

Here are some illustrations of this evaluation. As early as the spring of 1990, circles of the new power launched the terms of a language manipulative of the public sphere, which distracted attention from the real facts of life in favour of structures from the very beginning abstract. For example, an opposition critical of the preservation of realities of the “socialism with a human face” type was expected to offer “dialogue” instead of combat, by dialogue meaning an exchange of opinions without focus on the asymmetrical distribution of power and with no practical consequences⁵. In the early ‘90s, the so-called “neo-communist” interpretation of the 1989 changes – according to which these changes are rather the result of the need for adaptation to the “scientific and technological revolution” than for democratisation – emerged on the intellectual background and stayed there for several years. It was accompanied by a “nationalism” of neo-herderian origin and by the theory of the “apolitical” nature of intellectual life; at the other end of the political spectrum it was accompanied by the “cultural evasionism” trend – all of them formulas of abandoning, willingly or indirectly, political and civic interrogations and of avoiding questioning reality⁶. In 2000, Romania issued its first post-war legislation to prepare and to introduce the politically independent public officers, capable to represent public interest against the naturally diverse background of group interests and their representation. In 2001-2002 this legislation was not only practically suspended, but the process that followed acted in the reverse direction – i.e. extensive politisation of even more public positions.

International analyses devoted to Romania in the early ‘90s rightly evoked the populist atmosphere in relevant terms: “rumours surround you like flu viruses”⁷; the leaders and their “deeply conservatory” colleagues in the Front are, obviously, displeased with the idea of western capital to provide the background for economic reconstruction in the country⁸; “the propaganda machinery of the Front makes use of the fundamentally Stalinist model of conscious calumny”⁹; the Romanian people has risen in December 1989, but its action was rapidly deterred, by massive and systematic disinformation, towards a premeditated scenario¹⁰; the false slogan “we should rather stay proud at home than humble in Europe”¹¹, which hides the danger of interested self-isolation got terrain.

In the meantime, ever since 2001, one of the most profound effects of populism – **corruption** – has been in the spotlight within the country and abroad. Now I do not mean that corruption which fatally accompanies the systems based on representation and delegation of authority in public interest matters, but an already **systematic corruption**, resulting from the political involvement of public officers, the lack of reforms in the justice system, favouritism which has become policy, slips of legislation. Consequently, western analyses insistently and justifiably point to this aspect. **Populism now seems to entirely unveil its implications, and corruption is obviously the effect that crowns it.**

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Recently, the international scene has changed¹². The attack of 11 September 2001 on the United States of America showed one facet of cultural conditioning of behaviour susceptible to determine conflicts. In general terms, the danger is not new, since different cultures were likewise at war when the temple of Jerusalem was torn down, when the Greeks defeated the Persians, when the Barbarians invaded Rome and so many other times in history. **However, new is the realization of the fact that a culture clash is possible in a time when universalisation of modern values was expected, and of the danger of an unprecedented confrontation of global interdependences.** Undoubtedly, the hypothesis of the “clash of civilisations” cannot allow for deriving policies from religions either, since at the present state of investigation it is very difficult to establish univocal correlations between religions on the one hand and policies on the other. However, this hypothesis can reveal the shift of the major conflicts of our times towards culturally rooted conflicts. **In this new international context, alliances on the global scene tend to acquire a different configuration.**