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Re-making of Nation through Adult Education

Flashes on Romanian experiences

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The change is part of life, either it is wanted, intended and comfortably felt, or avoided, rejected and unpleasant. Usually, the change is a matter of choice, but there are situations when it is peremptory. So:

– when a whole country is changing because a part of the world, or the world itself is changing, that means change – everywhere;

– when what is to be changed must be done from top to bottom, that means change until the end;

– when the change intended has been never done before, but there are some parallel models to be reached through a kind of „going back“, that could mean reverse – change.

This is the triple case of the Romanian society, where, since almost ten years, especially the adult persons have to endure the return to capitalism, experiencing a lot of difficulties, servitudes and frustrations, all these equating to a re-birth and a complete new-life. At this regard, it looks appropriate to recall an anecdotic thought making career amongst our contemporary political analysts: it is easy to prepare a bouillabaisse from an aquarium content, but impossible to fix an aquarium, trying to use again the boiled fish in a pot.

In the contemporary Romanian society there is a lot to be changed, practically everything and everyone, in all direction and deeply in each of them. The most difficult to be changed are obviously the consciences, the mentalities, the ways of thinking, feeling and living, the traditions and habits, even if the economical structures and mechanism are simple to transform. Especially in adult persons, the previous attitudes and acting paradigms must be mostly replaced by:

– reference to the new type of the private property;

– habit of expressing initiative;

– sense of full responsibility;

– spirit of loyal competition;

– know-how in expressing personal opinions;

– manner of respecting other's opinion;

– discipline in current communication;

– mood and habit of living naturally and in an integrative manner, in a multicultural and pluralistic society;

– interest for public welfare and the community needs;

– habits for team-working and collaborative sense;

– critical and reflexive ways of perceiving reality;

– sense of logical, coherent, flexible and continuing way of acting;

– interest for a new type of managing everything, from the institutional/organizational level to the personal level (self-management) and so on.

Fact is that there are so many changes in the Romanian society, some of them intended, others just happening, so it becomes difficult to detect and select the good-ones from the rest. Things are more complicated when changes of the recent changes must be urgently operated, without having an appropriate system of values to refer to, excepting the large frame of actual democracy. Such a „brownian motion“ in a changing every-day life is not far from quite a paradox in many cases in our country.

For instance, during more than four decades of „communitary living and working“ as it meant to be and declared itself the communism society in Romania (at least in theory), a lot of behaviour elements, features supposed to be incompatible to such a social system, have been widely kept, with obstinacy, but carefully hidden, dissimulated, not only by fear of oppression, but simply because they are parts of humane nature. So it is the case of:

– personal interests, pushed sometimes until the real selfishness, flourishing under the illusory shine of public property (altogether property), that made possible frequent opportunities of stalling;

– lock of personal commitment, under the umbrella of the excessive centralized and normative leadership, equating to exclusive leaders responsibility and generating, in reverse, complementary to a symptomatic resignation/submission.

On the contrary, nowadays, in these last ten years of post communism, that is supposed to be, in a real capitalist society, essentially based, in all respects, on private, on initiative and personal interest, on individual behaviour, it is easy to find preserved in a paradoxical way, and not even hidden, elements concerns and practices for the public welfare and for the community interests such as support and social services, care of the state for poor citizens, and even a nostalgic regret for the communism concept of „equality“ seen as equality in poorness. This strange way of living with each foot in two disjunctive societies, trying to combine things impossible to put together, was and still is, unfortunately, real in this period of endless transition. At the proper time, the capitalism in the world had to experience, at the beginning, its wild phase, for to be understood, eventually, that the personal welfare is not possible without the public/community welfare. In our country, this beginning phase of primitive and ferocious capitalism was even more savage, most of the adult individuals misunderstanding that:

– now one can do anything that that is worthy, but not detrimental to another competitor;

– the personal freedom, so much and so long coveted before, still has its limits, never to be trespassed without a price (danger, risk);

– ignoring or having a speculative and opportunistic regard for the law doesn't mean enterprise or creativity, but infraction and corruption.

Several voices in contemporary press or social, political, cultural books claim that actual change in the Romanian society means both acculturation and enculturation, as phenomena emerged from the direct and nonrestricted contacts of Romanian citizens with capitalist realities, so long forbidden. The general and intensive seduction for all that belongs to/comes

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from capitalist developed countries ignored usually axiological criteria, so:

- acculturation at a symptomatic and national scale in Romania meant to give up a lot of elements (traditions, habits, acting and behaving models, beliefs and convictions still valuable) just because being too autochthonous and the replacement of all these with similar substitutes „imported“ from abroad, by reason of snobbism, rather than real necessity;
- enculturation, in exchange, considered in a proper measure, useful and legitimate, supposes the processes of approaching and description of cultural values of capitalist developed democracies. Seen from this perspective, the enculturation must be carefully re-oriented and accelerated, its progress being actually to slow and its level quite superficial, focussed on the „shape“, not on the content.

The new concepts, theories, mechanisms belonging to the economy, finance, policy, law, administration, education are overcoming ordinary people, being difficult to be understood and used in practice. It is absolutely necessary for adult persons in their professional daily life to be helped, supported, guided in this respect. Everyone in Romania agrees that such things are part of our present and future, having to be appropriated or even learned from the very beginning, but this is not possible by teaching them in a traditional way (presenting, explaining and exemplifying them). For adult persons these are things to be lived, learned by doing them, felt as real needs, all these leading to adult education as the one and only alternative.

It is well known that in the West European countries and in North America adult education grew by fulfilling two specific stages:

- previously, as a complementary educational extension for the adults missing the opportunity to get a formal instruction/education at the proper time (until the age of 20 to 25 years);
- subsequently, as training and re-training all adult persons, including those with substantial and complete formal education, as response to a more and more changing society and dynamic living.

In Romanian adult education these two stages still exist, the second one having in charge much more issues, because the changes in our society are nowadays not only frequent, but they concern the structure and not the details of the new coming social system, as well as the consciences of the adult persons, as the most delicate and critical field of specific actions. From this point of view, it appears as prior and cardinal a function of emancipation through education of the whole Romanian society. It is a fact that contemporary generations of children and teenagers benefit already from a new type of education in a new school, mostly modernized within the educational reform frame. With regard to adult generations, educated in the old fashioned school, an adult education unceasing but precautious and flexible is needed, for sure.

Unfortunately, in a country like Romania adult education itself had to be reinvigorated after 1989, until then being in the well-known position of marginal subsystem of spreading mass culture, through ideological mechanisms, based on an illusive educational force of the communist society, as a whole. Perceived immediately after 1990 by ordinary people, aversive to any communist inheritance, as a real residual ballast, confronted with an increasing crisis of institutional identity, adult edu-

cation had in fact several „ages“ in postcommunist in Romania:

- a strong decreasing, due to the „feelings“ presented above, but also explained by the lack of interest for such an area considered for about three years (1990-1992) „woman's land“;
- a slow but systematic rebuilding, institutionally and logistically speaking, between 1993-1997, with substantial support from abroad (see the collaboration with the German IIZ-DVV – Project Romania, or the Romanian-Danish Institute for Adult Education).
- a period of real development, starting from 1998, when needs for adult education multiplied and strongly felt on the educational and labor market led to framing a coherent strategy at a national scale, beginning to involve Romanian universities in this new field of education, and starting a trend of specific action research in this regard. Even law and administration issues are about to be settled, but for now, there is only a specialized department in the Ministry of Education and a Council for Continuing Education at the national level, excepting valuable local initiatives, such as the recent „birth“ of the Romanian Institute of Adult Education (IREA) in the University of the West from Timisoara (with DIE support from Frankfurt). Despite of the external help and support, welcomed anytime, but never enough through itself, educating an adult is mostly a matter of putting him in a condition and a position of a self-made man. If we extend these to the whole Romanian society, I think we are entitled to aim: Re-making a nation. Through adult education.

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Stärkung der regionalen Textilindustrie durch Weiterbildung mit neuen Medien

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In den letzten Jahren wurden verstärkt Aktivitäten unternommen, die berufliche Bildung auf der regionalen Ebene zu stärken. Gründe für diese Überlegungen und Initiativen liegen vor allem in den wirtschaftlichen Umstrukturierungsprozessen aufgrund der Globalisierung der Märkte und in den veränderten Produktionsbedingungen. Eine auf betriebliche Erfordernisse und Entwicklungsperspektiven zugeschnittene Bildung und Weiterbildung erfährt damit eine strategische Bedeutung. Die

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