

SANDA GOLOPENȚIA, coord., et al., *Școala sociologică de la București*, în Revista „Secolul 21”, București, Uniunea Scriitorilor din România și Fundația Culturală Secolul 21, no. 1–6/2012.

Presenting the Bucharest School of Sociology to the readers of the prestigious journal *Secolul 21* (*Publicație periodică de sinteză. Dialogul culturilor. Științele omului. Literatură universală*) is no simple task. As indicated in its long subtitle, *Secolul 21* addresses a diversified audience by offering synthetic approaches aimed at stimulating the dialogue between cultures, literatures and social sciences. On the other hand, the Bucharest School of Sociology was a uniquely complex sociological and social movement with multiple facets, leaders and contributors coming from many fields. Finally, the exegesis of the School itself encompassed the efforts of several generations of researchers.

Sanda Golopenția, professor emerita at Brown University (U.S.), undertook the coordination of a collective effort that tried to honor this challenge. In her previous work on the School she had already adopted more than one type of approach, by at the same time editing the (posthumous) works of Anton Golopenția and Ștefania Cristescu Golopenția (whose sociological publications were banned during the communist regime), publishing studies on members of the School such as Constantin Brăiloiu, Petre Ștefănuță, Christina Galitzi etc., and by regrouping in a series entitled *Rapsodia epistolară* (The Epistolary Rhapsody) hundreds of letter exchanges between Anton Golopenția and sociologists, anthropologists, historians, economists, administrators, artists, priests, teachers, peasants etc., many of whom were involved with the School at one moment or another in the interwar years¹. She also gave a unique image of the suppression of the sociological movement, discipline, institutions and sociologists in Romania in the volume A. Golopenția, *Ultima carte* (The Last Book/Card), which she edited. This volume regroups A.G.'s declarations during the 1950–1951 inquest (which he did not survive) preparing the Pătrășcanu trial, the declarations of fellow researchers at the Central Institute for Statistics, the declarations of the *Securitate* officers when the trial was reconsidered in the late sixties as well as a number of documents showing the way in which the communist regime operated at the time and post-1989 materials on the subject. In so doing, Sanda Golopenția made full (sociological) use of never before published documents in a number of private and public archives and, most of all, in the archives of the *Securitate*.

To do justice to the multidisciplinary dimension of Gusti's sociological vision as well as to the plural interests that define *Secolul 21*, Sanda Golopenția assembled a team in which representatives of practically four generations, from Romania, France and the United States, belonging to the fields of sociology, anthropology, feminism, intercultural and international relations, art, photography and architecture were fruitfully reunited. As a result, the project grew beyond the space assigned to one

¹ Cf. Anton Golopenția, *Opere complete*, I (*Sociologie*) and II (*Statistică, demografie, geopolitică*), ed. by Sanda Golopenția, București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000, 2002; A. G., *Românii de la est de Bug*, ed. by Sanda Golopenția, București: EE, 2006; A.G., *Ultima carte*, București: EE, 2001; A.G., *Rapsodia epistolară*, I (București: Albatros), II–III (București: EE), 2004, 2010, 2012; Ștefania Golopenția, ed., A.G., *Ceasul misiunilor reale*, București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1999; Șt. Cristescu-Golopenția, *Gospodăria în credințele și riturile magice ale femeilor din Drăguș (Făgăraș)*, ed. 3, cuvânt înainte și notă de Sanda Golopenția, București: Paideia, 2002; Șt. Cristescu, *Descântatul în Cornova-Basarabia*, ed. by Sanda Golopenția, București: Paideia, 2003; Șt. Cristescu-Golopenția, *Sporul vieții. Jurnal, studii și corespondență*, București: Paideia, 2007.

issue and the totality of the contributions had to be divided in two parts, the first being the one we will discuss here and the second being programmed to appear in 2013.

In the introduction to the present issue of *Secolul 21*, entitled “Dimitrie Gusti și Școala sociologică de la București în secolul XXI” (D. Gusti and the Bucharest Sociological School in the XXIst Century), Sanda Golopenția delineates several aspects that are still in need of further study. First, the personality of D. Gusti (whose maxim “A good social theory always means a good action” she used as a motto) deserves further study. The author gives as an example Gusti’s life-long aspiration to emulate Goethe’s synthesis between life and work raising the question whether, in his activity at the Royal Foundation, which is so much debated in Romania nowadays, Gusti did not try “to educate” King Carol II in a manner reminiscent of Goethe’s “political pedagogy” episode at the Weimar Court. Second, the sociological movement initiated by Gusti is neither limited to Bucharest (there were solid teams doing sociological research in Iași, Timișoara, Chișinău) nor exclusively defined in terms of Gusti’s mentoring (A. Golopenția, Traian Herseni, H. H. Stahl or Vasile Caramelia trained young researchers in their turn) or of “Gusti’s system.” The Timișoara team led by Cornel Groșorean, the Social Assistance School in Bucharest led by Veturia Manuila and even the group around D. Gusti developed approaches that diverged from that of the Professor. Among those, as shown by M. Cernea already in the seventies, A. Golopenția essentially renewed the research vision of the School. Thus, instead of studying the Gusti School as a monolithic institution centered on a number of relevant figures, the history of sociology could start comparing the activities of the different groups that composed what S. Golopenția calls “*arhipelagul gustian*” (the Gustian archipelago). Last, one should not forget that we are currently engaged in the fourth moment of the critical assessment of the sociological movement initiated by D. Gusti. The first was occasioned by Gusti’s celebration in 1936. The second took place in the somber forties, before and during WWII, when D. Gusti synthesized his sociological work in a number of volumes and lectures, while A. Golopenția, then Director of Publications at the Institute for Social Science, managed to bring to publication the main collective works of the School (including an important part of the papers prepared in view of the XIV-th International Congress of Sociology, due to take place in Bucharest in 1939 and disrupted by war). The third moment of research devoted to the Gustian movement started in the sixties (after the void between 1948 and the end of the fifties) and closed in 1989. Contrary to an opinion frequently expressed, it cannot be ignored, even if the communist regime grossly restricted the publication of or on Romanian sociology. S. Golopenția insists on the fact that this was the period during which members of the School such as O. Neamțu, H. H. Stahl, Miron Constantinescu, Pompiliu Caration etc. were still alive and could finally publish on the Bucharest School of Sociology in less restricted ways. In fact, many of the oral history interviews conducted by Z. Rostas belong to this period, while their publication and circulation became possible only in the current, post-1989 moment. Together with the important work of editing (by Sanda Golopenția and Marin Diaconu) and with Ștefan Costea’s Encyclopedia of Sociology this is a moment still evolving, in which a number of young researchers (Theodora Văcărescu, Florentina Stoian, Raluca Mușat, Ionuț Butoi etc.), who are represented in the current issue of *Secolul 21*, have already initiated promising projects.

The issue we are reviewing bears the subtitle *Monografiști și echipieri* and is comprised of four rubrics: “*Bilanț și perspective*” (General Review and Perspectives); “*Tineret, Universitate, Ministerul Instrucției, Cultelor și Artelor*” (Youth, University, and The Ministry of Education, Cults and the Arts); “*Cercetări monografice*” (Monographic Research); “*Echipe regale studențești. Serviciul Social*” (The Royal Student Teams and Social Service). The next issue, entitled *Publicații, Expoziții, Proiecte* (Publications, Exhibitions, and Projects) has the rubrics “*Publicații*” (Publications); “*Expoziții, Muzeul Satului, Pavilioane ale României*” (Exhibitions, The Museum of the Village, Pavillions of Romania at the Paris and New York International Fairs), “*Un Institut Social al Națiunilor*” (A Social Institute of Nations), “*Suprimarea Școlii*” (The Suppression of the School) and “*Epilog*” (Epilogue).

The second article is actually a lecture addressed to the Romanian Academy in 1940 by Dimitrie Gusti, entitled “*Considerații asupra unui sistem de sociologie, etică și politică*” (Thoughts on a sociological, ethical and political system). This is, in fact, a summarized, simplified and brilliant

presentation of his entire sociological system. To re-summarize it here would be pointless, as Gusti's account comprises its essential contents. One may view it as a landmark in the journal, as some of the authors of the studies included in it also summarize Gusti's sociological theory, while all of them analyze it and the way it has been put into practice or transformed along the line.

Mihail M. Cernea follows, with his study "*Diversificarea tipologică a cercetărilor asupra comunităților rurale*" (The typological diversification of research conducted in rural communities). The study's publication is a premiere – although it was written some 40 years ago, it has never before been published in Romania. It informs the reader on the various mutations that Gusti school's theory and methodology suffered over the years as it was used and reconsidered by his collaborators. He notes though that Gusti himself has never fundamentally changed his own theoretical system, the School's "official" one. The author reviews the original contributions made by certain innovators (Anton Golopenția, D.C. Georgescu, C. Groșorean) and their innovations – the simplified monograph, the problem-centered monograph, the area centered monograph, the regional one, the comparative research of a sample of rural communities, the use of statistics and the tendency to build village typologies.

Frank Alvarez, Pereyre writes about *L'ecole sociologique de Bucarest: fondements, réception, héritage*. First, he underlines the characteristic features and the evolution of the School's sociological theory and of its activity. He then compares them to the international sociological environment of the time, trying to shed light on the School influences and to place it in an international context. He points to the aspects of the School's activity and theory that were highly original for their time and identifies some of the elements that are still viable today. He analyzes the School's attempt to make sociology holistic, concluding that its approach is still of relevance and importance today. As he finds, although the School had a pure-sociological system and view as a base, it used a multidisciplinary approach in the research it conducted, thus trying to solve the problem of the very specialized view on reality that science usually generates. Moreover, in its holistic approach, the School integrated theory with research and research with development efforts.

Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu's study, "*Colaboratoarele înlăturate*" (The unacknowledged collaborators), deals with a previously unattended issue – that of women's contributions and involvement in the School activity. This is a gender study, based on feminist theories and on methodologies that the author specifies in the first part of the paper. She first places the School in a context little known before – that of women's and feminist movements and of the transformations underwent by women's condition. She finds this context to be an important part of the explanation for women's strong presence in the School. On the other hand, she finds that women's involvement in the School's activities was based on additional motives – men with strong positions in the organization needed to use women's skills for research and social intervention. Women, the men argued, had better social skills and were able to win peasants' trust, to get them to share the precious information they held; women were also better suited for commissioned work or for work in particular research or intervention areas. The author finally uses case studies (of which those of Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția, Paula Gusty-Herseni and Xenia Costa-Foru are most eloquent and elaborate) to prove that, although women's presence was admitted, they were assigned to less important work and less important positions and also to gender specific activities, in accordance with the gender stereotypes of the time.

Ionuț Butoi contributes with two studies. The first one follows Th. E. Văcărescu's and is entitled "*Tânăra generație interbelică*" (The interwar young generation). It strives to bring the reader to a more comprehensive understanding of a controversial Romanian generation, the youth of the inter-war period. The current literature on this generation – to whom most of Gusti's leading disciples belong – he argues, is incomplete, one-sided and biased, most of the times excluding some of the generation's most important members. The study tries to overcome this issue. It first offers a sequenced description of the trajectory followed by the youth belonging to this generation in their attempt to organize and assert themselves as a new generation of intellectuals. It then gives a nuanced and complete description of their intellectual and ideological options, as they took shape over the years. As it does so it includes views from inside the generation, belonging to young members of the

School – namely Mircea Vulcănescu and Anton Golopenția – who are, at the same time, some of those forgotten by other researchers of the subject of “the Young Generation”. Finally, the study deals with the generation’s multiplicity, unrest and with its clashes, linking its members to an environment in rapid transformation, anomic and atomized.

What follows is an analysis of a questionnaire created in 1930 by The Sociology, Ethics and Politics Seminar of Bucharest University’s Faculty of Arts and Philosophy and addressed to the university students of the time. Entitled “*Istorie și înțelepciune, dar și ironie și naivitate*” (History and wisdom, together with irony and naivety), it is an examination of the questions found in the questionnaire. The author notes both the resemblances and the differences between the past, inter-war era and the present one, what qualities or flaws are to be found in the questions. He also notices the absence of a deeper and potentially foretelling quest on the side of the designers of the questionnaire, thus insufficiently exploring the unrest of the times, which announced unequalled disasters.

Zoltán Rostás contributes with an analysis of the ways in which the Bucharest School of Sociology influenced Hungarian sociologists and sociology in his study “*Sociologia gustiană văzută de la Budapesta*” (Gustian sociology, as seen from Budapest). The influence, he shows, was born out of the interaction between Hungarian sociologists and intellectuals and the School’s leading members. One Hungarian sociologist, Gábor Lükő, is of special importance. He moves to Romania to study at the University in Bucharest and, as a consequence of meeting A. Golopenția, H. H. Stahl and C. Brăiloiu and joining them in their research campaigns, becomes familiar with the School’s theory and practice. Deported to Hungary, he becomes the main promoter of Gusti’s sociological system in Hungary. On the other side, Anton Golopenția holds a special merit in creating and maintaining a fruitful collaboration with the Hungarians – though he was not an exception, as School members in general had welcomed this collaboration. As a result of this collaboration, which extended for a while even in the post-World War II era, Hungarian sociology adopts both the Romanian School’s research model – the monograph – and its social intervention one.

Ionuț Butoi’s second study follows. Entitled “*În căutarea satului necunoscut. Monografiștii lui Gusti și sociologia satului românesc*” (Searching for the unknown village. Gusti’s monographists and Romanian rural sociology), it analyzes the way in which Romanian intellectuals – scientists, politicians and even philosophers – have viewed the Romanian rural world. The latter, he argues, by the time of last century’s ‘20s and ‘30s, had long been disputed, disdained or acclaimed by these intellectuals and yet remained largely unknown to them. Gusti and his School’s members were the first to engage in a comprehensive and ambitious research project, aiming to shed light on the realities of the rural world and its inhabitants. They are the first ones to understand that a large part of peasant communities’ problems were caused by attempts to radically reform a world that was mostly unknown to the reformers. These reforms did not help build a new and functional social organization for Romanian rural communities but rather disintegrated the old world and left it with dire prospects for the future. The final section of the paper is a grave conclusion – reforms of Romanian rural space, imposed by those in power even though they are still utterly ignorant of its more profound realities, are still a topical issue in Romania.

Florentina Țone’s study is devoted to *Francisc Rainer*. Doctor, professor and anthropologist, researcher and innovator, Rainer was also involved in the School’s monograph campaigns. Invited by Dimitrie Gusti, he joined the team of monographists in their research in Nerej, Fundu Moldovei and Drăguș and acted as a leader of the team studying the biological background of these communities. It is in these villages that he performed important anthropological research, using as shield and pretext medical tests and consultations, attractive and useful to their peasant beneficiaries. His work increased the welfare of these communities and produced remarkable research results in the field of anthropology. Moreover, it influenced the School’s activity, which later on included a medical component in its development oriented activities.

Raluca Mușat, in her study “*(Auto)portrete fotografice*” (Photographic (self)portraits), examines the role of photography and photographers in the School’s activity – be it research or social interventions. Photographs, belonging to professional photographers or to amateurs, members of the School, documented multiple aspects: the activity of the teams that worked on various monograph

campaigns, the lives of the peasants they met, the way that researchers spent their leisure time in these campaigns, the activity of the student social intervention teams and a range of problematic aspects of rural life.

Last but by no means least we will find Dumitru Sandu's study, which deals with the School's activity from a new, unprecedented perspective. Entitled "Ridicarea satului *prin el însuși. Ideologii și practici în interbelicul românesc*" (Community-managed rural development. Ideologies and practice in inter-war Romania), it analyzes social intervention, a significant part of the School's activity, and parallels it to the theory and practice of community development, finding strong correspondences between the first and the latter. Sandu argues that what the School created was an early version of a community development program. He highlights the ways in which different members of the School were involved in its development activities. Moreover, he analyzes the reasons why D. Gusti chose to transform what was a voluntary student involvement in social intervention into an obligation to work for a new institution – the Social Service – and shows some of the reasons for which this institution failed and ended up being suspended. His conclusions are rich and synthetic – he assembles an overall image of the importance and impact of the School's activity in the field of development, points to the elements of its development strategy that are still valid today and to those that were flawed or dysfunctional, reviews the individuals who have made significant contributions to the strategies of the Social Service (D. Gusti, of course, along with H.H. Stahl, Octavian Neamțu and Anton Golopenția), analyzes the presumed ideological roots of the School's activity and suggests that future, more comprehensive research concerning the impact of the pro-development activities of the School should be undertaken.

Alina Cecilia Juravle-Gasler

