"BY OURSELVES" – A LIBERAL CONCEPT

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Abstract: *The motto "by ourselves" was expressed even before 1877; after the conquest of national Independence, it became the leit-motif of the liberal doctrine and, at the same time, a political weapon against the conservatives.*

The concept regarded all the activity areas, including the foreign policy, being the axis of the whole national development process, the liberals acting towards the adoption of appropriate economic structures, creating credit and insurance institutions, which have become powerful instruments to accelerate the economic development and also to decrease the gaps between Romania and the advanced European states.

The concept "by ourselves" meant the national development under all its aspects, but specifying, by our own means. Hence the tendency to protect the particular industries to which the state had already provided for conditions of existence, namely raw materials and a stable market outlet for their products.

Key words: *"by ourselves", the National Liberal Party, the foreign capitalists.*

The motto of liberals, "by ourselves", symbolizes the program of the bourgeoisie in the process of affirmation, conscious that strengthening its political awareness depended on strengthening the entire economy, objective achievable primarily through their own efforts. I.G.Duca[1] defined the motto "by ourselves" as a national economic policy, not a policy of exclusivism and chauvinism, but a policy intended, firstly, to develop the economic forces of the country by our own means.

The motto "by ourselves" was expressed even before 1877; after the conquest of the national Independence it becomes the leit-motif of the liberal doctrine and, in the same time, a political weapon against conservatives[2]. The concept, which followed, mainly, the stimulation of the national internal forces, it will constitute the axis of the entire policy unfolded by the Liberal National Party in all its existence. This trend expresses, as it was shown by I.G.Duca, the "National Liberal Party's boundless confidence in the powers of life of the Romanian people"[3], in fact it represented the promotion of a national policy intended to contribute to the development of the national economic forces.

Designed by Ion C. Bratianu, the concept has synthesized, at that time, Romania's economic needs, such as a national industry, the domestic capital and trade, and the respect of the private property. Applying this concept, the National Liberal Party has managed to gather around many internal energies. But the policy "by

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[1] I.G.Duca, *Consecinţele războiului şi dezvoltarea internă în urma lui,* în *Războiul neatârnării 1877-1878,* Bucharest, 1927, p.150.

[2] **** Istoria Românilor,* 7th Volume, 2nd tom, Encyclopedic Publishing-house, Bucharest, 2003, p. 33.

[3] I.G.Duca, *The Liberal Doctrine*, conference held at the Carol I University Foundation on February 15, 1923, *Doctrinele Partidelor Politice,* Cultura Naţională Publishing-house, Bucharest, 1923, p.3.

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ourselves" was not a reaction of total rejection of foreign capital, as conservatives, their political opponents, often have argued that time, but rather a collaboration with it, to the extent to which the internal forces were co-interested[1].

The concept regarded all the activity areas, including the foreign policy, being the axis of the whole national development process, the liberals acting towards the adoption of appropriate economic structures, creating credit and insurance institutions, which have become powerful instruments to accelerate the economic development and also to decrease the gaps between Romania and the advanced European states[2].

Applying the concept "by ourselves", the National Liberal Party was concerned, in the immediate aftermath of the Independence war, with the development of peasant property, in the conditions in which the allotment of land for just married couples was foreseen in the Mazar-Pasha Coalition Program[3], but the war prevented the implementation of this measure.

The concept also regarded the development of the loaning institutions not by conceding them to foreign capitalists, but by creating them with our own means. In this respect, the projects for creating a banking institution, designed to contribute to the internal consolidation of the country, are worth mentioning. Thus, the National Bank was designed as one of the most important instruments for economic development and the determinant factor for social progress[4]. The need for such an institution was imperative felt by the Romanian state, its lack largely hindering the economic development. In this respect, after the conquest of the state Independence, Ion C. Bratianu, assisted by Eugen Carada, prepares the project of the law regarding the National Bank, sustained in Parliament on February 27, 1880[5].

Having the privilege of issuing denomination bills, in exchange for its stock of silver, the National Bank would function as a joint-stock company, having Ion Campineanu as prime-governor, a Liberal leader and minister in several governments. Funding the National Bank gave a powerful incentive to the future economic activities, by supporting the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie's needs for credits, offering them broad possibilities of affirmation[6].

The concept "by ourselves" meant the national development under all its aspects, but specifying, by our own means. Hence the tendency to protect the particular industries to which the state had already provided for conditions of existence, namely raw materials and a stable market outlet for their products.

As a conclusion, the economic policy "by ourselves" must be understood in the meaning of protecting the national industry, without removing the foreign capitalists and their experience, it meant a national initiative, foreseen and trust in the state's forces[7].

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[1] Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizaţiei române moderne,* 1st Volume, Cultura Naţională Publishing -house, Bucharest, 1931, p.33.

[2] Apostol Stan, Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România,* Encyclopedic Publishing-house, Bucharest, 1996, pp.207-209.

[3] The Mazar-Pasha Coalition on May 24, 1875, represents the moment of birth of the National Liberal Party, having a 12 Points program.

[4] Apostol Stan, Mircea Iosa, quoted work, p.215.

[5] D.A.Sturdza, *Istoricul Partidului Na'ional Liberal de la 1876-1888,* with two annexes containing the Party's Manifesto on September 8 and 11, 1880, Bucharest, 1880, p.7.

[6] Ştefan Zeletin, *Burghezia română.Originile şi rolul ei în istorie,*Bucharest, 1925, p. 96.

[7] Apostol Stan, Mircea Iosa, quoted work, pp.222-223

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