Chronotopos
A Journal of Translation History

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Sinister Ironies.
The Romanian translation of “L’Internationale” from an anthem of the oppressed to the last words of a tyrant.

1/2024
DOI: 10.70596/cts175

Herausgegeben am / Éditée au / Edited at: Institute of Applied Linguistics and Translatology (IALT), Leipzig University
ISSN: 2617-3441

Abstract

This article explores the cultural history around the publication of the Romanian translation of Pottier’s “L’Internationale” by C. Z. Buzdugan in 1900 in the socialist newspaper Lumea nouă*, as well as the song’s subsequent contexts during the communist regime (1944–1989). Combining an etymologically and stylistically-informed comparative close-reading of Buzdugan’s translated text and Pottier’s original with an account of the coeval crisis of early Romanian socialism, I provide fresh insight into how Romania’s still ruralized, post-feudal social structures at the turn of the twentieth century influenced some omissions and insertions in this previously neglected early translation. Aside from contributing to translation history, this article also sheds light on the importance of remediation and performance in the process of shaping the meanings of a widely circulated text. Through an analysis of the chameleonic totalitarian appropriation of “L’Internationale” in the Romanian context and of its perusal in Ceaușescu’s cunning game of distancing himself from Soviet control and appeasing the West while continuing to oppress the population of his country, I reveal a dark facet of the song’s potential to animate masses. Finally, I zoom in on the dictator’s final intonation of the workers’ anthem before the execution squad as an iconic and ironic historical lesson about the power of repetition and brainwashing to hollow out the positive message of this text and reduce it to a memento of Ceaușescu’s own empty glorification. I use this example as a caveat against the treacherous powers of propaganda, which to this day threaten Romanian society.*

Keywords: L’Internationale, C. Z. Buzdugan, early Romanian socialism, remediation, propaganda, Romanian 1989 Revolution, Ceaușescu’s execution

Zum Zitieren des Artikels / Pour citer l’article / To cite the article:
Cernat, Laura (2025): Sinister Ironies. The Romanian translation of “L’Internationale” from an anthem of the oppressed to the last words of a tyrant., *Chronotopos* 6 (1), 53-83. DOI: 10.70596/cts175

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Sinister ironies

The Romanian translation of "L'Internationale" from an anthem of the oppressed to the last words of a tyrant

This article explores the cultural history around the publication of the Romanian translation of Pottier's "L'Internationale" by C. Z. Buzdugan in 1900 in the socialist newspaper Lumea nouă*, as well as the song's subsequent contexts during the communist regime (1944–1989). Combining an etymologically and stylistically-informed comparative close-reading of Buzdugan's translated text and Pottier's original with an account of the coeval crisis of early Romanian socialism, I provide fresh insight into how Romania's still ruralized, post-feudal social structures at the turn of the twentieth century influenced some omissions and insertions in this previously neglected early translation. Aside from contributing to translation history, this article also sheds light on the importance of remediation and performance in the process of shaping the meanings of a widely circulated text. Through an analysis of the chameleonic totalitarian appropriation of "L'Internationale" in the Romanian context and of its perusal in Ceaușescu's cunning game of distancing himself from Soviet control and appeasing the West while continuing to oppress the population of his country, I reveal a dark facet of the song's potential to animate masses. Finally, I zoom in on the dictator's final intonation of the workers' anthem before the execution squad as an iconic and ironic historical lesson about the power of repetition and brainwashing to hollow out the positive message of this text and reduce it to a memento of Ceaușescu's own empty glorification. I use this example as a caveat against the treacherous powers of propaganda, which to this day threaten Romanian society.*

Introduction

In his survey of the circulation of "L'Internationale", Jan Gielkens warns that, although "stories about "L'Internationale" can be told for all language areas and all countries", these stories are "too rarely told and too often wrong", being full of "socialist heroization and romanticization" (Gielkens 1998: 83, my translation). The same article mentions in passing the existence of an early "anonymous" Romanian translation from 16 April 1900, in the social-democratic weekly "*Lumea nou_*" (sic.) (Gielkens 1998: 78), about which more information, at the time of Gielkens's writing, was missing. In the space of this elided diacritic sign ("*Lumea nou_*" is of course "*Lumea nouă*", which translates into "The New World") and in the limited information about the existence of a Romanian version of the song so early on (the "anonymous" translation actually belonged to C. Z. Buzdugan, who credited the composer De Geyter rather than Eugène Pottier for the text), one could read the reverberations of an entire history of imperfect – though not indifferent – attempts at communication between two cultures, Belgian and Romanian, whose locations at different extremities of the European continent

might make them seem more different than they are. In a move towards filling these gaps (both archival and cultural), this article explores the cultural and social history around the publication of the Romanian "Internationale" as well as the song's subsequent contexts as it gained prominence in the state-controlled cultural landscape after 1945, only to be gradually marginalized in favour of nationalist parades and festivals in the 1970s. Ironically, the one event that brought the workers' hymn back to public attention was the Romanian 1989 revolution, culminating with the execution of the dictator Ceaușescu, whose last words were none other than the first two lines of "L'Internationale".

In presenting these various phases in the evolution of Romania's implicit positioning on the international scene, I propose a contribution to an effort of relativization and contextualization, leaving a space for the grey zones of historical intervention. Though it might feel easier to respond to the "socialist heroization and romanticization" denounced by Gielkens with a diametrically opposed demonization of everything related to socialist movements in Eastern Europe in the spirit of "post-communist anticommunism" (Barbu 2004: 107–121) – a tempting reaction for someone like myself, raised in the first years of post-communist freedom, with a strong aversion to any impulse that might set political thought on the downward spiral leading to totalitarianism – in this piece my aim is to offer a more balanced view. Neither idealizing nor demonizing early Romanian socialism, I read it as an aspiration induced and nourished by international (including Western) models, only later highjacked by the hollowing spectacle of Soviet-imposed totalitarianism. In the long history of the hymn's remediations, the contamination of "L'Internationale" by the clichés of communist vainglory has emptied it of its subversive resonances. Furthermore, Ceaușescu's final intonation of its lines has sealed it into an association not only with his sinister historical part as one of the last European tyrants of his age, but also with the collective trauma of the Romanian Revolution of 1989, a time of extreme uncertainty, confusion, and bloodshed, whose only solution seemed to be the nearly ritualistic execution of the presidential couple. This unresolved traumatic complex, which haunts Romanian collective consciousness to this day, over thirty years on, makes my endeavour to put things into perspective a difficult, even risky one. While not aspiring to reach broad conclusions about the evils of the nearly five-decade dictatorship and the undeniable psychological scars they left, with this case study I hope to show how the Soviet-imposed communist rule turned a symbol of liberation into a weapon of propaganda, and how a text initially written to instigate the abolition of an unjust class system became woven into the foundation of another unjust system of privilege, entering the Cold-War logic of polarization that no longer promoted workers' solidarity across the world but instead replaced loyalty to a social cause with loyalty to a political bloc.

The first section of this essay focuses on the context in which the periodical *Lumea nouă* appeared, providing an overview of the workers' movement around the turn of the twentieth century and showing how the organization of early Romanian socialists, inspired by foreign models, ran up against a set of difficulties derived from the local specificities of the social structure. The second section outlines some of the main

themes and goals of the periodical, aiming to reconstruct some of the atmosphere in which the translation came out. I zoom in on the particularities of the Romanian translation of "L'Internationale" in the next section, comparing it to Pottier's original. I continue by discussing a second published version from 1944 and then charting the uses of the workers' anthem at public events before August 1944, during the Communist Party's illegal existence, as well as after the instauration of communist rule in the mid to late 1940s. Special attention is given to the 1968 moment, when Ceaușescu's opposition to the invasion of Czechoslovakia was accompanied by the music of "L'Internationale". I further discuss ritualized performances of supposed socialist success during festive moments. The final section tackles the still controversial topic of the Romanian anti-communist revolution and provides some context for the last famous public intonation of "L'Internationale" as the dictator, still enthralled to the convictions of his youth and seemingly blind to the gap between them and the horrific realities he had imposed, awaited his execution. Through these steps I aim to show how the circulation of Pottier's hymn became entangled with the changes in the social and political fabric of Romania as it underwent radical (and often unpredictable) transformations.

The Romanian workers' movement at the turn of the twentieth century

In 1900, when the translation of "L'Internationale" first appeared in print in Romania, the socialist movement there was already in crisis. The Romanian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Partidul Social-Democrat al Muncitorilor din România), founded in the spring of 1893 (JURCA 1994: 22; PETRESCU 2003: 96; TISMĂNEANU 2003: 38; NJAGULOV 2014: 237), had started out with the ambition of diversifying the political scene in the young state,[1] formerly dominated by two large parties – the National Liberal Party, founded in 1875, and the Conservative Party, established in 1880 (JURCA 1994: 22). However, by 1899 this socialist party was encountering logistical, tactical, and ideological difficulties, which resulted in the resignation of its leader, Ioan Nădejde, on 21 February (PETRESCU 2003: 146; JURCA 1994: 39), followed shortly after by the defection of several prominent members of the party, who joined the National Liberals – a switch known as "the betrayal" or the "treason" of the "generous" (see JURCA 1994: 39; PETRESCU 2003: 155; NJAGULOV 2014: 240; TISMĂNEANU 2003: 38). In spite of a manifesto titled "Suntem și rămânem!" ("We are and we remain!"), which appeared on 28 March 1899 in *Lumea nouă* ["The New World"] – the same journal that published "L'Internationale" in Romanian a year later – and where Alexandru Ionescu (supported by a few others, including C. Z. Buzdugan, the future trans-

[1] Romania, which had been created in 1859 under the name "The Romanian Principalities" through the fusion of Moldova and Wallachia, acquired its first modern Constitution in 1866 (based on the model of the 1831 Belgian Constitution, see HITCHINS 1994: 19), and obtained its political independence from Ottoman rule in 1877. The country's territory in 1900 did not include Transylvania, nor Bessarabia, which were reintegrated into Romania after the First World War.

lator of Pottier's text) tried to resist the idea of dismantling the Romanian Social Democratic Workers' Party (see PETRESCU 2003: 148), the party was first renamed "The National Democratic Party", following a congress in April 1899 (PETRESCU 2003: 148), then dissolved through the indefinite postponement of its next meeting (PETRESCU 2003: 154). With C. Z. Buzdugan as editor, the newspaper *Lumea nouă* continued publication until 1 October 1900 (PETRESCU 2003: 160; JURCA 1994: 55). Significantly, the translation of the famous workers' song was published precisely in this uncertain interval, when the socialist movement had already been weakened by the departure of many prominent members and, moreover, by a lack of popular support (workers had left the movement before intellectuals did, according to Graur 1911, quoted in JURCA 1994: 41; see also Rakovski's observation about the "gap between the workers and intellectuals" in the party, quoted in NJAGULOV 2014: 256).

Leading up to the party's dissolution, one of the main debates among its members revolved around the question of the justification of its existence in a predominantly rural society, still largely governed by a quasi-feudal mindset. According to the statistics cited by Keith Hitchins (1994: 157), the rural population of Romania comprised over eighty percent of the total population around the turn of the century (eighty-five percent in 1859 and eighty-two percent in 1912). Though socialist experiments had existed as early as 1835, when Theodor Diamant, a former student in Paris and follower of Fourier, had set up a phalanstery and later a "familystery" (see PETRESCU 2003: 37–42; JURCA 1994: 10), they had been limited and adjusted to the local specificity of rural communities. Around 1900, the number of industrial workers, though slowly growing, did not exceed 120,000 in a total population of nearly six million (JURCA 1994: 15);[2] it reached 200,000 (or around ten percent of the active population) only later, around the beginning of the First World War (HITCHINS 1994: 163; JURCA 1994: 57 cites a slightly higher number, around 250,000 around 1915). It is therefore no surprise that the socialists, caught between the slowness of industrialization and the peasants' reluctance to break traditional patterns of obedience, had a hard time organizing a large mass movement within the legal frameworks available. (There were, of course, peasant rebellions, like the one in 1888 and the massive one in 1907, but only some socialist circles backed up such radical action; see Jurca [1994: 19]). Vladimir Tismăneanu (2003: 37) describes the Romanian Left of these early years as divided between "Westernizers and the advocates of a special Romanian road to modernity that avoided cap-

[2] Proca (2010: 24) cites a different statistical survey, which showed that in 1902 only 37,325 men and 7,092 women were active as industrial workers. The difference, as Proca explains, is most likely connected to the inclusion of small manufacturers in the other census results, whereas this one included only those who worked in larger industrial complexes. According to the same source (ibid.: 25), industrial workers were no more than seven percent of the population at the census in 1930, whereas agricultural workers were seventy-eight percent. Njagulov (2014: 201) mentions yet another count, closer to Hitchins's estimate: "In Romania the number of hired workers in shops and factories increased from 28,000 in 1860 to 107,000 in 1901–1902 and to 212,000 in 1910." Commercial workers probably account for the difference.

italism". He sets this against the backdrop of a "national political culture […] still dominated by the tension between formal institutions, including constitutional arrangements modeled along Western lines, and traditionalist-archaic forms of social communication and cooperation" (ibid.,: 39). There were two main responses to this tension between modern forms and premodern social realities. On the one hand, some socialists, like Dobrogeanu-Gherea, considered that the development of Romanian society would pass through industrial capitalism before reaching the stage of class consciousness and socialist action (cf. NJAGULOV 2014: 213). On the broader political scene, these socialists had to defend their position against a ruralist trend called "poporanism" (translated as "Romanian populism" by Tismăneanu [2003: 38] and as "agrarian populism" by Njagulov [2014: 239]), promoted by Constantin Stere, who was sceptical of the prospects of industrialization and believed in an agriculture-based economy. On the other hand, some of the socialist party's prominent members, like V. G. Morțun, who had originally believed in the possibility of organizing the working class, concluded that "the natural conditions for accepting socialism are not created yet" (quoted in NJAGULOV 2014: 240), and thus justified the abandonment of the already feeble party. Both these factions shared an "obsession with authenticity" (PROCA 2010: 26), trying to address the perceived discrepancy between social needs and top-down forms of organization. The issue of local specificity was raised by the Romanian socialists not just in internal debates, but also in international contexts, such as the Congress of the Socialist International held in Zurich in 1893 (JURCA 1994: 35).

However, there was also a third, small but stubborn subgroup of socialists, who attended the last congress of the Romanian Social-Democratic Workers' Party in 1899 and tried to salvage this political entity. C. Z. Buzdugan, the Romanian translator of "L'Internationale", is among these figures. In a debate with G. Diamandy, who claimed that, in the absence of a proper bourgeoisie that would be able to oppose the large class of landowners, claims for collectivization and for acquiring workers' autonomy were premature (cf. PETRESCU 2003: 150), Buzdugan riposted by extending the definition of the proletariat to include peasants who did not possess land and thus had their labour as sole means of subsistence (quoted in ibid.: 151). He accused his opponent of taking only what is convenient from the Marxist doctrine (ibid.). Claiming that "the Social Democratic Party belongs not only to proletarians, but to all those who work and are being exploited" (Buzdugan, quoted in ibid.), the young lawyer and poet suggested renaming the party "Workers' Party" to avoid abstract terms that might be confusing for the undereducated (ibid.: 153). When his proposal was rejected, Buzdugan and a few fellow socialists sent an official letter resigning from the congress (ibid.: 154). Although some workers' unions and socialist circles remained active, a new socialist party (the Social Democratic Party) was not created until 1910 (ibid.: 238; JURCA 1994: 64; PROCA 2010: 36; NJAGULOV 2014: 240).

Statements and views of the socialist periodical *Lumea nouă*

The goals of the social-democrats in the early phase of their organization, at the end of the nineteenth century, were to create visibility and obtain rights for new social segments like industrial workers. However, as mentioned above, they were concerned with the working class very broadly defined, including small landowners who struggled under unjust conditions. Progressive for the time, their political agenda included democratic and welfare objectives like universal suffrage (extended to women, racial and religious minorities), regulations regarding the eight-hour workday and Sunday repose, restrictions on child labour, free mandatory education for children up to the age of fourteen, as well as the introduction of regulations regarding agricultural work, etc., alongside requests for more radical reforms like elective magistrature, the secularization of school education, and even the dismantling of the Senate and the revision of the Constitution, measures bound to have low popularity among the political elites (for more details see PETRESCU 2003: 104–107; JURCA 1994: 24; NJAGULOV 2014, 237).

These visions and aspirations were reflected in the pages of the socialist periodical *Lumea nouă.* Before offering a few examples, some context is useful. The official newspaper of the Romanian Social Democratic Workers' Party, *Lumea nouă* began publication in 1894. After being discontinued in 1900 (as mentioned), it was resumed briefly in 1911, from 1922 to 1925, and then from 1933 to 1940 (according to the holding lists at the Romanian Central University Library in Bucharest). At first relying on subventions from a social-democratic union of German workers in Bucharest (Arbeiterbildungsverein) (PETRESCU 2003: 128; JURCA 1994: 28), the newspaper benefited later on from the Romanian Social Democratic Workers' Party's acquisition and inauguration, on 1 November 1897, of its own printing press, which facilitated the issuing and dissemination of the periodical (JURCA 1994: 31). This was a short-lived experiment, since the party's financial needs imposed the sale of the printing press in 1898 (ibid.). Although many socialist clubs, including some in rural areas, had subscriptions to the socialist newspaper (JURCA 1994: 36; PETRESCU 2003: 135), in November 1898 the publication had to switch its frequency from daily to weekly (JURCA 1994: 34; PETRESCU 2003: 146), a decision announced in its pages as follows: "Today, after a torment-ridden existence, the daily 'New World' dies poor, because it has lived honest" (JURCA 1994: 38).

Though Russian-oriented undercurrents were present in Romanian socialism,[3] *Lumea nouă*'s inspiration was predominantly Western. The newspaper constantly pleaded for taking legal action and abiding by the law, citing the examples of socialist achievements in Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium, such as unions for agricultural workers or credit banks for peasants (ibid.: 36). Leafing through the weekly issues from the spring of 1900, one encounters many proofs of its international orientation, notably a recurrent rubric of updates on the progress of socialist movements abroad, including, for instance, news from Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands, and Russia (*Lumea Nouă,* 2 April 1900: 4), but sometimes also updates on more remote international

[3] Njagulov (2014: 236) mentions the role of "the influx of radically-minded emigrants driven away from Russia (particularly Russian Bessarabia) by the imperial government".

issues of socialist concern, such as the Transvaal war (the First Boer War), mentioned in several issues (ibid., 23 April 1900: 2; ibid., 16 July 1900: 2). On the occasion of May Day, a group of Romanian socialists from Paris sent their greetings to their colleagues at home (*Lumea Nouă,* 30 April 1900: 4), which confirms the strong ties between Romanian and French socialism. The magazine's contributors do not hesitate to formulate opinions on debated topics such as "anarchism" and "Zionism", to which they dedicate longer essays spanning several issues. Critical of both these currents, the authors of these essays show a surprising level of nuance, especially given the limited political (and even concrete) literacy of their target audience. Though he understands the antiauthoritarian drive, I. Armașu pronounces himself against the disorganization of extreme anarchism, citing the case of Bakunin's eventual cooperation with the authorities and of the French anarchists of *La Revolte* admitting the need for a certain degree of order (ibid., 16 April 1900: 3). Bănățeanu, the author of the series on Zionism, makes sure to stay clear of antisemitism while expressing personal scepticism about a Jewish nationalist project in light of the general anti-nationalist orientation of socialism (ibid., 9 April 1900: 3; see also ibid., 30 April 1900: 2).

Some of the newspaper's stances were probably not easily palatable for the political elites and even for regular citizens at the time, for instance its anti-royalist position. In an article published in early May 1900, Armașu criticized the 10 May parade traditionally organized to celebrate the King's Day (ibid., 7 May 1900: 1). According to this contributor, the King was hijacking the anniversary of the Romanian declaration of independence for a festivity centered around his own figure. However, this opinion was bound to be unpopular in a country where the instauration of a foreign dynasty connected to the great European royal families was considered a factor of stability and did play a part in the international recognition of Romanian independence after the 1877 war against the Ottomans (not to mention that 10 May was first and foremost an anniversary of the 1866 coronation day and only later integrated the anniversary of the declaration of independence, signed on 9 May 1877).

If we set aside such sensitive issues, the general tone of articles from the socialist newspaper was at once progressive for its time and more than reasonable seen from a contemporary perspective. Many of the articles pleaded for the eight-hour workday (ibid., 23 April 1900: 2–3), women's rights, universal suffrage (ibid., 16 April 1900: 1), the rehabilitation of people imprisoned for protesting or organizing socialist festivities (ibid., 23 April 1900: 2–3), and other just causes. The pages of the periodical also included translations of the "Socialist Catechism" by French socialist Adolphe Tabarant (misspelled "Tabaraut"), a text which established the position of workers' movements and provided a sort of accessible glossary for terms like "socialism", "proletarian", "capitalism", etc. (ibid., 2 April 1900: 4). The organization of festivities to celebrate the International Workers' Day on 1 May is also a prominent theme, advertised for months ahead of time and occasioning a special issue printed on pink paper on 23 April, followed by accounts of the ways in which the day was marked in different cities across the countries and in different neighbouring countries as well. Right next to the translation of "L'Internationale", the first page of the issue from 16 April includes a

manifesto signed by the "Executive Committee of the Bucharest Club, on behalf of the Romanian Workers' Party" (a party which, as mentioned, had already been dismantled and never existed under that exact name), which invites everyone to join in for the May Day festivities and promote (in capitals) "WORKERS' ORGANIZATION", "THE EIGHT-HOUR WORKDAY", "THE RULE OF LAW", and "UNIVERSAL VOTE" (ibid., 16 April 1900: 1).

The inclusion of short literary snippets is not the exception, but rather the rule in this periodical. A serialized novella called *Îndurare* [Mercy], for instance, spans several months of the publication and centres on the contrast between the relative luxury enjoyed by landowners and the abject poverty that causes the demise of some peasants. Though slightly pedantic, moralistic, and sentimental, the story ends climactically with the murder of the landowner (ibid., 16 July 1900: 2), anticipating the theme of interclass violence, which was later developed in one of the masterpieces of early twentieth century realism, Liviu Rebreanu's *Răscoala* (*The Uprising*) from 1932, based on the brutal (and brutally repressed) peasant rebellion of 1907. Poems, though not extremely frequent, fit the format of the newspaper quite well, and the editor C. Z. Buzdugan, a law student from Galați (a city on the Danube) and prolific (though not awfully original) poet, contributed several socialist-themed versified manifestoes, such as *Cântul lucrătorilor* (*The Workers' Song*), a ballad built on the contrast between workers and exploiters, which is listed as "imitation" (though it does not specify which original text it adapts) (ibid., 9 April 1900: 3), or a poem celebrating May 1 (ibid., 23 April 1900: 1). Stylistically these poems seem heavily influenced by Stere's "poporanism" (and Stere had even published once in the early issues of the periodical, see Ornea 1972: 61), although in content some of their lines anticipate the themes of the 1950s realist socialism, creating a discordant combination of industrial imagery (hammers, factories) and archaicizing poetic terms or turns of phrase.

Stylistic particularities of C. Z. Buzdugan's 1900 translation of "L'Internationale"

Buzdugan's translation of "L'Internationale" appeared in *Lumea Nouă* on 16 April 1900 (1–2). It is stylistically congruent with other literary attempts he published in the periodical, drawing on slightly archaicizing and lyricizing conventions such as syntactical inversions (which are grammatically correct in Romanian but mostly reserved for poetic language). Compared to other poems by him, this translation is more melodic and energizing, perhaps due to the preexisting rhyme and rhythm scheme, which the Romanian version follows closely (except for the refrain, which has *abba* rhyme as opposed to Pottier's *abab*). It is perhaps no accident that the attribution of the text, as mentioned, refers to "Degeyter" (spelled as one word) rather than to Pottier. Most likely, Buzdugan had first become acquainted with the song at one of the international socialist congresses, and only afterwards (if ever) retrieved the written text by Pottier. The attribution note, "După Degeyter" [After Degeyter], also suggests elements of free adaptation, which are confirmed if we look at the text.

To give a sense for the particularities, I reproduce here the Romanian translation (first column) in parallel with my literal English rendition (second column). For reference, Pottier's original French poem is also provided (third column). Regarding the spelling in Romanian, I have followed the journal's conventions closely, reproducing the weak vowels (ĭ – short "i" and ŭ – short "u") where they appear in the text, although this orthography disappeared in Romanian a long time ago. Archaic spellings ("pîne" for "pîine", "inemi" for "inimi", "zmulgă" for "smulgă", etc.) and spelling errors (e.g., "înnapoi" for "înapoi") have been preserved. In some cases, I have added missing diacritics that were obviously just skipped by accident, so as not to distract the reader. In some cases I have added an alternative meaning in brackets in my English gloss translation.

INTERNAȚIONALA (**După Degeyter**)	THE INTERNATIONALE (**After Degeyter)**	"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)
I *Sus! sus voĭ oropsiți aĭ vieței,* *Voĭ osîndiți la foame — sus!* *În inemĭ fierbe rezvrătirea,* *Începe al vecheĭ lumĭ apus.* *Sfîrșiți o dată cu trecutul,* *Sculați, popor de osîndiți ;* *Azĭ nu sînteți nimic în lume,* *Luptați ca totul voĭ să fiți.*	I Up! up you misfortunates of life, You, condemned to hunger — up! In the hearts rebellion is boiling, The twilight of the old world is starting. Finish at once with the past, Rise, condemned people; Today you are nothing in the world, Fight so that you should be everything.	Debout ! les damnés de la terre ! Debout ! les forçats de la faim ! La raison tonne en son cratère : C'est l'éruption de la fin. Du passé faisons table rase, Foule esclave, debout ! debout ! Le monde va changer de base : Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout !
Refren *Ea vine, triumfala* *Dezrobitoarea zi :* *Tot neamul va slăvi* *Internaționala.*	**Refrain** It is coming, the triumphal Liberating day: The entire kin [people] will praise The Internationale.	**Refrain** C'est la lutte finale : Groupons-nous, et demain, L'Internationale Sera le genre humain
II *Sculați, nu-ĭ nicĭ o mîntuire* *În regĭ, ciocoĭ, saŭ Dumenezeĭ.* *Unire, muncitorĭ, unire* *Și lumea va scăpa de eĭ!*	II Rise up, there is no salvation In kings, boyars, or Gods. Union, workers, union And the world will get rid of them! Too much have they ripped us off, the thieves	Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes : Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun, Producteurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes !

Prea mult ne-aŭ despoiat tâlhariĭ *Ce'n lene, lux, desfrâŭ se scald' ;* *Să ne 'nfrățim toțĭ proletariĭ,* *Să batem fierul cât e cald.*	Who in laziness, luxury, and debauchery swim; Let [us] all proletarians become a brotherhood, Let's strike the iron while it's hot.	Décrétons le salut commun ! Pour que le voleur rende gorge, Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot, Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge, Battons le fer quand il est chaud !
III *Drept pîne, plumbĭ neaŭ tras în piepturĭ,* *Ne pun la sarcinĭ miĭ și miĭ ;* *Pe când ceĭ marĭ aŭ numaĭ drepturĭ* *Noi n'avem de cît datoriĭ.* *Destul am plîns cerșind dreptatea,* *Muncind d'a-pururea pribegĭ,* *Flămînzĭ și goĭ, — Egalitatea* *Dă omenireĭ alte legĭ.*	III Instead of bread, they shot led in our chests, They submit us to thousands and thousands of labours; While the great have only rights We have nothing but obligations [debts]. We've cried enough begging for justice, Working, constantly uprooted, Hungry and naked, — Equality Gives humanity other laws.	L'État comprime et la loi triche ; L'Impôt saigne le malheureux ; Nul devoir ne s'impose au riche ; Le droit du pauvre est un mot creux. C'est assez languir en tutelle, L'Égalité veut d'autres lois ; « Pas de droits sans devoirs, dit-elle « Égaux, pas de devoirs sans droits ! »
IV *Mișeĭ în slava lor netoată,* *Ce aŭ făcut pentru norod* *A trîntorilor cruntă gloată,* *De cît să-ĭ zmulgă-al muncei rod?* *În groase lăzĭ de fier ascuns-aŭ* *Avutul nostru, ceĭ sătuĭ ;* *Luîndu-l înnapoĭ, poporul* *Lua-va numaĭ dreptul luĭ.*	IV Scoundrels in their idiotic glory, What have they done for the people The fierce mob of sloths, Other than snatch the fruit of their work? In thick iron chests they hid Our belongings, the well-fed; By taking them back, the people Will only take back their due [right].	Hideux dans leur apothéose, Les rois de la mine et du rail Ont-ils jamais fait autre chose Que dévaliser le travail ? Dans les coffres-forts de la bande Ce qu'il a créé s'est fondu En décrétant qu'on le lui rende Le peuple ne veut que son dû.
V *Ne-au dat miros de praf bogațiĭ.*	V They have given us dust scent, the rich.	Les Rois nous soûlaient de fumées,

Pace 'ntre noĭ și luptă lor! *Se vor uni cu noĭ soldații :* *Pe loc! și Arma la picior!* *Și de-or maĭ încerca pahonții* *Să ne măcelărească — apoĭ* *Vor ști îndată că toți glonțiĭ* *Sînt pentru eĭ, nu pentru noĭ.*	Peace among us and strife upon them! The soldiers will unite with us: Stand at attention! and Ground Arms! And should the brutish still try To butcher us — then They will know right away that all the bullets Are for them, not for us.	Paix entre nous, guerre aux tyrans ! Appliquons la grève aux armées, Crosse en l'air, et rompons les rangs ! S'ils s'obstinent, ces cannibales, À faire de nous des héros, Ils sauront bientôt que nos balles Sont pour nos propres généraux.
VI *Țărani și lucrătorĭ — noĭ sîntem* *Partidul mare muncitor;* *Pămîntul este-al celor harnicĭ,* *Ceĭ leneși plece unde vor.* *Cînd vulturĭ lacomĭ, corbĭ de pradă* *N'or maĭ pluti, norĭ negri, 'n vînt,* *Pe cer luci-va 'n tot-d'auna* *Al înfrățireĭ soare sfînt.* **C. Z. Buzdugan**	VI Peasants and workers [labourers] — we are The large working party; The earth belongs to the diligent [hard-working], The lazy should go wherever they want. When greedy vultures, preying ravens No longer float, dark clouds, in the wind, In the sky there will always shine The holy sun of brotherhood.	Ouvriers, paysans, nous sommes Le grand parti des travailleurs ; La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes, L'oisif ira loger ailleurs. Combien de nos chairs se repaissent ! Mais, si les corbeaux, les vautours, Un de ces matins, disparaissent, Le soleil brillera toujours !

I will start my analysis with one particularity which is hard to convey in English translation: Buzdugan's lexical choices and their distribution along etymological lines. Though Romanian, originally a Romance language with later Slavonic additions, had undergone a re-Latinization boost in the nineteenth century, importing massively from French and Italian to create more synonyms for Slavonic borrowings that were going out of fashion, Buzdugan's text preserves several terms of Slavonic origin, surprisingly for a translation from French. For instance, the word I translated as "rebellion" (from a line which has been heavily adapted, from "La raison tonne en son cratère" ["Reason thunders in its crater"] to "În inemĭ fierbe rezvrătirea" ["In the hearts rebellion is boiling"]) is "rezvrătire" (an archaic spelling for "răzvrătire"), a word with Slavonic roots, although the neologism "revoltă" ["revolt"], borrowed from the French "révolte", had already entered the language. Similar remarks can be made about the word for "condemned", which is translated as "osîndiți" (again derived from an old Slavonic root), perhaps closer to the French "forçats" than the neological "condamnați"

would have been, or about words like "slavă" [glory], "gloată" ["mob"], "norod" ["people"], or "pribegi" ["errant/ wandering"], all of which have Latin-origin equivalents in Romanian ("glorie", "mulțime", "popor", and respectively "rătăcitori").

However, we should hesitate to read a Russian influence in this lexical choice. Rather, I would suggest associating this with the influence of "poporanism" (the agrarian current mentioned above) and the general archaicizing tendency in Romanian poetry at the turn of the century, which only gave way to modernist experiments later, around the end of the First World War. Sometimes words that happen to have a Slavonic origin are chosen not only for their archaic sonority, but because of rhyme and rhythm requirements. The most peculiar example of this is the word "pahonții", roughly translatable as "the brutes" or "the ruffians" and referring here (a bit counterintuitively) to the upper classes, most likely chosen for its rhyme with "glonții" ["bullets"], an element preserved from the French original. Interestingly, the word "pahonții" originates in the Russian term for "infantry soldier", but had come to generically designate a person with brutish manners. Its application to the enemies of the working class makes for a semantic paradox, where being coarse becomes a moral attribute rather than referring to manners. Similarly, the word used to refer to the mass of "sloths" ["trîntori"] is "gloată" ["mob" in approximate translation], also a Slavonic borrowing, which traditionally referred to a multitude of people from the lower classes and only by extension to any disorganized large group, although here it is applied precisely to the rich. Nonetheless, the presence of words with Slavonic roots is not excessive and, with the exception of "pahonți", which has become quite rare in the meantime, most of these terms are current words. They do not create the impression that the translator went out of his way to select this vocabulary, but rather seem to conform to the general tone of poetry from Romania in those times.

Next to vocabulary, an interesting aspect of the translator's choices are the contextually motivated omissions and insertions that slightly change the meaning of the original, adapting it to the social realities in Romania. The most conspicuous omission is that of the phrase "les rois de la mine et du rail" ["the kings of the mine and of the railway"] from the beginning of stanza IV, replaced with more generic terms like "mișei" ["scoundrels"] and "trîntori" ["sloths"], a choice that can easily be linked to the smaller prominence of industrialization and technological modernization in Romania at the turn of the twentieth century. The tendency to use metaphors that sound less technical is also reflected in the fourth stanza, where instead of "coffres-forts" [roughly "safes", alluding perhaps to the safety chests used in the bank system], we find more generic "thick iron chests" ["groase lăzi de fier"], belonging not to a band of thieves ("la bande") but to "the well-fed" ["cei sătui", literally "the satiated"]. References to the state, its laws and taxation system, such as "L'État comprime et la loi triche, / L'impôt saigne le malheureux" ["The State represses and the law cheats / The tax bleeds the misfortunate"], from the beginning of couplet III of Pottier's text, are also left out in favour of a much less abstract preoccupation with subsistence: "Drept pîne, plumbĭ ne-aŭ tras în piepturĭ, / Ne pun la sarcinĭ miĭ și miĭ" ["Instead of bread, they shot led in our chests, / They submit us to thousands and thousands of labours"]. Though the notion of repression ("L'État comprime") and the idea of physical violence (entailed in the metaphor of bleeding) from

the French text are preserved in the Romanian version (in the second verse that speaks about forced labour), they are much amplified (through the mention of bullets, metonymically referred to as "led") and made much more palpable (it is not an abstract entity like "the state" or "taxation" who metaphorically "bleeds" the poor to a slow but certain death, but instead a direct threat, a bullet that destroys instantly, which is denounced in this couplet). The idea of "cheating" is also fleshed out without the detour through something like "law": the bullets are received "in the guise of bread" or "instead of bread". The class struggle is thus painted in more brutal and somewhat more aggressive colours, emphasizing above all the competition for basic means of subsistence. However, the avoidance of blaming the laws also reflects the legalist position of the Romanian socialist movement, mentioned in the previous sections.

Hunger is also foregrounded, along with penury (represented metonymically by nakedness) and uprootedness, in a line from stanza III which took the place of a repetition of the notion of rights corresponding to obligations ("Pas de droits sans devoirs, dit-elle, / Égaux, pas de devoirs sans droits !") from the original: "working, constantly uprooted, / Hungry and naked" ("Muncind d'a-pururea pribegĭ,/ Flămînzĭ şi goĭ […]"). Similarly, the word used for being "ripped off", corresponding to the incentive to make "the thief give up the plunder" ["pour que le voleur rende gorge"] is "ne-au despoiat" (an archaic form for "ne-au despuiat"), which roughly translates as "they ripped us off", but literally denotes the act of stripping somebody of their clothes. Here we see, again, a shift from the abstract to the concrete, a stress on nakedness or hunger, and an insistence not so much on justice (being "robbed" of one's right) but especially on extreme inequality (the rich being "well-fed" while the poor go hungry, the former metaphorically stealing the clothes off the latter's back, etc.), along with an accentuation of the urgency of the workers' plea. In many other cases, strong contrasts are preferred to more subtle ones. For instance, where Pottier had written "La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes / L'oisif ira loger ailleurs" ["The earth only belongs to men [mankind] / The lazy will go live elsewhere"], the Romanian translator intensified the contrast by writing: "Pămîntul este-al celor harnicĭ" ["The earth belongs to the hard-working"], a category more clearly opposed to the "lazy" than the generic "men". Sometimes, though, the rhetorical aggressiveness is transferred from one word to another rather than being amplified or toned down: where, in the French original, the "cannibals" are "obstinately" trying to "make heroes of us [the workers]", in Romanian these "cannibals" become "brutes" or brutish soldiers ("pahonți", see above), but instead of turning the workers into heroes they literally try to "butcher" them.

Perhaps even more interesting than the insertions related to local specificity are those that reflect notions and ideals specific to the French context, which were not present in the published version of Pottier's text but had been circulating in the media of the time. The best example is the word "proletarii" ("the proletarians"), which was present in Pottier's first preserved draft (cf. Brecy 1974: 301) but had disappeared in the published version, and which does feature in the Romanian version in stanza II, in a line replacing the French line "Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge" ["Let us blow the cast ourselves"], which allegorically links to the metaphor from the following verse ("Battons le fer quand

il est chaud" ["Let's strike the iron while it's hot"]). Instead of following Pottier's cue and extending the expression "let's strike the iron while it's hot" ("să batem fierul cît e cald"), which has the same wording and origin in Romanian as in French, to the previous line, which would have created resonances connected to workers' toils in large industrial iron furnaces, the translator chose a more generic reference to the way in which proletarians should unite (an idea expressed in the words "să ne-nfrățim", literally "let's become brothers") and then (only metaphorically, rather than concretely) "strike the iron while it's hot". The notion of brotherhood, first mentioned in this stanza, returns in the last line as well, where the sun that will "always shine" from Pottier's text receives two extra attributes: "al înfrățirei soare sfînt" (archaic for "al înfrățirii soare sfînt") ["the holy sun of brotherhood"]. Probably the best way to interpret this would be to read it in the light of the strong influence of the principles of the French Revolution upon Romanian elites, especially around and after the wave of revolutions in 1848. "La Marseillaise" was definitely sung often at socialist and progressive gatherings, especially before "L'Internationale" came to be widely known. Some historians are even convinced that "La Marseillaise" rather than "L'Internationale" was popular in this phase of the socialist movement, before 1905 (PETRESCU 2003: 220) – something I will come back to in the next section. For now, it is important to note that the insertion of words like "proletarian" and "brotherhood" reflected the affinities between the Romanian and the French (or Francophone) socialist movements.

Another significant deviation from the original text is the refrain. Pottier's ambitious and broadly humanist message ("C'est la lutte finale / Groupons-nous, et demain / L'Internationale / Sera le genre humain." ["It's the final battle / Let us group forces, and tomorrow / The Internationale / Will be mankind [the human race]"]) is slightly toned down by the use of the word "neam". A very common term, etymologically originating in Hungarian, "neam" can best be translated as "kin", but it refers both to family relations and, in several contexts, to a nation (being thus approximately synonymous to "norod" and "popor"). Instead of the "human race" or "mankind" being "the Internationale", which clearly indicates a political goal, the Romanian version announces that "the entire people" (which in this context seems to point to the nation rather than to mankind, although a reading as "mankind" is not completely excluded) will "praise" the Internationale. The idea of glorification is enforced through the use of the adjective "triumfală" ["triumphant"], which projects the future splendour of a "liberating" day, with classical Marxist messianic undertones. Incidentally, the adjective for "liberating", which is "dezrobitoare" [more literally translated, "unchaining", "un-slaving", from the Slavonic-origin word "rob", meaning "slave" or "servant"], reemphasizes the harshness of the perceived current conditions of work at the time of the text's publication. If the "triumphal day" will "un-slave" the workers, their situation leading up to that is one of servitude. And if, instead of "being the Internationale", the nation will "praise" or "glorify" the Internationale, the implication could be that some of the reflexes created by long centuries of servitude will unfortunately be preserved even in the event of a new social order. This possible nuance, obviously not intended but uncannily contained in the text, has been bitterly confirmed by history, which has revealed the ability of the imposed communist

regime to preserve the empty forms of monarchic and hierarchical glorification and put a hollow version of the ideal socialist society at the centre of mass parades. I will delve deeper into this topic in the next sections, focused on remediation.

Early remediations of "Internaționala": Constantin Titel Petrescu's 1944 version

According to early historian of the socialist movement Constantin-Titel Petrescu, whose monograph *Socialism in Romania* came out in late 1944[4] (shortly after Romania had been forced to switch sides and fight the last part of the Second World War in alliance with the Soviets on 23 August of the same year), "L'Internationale" was not widely known among early socialists. Petrescu, whose sources of information seem unreliable at times (he mentions Eugène Pottier, perhaps for the first time in a Romanian source, but he misrepresents the composer's first name as "Adolphe de Geyter" instead of Pierre [PETRESCU 2003: 220]), claims that the first Romanian socialist movement used to perform "La Marseillaise" rather than "L'Internationale" at gatherings. "The *Internationale*", he submits, "could not even have been sung within the old movement because [...] it was not yet known and adopted by the socialist parties" (PETRESCU 2003: 220). His explanation draws on the chronology of composition, citing June 1871 as the moment the text was written (which probably draws on Pottier's own dating of the version published in 1887 as composed in June 1871 – see Brecy [1974: 300]), but also mentioning that the music had been composed only in 1888 and adopted after the Paris congress in 1889, which would have been too late for it to be adopted in Romania, since the "generous" (an ironic name for the faction that left the socialist party to join the National Liberals) were just at that time defecting (PETRESCU 2003: 220). This is obviously an error, first of all because Petrescu contradicts his own chronology – he had mentioned, correctly, that the "generous" faction betrayed the socialists in 1899/early 1900 and not in 1889 (ibid.: 142, 155) – and second because the publication of Buzdugan's 1900 has survived as proof that the anthem was known by early socialists. Further contributing to the confusion is Petrescu's reproduction of the text of "Internaționala", together with a music sheet similar to de Geyter's but with the verses in Romanian (PETRESCU 2003: 221–222). While Pottier and de Geyter are credited for the text and respectively the music, there is no mention of the origin of the translation. However, the words are nearly identical to those of Buzdugan's translation, with a few significant changes which I will discuss here. First and foremost, the refrain is completely transformed to better resemble Pottier's original. The lines of this new refrain read:

[4] Here I have been using the 2003 reprint of Petrescu's 1944 work, which is much easier to access and has been edited by Nicolae Jurca. Some spelling particularities of the 1944 version might have been altered.

Romanian refrain in Petrescu (2003: 221)	**English gloss translation**	**French original**
Hai la lupta cea mare. Rob cu rob să ne unim. Internaționala Prin noi s-o făurim.	Come to the great battle. Slave with slave, let us unite. The Internationale Through ourselves to forge.	C'est la lutte finale : Groupons-nous, et demain, L'Internationale Sera le genre humain

Compared to the messianic accents of Buzdugan's refrain, mentioning the glorification of an approaching "triumphal day", these lines are much more dynamic, reflecting the call to arms in the original French version. Some differences from that version persist: the battle or struggle is not "final" ["finale"] as for Pottier, but simply "great", the message that the Internationale will be "mankind" is more elusively expressed through the call (formulated in the subjunctive mode, which in Romanian can function as an imperative) to "forge the Internationale through ourselves", and instead of "let us group ourselves" we read "slave with slave, let us unite", using the word "rob", a Slavonic-origin synonym for "slave" or "servant", a derivative of which ("dezrobitoare" ["liberating"]) had been present in Buzdugan's version. Pottier's reference to the immediacy of the battle (implied in the use of "demain" ["tomorrow"]) is left out, but most of the other accents are preserved.

Among the other changes, one that stands out is the order of stanzas: although stanzas I and VI are in the same position that they had in Buzdugan's translation (and in Pottier's 1887 version), stanzas II and IV are swapped with each other, and so are stanzas III and V. The explanation could be either that Petrescu had encountered (perhaps via oral channels of transmission) Pottier's 1871 version, where the stanza V of the published 1887 version (starting with "Les rois nous saoûlaient de fumées" ["The kings made us drunk on fumes/smoke", or "The rich gave us dust scent" in the Romanian version]) was actually on position III, or, more probably, that Petrescu's version had been wrongly transcribed from a pamphlet or brochure where the text appeared in two columns.

The other variations are minor, attributable perhaps to the imperfect transmission channels rather than to deliberate interventions, but some might have a meaning nonetheless. Some changes, like replacing "Sus! sus" ["Up! up"] with "Sculați" ["Rise up"] in the first line of the first stanza, or turning the present indicative in from "în inimi fierbe răzvrătirea" ["rebellion boils in the hearts"] and "începe-al vechii lumi apus" ["the twilight of the old world is starting"] into a subjunctive with imperative value ("să fiarbă-n inimi răzvrătirea" ["let rebellion boil in the hearts"] and "să-nceapă al vechii lumi apus" ["let the twilight of the old world start"]), might be intended to make the song more dynamic and enhance its urgency as a call to arms. The word "mișei", derived from Latin and meaning "scoundrels", from the beginning of stanza IV (turned stanza II in this text), is replaced with "stăpâni" ["masters"], making the class divide and the class injustice clearer (since it is now the "masters" who are robbing the "people" of the result of their work). This change might also have to do with the modernization of the text, "mișei"

being a more archaic term than "stăpâni". The same impulse to simplify and update the text might be behind the change, in the same stanza, of "să-i zmulgă-al muncii rod" ["to snatch the fruit of their work"] into "să-i fure-al muncii rod" ["to steal the fruit of their work"], since the word "să fure" ["to steal"] is more common than "să zmulgă" (archaic form of "să smulgă" ["to snatch"]), although in both cases the replaced term ("mișei" and "să smulgă") is still widely used. One last modification, perhaps showing more awareness of the initial intention in Pottier's text, is the turning of the lines "Se vor uni cu noi soldații / Pe loc! și Arma la picior!" ["The soldiers will unite with us / Stand at attention! and Ground Arms!"] into "Când s-or uni cu noi soldații, / Vor pune arma la picior" ["When the soldiers unite with us / They will ground their arms"]. Buzdugan's initial version seemed to be in slight discrepancy with Pottier's original ("Appliquons la grève aux armées, / Crosse en l'air et rompons les rangs!" ["Let the military go on strike / Capitulate and break the ranks!"] – where "crosse en l'air" is an equivalent for the white flag, associated here with the soldiers' refusal to serve or to defend), replacing the explicit mention of a strike and the commands that referred to ceasing the fight with two different military commands (roughly equivalent to "Stand at attention!" and "Ground Arms!"), which are associated with order and obedience. To interpret it in a logical way, one would have to assume that the soldiers are receiving these commands from the leaders of the people's revolution. In the meantime, the slightly modified second version reproduced by Petrescu announces the soldiers' joining of the revolution as something probable rather than sure ("when the soldiers unite with us"), but at the same time makes this probability a condition for the soldiers grounding arms, which in this context reads like a defiant gesture or a refusal to fight.

Perhaps a few additional words about the conditions under which Petrescu's work appeared are necessary here. While there is no space to go into details, it should be mentioned that the Romanian socialist movement was influenced by the Russian constitutional revolution of 1905 and by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, but for the most part preserved its autonomy (for a different interpretation, see Drăghia [2012], who argues that the Russian October revolution had significant reverberations in Romania, especially among the working class masses). When, in 1921, shortly after the end of the First World War and the 1918 reunification of Romania, tensions emerged between the "centrist" socialists and those who wanted to comply very strictly with the communist credo and adhere to the third International, the Socialist Party ended up splitting and the Communist Party was created (Jurca 1994: 127). The latter joined the third International, while the former did not. The Federation of Socialist Parties in Romania joined the Vienna-based International Workers' Union of Socialist Parties instead (ibid.: 139). The Communist Party was banned in 1924, while the Social-Democratic Party and other workers' organizations participated in the democratic process up until 1938, when all political parties were dissolved by royal decree and the royal dictatorship was instituted (Hitchins 1994: 421), followed in 1941 by general Antonescu's military dictatorship (ibid.: 469). After Romania abandoned its alliance with the Axis to join the Allies in August 1944, many socialists fostered hopes of a return to democracy (Jurca 1994: 326–327). What eventually happened instead, and within no

more than a couple of years, was the complete abolishment of political pluralism, as the Soviet-imposed communist dictatorship prevailed. However, in late 1944, when Petrescu's work appeared, this course of events was not yet predictable. Before the Yalta agreements and even shortly after, many socialists in Romania believed in creating a leftwing democratic force. Petrescu, at that time the leader of the Social-Democratic Party, was among them, envisioning no less than a triumph of democratic socialism in many nations, including the United States and the USSR (see JURCA, in PETRESCU 2003: XVII). His resistance to the Communist Party's power-grabbing tactics eventually resulted not just in Petrescu's political ostracization, but also in his arrest and a life sentence to hard labour (ibid.). His study of early Romanian socialism was not reprinted during the communist rule. Regrettably, thus, the potential of a lucid retrospective on early socialism lasted only very briefly, soon engulfed by the hypocrisy of overblown glorification and propaganda. What could have been a broader moment of remediation became the beginning of appropriation.

Public remediations: From underground gatherings to ostentatious parades

Directly affiliated with Moscow from 1921, the year of its constitution, the "Communist Party from Romania" (emphatically not the "Romanian Communist Party" in its early days, as historian Lucian Boia [2016: 19–20] points out) was a multiethnic organization (actually dominated by ethnic minorities [ibid.]) which contested Romania's sovereignty over some of its provinces (ibid.: 21), a position that motivated the government's decision to outlaw this party in 1924. A widespread myth, even among historians (BOIA 2016: 13; TISMĂNEANU 2003: 189), is that the ranks of the Communist Party from Romania were extremely thin at the time of the 1944 political U-turn: the estimate is usually under 1,000 members. Recent archival research has contradicted this much-quoted number, revealing 8,614 files of individuals who declared themselves former "illegalists" (members of the Communist Party before 1944) during the 1951–1952 census, but this number might be misleading given the wave of emigration in the 1940s and early 1950s, as well as the wave of repression and deportation which affected some party members too (CIOROIANU 2021: 18). The number of contacts and the support networks of some party members, which without being officially registered served the communists' cause, would inflate the estimated number even further (ibid.: 19, 24). Nonetheless, this number would still be at the bottom of a quantitative list of 1944 communist party effectives in states like Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, or the former Czechoslovakia (cf. FETJÖ / BOIA 2016: 13).

Essentially a branch of the Third International (BOIA 2016: 21), the Communist Party from Romania adopted the same symbols, including the crossed sickle and hammer and intoning "L'Internationale" as their anthem (BETEA et al. 2012: 87). Some communist activity continued in the years of illegality, and as a result many members of the movement were arrested and jailed, including the future dictators Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu. In between arrests, in 1939 the young Ceaușescu was briefly in charge of the cultural activity connected to the guild of textile

and leather workers (ibid.: 190). Ceaușescu's recent biography mentions a testimony of a worker who was recruited by him and participated in trips and feasts where communist songs, including "L'Internationale", were sung (ibid.: 191).

An important moment in the (often embellished and falsified) foundational stories that the Communist Party would later tell about itself was of 1 May 1939. Retrospectively written accounts from the 1980s, backed by coarsely faked photographs of the young Ceaușescu couple, praised the "leader" and his wife Elena for having organized "the first Labour Day celebration in Romania" (ibid.: 193). Obviously, as we have seen in the previous sections, there were several decades of May parades leading up to the 1939 one. What is more, this particular parade was not an initiative of the communist movement. It was an official parade organized by the Ministry of Labour to honour the King (Charles II), and included the march of a selection of guild members from different counties (ibid.). Ceaușescu was most likely not among those invited, and in any case the demonstration was not "anti-fascist", as he later claimed (Betea et al. 2012: 194; Tismăneanu 2003: 215). The retrospective repurposing of this episode by communist propaganda is consistent with how "L'Internationale", too, was appropriated by the Communists without giving any credit to the democratic socialist movements who were responsible for both creating and translating it.

For a few years after August 1944, the communists maintained at least a formal alliance with other workers' movements and socialist parties. However, as Moscow's grip on Romania and the Eastern Bloc tightened in the aftermath of the Yalta agreements, the communists were less inclined to collaborate with (or even to tolerate) the more democratic leftist parties and gradually excluded or even persecuted their leaders, being content to stage an ever-thinner pretence of democratic processes. One of the turning points in the party's tightening grip on power were the 1946 elections, which were recklessly frauded by the communists. After proclaiming their false victory, they proceeded to crush political opposition through intimidation, blackmailing, and arrests followed by torture and hard labour. After most democratic parties had been dismantled or auto-dissolved and King Michael I was forced to abdicate in December 1947, the year 1948 saw another round of elections, which consolidated communist totalitarianism. Confident in the success of their unorthodox methods, the communist party members organized popular manifestations which hailed the submission of their lists of candidates with dance, brass music, and communist songs, including of course "Internaționala" (Betea et al. 2012: 335).

As the communists consolidated their position, May parades became some of the key propaganda moments, together with anniversaries of the turn to socialism on 23 August 1944 and, later, birthday celebrations for the dictator. These Soviet-model festivities included marches with placards and portraits of Stalin et co., triumphalist speeches about a utopian future, and collective singing of political songs. Archival photographs from 1 May 1952, for instance, show Ceaușescu (a general under Gheorghiu Dej's regime at that time) already among the leading figures at these parades (ibid.: 355). Given the massive influence of the USSR style upon these manifestations, it is safe to assume that "Internaționala" played a prominent part there too. Underground

communists had been dreaming of such garish displays of power and popular support for over a decade. One example is Alexandru Sahia (1908–1937), a Romanian writer, journalist, and communist sympathizer who travelled to the USSR in 1934–1935 and subsequently published a volume of impressions (*URSS azi* [The USSR Today]). A prominent episode in this travel memoir is the parade celebrating the anniversary of the October Revolution (in the fall of 1934). Impressed by the technological paraphernalia, Sahia recorded how the "biggest plane in the world", called "Maxim Gorki", hovered over the marching masses playing "L'Internationale" in Russian on its radio (Sahia, quoted in CERNAT et al. 2005: 121). Sahia's prophetic tone and enthusiasm for Soviet "progress" and "peace", along with his untimely death, earned him a rarely disputed canonization in the communist literary pantheon. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the "new world" envisioned by communist enthusiasts like him had expanded its reign to Romania, at the cost of gruesome repression tactics against interbellum elites.

Resisting Moscow: 1968, "Internaționala", and the rise of nationalist communism

While one article's scope could not cover the subtle but significant changes happening over four and a half decades of brainwashing, demagogy, and increasingly monotonous and hypocritical parades, in this section I will start from a moment described by specialists of the period as a turning point in Ceaușescu's maneuvering towards a new kind of totalitarianism which favoured him internationally while diminishing his accountability and tightening his control over all the levels of the political and eventually even social life in Romania. This was the speech he gave at a mass event on 21 August 1968, the day when the troops of many Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia to repress the wave of pro-democratic protests and reforms known as the Prague Spring. Being among the Warsaw Pact states who refused to send troops, Romania was in a delicate position internationally. However, Ceaușescu, who had recently become head of state in 1965, managed to turn things to his advantage and cultivate a warmer relationship with Western states, including the US, while at the same time retaining complete authority within Romania, which allowed him to gradually establish a deeply entrenched nepotistic power system supported by his ruthless intelligence-gathering apparatus.

Against the backdrop of the post-Stalinist shifts inside the Eastern Bloc – the condemnation of (some of) Stalin's crimes within the Soviet Union, the rivalry between the USSR and China, the wave of resistance to Sovietization and the "de-Stalinization" trends in several Eastern European states (see BETEA et al. 2018: 17–23) – the Romanian communist leader, who already counted among his "successes" the achievement of hosting both Brezhnev and Xiaoping at the congress marking his inauguration (POPA 2021: 7), took advantage of the polarization in the East and the temporary openness towards the West to consolidate his own position. Under the appearance of democratization, he initiated an internal institutional reform which only resulted in giving him more power by making the new leadership dependent on his benevolence and

in fact centralizing the exercise of power (ibid.: 24–25). Internationally, he refused to submit to the Soviet Communist Party's authority, claiming that communist parties are ultimately national organizations without an international leader and thus resisting "hegemony within the international worker's movement" (Niculescu-Mizil, quoted in BETEA et al. 2018: 44). This obviously endeared him to the West (ibid.: 30) without completely compromising his position within the Eastern Bloc. By condemning the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Ceaușescu became, at least for a while, the international "hero" of the moment (ibid.: 56), with fragments of his speech massively quoted and disseminated.

Internally, the enthusiasm for Ceaușescu's resistance to Moscow-imposed politics was real (fueled as it was by the typical optimism of the sixties, a relatively good decade economically), but so was the fear of consequences. Archival research has unearthed several official letters from private citizens, addressing Ceaușescu with advice about what to do in the event of an invasion of Romania (ibid.: 193–206). The same sources reveal letters from Soviet citizens criticizing Ceaușescu's dissent (ibid.: 79–85). At the time of that research, the military archives for that period were still sealed (ibid.: 69), so it is hard to say how serious the threat seemed for the authorities themselves.

Notified of the start of the Prague invasion by phone in the middle of the night on 20 August 20, the Romanian communist leaders immediately organized a public support march for Ceaușescu on 21 August. On the next day, the official newspaper of the party, *Scînteia* [The Spark], recorded that over 100,000 people had joined the manifestation (ibid.: 132) and responded to the party leader's speech with long ovations, applause, and slogans such as "We swear, we make an oath, to defend this land", "Beloved Central Committee, we will build a wall around you", "We will work and we will fight, we will defend the motherland", followed by "the proletariat's battle anthem, the *Internationale*" (quoted in BETEA et al. 2018: 134).

While the reported number of supporters might have been inflated to boost Ceaușescu's image, there is no real reason to doubt that the song was sung at this occasion. This might have been partly the result of reflex and slow changes in mass behaviour, but the fact that it was mentioned in writing in the official party newspaper should make us consider whether the communist party had deliberately chosen it, and what significance this might have. Given that the workers' anthem had also been sung, first and foremost as protest signal and a revolutionary anthem, at the May '68 events in Paris earlier that year (ibid.: 282), its intonation in Bucharest could be interpreted as betokening a desire for change and an aspiration to closer ties with leftist movements in the West rather than within the Soviet Bloc. However, given that "L'Internationale" had already been associated with Eastern Bloc solidarity and pro-Soviet sympathies for over two decades, the choice remains puzzling. It testifies to a degree of collective amnesia which had weakened civic reflexes so much that people fell back on the very words that had earlier expressed their loyalty to the Soviets even when what they were trying to communicate might have been the opposite, an aspiration towards a different form of internationalism, eschewing Russian hegemony. Certainly, what made the biggest difference in this crucial historical moment was the atmosphere, and

people's enthusiastic support for Ceaușescu, expressed in the ovations and aplause which drowned the last words of his speech, right before "Internaționala" was sung (ibid.: 134). But the words were also important, as they vaguely suggested hopes for a change and conveyed a trust that was bitterly deceived.

What eventually happened in the next two decades was a gradual move away from internationalism and towards an increasingly strictly controlled nationalist environment, a claustrophobic dystopia where ties with the world abroad were increasingly reduced or at least policed, with the exception of the dictatorial couple and their acolytes, who continued to enjoy the privileges of international visits until the end of the regime. However, this evolution would have been hard to anticipate right away. Ceaușescu entertained a close relationship with Nixon, who visited Bucharest in August 1969 in what was the first foray of an American president beyond the Iron Curtain (Boia 2016: 168; Betea et al. 2013: 349). Nixon declared himself impressed, and pleaded for warmer diplomatic relationships with Romania, even considering the organization of peace negotiations with Vietnam in Bucharest (Betea et al. 2013: 353), to the exasperation of the Kremlin (ibid.: 354, 360). Spirits were fairly optimistic in Romania at the turn of that decade (Boia 2016: 129). The downward spiral is considered to have begun after 1971, with the so-called "July Theses", which inaugurated a sinister era in the history of communist mass manifestations, governed by Ceaușescu's cult of personality. This turn has usually been attributed to the inspiration the Romanian dictator drew from his Chinese and North Korean counterparts after his visits there in 1971, although recent reflections by historians point out that Ceaușescu's visit to the US in 1970 also played a role (Betea et al. 2015: 6–7) and, besides, the "openness" had always been only partial and superficial, as the anti-abortion law of 1966, among other restrictive measures, shows (Boia 2016: 131).

What most impressed Ceaușescu in his visits to China and North Korea, aside from the leader glorification that he later forced his people to emulate, was the impression of order and synchronization, the apparent joy and yet submissiveness of the youthful manifestants (ibid.: 14). The years that followed were dominated by "Ceaușescu's penchant for lavishly orchestrated stadium performances" which, according to Alice Mocanescu (2010: 421), had already manifested itself from the start of his rule. The accentuation of this tendency expressed itself in what Mocanescu (ibid.: 420) called the dictator's ambition to "master time", which was not only connected to the way in which mass celebrations were used to insert Ceaușescu in a politically sanitized and artificially glorified version of Romanian history, as Mocanescu rightfully claims (ibid.: 423; see also Boia 2016: 157–164), but also to the control exercised over people's everyday lives and spare time. Increasingly, attending these parades and fulfilling other political obligations invaded citizens' spare time and even their work hours, as studies of everyday life under communism have revealed (see Cernat et al. 2004; 2005; Pârvulescu 2015; Lenart-Cheng & Luca 2018; for a brilliant analysis of these sources see Mitroiu 2020). As more energy went into the hypocritical spectacle of the parades and the younger generations felt they were wasting their efforts (cf. Cernat qtd. in Mitroiu 2020: 111–112) and that the time spent waiting for official visits or being

forced to march with placards was being confiscated from them (PÂRVULESCU 2015: 103–108), the dictatorship's grip on individual freedoms tightened. In one of the earliest analyses of the phenomenon, Katherine Verdery (1991: 242) considered that parades "showed the state's control over Time, not only through displaying its power to control the past (and therefore the present) by parading a redefinition of history, but also through proving its capacity to expropriate the time and effort of others". This ambition to "gather up Time from living persons and redistribute it to the dead" (ibid.) went hand in hand with other forms of monopolizing time, like the infamous queues for rationed food in the 1980s (ibid.).

Alongside the May and August parades, the communist government made up many other occasions to celebrate, related to half-mythologized occasions from remote moments in Romanian history (MOCANESCU 2010: 421–423; BOIA 2016: 157–164). The aspect of the parades changed significantly as Stalinist and pro-Soviet portraits and symbols were replaced with hyper-nationalist ones, featuring ancient or early-modern leaders and usually skipping over the history of Romanian royalty straight to Ceaușescu as the direct descendant of these earlier figures (MOCANESCU 2010: 423). Another important factor in this imposed turn to nationalism was the organization, from the mid-1970s on, of yearly amateur art festivals and competitions known as "Song to Romania", a garish monumentalization of folkloric and traditionalist games and art forms. These "stereotyped, grandiose, pompous and rigid" (GIURCHESCU 1987: 169) mass manifestations resulted in a "ritualized system of leadership, in a dynastic, rigidly bureaucratic and military-like style, dominated by Ceaușescu's personality cult" (ibid.: 163). Cultural historian Cristian Vasile, who analyzed the origins and strategic aims of implementing these mass performances, identified in their exaggerated ruralism and their amateurism a deliberate sabotaging of intellectualism and of anything that looked like "elite culture", with the result of compromising or marginalizing any potential critics of the regime (VASILE 2014: 83–84). The "rhythmicity" of these gatherings (MOCANESCU 2010: 420) strengthened their control over social life, sustaining at first an illusion, then a simple pretence of historical coherence and national cohesion. The effect has been characterized as "a communist regime of national-Stalinist nuance" (VASILE 2014: 84), "Byzantinism" or "ideological shamanism" (TISMĂNEANU 2003: 220–221), and "manipulation through history" (BOIA 2016: 155).

While internally the slippery slope towards disaster was already running its course, externally Ceaușescu continued to thrive, at least in the 1970s. After the apparent opening towards the West and the 1968 resistance to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Romanian president came to be seen as an important international actor, with an unprecedented role in brokering agreements and negotiating peace conditions (for instance between Israel and Palestine in 1967) or commercial plans (ibid.: 165–166). Ceaușescu made full use of his influence and prestige to cultivate relationships with many leaders, totalitarian or otherwise. Boia (ibid.: 167) approximates the number of his visits abroad between 1970 and 1989 to 150. In the vast majority of these visits, he was accompanied by his wife Elena, who had learned the "bitter" lesson of Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing (POPA 2021: 13, 56) and did all within her power to prevent

a similar downfall by establishing a "family dictatorship" (POPA 2021). In the meantime, within Romania the dictatorial couple was pushing increasingly xenophobic politics, drastically restricting the approval of passports and visas (BOIA 2016: 134–135), and discrediting or even persecuting people with connections abroad (ibid.: 170–171). This gap between the semblance of internationalism (and all the privileges derived from it) and the reality of insularity was to play an important part in Ceaușescu's eventual downfall.

For the reasons explained above, 1968 is considered by historians and political theorists to have been "crucial in determining the future of Romanian national communism and its evolution into the 'dynastic socialism' that Ceaușescuism eventually became" (TISMĂNEANU 2003: 198). After the 21 August manifestation, which ended with ovations and the singing of "L'Internationale",

a power-mad neo-Stalinist leader without the slightest democratic inclinations succeeded overnight in awakening genuine popular enthusiasm and winning unlimited credit from a population convinced that Romania would follow the line of liberalization and rapprochement with the West (TISMĂNEANU 2003: 201–202).

However, as the distance between the dictator's international aspirations and his fierce, surveillance-backed (BOIA 2016: 116) internal control over people's lives increased exponentially, it is interesting that "L'Internationale" itself lost some of its iconic appeal. Just like Stalin, whose figure "suffocated" the imagery of the first generation raised under communism, had been nearly forgotten by the children growing up in the late 1960s (PÂRVULESCU 2015: 112), "L'Internationale", which had turned a communist anthem into an expression of liberal aspirations in the 1968 moment, was eclipsed by nationalist demagogy and ostentatious ruralism in the next decades. Though some literary historians remember that the song was still sung in schools as late as the early 1970s (Professor George Ardelean, private conversation, 2 November 2023), its performance at public parades dwindled.

The last act: The execution day between delirium, ritual, and reflex

Ceaușescu's last days are perhaps his most remembered and most intensely mediatized moment. The combination of violent and liberating images from Eastern Europe's only bloody anti-communist revolution (GARTON ASH 1999: 113–114) almost immediately made the spotlight of news channels around the world. The events are well known, so I will only recapitulate them briefly. Ironically, the setting of Ceaușescu's downfall is almost identical to the one of his glorification in August 1968: the same balcony (BOIA 2016: 189; BETEA 2021: 750). Imagining he could appease the spirits after the bloody repression of protests in the Western city of Timișoara on 16 December 1989, which had killed over 50 and wounded around 200 (BETEA 2021: 743), the dictator summoned another people's rally, an impromptu one just like two decades earlier. However, the masses gathered on 21 December did not sing " Internaționala". Instead, the anthem that

burst out from the crowds in the middle of angry booing directed at the erstwhile hero was "Deșteaptă-te Române!" [Awaken, Romanian!], based on a poem composed by Andrei Mureșanu during the 1848 nationalist revolution that marked the beginning of the Romanian states' (then under Turkish and respectively Hungarian rule) alignment with Western ideals of liberation and democracy. The words "awaken, Romanian" had circulated in underground anti-communist student circles and anti-Ceaușescu pamphlets in spite of the strict surveillance and cruel repression against those who disseminated them (Professor Caius Dobrescu, private conversation, 2 November 2023). However, words from the same poem had been quoted by Ceaușescu himself in his last speech (Betea 2021: 755), revealing how much nationalism had become a double-edged sword which the dictator was trying to appropriate in his favour.

Confronted with the sudden (and, for them, unexpected) manifestation of resistance, the dictator and his wife (whose grip on power was only second to his own) escaped during the famous helicopter scene on 22 December, only to be caught, held as hostages in secret for three days (during which, emphatically, none of their allies tried to contact them, according to Domenico [1999: 76]) and then executed after a summary trial. The causes of the revolution at a societal level were more than obvious, chiefly the simultaneous concentration of power in few hands and the arbitrariness of governance in the nepotistic system that revolved around the leader's whims, along with the economic failure of a politicized model of industry and trade (see Siani-Davies 2005: 34). The international climate at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the *perestroika* was also a decisive factor. The unfolding of the revolution itself – a "bloody bacchanalia" (Siani-Davies 2005: 97) punctuated by conspiracy theories, "terrorist" rumours and accusations, and over a thousand very real deceased (see Cesereanu 2004: 61; Siani-Davies 2005: 97; Betea 2021: 773 for exact casualty figures) – has been described as confusing and chaotic by specialists and some details remain hard to unravel to this day (Siani-Davies 2005; Cesereanu 2004; Domenico 1999; Boia 2016: 190–191; Betea 2021: 773). Though it is not within my scope or expertise to try to explain the history of those troubled days, I have sketched here only the backdrop against which the execution took place.

After the three days of detention in precarious health and hygiene conditions (Domenico 1999: 77), on 25 December the dictatorial couple was submitted to an improvised trial, recordings of which exist in the Romanian Television Archive and are often broadcasted around 21 December in Romania. Reading through the stenogram of the process, one recognizes the dictator's surprise and the contradiction between his refusal to recognize the court's authority ("I will only answer in front of the Great National Assembly and the representatives of the working class" – Auneanu 1991: 25) and his verbosity in nonetheless engaging with the accusations. Confronted with the reality of collective rage and hate against them after decades of oppression and the cruel starvation policies of the 1980s, the Ceaușescus persisted in their nominal allegiance to "the people", hinted at not just by the dictator's supposed admittance of accountability to "the working class", but also by his wife's stubborn insistence, towards the end of the trial, that "we will not betray the people" (Auneanu 1991: 56). Did the

couple persist, against all evidence, in believing the false eloges of flatterers, demagogues, and court poets, which contributed to the construction of the delusion that the two leaders were adored by "the people"? Were they pretending, like everyone else in the country had for decades, that this glorification of their persons had succeeded? Some historians argue that Ceaușescu's was a "sober defence" (BURAKOWSKI et al. 2020: 624), refusing to recognize the court's jurisdiction. Others speak of his "conspiratorial delusions" (TISMĂNEANU 2003: 323) about a foreign complot against him (see also SIANI-DAVIES 2005: 140, 180). What is certain is that the former dictator and his accusers had no common lingo: the situation of the power reversal was so new that both parties failed to find an adequate expression for what was going on, turning the trial into "a shouting match of mutual incomprehension" (SIANI-DAVIES 2005: 139). If the prosecution's quickly composed list of crimes was in some cases exaggerated (the word "genocide" was thrown around, according to Auneanu [1991: 15]), Ceaușescu's responses also inevitably fell back on clichés. Decades of repetition and demagogy had made him incapable of responding to a situation where he, who had constantly framed dissidents as "enemies of the people", was considered the enemy. General Kemenici, in whose charge the dictator was during his last days, remarked that Ceaușescu had completely forgotten how to talk to anyone other than "slaves", which led to his incomprehension of the new situation (DOMENICO 1999: 76).

It is perhaps for this reason that, after the verdict was declared and he found himself in front of the execution squad, Ceaușescu felt the need to sing, for one last time, the tune of "L'Internationale". Though it had crumbled down, the opposition between an "us" and a "them" was the only logic that could still support him. But some believe he did not see, until the very last moment, that he had been on the wrong side of the exploitation divide all along. The paradox has been pointed out, with deep indignation, by a member of the firing platoon:

And all of a sudden, Ceaușescu started to sing "Internaționala": "Rise up, you misfortunates of life, / You, condemned to hunger …" He was singing not for himself, but for all of us present, so that he would be heard. The lines were nonetheless out of place, they had neither rhyme nor reason in the context, they were in complete discordance with that tense moment. He was speaking of slavery, of condemnation, of hunger?!

At some point, our eyes met. I felt mercy and pity in his eyes (as in "You too, my son, Brutus?!") but also reproach (as in "in your doglike wretchedness, you have bitten the hand of your master").

Then, in that moment I think he had really become human: unburdened of megalomania, abandoned by all, left to his own fate. I liked this attitude of his, of submission and I told myself that in this way he would die with dignity and courage …

Two or three steps away from the wall, Ionel [the captain of the platoon] told us, firmly and seeming terrified: "Leave him, withdraw!" Then, with an amazing force, with despair in his gestures he grabbed both of them by the chest, pushing them with their backs

against the wall. In that moment, Ceaușescu swallowed the last word of his song ("hunger", he didn't have a chance to also say "rise", as the line continued). (Testimony by Sargent Dorin Cîrlan, quoted in DOMENICO 1992: 146–147, my translation)

This is perhaps the best-preserved (and probably the earliest) account of this final historical moment in the journey of "L'Internationale" through Romanian cultural conscience. The recording of the trial unfortunately does not capture this instant, and for a while I suspected it to be no more than a rumour. The camera footage stops right after, realizing they were going to be executed, the dictatorial couple insisted on dying together (AUNEANU 1991: 74). It then cuts straight from the scene where their hands are tied to the gruesome and widely circulated image of their dead bodies. The actual scene of the execution has been missed, apparently because of the time it took the camera operator to unplug his device (MARCU 1991: 50–51; SIANI-DAVIES 2005: 140). The absence of footage covering those few crucial moments has been confirmed by the Romanian Television Archives (email correspondence, 7 November 2023). However, several sources corroborate the description of Ceaușescu singing "Internaționala", though they do not fully coincide and they interpret the gesture slightly differently.

According to Kemenici, Ceaușescu, unlike his wife who struggled and cursed, was calm but tearing up on his way to the execution site. His last words would have been, in this version, "Long live the Socialist Republic of Romania, free and independent" (DOMENICO 1999: 111), presumably a correlative of his prediction, during the trial, that Romania would lose its independence without him (AUNEANU 1991: 66), which made Kemenici himself tear up. Kemenici, too, remembers that the dictator sang "Internaționala", not until the very last moment but rather "before reaching the wall" (DOMENICO 1999: 111). He finds this surprising because the song had been "forbidden by [Ceaușescu] himself [and] had not been heard in the Romania of the last 10 years" (DOMENICO 1999: 111–112). Emphasizing the contrast between this "song of [Ceaușescu's] youth" and "the nationalism that made him end up in front of the execution squad", Kemenici thought to recognize "something of Freud, of psychoanalysis, of yin and the unconscious" (DOMENICO 1999: 112) in this final paradox, also associating it with a return of someone feeling "betrayed by his own people" to a more basic, "primary socialism", the socialism of "Proletarians of all nations, unite!" (DOMENICO 1999: 112).

Captain Ionel Boeru, who was in charge of the execution squad, and later gave some interviews for *The Guardian,* also remembers the dictator intoning "Internaționala" in his last moments (GRAHAM-HARRISON 2014). He later gave more details about the execution in a talk show in 2019, mentioning that Ceaușescu shouted "Long Live Socialist Romania" and then sang the first few lines of "Internaționala".[5]

Finally, Ceaușescu's biographers offer a more metaphorical explanation: Ceaușescu's numbness in front of the execution squad meant that the "human in him" had already

[5] Marius Tucă Show, 17 December 2019.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsqn5aP94bs&t=1784s, [in Romanian] accessed on 19.02.2024.

perished, either from oppression and deprivation early in life, or "slowly killed by the poison of power"; however, "the tireless illusion of a *world cause* made his final reflexes twitch: the *revolutionary* meets death singing 'The Internationale'. 'Shut your mouth!', the paratrooper hit him, striking him lightning-fast under the machine gun's charge" (BETEA et al. 2015: 381). The paratrooper himself, Ionel Boeru, does not mention being so rude.

In spite of the small discrepancies between testimonies and versions, and of the ease with which the moment has been mythologized, it is plausible that Ceaușescu did sing Pottier's anthem. Perhaps the parallel between the 1968 and 1989 moments triggered the association, and the song took him back to his glory days. Perhaps, as some say, it triggered memories of an even earlier time, when he defiantly sang the song as a protest after his multiple arrests. Another hypothesis is that he truly saw himself as the last bastion of the "true" Internationale, betrayed or abandoned by all the other Eastern Block leaders from Husák to Gorbachev (Professor Mircea Martin, private conversation, 2 November 2023). If we are to believe this, it means he was singing not just so that the executioners could hear him, but also so that posterity could hear him, as he realized, though belatedly, that the end of an age was at hand. Whether it was delirium, ritual, or reflex, this historical allusion to "L'Internationale" should help us remember how context can indelibly smear a text, and how circulation sometimes becomes ideological contamination.

Acknowledgements

Laura Cernat would like to thank the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) for its generous support of her project (1240823N) and the following Romanian colleagues and friends for helping to retrieve sources which were not available in Belgium: Petru Cernat, Diana Ciobanu, Vlad Nicolae, and Professor Ioan Stanomir. Also thanks to Professors George Ardeleanu, Caius Dobrescu, and Mircea Martin for sharing their direct experience of oppression and resistance during Ceaușescu's dictatorship.

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