Conversely, the collective security does not define any specific threat, but is against any breach of peace, no matter who the aggressor is. The basic premise is that each state or actor on the international scene is genuinely interested in maintaining peace and finding a non-violent solution to a given dispute. Kissinger emphasises that the collective security favours a peaceful international environment only if all, or at least the most important states encompassed in the collective security system share the same ideas in relation to the nature of the threat, and are ready to use force irrespective of the nature of the national interest they may have in that particular matter. The League of Nations was based on such a view - an international organisation that would act as an arbiter in the international arena.

Lacking a real force of action, the League was unable to stop aggressive actions. For example, Germany was admitted to the League in 1926. Despite not being a member from the beginning, Germany was admitted only after signing the Locarno Treaties in 1925 to guarantee the Western borders, those with Belgium and France, with no specification related to its Eastern borders. Although given a permanent seat in the Council, Germany later chose to withdraw from the working meeting of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in 1933, and officially announced its withdrawal from the League on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1933. Later, in 1936, Germany denounced unilaterally the Treaties of Locarno. Japan, a founding member of the organisation, attacked Manchuria in 1931, and ceased to be a member in 1935. Italy, another founding member, attacked Abyssinia in 1935, and requested its withdrawal from the League in 1937. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was expelled in December 1939 due to the action against Finland.

The aspects encompassed in the philosophy of international law, such as the concept of sovereignty, were now challenged in the new post-war context. Being a member of the League consisted in “[...] not only having rights that are understood on a reciprocal basis, but also obligations that countries obey on a free willingly basis” (EIR, I (6), 1919). The idea of sovereignty, which was a prominent foundation in the European political thought, seemed to lose its influence in the context of the League’s organisation model: “[...] Europeans, for a long time, felt the need of solidarity and this need should lead them to such political structures out of which the idea of sovereignty is gradually excluded” (EIR, I (16), 1919), was writing Rădulescu-Motru in his article *The sunset of sovereignty*. He constantly enhanced the idea of solidarity which constituted as a political virtue enabling new development perspectives for Europe, whereas the old-fashioned sovereignty was the one that had caused conflicts among European states too many times. In what concerns the Romanians, they “[...] are pressured to make a decision which will influence not only their history, but that of Europe in its entirety” (EIR, I (16), 1919).

In relation to the premise stated in the previous paragraphs, regarding the time of illusions, in a number of articles, the idea that the League of Nations was a cornucopia personification is common and a relevant example comes from the article *Between Militarism and Balkanism* signed by Rădulescu-Motru: “The structure of the League of Nations is remarkable, since in such an organisation both small and distanced nations finally find peace and prosperity” (EIR, I (8), 1919). Despite this enthusiastic approach, there were voices filled with disapproval towards the League, most likely disappointed with the political decisions or diplomatic inabilities starting its second session in 1921: “The pathetic endeavour to improve Humanity has come to the end of its second session” (EIR, III (78), 1921), was writing B. Dumbravă in an article entitled *Notes From The League of Nations*. Moreover, “[...] its birth and its very first steps met with two different political and spiritual approaches: a childish belief in the sudden reforming power of the League, and the scepticism [...]” (EIR, III (78), 1921).

As far as Romania’s foreign policy is concerned, the reader finds out from the article entitled *The politics of alliances*, which maintains the same enthusiastic and utopian tone of the Review, that Romania will undoubtedly follow the path of the League of Nations irrespective of international events. Apparently, the League had the political force to bring together two rival countries, France and Germany, to work together on a plan for Balkan stability, since this is the only way these countries will maintain their peace, and Europe would live, after such a long time, “a time of Christian fraternity” (EIR, II (47), 1920).

A vulnerable society such as the Romanian one after the great conflagration, could be easily disturbed from its trajectory towards the European project due to all the challenges emerged in the newly shaped international system. The turmoil brought along with the World War I was perceived as apocalyptic, with the potential to destroy the moral and ethical fabric of society, the rehabilitation plans of Europe and its psychological foundation. Another danger would be the precarious economy seriously affected after the war. Then, the nature of the domestic politics as analysed in the previous section of the study was perceived as a possible obstacle for the Romanian society on the European path. Not only internal and external factors, such as those concerning the changes taking place in the international arena, but also a major danger was identified in the Bolshevik ideology. Rădulescu-Motru expressed his concern about the possibility of this type of ideological movements to spread across other parts of Europe. In the article *Revolutionary Ideology*, he states that a possible spreading of ideology is likely to happen on other territories since the ideology encounters in its way social and economic vulnerabilities (EIR, VI (158), 1924).

One learns that although “the League tries to last forever”, in other words to be an active presence in the life of Europeans, it has the ambition of “a

society” (EIR, I (2), 1919). Albeit, in French, it is called *Société des Nations*, and in German, *Völkerbund*, the League is established on the basis of anti-war discourse and pacifist programme ruling the forthcoming years, and on the eternal peace concept expressed by Kant in his famous essay *Perpetual peace* (Kant, 2008). The audience is informed about the fact that the League of Nations will be enforcing stability bearing the features of each European member since “[...] Europe is not a geometrical display of states, which is the case of America; it resembles more to a puzzle game, whimsically cut piece by piece over the centuries” (EIR, I (2), 1919). The League of Nations and the design of a completely new international system was a frequent theme in the pages of the Review. The first international organisation with universal vocation was described enthusiastically as the guarantor of world’s peace. As one of the founding members, Romania brought its contribution in shaping the League of Nations at its establishment at the Peace Conference in Paris, 1919. From the first issue of the Review, Rădulescu-Motru addressed the League of Nations as “a spiritual family” (EIR, I (1), 1919), in which all the other members were concerned with the same problems, the same methods to engage in solving them. In a first-page article entitled *What is Europe?*, in some paragraphs cited from *Mercure de France*<sup>9</sup>, the challenges and contradictions the newly established League had to find a solution for were described and enumerated.

#### 4.4. United Europe. Incipient project

Thoughts of a unified Europe, within whose boundaries common values would rule the old continent and bring it to a time of peace and stability, could be traced in the history of modern Europe. It was particularly one personality who had a positive influence in the design of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Immanuel Kant, already mentioned in the paper, and his remarkable works, the essay *Perpetual peace* and his law doctrine, established the foundation of the international society on the universality of law principles, where every community embodies a sociological, moral, and judicial entity able to govern itself. In relation to war affairs, Kant envisaged a plan for disarmament that would finally lead to an international peace treaty, severely condemning war as the solely instrument of settling disputes. Perpetual peace would represent the true progress of humanity. Kant’s premise influenced Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations, an instrument to establish and maintain the rule of law and ethics in the international society. Several other similar initiatives across Europe

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<sup>9</sup> *Mercure de France* was a French literary publication of long tradition, first issued in 1672, and later under different titles, such as: *Mercure gallant*, *Nouveau Mercure Gallant*. The publication changes its title in *Mercure de France* in 1724. It was banned from printing between 1674-1677, and 1811-1815, then ceased to exist from 1825 to 1890. The review was awarded numerous literary distinctions.

are to be counted: Saint-Simon<sup>10</sup> with his project of re-organisation Europe (*On the Reorganisation of European Society* written in 1814), or August Comte<sup>11</sup> and his famous project of a unified Europe gathering the greatest powers from the old continent: France, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, and Germany.

After the Great War, projects that foresaw a unified Europe would develop in accordance with the possibility of establishing a new model of doing politics, of structuring European nations. However, the innovation of these intellectual and political projects stands in the capacity to envisage a way of avoiding the economic collapse that afflicted the European society in the post-war years, a unified Europe that would regain and preserve the old continent's prestige.

The European project conceived over centuries was outlined substantially after the World War One in terms of political principles and economic beliefs. The following programmes positively influenced Europe in the interwar period: the pan-European movement initiated by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi<sup>12</sup>, the establishment of the League of Nations, the release of scientific reviews and publications on European themes such as *Das neue Europa*, *Les États unis d'Europe*, *L'Europe nouvelle*.

Coudenhove-Kalergi's initiative was the most famous of that period, and his programme was presented to the Romanian audience inside the Review's pages. To his knowledge, Europe was a human creation sustained with the efforts of the virtuous men: "[...] Europe ought to be incessantly conquered, created, and modelled over and over again" (EIR, VIII (202), 1927) so as not to remain just an *existence*, but become an *exigency*. Coudenhove-Kalergi was an overt supporter of federal Europe, as the only solution according to his views was a political and economic unity for Europe, and the ability to maintain its advance with regard to other extra-European powers: the United States of America that were economically outpaced Europe, and Russia that was ideologically threatening Europe.

The League of Nations could give an enhancement to the economic solidarity among the European nations despite the difficulties and political realities of the post-war period which unbalanced the domestic harmony of the European nations. Therefore, the foundation of the spiritual, united and free

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<sup>10</sup> Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) was a French political thinker. Most remarkable works: *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains* (1803), *De la réorganisation de la société européenne* (1814), *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825).

<sup>11</sup> Isidore Marie Auguste Francois Xavier Comte (1798-1857) was a French sociologist and philosopher. Under the influence of Saint-Simon, Comte founded the doctrine of positive philosophy. Major publications: *Discours sur l'esprit positif* (1844), *Système de politique positive* (1851-1854).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Nikolaus von Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) was a political thinker of Austrian origin, known for his book entitled *Pan-Europa* published in 1923 and the movement for European unity.

Europe was placed among the responsibilities of the political professionals to fulfil the task History had given Europe at that moment in time. In order for Europe to become an exigency, in accordance to Coudenhove-Kalergi's programme, "[...] the future European culture will be the culture of the professional elite" (EIR, VIII (201), 1927).

The restoration of the European conscience in a united ensemble was a political action initiated to protect Europe against possible dangers, such as the emergence of the political, economic and military prestige of the American nation, subject of great concerns and anxiety for Europeans. War indeed, according to Lucien Romier in his article, *Finis Europae?* (EIR, VII (184), 1926), "[...] took away from Europe three moral advances: the advance of the active population, the advance of the monetary richness, and the advance of the technical machinery". Romier anticipated a possible future inner anxiety inside Europe: an industrial anxiety regarding the development of the United States of America, a country that used to praise the historical and religious prestige of Europe; and an economic anxiety, regarding the loss of the trading advantages and superiority in competition with the United States of America which were about to play an unchallenged political, economic and military role in the international arena after the World War One.

Another initiative belonged to Aristide Briand<sup>13</sup> who, in 1929, proposed the foundation of federal Europe and announced it at the meeting of the General Assembly of the League of Nations. The federal project would enable member states to proceed to a constructive approach of political and economic issues, in order to discourage any attempt that threatened the peace of the old continent. Briand would outline his project in the Memorandum of 1930, where he proposes that, in moments of crisis, the European states should enable the development of economic and then political ties, hence creating a federal bond. Unfortunately, Briand's views did not meet with other European politicians from Italy and Germany that expressed their concerns in connection to the boundaries settled by the post-war treaties, while other states denounced the supra-national features of the federal Europe (Berstein and Milza, 1998).

In order to restore the economic power of Europe and its international prestige in relation to the extra-European powers, such as the United States of America, Soviet Russia, or Japan, intellectuals and politicians envisage a large variety of solutions. Europe must face the emergence of new international powers (Berstein and Milza, 1998), since extra-European countries took

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<sup>13</sup> Aristide Briand (1862-1932) was a French Prime Minister between 1909 and 1911 that took the office after Georges Clemenceau. He became again Prime Minister for a short period of time in 1913, then between 1915 and 1917, 1921 and 1922, 1925-1926, and 1929. Briand also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of France between 1915 and 1917, 1921-1922, 1925-1926, and 1929. He is famously known for the Kellogg-Briand Pact signed in 1928.

advantage of the war and increased their industrial and agricultural production, among which one may count Japan, Canada, or the United States of America. In addition to the League of Nations, designed to function on the rule of international law and principles of ethics with the aim of preserving peace and avoiding future conflicts, and seeking peaceful answers to the problems of its members, Europe needed a project to search for an answer to its rather difficult economic situation. The Economic and Custom European Union was such a project, founded in 1926, that would bring European states to a common denominator and prefigure the later developments in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5. Final remarks

The present research aims to reveal a critical approach on the content of one of the most renowned publications in Romania in interwar times, namely the *European Idea Review*. A large number of articles were selected from all the issues of the Review on a ten-year period, with the goal to achieve the rebuilding of the political and philosophical initiatives related to the European realities that were animating the Romanian audience and the most prominent intellectuals. As seen above, four were the themes that evolved around the Review, one in particular proved to be of great interest for the writers and readers, the reformation and modernisation process of the Romanian society as an expression of common political actions and principles. The content of the study is organised according to four essential questions: was there any perspective of a united Europe among the intellectual Romanian elite?, how was the Romanian culture perceived as part of the European one?, how did the challenges on the international political scene influence the European destiny and the Romanian society?, and what future did Europe have in the new post-war political order?

In all fairness, the Review was an educational and moral project, with the aim to enhance its role in society, in the public conscience, in the political life (EIR, I (1), 1919), and to promote the values and virtues of humanitarianism “[...] but not as a simple conglomerate, i.e., cosmopolitanism, but as the unity and harmony of the national spirits” (EIR, I (5), 1919). The Review comprised in its pages various European debates. Some examples are the philosophical thought system of Henri Bergson (EIR, II (63), 1921) in the articles signed by M. T. Djuvara, the philosophical approaches presented in the articles written by Șt. Zeletin *About the ideal* (EIR, II (57), 1921). Other articles promoted book releases in the special column entitled “The best books” (EIR, III (70), 1921), or “The eternal ideological drama or how does an idea emerge, live and die” (EIR, III (82), 1921), or by explaining concepts and European movements: *Pan-Europe* (EIR, IV (107), 1922). All these enriched the audience and were representative for the Europeanist movement. As the article *Europeanism*

concludes on the mission of the Review and the impact of Europe on nations' lives: "[...] it echoes in my mind, in my ears, in my soul: Europe. Europe, you Technology, you Science, you everything that is Life ... we brought you home" (EIR, I (4), 1919).

In other words, the European Idea Review was more than a publication, it was a means of bringing Europe home, of making it accessible to a larger audience, of embracing its ideals, realities and future plans. The Romanian interwar political and cultural public space was in great need of such a publication, especially because "[...] the modernisation process of the Romanian society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not favour the in-depth understanding of the political concepts, the political thought systems, the vision on the human being and society of the old Romanian culture" (Duțu, 1999, p. 191). Romanians have developed "[...] the traditional way of doing politics, but did not question themselves about the necessity to establish a public space", a fact that brought numerous disadvantages to the Eastern-European space that "[...] when confronted with the foundation of the national state did not have in its history a tradition able to provide some answers to the questions raised by the grandiose effort of establishing a society" (Duțu, 1999, p. 73). Moreover, I would like to highlight the visionary perspective of the editors and writers of the Review concerning the European project that would become a reality only few decades later following the transformation "[...] initially an intellectual programme, the European spirit became a public reality assimilated in-depth, and in breadth" (Marino, 1995, pp. 46-47).

The European Idea Review was a publication issued in a complex time of the Romanian history. The present study aimed to research the Europeanist phenomenon in the inter-war public space. The Review was unique compared to other publications especially due to the encyclopaedic features of its articles (Vlad, 1994, p. 4), presenting scientific publications, international conferences, the Intellectual Union's activity in Paris, portrays of the most famous personalities of that times. Moreover, it was unique in its initiative and approach to presenting non-biased facts and actions, to enforce cleanness in the Romanian politics, its declared goal to start and initiate political and cultural changes in the Romanian society supported by its readers and a larger audience, "[...] in order to succeed in the endeavour of 'Europeanising' our public space, we need the support of our known and unknown friends" (EIR, I (1), 1919). With all these being added, the European Idea Review represents a refined cultural and political expression of the Romanian society in the 1919 – 1928 period.

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