

## Democracy and humanism

---

by Al. TANASE\*



The topical character of the problems of democracy in the contemporary world derives from the rhythm and scope of the transformations occurring in society, from the seriousness and multitude of the problems confronting mankind today and which require a growing organized and conscientious participation of the nations, of the human communities, in the adoption of the fundamental decisions and orientation of the states' policy in the sense of a progressive historical movement.

Romania's experience in the domain of social and state construction has gradually acquired traits and peculiarities whose examination reveals original ideas and solutions that represent not only adequate answers to the problems arising in the process of radical renewal of social-economic and political structures and super-structures, different from those of other countries, but also original contributions to the thesaurus of positive ideas and experience of the political democratic movement. Particularly the last few years have seen a special effervescence as regards the rate and scope of improvements in the organization and leadership of social life. But they had long been prepared most thoroughly. Not spectacular reforms, but a process of gradual completion, measures for the reconstruction of the social life by the growing mature of all social, political and cultural conditions, this is one of the characteristics of the method consistently promoted by our state.

The democratic process has embraced all compartments of the political life ; and, if the affirmation of a position of our own, the consistent promotion of the principles of freedom, independence and sovereignty, of mutual respect and of the national dignity of each people, in the sphere of foreign relations, have been well known and have impressed

---

\* Ph.D. University Professor, Member of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

more powerfully the *progressive political awareness* of our days, it is no less true that such a policy would not have been able to stand out without its natural corollary, which is the home policy of a state.

Such an orientation stems both from the understanding and creative application of the Marxist-Leninist conception by the Romanian Communist Party, and from a historical peculiarity of the Romanian people. Despite the internal and external oppression to which it had been subjected, democracy has been for the Romanian people a *life principle of the national movement and of the historical consciousness*: all the great events and social-national processes, which made up and affirmed the Romanian nation as a distinct reality, modern Romania as a unitary and independent state, which have guaranteed her legitimate joining the family of the free and independent peoples, have not been the outcome of treaties among foreign powers, of diplomatic compromises among the big powers, but the fruit of large social movements, having a democratic content (by the broad participation of the people's masses, by the struggle of the whole people) and a national-progressive content (by the goals proclaimed and the results obtained).

By establishing and developing new relations of production characterized by co-operation and mutual assistance in work, socialism unchains all creative energies of the people, but for these energies to be fully and efficiently manifested, a political organism is necessary, as well as a framework of democratic institutions, liable to continuous improvements; Lenin underlined that socialism was not possible without democracy in a double sense: *a*) of the struggle for the carrying out of the socialist revolution, which is also a struggle for democracy; *b*) of the consolidation of the victory and completion of socialist construction which is inconceivable without full democracy.

As to the way in which the Romanian state tackles and solves the problem of the organization and leadership of social life, of the enlarging of socialist democracy, two ideas seem to me to be fundamental (although they, obviously, do not exhaust this problem):

1. As regards methodology, the economic, social and cultural policy is an applied dialectics which regards the socialist society as a would be reality and dialectical exceeding, comprising intrinsic trends towards a continuous self-improvement as a complex, objective and most differentiated reality. Hence, the social structures, the forms of organization and methods of leadership are not and cannot be ossified, given once and for ever, and the growing diversity of situations turns altogether improper the application of standard recipes in organizing

the social relations, of uniform methods of leading society. The best exam of a vivid, non-speculative dialectical thinking in keeping with the dialectics of the real, lies in the dissociation of the viable structures from the anachronical ones, in perceiving the mutations come about in reality and the finding of the most adequate ways of organizing and leading social life, in the adoption, in the light of the laws and generally-valid principles of socialist construction, of measures stemming from the exploration of local realities and from the examination and selective utilization of others' experience.

The dynamism of a social system is also measured by the way in which it means to promote what is new, to remove the out-dated methods and forms of human activities. It is not sufficient that socialism objectively generates unlimited possibilities of multilateral progress, that it offers economic levers of a highly supple and efficient action. For these new conditions and possibilities to be turned to account, turned into flourishing social realities, the prompt, active intervention is necessary of certain subjective factors, and first of all a *critical attitude* towards the concrete forms and methods of organizing and leading the social-economic, political and cultural life. Immobility and stiffening are principally incompatible with socialism, but, for this incompatibility to become a *question de facto*, it is necessary to permanently adapt the methods of leadership to the stages of the forces and relations of production to the standard of professional training of the basic staff and of the lathe people's masses, to the *progress* of the whole society.

Legislative and organizational measures have thus been adopted with regard to improving the forms of both *representative democracy*, and of the direct one, preceeding however, from the *idea of the necessity of the state* as a basic component part of the super-structure of the new system, the major political factor of its construction with an ever more important and active role in settling and guiding social processes.

The application and enlarging of the democratic principles are conducted in a progressive way, without the a priori exclusion of errors, transient imperfections, the permanent and irreversible action being, however, the large promotion of democracy in social life as a whole.

An essential problem confronting socialist democracy and requiring an attentive settlement is that of the relationship between democracy and planning, or, in a larger framework, between the requirements of democracy and those of the scientific methods in the organizing and leading of social life. The value and necessity of planning are unanimously recognized today. They have become a compulsory condition of social and economic progress. And planning implies the firm holding and efficient employment of the main levers of power.

But how can we make sure that these levers are not used to the detriment of democracy? How can we ensure the blending of the scientific criteria of power, which require a high professional competence and responsibility, with the principles of democracy which require a large mass participation not only in the carrying out of the best decisions concerning the steady and ascending development of economy and culture, of the entire social life, but also in the adoption of such decisions? We know for sure that we cannot oppose the two notions for the reason that the scientific organization of labour necessitates a high professional competence, and not a democratic participation. Neither can we oppose, in the name of democracy, the bureaucratic distortion of planning to the lack of any planning.

In the conditions of socialism, the moral values of democracy are not opposed to the scientific values of technical economic progress. A planned and organized settlement of the social life should be rationally scientific, based on knowledge and a high professional competence but also on the efficient action, in a large democratic framework, of large human communities. The system of democratic relationships is precisely that sphere of socialism in which the unity between knowledge and action, between scientific and practical is expressed most eloquently.

A superior stage of democracy is that in which the methods of organization and leadership of social life should blend the *romanticism* of large scale democratic movements with the *scientific rigour* of the built models. A symptom of this new phase is in Romania the effervescence of social research of the last few years, the penetration of the methods specific to sociologic research in state and party life. It is not by bureaucratic super-decisions and administrative measures that one can solve the multiple and difficult problems of social development, but by combining the method of investigation with the method of large people's consultations. Only the combined using of these methods can lead to the improvement of the style and forms of management.

What enables such a blending, therefore, the co-ordination and scientific guiding of all organized and democratically expressed human efforts, the full turning to account of the existing resources with the view to ensuring the ascending course of the new system, is the fact that the social barriers and the class antagonisms which had limited the possibilities of planning in regimes based on exploitation and private property, have disappeared.

The large democratic consultation in the drawing up and adoption of essential decisions for the development of this country, *the turning of these decisions, and generally, of the entire political and economic*

*policy into facts of civilization, into material and spiritual realities, implies the raising of the level of culture and consciousness of the entire people.* In fact, along the line of this process are also the tasks recommended in the recent « Proposals of measures for the improvement of the political ideological activity, of Marxist Leninist education of the party members, of all working people », made by the General Secretary of the R.C.P. Nicolae Ceausescu, and unanimously endorsed by the Party Central Committee. The construction of the many-sidedly developed socialist society, includes, as an organic part, also the transformation of the people's consciousness, the formation of the new man.

2. *From the social-human point of view (finality) the improvement of the political-social system, an essential content and a modality of enlarging socialist democracy, is indissolubly correlated with the humanist principle.* Democracy and humanism are two fundamental principles guiding the whole activity of the Romanian Communist Party and of the Romanian socialist state, for which man represents not only the finality but also the immediate aim, not only an *object* of the policy, but first and foremost an active subject of the democratic processes. The humanist meaning of democracy lies, on the one hand, in the fact that through the intermediary of its entire system of political, state and public relationships, the progress of civilization becomes a progress of the whole of society, and on the other hand in the fact that it affirms a profoundly renewing outlook about man and his world. In this very humanist finality, in the ensurance of the affirmation and multilateral development of man lies the superiority of socialist democracy. And man is regarded in the multitude of his relationships and constitutive inclinations « The society we are building, said the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, president of the Romanian State Council, has, as a supreme goal, the serving of man, the accomplishment of the highest aspirations of the entire people. It is striving to secure both a material civilization, and a rich spiritual life for all the citizens of our country. The socialist society does not reduce man to the role of a production force, but sees in him the end-user of all scientific and cultural values produced along the years, the supreme factor of society, who, for being able to fulfil his great mission of transforming the world, has to constantly widen his horizon, enrich his knowledge, improve his character, his personality ».

The new man of our society does not stand passive to the democratic beneficial effects. He is and affirms himself as a personality of a modern, socialist conduct, to the extent to which his being related to the

democratic system of the political and cultural relations is expressed, in the main, by an active participation, moral responsibility and competence. In relation to the man regarded as a personality, democracy has a double role: *a)* of *integrating* man in the complex network of social relations; there are different grades and means of integration, but a democracy which does not ignore the moral values always acts in the interest of an essentially humanistic integration, opposing both the isolation of the individual from the collectivity, of his subjectively internal life, of objective social life, and the dissolution of the individual in the social group or in a latter collectivity; *b)* of *differentiation*, of delimitation, personality not being a simple abstract entity of a collectivity of its statistic mean, but individually concentrated, relatively autonomous of his creative potentiality.

The humanist sense of democracy also resides in the fact that it is not only a *problem of civilization*, of *institutionalization* and *objectivising* of a certain *system of social relations*, but also a *problem of culture*, which implies *knowledge*, *participation*, *action* and *responsibility*. We refer to the *ethic* and even *psychologic* aspect of democracy. When there is an *objectively democratic social framework*, a *mobile system* of social relations, permanently *open to self-improvement*, as an *intrinsic* tendency, an effective affirmation with renewing effects of the *democratic principle*, becomes a question of *spiritual climate* and of *conduct*. Hence, a democratic society should act not only for the creation of *democratic institutions*, adequate to the latest requirements of *social progress*, but also *mould, form* and *educate democratic attitudes*, a *democratic conduct*.

The enlarging of *socialist democracy* takes place in the direction of expanding the *social basis*, of increasing the share of the *economic and cultural democracy*, of a growing *efficiency* in carrying out the planned objectives and of developing the creative capacity of the people's masses.

The betterment of socialist democracy is an integral process embracing all compartments of the social life and is continuous, in the sense that, as underlined by Nicolae Ceausescu, what is established now cannot be a limit for the enlarging of socialist democracy as a basic problem of the development of our society as a whole; its is therefore a process covering more stages of evolution, both as regards the social, civic responsibility, the grade and efficiency of rights and social liberties, the force of negation of self-criticism, of what is outdated, out-moded, and the force of affirmation of the new, and as regards the concrete institutional system through the intermediary of which the democratic action is achieved. We are now in that phase of democracy which has made necessary the adoption of new measures,

sanctioned also by the strengthening of the moral-political unity of the people, of the brotherhood of the Romanian working people and the working people belonging to the co-inhabiting nationalities the application of new methods of organizing and leading the social life.

In conclusion, from any point of view we would look at things, the active *subject* of democracy is *man* in his double double quality of *beneficiary* of the conditions and his formative influences, and, at the same time, of a *creative principle* of a truly democratic system. And, if the fundamental problem of humanism is that of the liberation of man, of achieving and developing its human essence, socialist democracy is the main political instrument for attaining these desiderata. Alongside the *process of work*, *democracy is a fundamental factor in developing the active consciousness and creative spirit of the working masses.*

Authentic democracy is a fertile ground for the achievement and affirmation of the integrity of the human person. Democratism means the responsible and competent participation of the people's masses, of the quasi-totality of the members of society, directly, or through representative institutions, in the organization and management of public affairs. A non-differentiated mass cannot be an active and efficient subject of democratic decisions. In the centre of socialist democracy lie not « non-critical masses » but human collectivities, made up of formed, or would be personalities.

Socialist democratism means the improvement of the organizational institutional system, and, to a greater extent, the creative assertion of man as a personality. A new human typology, the realization of the *human essence* in the concrete *social existence* suppose the turning of the *possible* and *ideal condition* into a *real condition*, the transformation of the *human world* into a *world of liberty*.

