

DAN POPESCU

Times of Turmoil: The Fascination of Ignored History

Associate Professor: Dorel Morândău, PhD (ULBS)

The book begins with an overview on the educational and professional evolution of the author in a time full of turmoil, as even the title promises. The author remembers with great respect teachers who have influenced his education from elementary school to university graduation. He further on reviewed the professional positions that have enriched his experience and strengthened his educational development in the economy. His articles on economic issues (not just convenient, many of them for the communist regime) have intrigued even abroad (therefore, he received an invitation for documentation from the German newspaper *Die Zeit*).

Since 1989, Professor Dan Popescu's liberal thought materialized both politically and economically through his work as a professor. Dan Popescu has been teaching at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, at Bucharest University, at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest and other universities in the country. Abroad, he taught as Permanent Professor at the University of Rennes (France - where he received in 2009 the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*) and the University of Pescara (Italy), at the Academy of Economic Studies in Moldova (where ever since 2004 he has also been *DHC*) etc.

The "Introduction" emphasizes the national and international scale Professor and his rich activity in the field, where numerous books and articles are an important indicator of his professional performance. The first chapter examines the role of religions in shaping the European identity. Christianity is investigated historically, especially through its implications in the field of economy. Dan Popescu gathers between book covers articles published in recent years, mainly in magazines. The author makes a historical excursus in the evolution of pre-Christian Europe (ancient and marked by slavery) and Christian (Medieval, capitalism, coming to the present day). In this context he emphasizes the role that was played by religion and the Church in the making of a United Romania.

A second important trend contributing to paradigm changing is education and the author makes an analysis from the perspective of economic

education, which has undergone several mutations. Dan Popescu observes, not without some bitterness, the marginalization or even the absence of some disciplines such as economic history (Universal and Romanian), which largely affects the formation of economic culture.

With a rich academic experience, both in the country ("Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, the Bucharest University etc.) and abroad (University of Rennes, France, University "Gabrielle D'Annunzio" Pescara, Italy, the Academy of Economic Studies in Chisinau, Moldova) the author makes an analysis on how to teach economics in a changing technological and social context, in the context of using databases, international exchanges of teachers and students, in the acquisition of scientific prestige. Participation in numerous international economic congresses (Milan, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Helsinki, Utrecht, Stellenbosch etc.) gives the Professor a global view on how the economy has become a paradigm. An eminent specialist in the history of Economic Doctrines, the author makes analysis by using numerous examples from the economic history and the history of economic doctrines, thus giving consistency to the ideas exposed. For example, when speaking of human influence on the climate and the changes this impact brings, he debates on economic categories that have been recently outlined (the Anthropocene) and embroiders with a refined spirit the ideas expressed by personalities of antiquity (Horace "One chases nature with the hayfork, but it will turn back in rush") on the visions of contemporary researchers, who pull numerous warning signs (on deforestation, on how agriculture is performed, pollution, extinction of species, excessive urbanization, industrialization etc.).

Speaking of vulnerabilities, a review is made using a consistent bibliography on the role the war played in world history, noting that, often, this was the only way to resolve conflicts. Dan Popescu quotes Jean Jaures (whom he largely agrees with), when he would praise the defensive war, although he was a convinced pacifist, awaiting the moment when the nations will resolve conflicts through rational negotiations.

Professor Dan Popescu starts the second chapter with a brief overview of the fall and decline of Rome, reflecting the economic, political, ideological causes which led to the disintegration of society and poses questions, together with other researchers whether the current civilization is moving in the same direction. The author concludes optimistically, seeing in education and culture significant milestones for the development of society.

This chapter includes a communication of the Professor at the Romanian Academy - "European Cultural Patterns. Enlightenment Reverberations."- showing by historical perspective the cultural context of economic development. This idea, absolutely remarkable, is also highlighted by a Nobel Prize winner for Economics, Douglass North, who sees the key to economic progress in culture.

Another communication of the Professor (also at the Romanian Academy) addresses the burning issues of contemporary world in the era of globalization, but also analyzed through historical insights. Here he undertook an analysis of migration in time, from "free migration" (which was not a migration driven mainly by economic constraints - K. Pomeranz) to contemporary migration, driven mainly by economic reasons with the whole suite of problems (religious, terrorism, integration, blocking of borders etc.).

Once with globality - says the author - there also appear global issues (pollution, Earth overheating, weapon accumulation, pandemics etc.). Ample space is given to the epidemics and pandemics that struck in time and unfortunately even today are striking many states, including Romania (plague, cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid, flu etc.). It has been reviewed how perception over them has changed as well as the manner of intervention - from primitive methods to scientifically grounded strategies today.

Speaking of social and solidary economy, the author analyzes the concept in terms of those who played an important role in its definition (Leon Bourgeois and Charles Gide). He frames social economy in the époque (late 19th and early 20th century), noting the socio-cultural context (films, exhibitions, etc.) that raised the aspirations of the population. Social and solidary economy is a response to market pressure and Leon Bourgeois believes that "Solidarity School" comes to found its objectives legally and economically. Solidarity, as stated by all authors is almost a natural law.

In Chapter 3, Dan Popescu scans the socio-economic development of Germany, through the German economists who has often had different points of view, as compared to English and French economists. German economists that had a significant influence not only on Germany but also on Europe are listed: Fr. List, Bruno Hildebrandt, Werner Sombart, Joseph Schumpeter etc. Many German economists oriented towards the social market economy, seeing here the key to success and prosperity of a society. Professor Dan Popescu sees, finally, that Germany moves away from the model of social market economy and moves towards the Anglo-Saxon free market economy, thus

passing from the "economys of prosperity" to "economic competitiveness", but will return in-between the two. The theme of migration, previously treated, is repeated in this chapter, the author outlining many contemporary issues facing the EU and US. Within this framework, the Romanian situation is also analyzed, showing significant statistics on Romanian immigrants per year, by age groups, the EU countries and England.

A large part of the last chapter (Chapter 4) is devoted to economic history from Genghis Khan to Andre Thevet. Attracted by strong personalities who conquered, to a large extent, the world through war - Genghis Khan and Napoleon Bonaparte - the author makes a thorough analysis on how they led, conquered and dominated, highlighting the socio-cultural context in which they acted . Based on an exceptional bibliography, Professor Dan Popescu highlights Napoleon's contribution to the making of the modern state, the introduction of the Civil Code, to the support of the French economy and not only.

Any work of Professor Dan Popescu can be read in several ranges. You can decode this valuable book in a historic register, economic, political, cultural and psycho-sociological one. Chapters and subchapters have one significant statement about the topic presented, warning the reader on the chapter contents. The book was published by Continent Publishing House in special, fine graphics. Photos on the covers, highly suggestive, reflect the author's antipodes journey (Africa and finally France)! It is a stimulating and enjoyable reading addressing both researchers, teachers, students, and the general public.