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L'Internationale on the move:
Case studies on the world's most translated anthem

Elke Brems, Pieter Boulogne & Jack McMartin (Hrsg. / eds.)

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Edited by Elke Brems, Pieter Boulogne and Jack McMartin

## Content / Inhalt / Contenu

# Editorial

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**Elke Brems & Pieter Boulogne & Jack McMartin**

# "L'Internationale" on the move

Just over a hundred and fifty years ago, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (1870), Paris was taken over by insubordinate soldiers of the National Guard. Over the course of two months, the insurgents attempted to create a new political system, a working-class community, which separated church and state, introduced social housing, abolished child labour, and gave employees the right to take over abandoned enterprises. At the end of May 1871, this Paris Commune was violently ended by the French army. After circa 15,000 communards were put on trial by the conservative French government in Versailles, order was re-established. But the dream of addressing social injustice would not be forgotten. Immediately after the defeat the Commune, in June 1871, one of its members, Eugène Pottier (1816–1887), commemorated it in a poem, written in French, which he named "L'Internationale". Seventeen years later, in 1888, the Belgian socialist and composer Pierre De Geyter (1848–1932) set Pottier's poem to music. "L'Internationale", previously a poem, was (re)born a song.

If the song "L'Internationale" has since become and still is a worldwide symbol of social struggle, it is because it was translated and often retranslated into dozens of languages and made to serve in many contexts. This focus issue presents new research on versions of "L'Internationale" in different languages, historical contexts, social settings and media and explores the transnational and transmedial links between them. In doing so, we want to demonstrate how insights from (song) translation studies, reception studies, cultural memory studies and social history can be combined productively to explore the worldwide circulation and myriad social uses of one of the world's most iconic, impactful and widely translated songs.

The study of translation as it relates to music is still an emerging field. In 2008, a special issue of *The Translator* entitled "Translation and Music" (Susam-Sarajeva 2008) was a first important effort to focus perspectives in this area. In the meantime, scholars such as Peter Low (*Translating Song: Lyrics and Texts*, 2017), Lucile Desblache (*Music and Translation*, 2019) and Johan Franzon et al. (*Song Translation*, 2021) have contributed to bringing the field to fruition. Alongside (and generally preceding) these recent, more conceptually and empirically exhaustive efforts are publications on specific genres, such as religious songs (e.g., Nida 1964), opera (e.g., Gorlée 1997), popular music (e.g., Kaindl 2005), musicals (e.g., Franzon 2008), animated films (e.g., Martín-Castaño 2017) and chansons (e.g., D'Andrea 2023). More generally, song translation remains an under-researched subject in translation studies. As Lucile Desblache (2019: 27) has it, "musical transnationalism, transculturalism and translation in the narrow (translation involving song lyrics or writings about music) or wide

(transcreation or mediation of musical styles and genres) senses of the word, remain largely unexplored."

Another largely unexplored area is the intersection of song translation and *history*. It is here that we hope to situate this focus issue on the translation history of "L'Interationale". We build on the basis laid by the Dutch scholar Jan Gielkens (1998a: 83), who in his study about "how 'L'Internationale' travelled around the world" wrote that "stories about 'L'Internationale' can be told for all language areas and all countries. Until now, those stories have been told too little and too often wrong because they are full of socialist heroism and romanticism".[1] This is also reflected in the existing historiographical work on the song, which, as Gielkens states elsewhere (1998b: 1), was, at least before the twenty-first century, almost exclusively written by leftist historians and displays a clear ideological bent. Furthermore, although "L'Internationale" has been frequently translated and many secondary sources note that it is sung in many different languages, very few studies have so far dealt with the song *as a translation*. Often translational aspects are overlooked, to the extent that some scholars are completely unaware of the textual and ideological differences between different language versions. Donny Gluckstein's "Deciphering The Internationale: the Eugène Pottier code" (2008), which mistakenly bases claims about the ideological aspects of the French original on an English translation, is but one example. An exception is Ron Kuzar, who, in his article "Translating the Internationale: Unity and dissent in the encoding proletarian solidarity" (2002), looks at English and Hebrew translations of the song to show how they encode different ideologies (in his case Zionism) and adapt the text to different societal contexts.

Translation studies scholars cannot settle for the simple awareness that the many versions of "L'Internationale" that fill the world differ from the first, as well as from each other. It is our task to identify and scrutinize these differences: which textual and musical guises did the song take on in translation? What was left out, altered or added? Why, and to what ideological or social effect? In order to interpret these textual shifts, we adopt a contextual approach, looking at the production, circulation and reception of the translated songs. Which actors were involved in the song's circulation, translation, reception and performance? How does the song *work* in a given target culture and context? At which specific events was it sung and performed? Was it co-opted by the state or by countercultures? In other words, this special issue wants to investigate and connect the textual shifts and social uses of translations of "L'Internationale" in some of the myriad cultural contexts in which they emerged and circulated. Our approach connects four interrelated perspectives, facilitating conceptual diversity while also providing measures for comparison: the spatial, the temporal, the ideological, and the multimodal. The seven case studies collected here draw on these four perspectives, each in their own way, to capture "L'Internationale on the move".

[1] Gielkens's words in the Dutch original: "Verhalen over de Internationale zijn voor alle taalgebieden en alle landen te vertellen. Tot nu toe zijn die verhalen te weinig verteld en te vaak verkeerd, omdat ze vol zijn van socialistische heroïek en romantiek." All translations of citations are by the authors.

The **spatial** dimension points to a tension between the song's national and international aspirations. Its text was conceived in memory of a *French* historical event, after all. It was performed during congresses of the French worker's movement, gatherings that also attracted supporters from abroad. Soon, it would find its way to the international socialist congresses at the turn of the century: Paris 1900, Amsterdam 1904 and especially Copenhagen 1910. By then, so many translations of the song had emerged that most Europeans could sing it in their own language. This delocalization process lifted "L'Internationale" from its local context and initiated countless social uses in many different contexts around the world.

An illustration of the manner in which geography, among other parameters, can affect translation strategies can be found in the contribution by **Erwin Snauwaert**, who examines Spanish translations of "L'Internationale", including one situated in the historical-geographical reality of the Cuban revolution. This focus issue also sheds light on the *Nachleben*, the afterlives, of the song in the Netherlands and Flanders, Russia, Romania, Germany, and the English-speaking world. In all these geographical contexts, the song kept its title and, in line with it, its international character. "L'Internationale" was both a song that united socialists of all shades all over the world (and thus preeminently international) and a song that, when translated and retranslated in diverse contexts, could function in a very specific local and national (sometimes even nationalist) way. Joep Leerssen (2018: 169) argues in his book on national thought in Europe that "one of the outstanding features of nationalism is that it is a supremely international affair, spilling from one country to another, spreading ideas, books and symbols freely across the map, spawning copycat movements at great distance". But even beyond nationalist uses, the international song proved to be a very useful narrative template (cf. Rigney 2012: 85) to help people articulate and imagine their local story. Translation could thereby help to cut the song to measure.

A second dimension is that of the **temporal**. Taken together, the contributions of this focus issue cover a wide time span, from the song's conception to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The act of singing "L'Internationale", in whatever language, is also a way of recalling other times it was used and sung. Rigney (ibid.: 70) states that music and aurality serve as connectors between past and present, and that "singing is an important medium of collective memory, one that provides a living and, indeed, embodied connection between the past and the present through the voices of the participants". In some instances, it is sung out of nostalgia for bygone days, in others as a call for a better future, in still others as both retrospective and forward-looking at once. The original text itself is unambiguously focused on the future and calls for the creation of a tabula rasa for a new order which was in the process of realization. However, its uses do not always align with this clean-slate stance. Each time the song is sung, it is imbued with new meanings; the contemporality of the performance and its uses in the present influence our (re)interpretations of the song's past and future. A good illustration of this mechanism can be found in the contribution by **Christophe Declercq**, who focuses on the circumstances surrounding Billy Bragg's 1989 retranslation of "L'Internationale" into English. The reworked song was performed at that year's Vancouver

Folk Festival, held just after the events in Tiananmen Square, where Chinese youths had (unironically) sung the "L'Internationale" as part of their protests. Bragg's rendition contains several new verses in an effort to help the song resonate with new groups and causes and to "redefine what socialism and what communism means in a post-Marxist sense" (cf. BRAGG / MILLER 2000).

The fact that the accumulation of time inevitably alters the status of the song is also central to the contribution by **Pieter Boulogne** about "L'Internationale" in Russian: in times of revolution, the song was actively forged by Lenin into an instrument to mobilise the masses, whereas under Stalin, especially during the Second World War, singing the Russian version of the song became a diplomatic problem. A similar evolution is described by **Laura Cernat** in her contribution about the translation of Pottier's hymn into Romanian: the song was first translated in 1907, when peasants rebelled against the rural landlords; by the late 1940s, "L'Internationale" had become one of the official songs of the imposed communist regime, and in 1989 the last communist dictator went to his death singing it. As Müller succinctly states, "the past is an argument" (MÜLLER 2002: 23), an ongoing negotiation where different actors try to establish their version of past events as truth. The same can be said about defining the song's possible futures.

The third dimension concerns **ideology**, here understood not merely as political instrumentalization, but in its broad sense, as the set of beliefs and values shared with a particular group (VAN DIJK 1998). Whereas translators of "L'Internationale" often faced censorship, leading to a translation's suppression or publication abroad (as in the case of the first Russian translation), even uncensored translators tended to adapt their versions of the original to the dominant ideological norms of the receiving (sub)culture. Additionally, the personal ideological beliefs of the translators, whether in line with the mainstream ideology or opposed to it, also manifestly influenced choices made during the translation process.

The influence of the translator's ideology on the translation is central to the contribution by **Elke Brems** and **Francis Mus** about two Dutch translations of "L'Internationale". They compare the canonical Dutch translation by the communist activist and prominent poet Henriette Roland Holst (1869–1952) with a lesser-known translation made by the Dutch poet Ernst van Altena (1933–1999). Holst's translation testifies to her strong socialist idealism, but can also be linked to her own poetics (word choice, tone, etc.) as a writer. The version by van Altena is different insofar as it is a retranslation undertaken with the explicit aim of 'restoring' the original meaning of the poem.

Interestingly, ideology is not only a factor that shapes the translation, but also the *framing* of the translation. This is demonstrated by **Jan Ceuppens**, who in his contribution looks at the different recontextualisations of the 1910 Emil Luckhardt version of "L'Internationale" in German, which stands as the classic, generally accepted version, so much so that it has been used by ideologically competing factions within socialism, in very different contexts and very different musical interpretations. Ceuppens examines the ways in which Luckhardt's text has been recontextualised in settings ranging from large-scale orchestral arrangements in the German Democratic Republic and at trade

union events to solo guitar interpretations in the context of German student movements of the late 1960s. In doing so, he touches upon aspects of temporality and multimodality. Other contributions illustrate that, notwithstanding the ideological variety that can be found around the (international) song "L'internationale", the factor of socialism is always present – although what was declared to be 'socialist' policies in regimes like that of Stalin or Ceaușescu had little to do with the ideology underlying the original song.

A fourth dimension refers to the **multimodal** nature of "L'Internationale". Multimodality is integral to the research object itself: like any song, "L'Internationale" has three main foci: the musical, the verbal and the performative (cf. GOLOMB 2005; KAINDL 2005). It is common to refer to music as a 'universal language' and therefore to assume that music travels well because there is no need for translation. However, just as its lyrics are subject to translation, so too does the music of "L'Internationale" undergo myriad changes to accommodate its target contexts, whether performed by a military band in Red Square, a singer-songwriter in a documentary, a group of activists closing a meeting, etc. The different versions remain recognizable, however, as the composition by Pierre De Geyter.

Exploring how music travels entails not only accounting for the interaction between the musical and the verbal when a song is translated (e.g., questions pertaining to singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm and rhyme, cf. LOW 2003), but also how music contributes emotive intensity to meaning-making, how singing along enhances community embodiment, and how changes to the musical score or performance can be linked to specific social contexts and uses. Drawing inspiration from film narratology, **Jack McMartin** examines the auditive and visual meaning-making resources at work in documentary film. His contribution looks at 'translatedness' (representations of translation, and the degree to which they are made explicit) in the short documentary *The Internationale* by Peter Miller (2000). The key question is how translation is represented, in terms of multimodal narrative techniques, in a film about one of the world's most widely circulated and widely translated songs. He concludes, among other things, that the documentary's narrative holds up (re)translation of "L'Internationale" into English as the best way to revitalize the song's change potential and redeem it from past misuses.

For each case study of this focus issue, the combined perspectives of spatiality, temporality, ideology and multimodality have proven to be fruitful in bringing to light the roles translations and translators have played in the continued circulation of "L'Internationale" across cultural, geographic and ideological boundaries. More generally, this special issue contributes new perspectives to the fascinating space where music, translation and history meet.

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# Articles / Artikel / articles

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**Elke Brems & Francis Mus**

# The poetic, the personal and the political. Two Dutch translations of “L’Internationale”

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**Abstract**

*This contribution provides a comparative analysis of two Dutch translations of “L’Internationale”, one made by Henriette Roland Holst in 1900 and the other by Ernst van Altena in 1981, respectively. The comparison is relevant for two reasons: (1) the latter translation can be considered a reaction to the former; and (2) each translator paid particular attention to the literary rather than the musical characteristics of the source text. The lyrics are therefore given a prominent place in the analysis; at the same time, we also dwell on the multimodal dimensions of the text. Roland Holst’s version was clearly meant to be sung. In her translation, she added a number of forms of address, which make the text more personal. She also adapted the text to make it less party-political and incitive. Finally, her lyric can be considered more poetic than the original. Alternatively, the tenor of van Altena’s translation is more concrete and informal than the source text. He provides another view on the original, but one that is not necessarily less mediated one, contrary to what he has suggested in public reflections. The result is a hybrid form comprising a demarcation strategy with regard to Roland Holst and his preliminary wish of rendering the source text as completely as possible.*

*Keywords: Song translation, multimodality, socialism, poetry, Ernst van Altena, Henriette Roland Holst*

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# The poetic, the personal and the political. Two Dutch translations of "L'Internationale"

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## "L'Internationale": from literature to music

"L'Internationale", the emblematic anthem of the workers movement, is striking for a number of reasons: not only is it one of the most well-known and most-sung songs in the world, it has also played a major role in the identity formation of uncountable socialist movements, attesting to its historical impact. In this sense, "L'Internationale" is an excellent illustration of how music takes a prominent place in culture. And yet, the British socio-musicologist, Simon Frith (2004: 1) notes with some surprise that the ubiquitous presence of music has largely been ignored by scholars. However, since the so-called 'cultural turn' in translation studies and the increasing success of such disciplines as cultural studies and popular music studies, the situation has changed profoundly. Music (both classical and popular) has become a key object of study in literary and translation studies. Within translation studies, some scholars (such as Franzon et al. 2021: 20) have even argued for a specific sub-discipline called 'song translation studies', which would pay sufficient attention to the multimodal character of music in general and the specificities of music translation in particular (see, for example, Low 2017; Mus & Neelsen 2021).

The translation of music became a bona fide object of study within translation studies beginning in the 1990s. For a long time, however, there has been a strong focus on canonical genres such as opera librettos and 'art songs' (cf. Minors 2013), as well as on the technical dimension of song translation. In this regard, Peter Low's 'pentathlon

principle' was and still is one of the most used references. By means of this sporting metaphor, Low distinguishes five criteria in the process of song translation: singability, sense, naturalness, rhyme, and rhythm. The pentathlon principle has proved fruitful for many case studies, but ideally requires a double expertise from the researcher: technical knowledge (of translation and of music) on the one hand and a scientific background in translation studies on the other. Regarding the latter, a scientific perspective can shed light on the specific function of lyrics compared to other dimensions (or 'modes') of the song and on the overall function of the song within the context in which it was produced and/or translated. Today, more and more attention is paid to plurisemiotic (KAINDL 2005) or multimodal (CARPI 2021) aspects of song translation. In this regard, popular music has proved to be very relevant because in it we often see an explicit combination of verbal, visual, gestural and other modes, e.g., in music videos, live performances, stage musicals, etc.

This contribution provides an in-depth analysis of two translations of "L'Internationale", one made by Henriette Roland Holst in 1900 and the other by Ernst van Altena in 1981, respectively. Though both translations differ considerably (only the former was meant to be sung, for example), a comparative analysis was considered relevant for two reasons: firstly, the van Altena translation can be considered a reaction to the Roland Holst translation and, secondly, each translator paid particular attention to the literary rather than the musical characteristics of the source text. The lyrics will therefore be given a prominent place in the analysis. At the same time, we will dwell on the multimodal dimensions of the text by examining whether the translation and reception were influenced by their literary and musical origins, on the one hand, and by the new context in which they would function, on the other.

Though "L'Internationale" was originally published as a poem and only afterward set to music, it has since become extremely difficult to ignore its musical dimension when reading the original text or its later published translations. This can have an impact on the visibility of the text and on the importance accorded to it by the reader or listener. Already in 1907, warnings were sent out in anarchist circles that this poem set to music would obviously catch on, but that the sung version (to which many also sang along) might cause listeners to stop paying attention to the meaning of the words: "*L'Internationale* est une chanson à la mode que tout le monde chantonne ou sifflote, sans en connaître ou sans en comprendre les paroles" (*Les Temps Nouveaux*, 19.1.1907) [The Internationale is a fashionable song that everybody hums or whistles without knowing or understanding the words]. Moreover, music is often put forward as a universal language that can bring everyone together.[1] Following the first English translation in 1900, T. Sims wrote the following in the party organ, *Justice*: "[…] Music is international. We are internationalists; let our songs be international also" (in GIELKENS 1998: 77). A

[1] The idea of music as a universal language was picked up enthusiastically by many and popped up regularly in the years that followed. In 1921 the French-speaking Belgian left-leaning internationalist art magazine *Lumière* remarks that, ideally, music should be "la langue universelle" [the universal language] that speaks to "toutes les oreilles comme la peinture parle à tous les yeux" [all ears much like a painting does to all eyes].

similar ambition could be found in the French socialist newspaper, *L'Humanité*: "L'Internationale résonne sur toutes les lèvres prolétariennes et dans les langues diverses où elle a été traduite, elle parle le même langage à tous les exploités" (29.6.1907) [The Internationale resounds on the lips of all proletarians in the diverse languages into which it has been translated; it speaks the same language to all the exploited.].

Though some considered the neglect of the text of "L'Internationale" as ruining the whole song, this did not mean that the song would lose its mobilising power, which was strengthened by the music and/or by the interplay between word and music. This does not apply solely to "L'Internationale", but rather can be seen as a common feature of music that circulates internationally: in a special issue of *The Translator* on music and translation, Susam-Sarajeva (2008: 192) writes that in some cases, "non-translation in the case of music may allow the imagination more leeway […]".

Before turning to the song's reception in the Dutch language area, let us spend a moment on the history of the origins of the French text, which belongs within the repertoire of Second International socialist poetry – "un phénomène négligé des chercheurs" [a phenomenon neglected by scholars], according to Marc Angenot (2013: 167). This occasional and combative poetry was aimed at a broader audience, its intention being to promote social struggle through songs that were sung during socialist evenings, parties and banquets. (Poems that were not set to music were also widely circulated.) This highly diverse repertoire was not embedded within a party context: 'chanson populaire' [popular song] or 'chanson sociale' [social song] comprises the totality of 'poèmes des chansonniers romantiques réunis dans le 'Caveau moderne' fondé en 1806, tradition où les noms les plus fameux étaient ceux de Béranger, Gustave Nadaud, and then d'Eugène Pottier' [of poems by romantic composers united in the 'Caveau moderne' founded in 1806, a tradition in which the most famous names were Béranger, Gustave Nadaud, and then Eugène Pottier] (ibid.: 172–173). It was only from 1880 on that these songs became increasingly known as 'socialist songs' because of their explicit overtures to various socialist parties. Despite the increasing social and political ambitions of these songs, this took nothing away from what their composers considered their artistic potential. On the contrary, they considered the struggle for justice and equality as the nucleus of what art should be about, even though it hardly seemed to be the case either in contemporary 'decadent' or 'depraved' bourgeois art or in more popular 'café-concert', that the socialist press considered a danger to militant action. Marc Angenot (ibid.: 187) summarises this contrast in powerful terms:

*Face à la niaiserie apolitique et démobilisatrice du café-concert, la chanson socialiste est politique de part en part, mais pas dans le sens d'un simple endoctrinement prosaïque : elle émeut profondément, elle est conforme à une sensibilité militante qui, au milieu des rituels des partis 'révolutionnaires', dans les grands hymnes entonnés en chœur, en vient fréquemment aux larmes […]*

*[In contrast to the apolitical and demobilizing drivel of the café concert, socialist song is political through and through, but not in the sense of simple prosaic indoctrination: it touches deeply, it is in keeping with a militant sensitivity that often brings a tear to the*

*eye during the rituals of 'revolutionary' parties when singing those grand anthems in chorus [...]]*

The function of this music was multiple from the outset: putting a sincere sensitivity to words and music, on the one hand, and an unambiguous incitement to action, on the other.

A number of these socialist songs were published anonymously, while others were clearly the work of individual authors, the most well-known of whom were Jean-Baptiste Clément ("Le temps des cerises") and Eugène Pottier ("L'Internationale"). The origins of "L'Internationale" are well known. The words of the poem were written in 1871 by the Frenchman Eugène Pottier, and were originally meant to be sung to the tune of the Marseillaise. In 1888, the Belgian Pierre De Geyter composed the melody we know to this very day. Four years later, "L'Internationale" was proclaimed the official anthem of the workers' movement, after which it circulated very quickly and was adapted musically (including arrangements for piano, choir, brass band, etc.) and was also translated enthusiastically by many. A full one hundred years later, Jan Gielkens (1998: 73) remarked that "L'Internationale" was "misschien wel het meest vertaalde lied ter wereld" [was perhaps the most translated song in the world]. The number of translations, re-arrangements, adaptations and parodies amount in total to at least 140 versions in 50 languages.

**The Dutch translations**

"L'Internationale" has been translated several times into Dutch. The line between borrowing, adaptation and translation is sometimes thin, and as a result numerous different versions exist in Dutch (cf. GIELKENS 1998). In 1890, for example, Karel Waeri, the Ghent composer/musician kept the melody but wrote a completely new text – a very common practice among composers of such anthems, it must be noted. The first singable Dutch translation was published on 4 April 1894 and was penned by Johan Visscher (cf. GIELKENS 2004). The most well-known version is by the Dutch poet and socialist Henriette Roland Holst (dating from 1900), but if we also take intersemiotic translations into account, we must also mention the series of wood carvings by the Flemish graphic artist Frans Masereel. His last work is an illustrated edition of "L'Internationale", which he published in 1970, at the age of 81.

As the extensive literature on retranslations has shown, the reasons for retranslating a text can be extremely diverse: quality-related (especially if the first translation has been criticised), commercial (e.g., marking the anniversary of an author or a work), functional (e.g., if the translation is to serve another purpose, address a new audience, or be sung instead of read), etc. (VAN POUCKE 2017; TAHIR GÜRÇAĞLAR 2019; KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2014). In this respect, numerous partial or full Dutch translations of "L'Internationale" followed the Roland Holst translation, including translations by Theun de Vries (following the transformation of the SDAP to the Labour Party), Jacques Firmin Vogelaar (to the melody of "L'Internationale", combined with the Dutch national anthem), Jaap van de Merwe (a very radical rearrangement in a much

more informal language register), an anonymous translator (meant specifically for a Flemish audience), and, finally, Ernst van Altena, a version labelled by Gielkens (1998: 82) as a "meer literaire poging" [more literary effort ].

In what follows, we will focus firstly on what can be called the most canonical translation, i.e., the translation by Roland Holst. In contrast to previous research, we wish to stress the relation between her strategy as a translator and her poetics as an author. How can we situate this translation in relation to the life and work of Roland Holst, and why was she an ideal translator to canonize this song? We then turn to van Altena's translation, exploring the various ways his version differs from Roland Holst's. Given that van Altena's version was not meant to be sung, its literary dimensions are foregrounded in the analysis. We conclude by comparing the two translations.

### *Henriette Roland Holst's translation*

The first time the Dutch poet Henriette Roland Holst (1869–1952) heard a performance of "L'Internationale" was probably during the 1900 International Socialist Congress in Paris. She was part of the Dutch delegation. Not long afterwards, in the same year, she translated the text into Dutch.[2] The translation was probably printed for the first time in 1902 and sung at a festive evening before the start of the Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (SDAP) [Social Democratic Workers Party] congress (GIELKENS 1998: 7). Her version has since remained the canonical version both in Flanders and the Netherlands; Van de Merwe termed it a "taaie klassieker" [stubborn classic] (VAN DE MERWE 1974: 49).

During her lifetime, Henriette Roland Holst was widely considered one of the greatest Dutch poets ever known (BEL 2018: 464). Though her poetry has since been largely forgotten, she remains well known as a socialist and communist activist. Her translation of "L'Internationale" lies at the crossroads between these two ambitions (poetry and activism).

Henriette Van der Schalk (as she was known before her marriage to the painter Richard Roland Holst) stemmed from a well-to-do middleclass family. At the end of the nineteenth century, she became entranced by the then-burgeoning socialist movement, among other things, from reading Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, which she came to know through a poet friend Herman Gorter. In 1897, she joined the SDAP. She immediately put all her energy into party activities, giving readings and writing pamphlets and articles in innumerable socialist newspapers. She also provided financial support to the party and even became a member of the party executive (SCHAAP 2000). She gained international renown and was in close contact with Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Leo Trotsky. She was a polyglot and wrote the successful pamphlet (first hand, in

[2] In 1898, Roland Holst had already borrowed a collection of poems by Eugène Pottier from a fellow party member; she copied some poems and mentioned in a letter that she would translate a few of them one day if she had the time (ETTY 1996: 77–78; GIELKENS 1998: 7). Her translation is mentioned for the first time in 1900 in a letter sent to the newspaper *Het Volk* (ETTY 1996: 632; GIELKENS 1998: 7). It was printed for the first time in 1902 (STERRINGA 1902; see GIELKENS 1998) and in 1903 along with the music (POLAK 1903).

German) *Generalstreik und Sozialdemokratie* (1905) [General Strike and Social Democracy], for example. Her relations with socialism and communism were rather tempestuous and hence much publicised (see ETTY 1996 and SCHAAP 2000). She turned from socialism to communism during the First World War: in 1921 she even participated in the Third Congress of the Communist International in Moscow but left the party in 1927. She became more and more of a religious socialist but remained on the barricades in protest against fascism and colonial exploitation in the Dutch East Indies, among other things.

Roland Holst's translation of "L'Internationale" belongs to her early commitment to socialism, and in fact to her beginnings as a poet. Her debut as a poet came in 1896 when she published the collection *Sonnetten en verzen in terzinen geschreven* [*Sonnets and verses written in terza rima*], written in mystic symbolic style. After encountering socialism and Marxism, she wished to bring her two callings together. Like many Dutch socialists, she found inspiration in the work of the English socialist thinker, writer, and artist William Morris, who had died shortly beforehand (in 1896). She translated much of his work, and a year after joining the SDAP published a collection of Morris's essays entitled *John Ball en andere vertalingen* (1898) [John Ball and other translations]. She remarked in relation to these essays: "Blijkbaar was ik in die jaren rijp geworden om ze te begrijpen, het was of de schellen mij van de oogen vielen, of ik de maatschappij, het mij omringende leven in een nieuw, helder licht zag" [Seemingly I had matured enough in those years to understand them, as if the scales had fallen from the eyes, as if I saw society, and life surrounding me in a new clear light] (ROLAND HOLST 1898: 95). As a means of reckoning with her own 'old' poetics, she wrote the pamphlet entitled *Socialisme en literatuur* [*Socialism and Literature*]. However, she had not yet recovered her own poetic voice. She did write propaganda verse, later collected in *Meiliederen en propaganda-verzen* (1915) [*May Songs and Propaganda Verses*], but her lyrical work would be published only seven years after her debut, in a second collection that bore the significant title *De nieuwe geboort* (1903) [*The New Birth*]. In this collection, she gives voice to her joy regarding her new vision of the world and expresses her sorrow at the heavy sacrifices that accompany it. The collection bears witness to a strong awareness of a joyful expectation of a new age and society, of an awareness of living at a pivotal moment in time and of a readiness to make sacrifices. Meanwhile, in only a few years, she had managed to gain considerable knowledge of and a passion for socialism, publishing a steady stream of studies on socialist topics such as *Kapitaal en Arbeid in Nederland* (1902) [*Capital and Labour in the Netherlands*], a concise cultural history of the working class from a Marxist perspective, and a pamphlet called *Arbeiders en alcohol* (1902) [*Workers and Alcohol*].

The translation of "L'Internationale" happened in the middle of all these writings: innumerable socio-political articles and pamphlets, her translation of William Morris, propaganda verses, her mystical debut and her second socialist collection. Roland Holst was highly aware of the difference between poetry and propaganda verse. In the preface to her translation of William Morris's essays, she writes: "Morris' propagandaverzen zijn bekend en in hun soort voortreffelijk: natuurlijk wist hij zeer goed dat in wat wordt geschreven met het oog op propaganda, nooit het afgeslotene, in zich zelve

bloeiende leven kan tieren van poëzie" [Morris's propaganda verses are well known and are excellent examples of their kind: of course, he knew very well that what is written for the purposes of propaganda can never draw on the self-blossoming life of poetry"] (ROLAND HOLST 1898: 8–9). She also makes this distinction for her own poetry. In the foreword to *De Nieuwe Geboort,* she writes that socialist poetry is no propaganda poetry for the workers movement.

*Van eene poëzie, zuiver sociaaldemocratisch van geest, dat wil zeggen, uit de gedachte- en gevoelswereld van het strijdend proletariaat geboren, hebben wij nog geen voorstelling. Daartoe is de proletarische klasse nog te zwak en leven in haar nog te veel burgerlijke reminicenzen.*

*[We cannot yet imagine that singular type of poetry, purely socio-democratic in spirit, which means born of the world of thought and feelings of the militant working class. The proletariat is too weak for it and still has too many middleclass memories living on in it.].* (ROLAND HOLST 1903)[3]

She recognises that her own lyrical poetry is not socio-democratic enough and that her propaganda poetry (separate from *De nieuwe geboort*) is not truly socialist poetry. In fact, she associated the latter more with her activist side than with her poetic side: elsewhere she speaks disparagingly of her "propagandistisch geschrijf" [propagandist scribblings] (ROLAND HOLST 1900). This also applies to her translation of "L'Internationale",[4] which plays no part at all in what she tells us of her own life in her memoirs *Het vuur brandde voort* [*The Fire Burns On*] or in her correspondence. Seemingly it was just a little job she did between turns. And yet it is the one text that remains of her literary heritage.

To conduct the comparative translation analysis, we will draw on the version published in 1902. (There are other adapted versions in circulation.) The first thing to notice is that only three stanzas were translated (1, 3 and 5). That is why the version sung in Dutch is much shorter than the original. One can only wonder how that played out at international conferences when all versions of the song were sung at the same time. Roland Holst kept the original rhyme scheme (consistently alternating rhyme). Because she alternates between feminine and masculine rhyme, as does the French original, each second line seems to acquire a stress (masculine rhyme); there is a full stop every two lines

[3] In 1903, the Flemish poet Karel Van de Woestijne, speaking about *De nieuwe geboort*, nonetheless expressed the lamentation that Roland Holst had wasted her poetic talent (which he had previously praised) on "proletarisch-sociale deklamatie en opgezwollen meeting-praat" [proletarian social bombast and the bloated talk of mass meetings]. He concluded: "Zij was eene dichteres, die socialiste werd" [she was a poet who became a socialist] (VAN DE WOESTIJNE 1903: 631, 636).

[4] Like most girls from a well-off background, Roland Holst was very fluent in French. (She even wrote verse in French in her youth.) She did not translate much except for Morris and then Dante (*Il Convito*, unpublished), which had a strong influence on her first collection. She also participated in translations of work by Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy.

(often in the form of an exclamation mark). This alternance between feminine and masculine rhyme is of course emphasised in the music but this is not easy to convey in all languages. It is a common verse form in Dutch, however. Sticking to the rhyme scheme enhances the song's singability, as well as the capacity to remember it. But the end rhyme has clear consequences for the rest of the lines. Retaining this end rhyme forces the rest of the translation to be rather "free" in terms of its meaning.

It is striking that the volcano metaphor in the first stanza was replaced by a flood metaphor, for example, which is slightly less explosive (aggressive) and does not express vertical movement to the same degree if at all. Roland Holst's line in the first stanza is famous: "Sterft, gij oude vormen en gedachten!" [Die, ye old forms and thoughts!], in which she is more imperative and poetic in her stance than the original "Du passé faisons table rase" [Of the past a tabula rasa let us make]: the imperative "Sterft" [Die] is the most outspokenly aggressive term in the whole poem. The final line in this stanza sounds a very different note, however: "Begeerte heeft ons aangeraakt" [Desire has touched us], which has no corresponding line in the source text. This poetic phrase ushers another tone of a more lyrical order into the stanza: desire and touch humanizes and embodies the discourse. Moreover, "desire" is a typical word in Roland Holst's poetic vocabulary: in her first two collections (between which this translation came about) the word occurs no less than twenty times. The refrain below begins with a line that is less powerful than the French "C'est la lutte finale" [It's the final struggle], which is very hopeful and rousing. Roland Holst writes: "ten laatste male" [for the last time], which is more of a rhyming stopgap than a call to arms. "Finale" was translated but not "lutte". Much was gained by the fact that the rhyme of the French original and Dutch translation are the same: -ale. Roland Holst begins the refrain with a form of address: "Makkers" [Mates], an informal variant of "friend". This creates a sense of friendship in the refrain.

| | |
|---|---|
| C'est la lutte finale | Makkers, ten laatste male |
| Groupons-nous et demain | Tot den strijd ons geschaard, |
| L'Internationale | En d'Internationale |
| Sera le genre humain | Zal morgen heerschen op aard |

She perpetuates this friendly atmosphere by using another form of address in the second stanza (the third in the French version): "Broeders" [Brothers]. Such forms of address by the lyrical persona in a poem could be considered rather one-sided, but in the case of a song, everyone can feel addressed and take the place of the lyrical persona: everyone who sings along also sings of and to "mates" and "brothers" and as such is both the addresser and the addressee. In itself, this performative act of singing and expressing words creates a circle of friends. Roland Holst makes the stanza less specific by dropping "l'impôt" [tax] and replacing it with a more poetic image: "tot het merg wordt d' arme uitgezogen" [the poor are sucked dry to the marrow]. Roland Holst's translation of the third stanza is less sharp and concrete than the original. She makes no call to arms or for a military strike or to kill the generals. "Cannibals" are turned into more innocent "barbarians". The tenor of this stanza is emblematic of the whole

translation: less concrete, less agitative, less party-political. This effect is strengthened by the omission of stanzas 2, 4 and 6 that contain more forms of address, such as "producteurs" [producers] and "ouvriers" [workers], (which are very different in kind than "mates" and "brothers"), along with references to mines and railways and to the party. Roland Holst's political discourse has been infiltrated by a more personal discourse. This is not only a matter of using such terms as "mates" (three times in each refrain, in fact) and "brothers" (twice), through which anyone singing the song will feel a more personal bond with the other singers. This translation is more personal because of Roland Holst's particular form of poetry, which is clearly visible in the Dutch translation. The phrase "desire has touched us" is an example already mentioned above. Between her first and second collection, the words "mates" and "brothers" increasingly became part of Roland Holst's vocabulary: there are two occurrences of "makkers" [mates] and two forms of "broeder" [brother] in her debut in contrast to nine "makkers" (four of which are forms of address) and nine forms of "broeder" in her first socialist collection. Of course, these do not only belong to Roland Holst's particular lexicon but also to the general vocabulary of socialism as such.[5] But Roland Holst's highly personal poetic language is visible in other ways. Extensive studies have been carried out on the particular language she used in the first stage of her career as a writer (Ariëns 1943; Weevers 1957; Van Praag 1946) and many of these elements can be found in this translation as well. Van Praag points to the "very strange abbreviations" she uses when dropping unstressed syllables and to various other blends. Examples of this in the translation are "slaafgeboornen" instead of "slaafgeborenen" [slave born], "d'arme" for "de arme" [the poor], or "waap'nen" for "wapenen" [weapons]. She also often drops smaller words such as prepositions (here: "Wij hebben waap'nen (om) hen te raken" [We have weapons (with which) to strike them]) and articles ("Geen recht waar (de) plicht is opgeheven" [No right where (the) duty has been abandoned]). She sometimes uses strange abstractions, such as nominalized infinitives ("reedlijk willen" [reasonable willing]). Other verb forms are also used in a strange way, such as the past participle in "tot den strijd ons geschaard" [rallied us to the fight]. Roland Holst also typically draws on little-used genitive constructions, as illustrated here: "and'rer twisten" [others' disputes] and "and'rer wil" [others' will]. These peculiarities of Roland Holst's early poetic style, which were considered by some critics as weaknesses that hampered readability, do leave their mark on this translation. As a result, not only is "L'Internationale" recognisable in terms of its style as a Henriette Roland Holst poem, but its stylistic characteristics (called manneristic by some, see van Altena 1981) considerably also hamper its singability. This is audible in performances in which the genitive construction "'s hongers sfeer" for example, is sung as "hongers sfeer" or "hongersfeer", making it unclear for some singers where the stress should lie, how certain words should be pronounced or stressed, etc. Its difficulty to sing and its "complicated language" (Gielkens 1998: 12) along with its archaic character (even in her own time, Roland Holst was reproached for being archaic) have all resulted

[5] For an interesting discussion of French forms of address in "L'Internationale", see Angenot (1992).

in calls for a new translation (GIELKENS 1998: 13). And yet no other translation has taken its place in the canon, a translation which has since acquired the status of national heritage (VAN DE MERWE 1974: 335–355).

How can we explain its canonical status? At the time Roland Holst translated the lyric, her career as a poet really took off and her renown only grew during the first half of the twentieth century. After that she was mainly known as "een dichteres die ooit heel beroemd was, veel dichtbundels heeft gepubliceerd, maar misschien geen grote literaire kunst heeft voortgebracht" [a poet who was once very famous, published many collections of poetry, but perhaps had produced no great literary art of note] (BEL 2018: 464–465). Now she is mainly known as "a huge political personality who had paved the way both nationally and internationally" (ibid.: 464). In fact, she was an ideal translator for "L'Internationale": she had considerable literary authority (her own highly esteemed oeuvre that was recognisable in various ways in this translation), she was a celebrated socialist activist, as a result of which not only could literary qualities be attributed to the translated lyrics but also an aura of authentic inspiration and conviction. Viewed in combination with her own lyric poetry (such as *De nieuwe geboort*), her propaganda verse, her many pamphlets and speeches, this translation got off to a flying start. She was often present at events during the early years where the song was sung. The most well-known performers of this translation in those first decades were Stem des Volks [The Peoples' Voice], a socialist choir. According to Etty (1996: 78; see also VAN DE MERWE 1974: 199–203), Henriette Roland Holst translated the text for this militant choir, who were directed with verve by the legendary Otto de Nobel. It is certain that De Nobel rearranged it for a 'mixed choir' as can be seen from the partition dating from 1913 of the Bond van Arbeiders-Zangvereenigingen in Nederland (IISG) [The Union of Dutch Workers Singers Associations]. The Stem des Volks was originally an Amsterdam choir but was emulated in many Dutch cities using more or less the same socialist repertoire. Henriette Roland Holst's translation of the song therefore became well known in socialist circles. Even though the text is demonstrably difficult, and people stumbled over certain words and phrases, it acquired a place in the cultural memory (and was handed down from generation to generation), all in Roland Holst's words. Or to put it another way, another translation and another text would have made another song of it. As early as 1938, the communist writer Theun De Vries was asked to do another translation because of criticism of Roland Holst's difficult text, but his rendition never surpassed Roland Holst's version: workers found it too difficult to learn the new translation as they were too used to Roland Holst's text (GIELKENS 1998: 13). He even said so himself in the *Volkskrant* of 16 November 1987: "Ik heb mijn leven lang de tekst van Henriëtte Roland Holst gezongen […]. Die woorden zitten er bij mij zo diep in. Dieper dan die van mijn eigen tekst. Mijn vertaling ken ik niet eens uit het hoofd." [I've sung the text of Henriëtte Roland Holst all my life […]. Those words are so deep inside me. Deeper than my own text. I don't even know my own translation by heart.]

***Ernst van Altena's translation***

Though Ernst van Altena's (1933–1999) translation of "L'Internationale" never enjoyed prominence, van Altena himself became famous as a translator, mainly of French poetry and chanson. His consecrated status is visible, among other things, in his many awards: the Martinus Nijhoffprijs (the most prestigious translation prize in the Dutch language area), which he received in 1964 for his translation of François Villon (*Verzamelde gedichten*, 1963) [Collected Poems] and the Hiëronymus Prize for his complete translation work. He began his translation career in 1955 with French chansons (Béart, Bécaud, Brassens) and seven years later he worked on a large Jacques Brel project, to which he owes his reputation as song translator, partly because Brel himself performed his Dutch translations.

*Van Apollinaire tot Wedekind*, a (not exhaustive) volume of van Altena's collected translation work published in 1981, comprises almost 700 texts by about 150 authors – including his version of "L'Internationale". In his foreword to the volume, van Altena delves deeper into the selection process and makes a few striking remarks about his translations of lyrics. He notes that lyrics that lose significant value when considered without the accompanying music are often mistakenly called 'commercial' in the variety business (VAN ALTENA 1981: 5); nonetheless he uses exactly this criterion to decide which texts would be included in his *Van Apollinaire tot Wedekind*. In some of his boldest remarks, van Altena sketches a portrait of the translator he was or wished to be. For example, in explaining why many of his translations are socially committed, he remarks that "*de* vertaler is meer moralist dan estheet" ["*the* translator is more of a moralist than an aesthete] (ibid.: 6, our italics) and regards the translator as having an important "sociale taak" [social task], that is, as someone who can unlock certain texts for an audience that does not understand the source language. Regarding the translation of poetry, he remarks:

*Afhankelijk van de aard van de uitgangstekst en van het gebruiksdoel, kan [het vertalen van poëzië] een vrijwel letterlijk navolgen van het origineel zijn, ofwel een zeer vrijmoedige bewerking. Maar in elk geval is het geen woord-na-woord-weergave van het origineel, want daarbij verdampt de poëzie.*

*[Depending on the nature of the initial text and its purpose, [translating poetry] can either mean literally following the original or making a very frank adaptation. But whatever the case, it's never a word-for-word rendition because then the poetry simply evaporates.]* (ibid.: 7)

Alongside his foreword, van Altena also provides contextualising notes on each author. For his translation of "L'Internationale" he mainly outlines the life and work of Eugène Pottier (whose entire oeuvre deserves revaluation, according to van Altena), and then discusses his own translation in more depth in the last paragraph:

*Een nieuwe vertaling van de Internationale maak je natuurlijk niet om te proberen de traditionele van Henriëtte Roland Holst te vervangen. Ook al is die heel wat maniëristischer dan het volkse origineel van Pottier, de Nederlandse tekst is beladen met te veel groots verleden om ermee te kunnen concurreren. Een nieuwe vertaling heeft dan ook als enige functie het zicht op het origineel weer wat te verduidelijken.*

*[You don't simply do a new translation of the Internationale to try and replace the traditional one by Henriette Roland Holst. Even though it is more manneristic than Pottier's more folksy original, the Dutch text is far too steeped in a grander past than one cannot compete with. The only purpose of a new translation would be to somehow clarify the view on the original.]* (VAN ALTENA 1981: 546)

Given that van Altena was making a retranslation, he felt obliged to justify the existence of his own version. By providing a subtle mixture of admiration for and criticism of Roland Holst's translation, he paved the way for his own version, which fits entirely within the general portrait he sketched of himself in the foreword: a specifically socially committed translation, because of the choice of source text, and with the main goal of (once again) providing the reader access to the source text. The question is whether this general ambition, as it comes to the fore in the paratext (the foreword and the contextualising notes), is achieved in the translation itself. Following Batchelor (2018), we consider a translation's paratext as any element conveying comment on the translation, or presenting it to readers, or influencing how the translation is received. However, as Tahir Gürçağlar (2016: 116) argues, the study of paratexts "cannot be a substitute for textual translation analysis". In this case, it must also be noted that van Altena was seemingly economical with the truth.[6] Indeed, comparative analyses are essential, since paratexts function as strategic *lieux d'énonciation* for self-representation. Too often, they are studied in isolation, with rigorous comparative analyses of source and target texts altogether omitted due to the time-consuming nature of the task.
As we have pointed out above, Gielkens described van Altena's translation as "literary"; in another piece he adds that van Altena tried to transfer "de tekst en niet de intentie" [the text but not its intention] into Dutch (GIELKENS 1999: 38). What does he mean by

[6] A series of corrections were printed in the 2006 *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* [Annual of the Dutch Society of Letters] relating to Ernst van Altena's obituary in the 2000 –2001 Annual. The author (van Altena's brother) concludes with the following: "Deze correcties op een levensbericht gaan over biografische gegevens en niet over de merites van Ernst van Altena's vertalingen. Al komen veel critici ook daarbij weer bij grote tegenstrijdigheden uit. Frans de Haan schreef in *De Volkskrant* van 7 juli 2000 over Ernst van Altena's werk: '[…] prachtige dingen die je doen dagdromen over een van Altena met wat meer geduld en zelfkritiek: aan talent ontbrak het hem zeker niet.'" (VAN ALTENA 2006: 112). [These corrections to the obituary are biographical in nature and have nothing to do with merits of Ernst van Altena's translations, even though once again many critics point to large contradictions in them. Frans de Haan wrote in *De Volkskrant* of 7 July 2000 about Ernst van Altena's work: '[...] beautiful things that make you daydream about a van Altena with more patience and self-criticism: talent was one thing he certainly didn't lack.']

these rather concise formulations? It is certain that van Altena's translation is complete – including the infamous fifth stanza ("le couplet des généraux") [the couplet about the generals], which had been left out of various other translations because of its explicit call to murder officers ("[…] nos balles / sont pour nos propres généraux") [our bullets are for our own generals]. Besides this, its inclusion in the collection *Van Apollinaire tot Wedekind*, the absence of references to any concrete song context[7] and the accompanying note make it clear that the translation was not immediately meant to be sung. As a result, van Altena was not hampered during the translation by any of the technical imperatives of song. In contrast, he did keep to the rhyme scheme in part; the alternance of masculine and feminine rhyme that fits the song so well was not retained throughout, however.

An overall analysis of the translation shows that van Altena mainly focused on transferring language register: the Dutch version is considerably less lofty, which is visible in the lexical choices (more concrete than in the source text) and in its style (less rich than the source text). These choices cannot be simply explained in terms of the limitations caused by transferring the rhyme scheme. Take the first stanza for example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Debout! les damnés de la terre! | Verschoppelingen, kom in opstand! |
| Debout ! les forçats de la faim! | Gij hongerslaven, kom, val aan! |
| La raison tonne en son cratère, | Nuchter denken gaat nu aan de kop, want |
| C'est l'éruption de la fin. | rede stroomt uit de geestvulkaan! |
| Du passé faisons table rase, | Maak schoon schip met het zwart verleden, |
| Foule esclave, debout! debout! | slavenmassa's sta op, sta op! |
| Le monde va changer de base: | De wereld draait naar recht en reden |
| Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout! | wij lagen onder: op naar de top! |
| *C'est la lutte finale* | *Laatste strijd, alles geven* |
| *Groupons-nous, et demain,* | *solidair allemaal!* |
| *L'Internationale* | *En 't rechtvaardige leven* |
| *Sera le genre humain.* | *wordt internationaal!* |

In terms of form, the French text uses clear repetition ("debout" appears four times, two as anaphors in the first two lines) and an extended metaphor of verticality ("debout", "éruption", "cratère") to represent "opstand" [uprising] (both literally and figuratively). All of this was weakened in the Dutch version: "debout" was translated in three different ways, and the strong "éruption" changed word type in the translation and becomes the less strong horizontal "stromen (uit)" [flow or stream out]. Perhaps van Altena was influenced by Roland Holst here, who translated the verb "tonner" [to thunder] as "stromen" [steam/flow], but he did keep the verticality of "éruption" in "rijzen" [to rise/surge up]. Through its use of everyday speech, van Altena's rendition of the refrain is also more concrete, direct and informal than the French. Not only is

[7] The translation appeared for the first time in the collection. There does not seem to have been any reason or request to translate this Dutch version for singing purposes.

the adjective "(lutte) finale" replaced by "laatste (strijd)," a strikingly ordinary usage "alles geven" [give your all] is added on to the line. In the same way that "lutte finale" is more informal in Dutch than in French, the imperative "groupons-nous" in the following line was translated by the equally informal "solidair allemaal" [let's all stick together]. "Humain" becomes "rechtvaardig" [just], and even the clear reference to "L'Internationale" (with capital letter in line three of the refrain) was translated as the general adjective ("internationaal") [international]; in like manner, the symbolic "égalité" [equality] in the third stanza disappears altogether in Dutch.

This translation strategy is noticeable in every stanza. In one (very striking) sentence, the switch to an informal language register is domesticating in tenor. Lines 5–6 in the fifth stanza ("S'ils s'obstinent, ces cannibales, / à faire de nous des héros," [If they persist, these cannibals, in turning us into heroes]) become: "Dat ze erkennen, die kannibalen: / de ware held is *Jan Soldaat*" [That they recognise, these cannibals, the true hero is Johnny Soldier] in Dutch (our italics). There are no further clear choices for domestication to be found in the translation, but that van Altena did not shun them elsewhere is clear from the foreword in which he also noted that he often opted for a "vrijmoedige bewerking" [frank rendition] (see VAN ALTENA 1981: 7), one example being "Les copains d'Abord" by Georges Brassens, where the Mediterranean becomes the Ijsselmeer and pastis turns into Berenburger, etc.

This direct, spoken-language style matches the vision and goals proposed by van Altena in the foreword and his notes accompanying his version of "L'Internationale": to unlock a text for a new audience and allow the target-text reader to acquire a view on the original. In van Altena's far from manneristic style we can also detect a strategy of demarcation with regard to the canonical translation by Roland Holst. To conclude, though this translation is not singable, the memory of the song is kept alive in the layout with its clear distinction between stanzas and refrain, the refrain being indented and set in italics.

**Conclusion**

Henriette Roland Holst's translation of "L'Internationale" came about at a time when both her literary and political authority were at their zenith and she had a large network in both domains (as well as, among other places, in choirs, where her song was circulated very quickly and efficiently). To her, "L'Internationale" was part of her propaganda work: she did not consider the translation as part of her poetic oeuvre. Her version was clearly meant to be sung: she kept the rhyme scheme, which was closely connected to the music (alternating masculine and feminine rhyme) and made the lyric easier to remember. She added a number of forms of address (mates, brothers), which awakened a sense of solidarity and of belonging to a group while singing. This makes the text more personal: the singer addressing the co-singer. At the same time, she made it less party-political (and therefore more timeless) and incisive. Her lyric is more poetic than the original. This is because Roland Holst, even though she did not count this translation as belonging to her poetry, still left her poetic mark on it, as demonstrated above. It is true that the typical peculiarities of her style do hamper the

singing – but not too severely. Perhaps this stems from what we also discussed above: that adapting the text of "L'Internationale" does not necessarily rob it of its mobilizing power, which was strengthened by the music and/or the interaction between word and sound.

Van Altena realised that his translation should not attempt to replace Roland Holst's version, which had by then accumulated eighty years of history. He himself argued that Roland Holst's translation was so established that the original had disappeared from view in the Dutch language area. He wished to do a new socially committed translation, primarily to provide access to the source text. This intention paradoxically applies to many (re)translations: to (re)translate so as to better reflect the source text. He does so, among other things, by translating all the stanzas and by not limiting himself to a certain (more virtuous) selection. A detailed analysis shows, however, that the tenor of his translation is more concrete and informal than the source text. He provides another view on the source text, but not necessarily a less mediated one, despite what he seems to suggest in the paratextual material. The result is a hybrid form comprising a demarcation strategy with regard to Roland Holst and his initial ambition of rendering the source text as completely as possible.

The political and the personal are woven together in each case. The personal (one's own motives, one's own poetics) has an undeniable domesticating character that moves the lyric away from the original. A constant feature of "L'Internationale" is its music, as it binds together all translations in all languages and registers. In this way, one could argue that a version is closer to the original if it is singable and is actually sung in practice. Henriette Roland Holst's "De Internationale" is etched into the song memory of left-wing Dutch people and in this respect is closer to the original: it fulfils the same function.

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# "Translated by Arkadiy Kots" Weaponization, Consecration, Monumentalization and Reincarnation of the Russian "Internationale"

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**Abstract**

*The impact of Arkadiy Kots as the translator of "L'Internationale" on Russian society is easy to underestimate. His Russian song translation, which emerged as a product of the counterculture, was first weaponized by Lenin to motivate workers to engage in the Russian Revolution. Then, it became the object of consecration: it was made the first anthem of the Soviet Union. However, with the passing of time, the song became an ideological and diplomatic issue, which under Stalin was solved by its monumentalization. As an established monument, Kots's translation remained a fixture in Soviet culture until the very collapse of the empire. It is obvious that the failure of the Soviet experiment heavily damaged Kots's cultural value. Nevertheless, his song translation remains present in post-Soviet Russia as the anthem of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. At the same time, Kots also serves as an inspiration for the protest band that under his name has translated "L'Estaca", which, as the most popular protest song of our time, could be seen as a reincarnation of "L'Internationale".*

*Keywords: Arkadiy Kots, The Internationale, rock band, translator, anthem, Soviet Union*

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# "Translated by Arkadiy Kots"

## Weaponization, Consecration, Monumentalization and Reincarnation of the Russian "Internationale"

*The impact of Arkadiy Kots as the translator of "L'Internationale" on Russian society is easy to underestimate. His Russian song translation, which emerged as a product of the counterculture, was first weaponized by Lenin to motivate workers to engage in the Russian Revolution. Then, it became the object of consecration: it was made the first anthem of the Soviet Union. However, with the passing of time, the song became an ideological and diplomatic issue, which under Stalin was solved by its monumentalization. As an established monument, Kots's translation remained a fixture in Soviet culture until the very collapse of the empire. It is obvious that the failure of the Soviet experiment heavily damaged Kots's cultural value. Nevertheless, his song translation remains present in post-Soviet Russia as the anthem of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. At the same time, Kots also serves as an inspiration for the protest band that under his name has translated "L'Estaca", which, as the most popular protest song of our time, could be seen as a reincarnation of "L'Internationale".*

### Introduction

It is probably not an overstatement to say that most songs serve a primarily aesthetic purpose. Although revolutionary songs can also generate an aesthetic effect, their main purpose is pragmatic: they seek to effect change in the world by contributing to the overthrow of a regime. In the case of "L'Internationale", the aim was to transform capitalist society into a socialist society. Although efforts to achieve this had been undertaken in numerous countries worldwide, Russia is the very first country in which a revolution in the name of socialism was actually successfully carried out. In that sense, the Russian version of "L'Internationale" was groundbreaking. The fact that this communist regime has meanwhile collapsed adds an extra dimension. The question that arises is how this major historical event has affected the song's afterlife. In more general terms, this article seeks to explore how the Russian version of "L'Internationale" has functioned in Russian society in shifting historical and political contexts.

In our chronological overview of the different approaches the Russian culture has had towards the translation of "L'Internationale" and its translator, we will make use of different terms. 'Weaponization' is the act of turning something into a weapon. The concept of 'consecration' stems from Bourdieu (1993: 11). It refers to the development of 'symbolic capital' through the power of state and cultural institutions. The term 'monumentalization' is loosely inspired by Meyer (2023: 7–8). We use it to refer to the 'heritage project of self- and collective identity building' of the Soviets, in the form of 'recording

and preservation of knowledge about their homeland'. 'Reincarnation', lastly, will be used to speak about the rebirth of Arkadiy Kots in a metaphorical sense.

Gielkens (1998: 72) points out that "almost without exception, the historiography about 'The Internationale' comes from the leftist movement itself",[1] often resulting in mythologized anecdotes. This caveat is most certainly applicable to the Russian sources that address "L'Internationale" and its Russian translation. It speaks volumes that one of the best documented books on this song, namely *Muzyka – revolyutsii*, is even dedicated to its Russian translator in his capacity as one of the "creators of the immortal 'supreme song of the revolution'" (DREYDEN 1981: 3).[2] Thus, one must be cautious when gathering supposed facts from the available sources. That being said, there is no reason to presume that information provided by individuals who adhere to an ideology different from that expressed in the song would be more reliable.

**Translated by Arkadiy Kots**

It is not surprising that Arkadiy Kots (1872–1943), with whose life the creation and circulation of the Russian version of "L'Internationale" is intimately interwoven, has played an active role in the socialist movement of Russia. The fact that he was of Jewish origin seems to have been crucial for his approach to socialism, given the discrimination of Jews under the tsarist rule, but he has not always been a supporter of the Bolsheviks.

Arkadiy (actually Aron) Kots was born in 1872 in Odessa, as the son of a low-level official and dockworker. In the early 1880s, pogroms took place in Odessa, on which Kots wrote poetry as a young adolescent. After completing urban elementary school in Odessa, at the age of 15, he wished to continue his studies but was not allowed into a local high school because of the quotas on Jews. With the help of his older brother, he was able to pursue further studies two years later in the Donbas, at the Mining Institute. In 1893, Kots received the degree of *Steiger* (pit foreman). After his apprenticeship, he started working in coal mines near Moscow. When employed in a mine close to Tula, he twice met with the Russian writer Tolstoy, by whose philosophy he was greatly impressed (LIVSHITS 2009).

Because he was Jewish, the mere presence of the Kots family in the Moscow region was illegal. He had to return to the Donbas, where between 1894 and 1897 he worked in mines near Youzovka (now Donetsk). Then, he fled Russia, as more than two million Jews did between 1881 and 1920. While most fled to the United States or the Ottoman Empire, Kots chose a less common destination: France. From 1897 to 1902, he studied mining engineering in Paris. As a student, he frequented the Russian diaspora – he was involved in a student choir of Russian political emigrants – and the socialist movement

[1] Original text: "De geschiedschrijving over de Internationale is bijna zonder uitzondering afkomstig uit de linkse beweging zelf." All translations from Dutch and Russian are mine, unless otherwise specified.

[2] Original text: "создателей бессмертной «песни песней революции»".

(DREYDEN 1981: 52, 64). In 1899, he attended the Congress of French socialist organizations, where he heard the official anthem of the socialist movement, "L'Internationale" (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 6). According to the Soviet version of facts, he was deeply impressed by the collective performance, which he claimed ended in a feeling of unity, hugs and kisses (DREYDEN 1981: 41–42).

Kots, who used to be a Tolstoian pacifist, eagerly attended lectures by famous revolutionary orators. His poetry also underwent a metamorphosis: while in Russia he had written romantic-allegorical poetry, in France he began to experiment with militant civil-revolutionary lyric (CHERNYAYEV 2023). In hindsight, it is tempting to assert that with his linguistic background, ideological views, musical affinity, and literary preferences, Kots must have sensed a calling to translate "L'Internationale". At the time, there was no established translation of the song, although a Russian translation, in prose, had been made as early as 1896 by the Russian revolutionary Yekaterina Barteneva (DREYDEN 1988: 48–49). This version, however, was never popularized. When the first issue of the political newspaper of Russian socialist emigrants *Iskra* appeared in Leipzig in December 1900, it contained a report on the International Socialist Congress that was held in Paris, including the *French* text of the chorus of "L'Internationale" (RAKHOVSKIY 1900: 23). Ironically, the article contained an appeal to gather under the sounds of "L'Internationale", while the Russian workers did not understand any French, and a full, singable translation was not provided.

After the turn of the century, translations of "L'Internationale" were made in almost all European languages (GIELKENS 1998: 78). Kots followed this trend: in 1902, he wrote his own translation (KARABANOV 2015: 237). Since it was intended to be sung by the Russian labour movement to the music written by the Belgian-French socialist Pierre De Geyter (1848–1932), he used a similar metre and rhyme scheme (namely aBaBcDcD, with an alternation between feminine and masculine rhyme). At the same time, as becomes evident from a glance at the macro-structural features, Kots's translation strategy was not targeted at reproducing the French source text to the full extent. As a matter of fact, he translated only three stanzas out of the six. According to his own testimony, these shortenings were motivated by his desire to make the original song – which already in itself is "a collection of socialist slogans" (GIELKENS 1999: 33)[3] – "shorter, and also more suitable to be performed, to make it easier for the battle slogans to penetrate the broad working-class masses" (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 6).[4]

Kots selected the first, second and sixth stanzas of the original to reproduce. According to his own words, he found stanza 1 "most important in content and most striking in artistic terms" (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 6).[5] Stanza 2 was chosen because it was about the

[3] Original text: "[d]e originele tekst van de Internationale eigenlijk een verzameling socialistische leuzen."

[4] Original text: "сделать песню более краткой, более удобной для исполнения, чтобы облегчить проникновение ее крылатых боевых лозунгов в широкие рабочие массы."

[5] Original text: "наиболее значительной по содержанию, а в художественном отоношении самой яркой."

so-called essence of the workers' struggle: the need to go to war together with the masses, and not as a hero acting alone (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 7). This reasoning, however, does not take into account the fact that the corresponding stanza of the source text makes no mention of a hero. That stanza 6 was retained is convincingly explained by Sidorovskiy (1987: 7) by the fact that it speaks "of the transfer of the land to the working peasants, who were particularly important in agrarian Russia".[6]

Yet, this still does not explain why the third, fourth and fifth stanzas were completely omitted in the Russian lyric. Stanza 3 of the source text is about the moral bankruptcy of the state and the law, the unfair treatment of the rich and the need for equality. In stanza 4, the industrialists ("les rois de la mine et du rail") [the kings of mines and rails] are held responsible for theft vis-à-vis the workers, who want to get their share ("le peuple ne veut que son dû") ["the people only want what they're due"]. Stanza 5 focuses on kings and military superiors, who are threatened with strikes ("la grève aux armées") ["strike in the armies"] and even death ("nos balles / sont pour les propres généraux") ["our bullets / are for our own generals"]. These stanzas could also have spoken to people in a Russian context. The 'kings' mentioned in stanzas 4 and 5 could easily have been replaced by 'emperors' or the more general term 'monarchs' in order to fit the Russian frame of reference.

Kots did not refrain from micro-textual interventions either. In stanza 1 of the French song, the cursed and the starving are called upon to rise up, to put an end to the past, to change the world. In the corresponding Russian stanza, this message remains more or less the same, but extra pathos is added by stating that our "outraged mind" is ready to engage in "a deadly fight".

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1902)** |
|---|---|
| Debout ! Les damnés de la terre ! | Вставай, проклятьем заклеймённый, |
| Debout ! Les forçats de la faim ! | Весь мир голодных и рабов! |
| La raison tonne en son cratère, | Кипит наш разум *возмущённый* |
| C'est l'éruption de la fin. | И в *смертный бой* вести готов. |
| Du passé faisons table rase, | Весь мир насилья мы разроем |
| Foule esclave, debout ! Debout ! | До основанья, а затем |
| Le monde va changer de base : | Мы наш, мы новый мир построим – |
| Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout ! | Кто был ничем, тот станет всем.[7] |

It is interesting to note about the translation of the chorus that its first line reads – at least in this version, which, as we will see, differs from the canonical version – "this *will*

[6] Original text: "о передаче земли трудовому крестьянству, что в условиях крестьянской России имело значение особое."

[7] Emphasis added. Translation into English from the Russian: "Stand up, branded by the curse, / the whole world's starving and slaves! / Our *outraged* mind is boiling, / Ready to lead into a *deadly fight*. / We will dig up this world of violence / Down to the foundation, and then / We, we will build our new world: / He who was nothing will become everything!"

*be* the final / and decisive battle," while the source text situates the battle not in the future, but in the present: "C'*est* la lutte finale" (emphasis added). This translation choice could stem from a concern for metre. At the same time, the chosen wording was consistent with the hope of the left-wing Russian revolutionaries for a large-scale popular uprising to come. Another remarkable translation shift in the chorus concerns the last line, "L'Internationale / sera le genre humain" ["The Internationale / will be humankind"]. It was changed into "With 'The Internationale' / the human race will wake up" (see also DROBINSKIY 1930: 545).

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1902)** |
|---|---|
| C'est la lutte finale | Это *будет* последний |
| Groupons-nous, et demain, | И решительный бой; |
| L'Internationale, | *С Интернационалом* |
| Sera le genre humain. | *Воспрянет род людской!*[8] |

According to stanza 2 of the source text, salvation from above is not to be expected: "Il n'est pas de sauveurs souprêmes, / Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun". ["There are no supreme saviours / Neither God, nor Caesar, nor tribune"] Interestingly, the word "tribun" (referring to the magistracy) in the Russian text was rendered as "hero", implying that people should not wait for some individual hero to come. By turning away from individual heroism, the song can no longer be used to create a cult around a leader: it glorifies only the power of the collectivity.

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1902)** |
|---|---|
| Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes, | Никто не даст нам избавленья: |
| Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun, | Ни бог, ни царь и *не герой*. |
| Producteurs sauvons-nous nous-mêmes! | Добьёмся мы освобожденья |
| Décrétons le salut commun ! | Своею собственной рукой. |
| Pour que le voleur rende gorge, | Чтоб свергнуть гнёт рукой умелой, |
| Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot, | Отвоевать своё добро, |
| Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge, | Вздувайте горн и куйте смело, |
| Battons le fer quand il est chaud! | Пока железо горячо![9] |

In the third and final stanza of Kots's translation, corresponding with stanza 6 of the source text, the original agrarian touch ("paysans") was omitted. This is remarkable, since Russia was still very agrarian at that time. On the other hand, a military connotation has been added ("workers [...] of the army of labour"), which resonates with

[8] Emphasis added. Translation into English: "This *will be* our final / and decisive battle; / *With* 'The Internationale' / *the human race will wake up!*"

[9] Emphasis added. Translation into English from the Russian: "No one will give us deliverance, / Not a god, nor a tsar, nor *a hero*. / We will get our liberation, / With our own hands. / To cast down the yoke with a skilled hand, / To reconquer what is ours — / Fire up the furnace and hammer boldly, / while the iron is hot!"

Russia's deep-rooted militarization. It is also notable that the birds of prey, "les corbeaux, les vautours" ("the ravens and vultures"), have been changed to the even more demonizing "a horde of dogs and torturers".

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1902)** |
|---|---|
| Ouvriers, Paysans, nous sommes | Лишь мы, работники всемирной |
| Le grand parti des travailleurs; | Великой *армии* труда, |
| La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes, | Владеть землёй имеем право, |
| L'oisif ira loger ailleurs. | Но паразиты — никогда! |
| Combien de nos chairs se repaissent! | И если гром великий грянет |
| Mais si les corbeaux, les vautours, | Над *сворой псов и палачей*, |
| Un de ces matins disparaissent, | Для нас всё так же солнце станет |
| Le soleil brillera toujours! | Сиять огнём своих лучей.[10] |

In Russia over the course of the past decades, numerous linguists have weighed the quality of Kots's translation. Clearly, there is a consensus that Kots, whose interventions were consistent with Lenin's view that art "must be understood and loved by the masses" (AL'SHVANG & TSUKERMAN 1977: 236),[11] has been able to deliver a text that lent itself extremely well to the Russian revolutionary movement. Dreykin (1981: 56, 57, 60), praises the translator's "aphoristic precision and vivid intonation" ("афорическая точность и живость интонации"). He observes "a poetic liberty" ("поэтическая вольность"), yet believes that the translator remains true to the authorial intent. The Soviet music expert Lev Sidorovskiy (1987: 6), in turn, asserts that Kots "has preserved the spirit of the original" and "managed to produce a sharply modern, distinctive text, which perfectly suited the main objectives of the new stage of the revolutionary movement."[12] More recently, Shapochkin (2013), on the basis of cognitive analysis, has attributed an enormous so-called pragmatic potential to the Russian text, which he believes to be based on the way the song pits "power" ("власть") and "justice" ("справедливость") against each other. This opposition is, obviously, also abundantly present in the French source text. Chernyayev (2023) too praises Kots for having "reinforced the song's revolutionary proclamatory sound".[13]

[10] Emphasis added. Translation into English: "Only we, the workers of the worldwide / Great *army* of labour, / Have the right to own the land, / But the parasites – never! / And if the great thunder rolls / Over *the pack of dogs and executioners*, / For us, the sun will forever / Shine on with its fiery beams."

[11] Original text: "Оно [исскусство] должно быть понятно этим массам и любимо ими."

[12] Original text: "Аркадий Коц сумел в то же время дать остро современный, самобытный текст, превохно отвечавший главным задачам нового этапа революционного движения."

[13] Original text: "переакцентировал отдельные детали текста, усилив его революционно-прокламационное звучание, при этом текст Коца впитал в себя перелицованные цитаты из коммунистического манифеста Маркса."

Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, the birth of the first singable Russian "Internationale" was a fact, but in order to live the life it was meant to live, and to mobilize the Russian speaking working-class masses, it first needed to be brought to them – censorship notwithstanding.

**Weaponization**

Kots's Russian translation of "L'Internationale" appeared in 1902, in the fifth issue of the social-democratic journal *Zhizn'* (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 6). The poem was printed without the music as part of a wider selection of poems by Kots, gathered under the umbrella title "Proletarian Poems" ("Пролетарские песни"). The magazine in question was illegal in Russia, and had to be published abroad (in Geneva). Thanks to Kots's translation also the members of the social-democratic avant-garde of Russian emigration who did not know French were able to become familiar with the song. Afterwards, the text was secretly distributed in Russia, together with the music, on separate flyers, as part of anthologies and also in handwritten form (DRUSKIN 1959: 16, 69). Kots was also personally involved in distributing his song translation in Russia (DREYDEN 1981: 74).

After the turn of the century, Kots had become an active member of the Russian socialist movement. In 1903, he had returned to the Donbas where he joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDRP). He engaged in propaganda and agitation in Mariupol and Odessa by publishing inflammatory poems and pamphlets in Russian translation. He also regularly contributed reports and essays as an editor to the newspaper *Iskra*. From time to time, he published individual books. A noteworthy example is his 1907 essay *Struggle for Universal Suffrage in Belgium (Борьба за всеобщее избирательное право в Бельгии)*. In that year, in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in Russia, his collection *Proletarian Poems* was published in Saint Petersburg. It is known to be one of the very first poetry collections featuring class-struggle poetry published in Russia. However, it was immediately confiscated.

In the decade preceding the Russian Revolutions, Kots's translation of "L'Internationale" led a life of its own, independent of the translator's persona. Lenin made a case for transforming the song into a revolutionary weapon of struggle. By intensively promoting this song, his party distinguished itself from the social revolutionaries and the anarchists among the Russian emigration movements. The Russian text was sung by the delgates of the third congress of the RSDRP held in London in the spring of 1905. The conference proceedings mention that "the congress participants stood up and sang 'L'Internationale'". This indicates that by 1905 the song had acquired the status of the anthem of the RSDRP, even though no official resolution was adopted on the subject (DREYDEN 1981: 66).

Apart from distributing the song and its music, the Bolshevist leaders also began to promote the song by regularly quoting from it (DREYDEN 1981: 115). In 1912, Lenin even had the song lyrics placed in the very first issue of *Pravda*, which then functioned as the official mouthpiece of the RSDPR. On 3 January 1913, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pottier's death, Lenin devoted another article to his song

in *Pravda*, in which he claimed that "[n]o matter what country a conscious worker finds himself in […], he can find comrades and friends in the familiar tune of 'L'Internationale'" (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 5–6).[14] However, this was more an example of wishful thinking than an adequate representation of reality. In fact, in Russia where tsarist censorship ruled, on the eve of the Russian Revolution the song was still unknown to most workers. When Lenin returned from emigration on 3 April 1917 and arrived at Finland Station, he suggested that the crowd sing "The Internationale". He then noticed that only very few knew the song's words and melody. In March 1917, when the First World War was still raging in full force, Lenin had ordered in the fifth issue of the party newspaper *Pravda* that "the Russian revolutionary army [...] must learn the choral singing of 'The Internationale'" (DRUSKIN 1959: 7–8).[15] When on the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin addressed the Russian working masses in Petrograd during mass demonstrations in squares, yards and factories, his speeches systematically ended with the collective singing of Kots's version of "L'Internationale". In that way, Kots's song translation was used as a Bolshevik weapon.

**Consecration**

Kots's contribution to the Russian Revolution as a translator of "L'Internationale" did not bring him the slightest degree of fame in the turbulent years that immediately followed. The reason might be that, according to some sources, in 1914 he had joined the ranks of the Mensheviks (CHERNYAYEV 2023). In the early 1920s, after the Russian Civil War, during which he supported the Bolshevik government, Kots re-joined the Bolshevik Party and settled near Moscow. He worked in the metallurgical sector as an engineer and mine inspector, while his literary pursuits faded into the background. Only occasionally did he write brochures, including for children, and poems for Soviet magazines.

Kots had remained invisible as a translator, but his translation of "L'Internationale" was anything but. After the 1917 October Revolution, it was given a key role in Russia's cultural life, and – to put it in Bourdieuian terms – gained much symbolic capital. One might think that a song destined to spark a revolution would lose its relevance once the revolution was over. This was by no means the case. As Shilov (1963: 4) puts it, "The Internationale" had to help in the fight against the internal and foreign enemies of the young Soviet state. As a matter of fact, until the end of the Civil War (1917–1923), the Russian people had to be mobilized to protect the Bolsheviks' seizure of power against the White movement. What's more, Lenin wanted the revolution to spread to Russia's neighboring countries. The song had lost nothing of its relevance.

[14] Original text: "В какую бы страну ни попал сознательбный рабочий […] он может найти себе товарищей и друзей по знакомому напеву «Интернационала»."

[15] Original text: "Русская революционная армия […] должна обучиться хоровому пению «Интернационала»."

The February Revolution of 1917 had logically led to the prompt abolition of L'vov's Russian anthem "God Save the Tsar!" ("Боже, Царя храни!"), with lyrics by the romantic poet Zhukovsky. Because it was not immediately replaced by a new anthem, there was a vacuum (KARABANOV 2015: 237). In March 1917, the symbolist poet Bryusov called for a national contest to introduce a new anthem, but it did not come to that: the temporary Russian government had more important concerns (the ongoing World War). Whenever an anthem was appropriate, the so-called "Worker's Marseillaise" (to the melody of the Marseillaise, with lyrics by Lavrov) was played (KARABANOV 2015: 237).

As soon as the Bolsheviks took power, they replaced the "Worker's Marseillaise" with Kots's translation of "L'Internationale". From the beginning of 1918 onward, the song functioned as the anthem of the world's very first socialist state, Soviet Russia, which in the same year was renamed as the Russian Federative Socialist Republic (SHAPOCHKIN 2013: 134). It was performed at all official ceremonies, meetings and parades. When the Soviet Union was formed in 1922, the anthem passed from the Russian Soviet Republic to the newly created state. However, no official legal act endorsing it as the official anthem of the Soviet Union was made. The anthem was tacitly adopted. According to Karabanov (2015: 238), its lack of legal status was due to the fact that the early Soviet leaders, who still hoped that the Russian revolution would spread to other countries, considered "any national idea, even musical […] a bourgeois and counter-revolutionary fact".[16]

Interestingly, the version promoted by the Soviet authorities slightly differed from the version that had been created and published by Kots. To begin, the phrase "This *will be* our final / and decisive battle" ("Это будет последний / И решительный бой"; emphasis added) was replaced by "This *is* our final / and decisive battle" ("Это есть / наш последний/ И решительный бой"; emphasis added), which is closer to the French text. In 1927, this subtle modification became a theme in Mayakovsky's *Well done!* (DREYDEN 1981: 154). According to Sidorovskiy (1987: 7–8), who seems to take this poem literally, the change in question had emerged *during* the Russian Revolution itself. However, Druskin (1959: 17) contradicts this version. For instance, the 1919 Soviet Russian poster by A. Apsit (figure 1) illustrates that even after the Revolution, "The Internationale" continued to be printed and sung with the lyrics originally written by Kots (DREYDEN 1981: 154, 159).

[16] Original text: "[…] всякая национальная идея, даже музыкальная, трактовалась как проявление буржуазности и контрреволюция."


Figure 1: the poster "The Internationale" (1919) by A. Apsit,
with the song translation by Arkadiy Kots[17]

Another, no less drastic modification concerns the line "We will *dig up* this world of violence" ("весь мир насилья мы разроем"; emphasis added), in the first stanza of the song. In all Soviet publications this was changed to the more freely translated and

[17] This work is in the public domain in Russia according to Article 1281 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, Articles 5 and 6 of Law No. 231-FZ of the Russian Federation of 18 December 2006. Retrieved from:
http://redavantgarde.com/collection/show-collection/314-internationale-.html?authorId=131

much more aggressive phrase "We will *destroy* this world of violence" ("Весь мир насилья мы разрушим"; emphasis added), which in itself functioned as one of the slogans of the early Soviet Union. According to Druskin (1959: 17), this change was made by the masses themselves, at the expense of rhyme. The new version had been common since the years 1905–1906 (DREYDEN 1981: 150–151). Incidentally, it was also common among workers and sailors during the Revolution to sing the phrase "the human race will *rise* up" ("*восстанет* род людской") – again closer to the French – instead "the human race will *wake* up" ("*воспрянет* род людской"), but this change did not make it into the Soviet publications (DREYDEN 1981: 151).

Under Lenin, the consecration of "The Internationale" went further than its instauration as the state anthem. In the early 1920s, the song was ordered to be (re)translated into a wide range of languages spoken by the peoples of the Soviet Union. Already before the Soviet times, Kots's translation had served as the source text for the bulk of translations into the languages of the Russian Empire other than Russian. According to Dreyden (1981: 55, 111), the practice of using Kots's text as a source text for indirect translation continued after the revolution. A great many proletarian poets, and several renowned poets and writers, played a role in this centralized process (DROBINSKIY 1930: 546; DREYDEN 1981: 181–182; DREYDEN 1988: 190).

The prestige gained by "L'Internationale" and its Russian translation in the Soviet Union is also attested to by the fact that when Lenin was given a last salute by a thousand-strong crowd in January 1924, the song was played alongside Chopin and Beethoven. On this occasion, Kots's translation was sung by a choir. And when the farewell celebration came to an end, all Moscow's military orchestras played a funeral march that was followed by the melody of "L'Internationale".

**Monumentalization**

The "Cultural Revolution" (FITZPATRICK 1984), which had begun in the early 1920s and was basically meant to yield proletarian or socialist culture, took more imperative forms under Stalin. In a first phase, before the Second World War, Kots's translation of "L'Internationale" was still given an important role to play in Soviet culture.

The Soviet government began to care about De Geyter after an article about him appeared in the newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva* on 19 December 1927. It was promptly decided to pay the composer of "L'Internationale" a monthly pension of $100 (DREYDEN 1981: 169). In the spring of 1928, he was even honourably invited to Moscow (DRUSKIN 1959: 15). After the now 80-year-old composer of the hymn was found healthy enough by a Soviet doctor attached to the Embassy of the Soviet Union (SU) in Paris, a trip to the Soviet Union was organized in the summer of 1929. The direct occasion was the sixth congress of the Comintern, founded by Lenin to fuel international revolution. In Moscow, De Geyter conducted a concert in which a choir sang "L'Internationale." In addition, under his direction, thousands of participants of the first edition of the international sports event Spartakiad sang his song on the Red

Square (DREYDEN 1981: 170–172). At that time, the Russian translator of "L'Internationale" still remained unknown: until the late 1920s, the text had been systematically published without mention of the translator (DREYDEN 1981: 51).

Although invisibility might seem an almost natural condition for literary translators, under Stalin quite a few became famous in the Soviet Union. They were mainly men of letters who had previously become known as authors of original works, got into trouble for ideological reasons, and then were given a second chance as literary translators. In this context, Brian Baer (2016: 116) uses the term "reauthorization". A textbook example is Pasternak, whom Fadeyev, the then head of the Soviet Writers' Union, in 1947 dubbed as "famous in Russia *as a translator* of Shakespeare" (ibid.). In light of the visibility that was given to translators under Stalin, it is not so surprising that Kots finally received recognition (KHENTOVA 1986). He again began to translate intensively in the early 1930s. His translations in leading newspapers and literary magazines included poetry by Béranger, Pottier and other socialists and poets of the Commune de Paris. He even translated a selection of poems by Charles Baudelaire, who was riskier, ideologically speaking.

Kots also decided to translate the stanzas of "L'Internationale" that he had left out of his song in 1902. The immediate trigger was the preparation of an anthology of Pottier's poems (DREYDEN 1981: 55). In 1937, the year when the Stalin terror was in full swing, the renewed, full Russian translation of "L'Internationale" was published in the eleventh issue of the famous Russian monthly literary magazine *Znamya*, under the title "Our Anthem" ("Наш гимн"; DRUSKIN 1959: 16). The newly translated verses were rhymed and metrical just like the old ones, and they also show major deviations from the source text in terms of meaning – which is in contrast to the previously translated stanzas. In the third stanza of the source text, for instance, there are no direct references to the first French verse, "l'état comprime et la loi triche" ("the state oppresses and the law cheats"). It is possible that the translator feared criticizing the state in these general terms. It is also interesting to note that the translated third stanza contains a sentence, of which there is no obvious correlation in the source text, that almost literally rearticulates Article 1 of the 1936 Stalin Constitution: "All power to the people of labour!" ("Вся власть народу трудовому!").

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1937)** |
|---|---|
| *L'État comprime et la loi triche,* | Довольно кровь сосать, *вампиры*, |
| L'impôt saigne le malheureux; | Тюрьмой, налогом, нищетой! |
| Nul devoir ne s'impose au riche, | У вас — вся власть, все блага мира, |
| Le droit du pauvre est un mot creux. | А наше право — звук пустой! |
| C'est assez languir en tutelle, | Мы жизнь построим по-иному — |
| L'égalité veut d'autres lois: | И вот наш лозунг боевой: |
| «Pas de droits sans devoirs, ditelle, | *Вся власть народу трудовому!* |
| Égaux, pas de devoirs sans droits!»[18] | А *дармоедов* всех долой![19] |

[18] Emphasis added.

[19] Emphasis added. Translation into English of the Russian: "You've sucked enough of our blood, you *vampires*, / With prison, taxes and poverty! / You have all the power, all the blessings of the

In addition, in stanzas 3 and 4, the translation puts much more emphasis than the source text on discrediting those who were unwilling to work, using lexical elements such as "vampires" ("вампиры"), "moochers" ("дармоеды") and "parasites" ("тунеядцы"). This shift was perfectly consistent with Stalin's policy, in the sense that the implementation of economically unrealistic five-year plans was accompanied by an iron discipline and the criminal prosecution of so-called social parasites.

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1937)** |
|---|---|
| Hideux dans leur apothéose, | Презренны вы в своём богатстве, |
| Les rois de la mine et du rail, | Угля и стали короли! |
| Ont-ils jamais fait autre chose, | Вы ваши троны, *тунеядцы*, |
| Que dévaliser le travail ? | На наших спинах возвели. |
| Dans les coffres-forts de la bande, | Заводы, фабрики, палаты — |
| Ce qu'il a créé s'est fondu. | Всё нашим создано трудом. |
| En décrétant qu'on le lui rende, | Пора! Мы требуем возврата |
| Le peuple ne veut que son dû. | Того, что взято грабежом.[20] |

In stanza 5, it is noteworthy that despite the fact that Stalin responded to strikes with bloodshed and repression (ROSSMAN 2005), a call to strike is still included in the translation. Admittedly, the monarchic context makes it clear that the strike is not directed against Soviet power. While the source text mentions violence against "nos propres généraux" ("our own generals"), Kots's translation, speaks simply of "assassins" ("убийцы").

| **"L'Internationale" by E. Pottier (1887)** | **Russian translation by A. Kots (1937)** |
|---|---|
| Les Rois nous saoûlaient de fumées, | Довольно королям в угоду |
| Paix entre nous, guerre aux tyrans! | Дурманить нас в чаду войны! |
| Appliquons la grève aux armées, | Война тиранам! Мир Народу! |
| Crosse en l'air et rompons les rangs! | *Бастуйте*, армии сыны! |
| S'ils s'obstinent, ces cannibales, | Когда ж тираны нас заставят |
| À faire de nous des héros, | В бою геройски пасть за них — |
| Ils sauront bientôt que nos balles | *Убийцы*, в вас тогда направим |
| Sont pour *nos propres généraux*.[21] | Мы жерла пушек боевых![22] |

world, / And our rights are but an empty sound! / We'll make our own lives in a different way — / And here is our battle cry: / *All power to the people of labour!* / And away with all the parasites!"

[20] Emphasis added. Translation into English from the Russian: "Contemptible you are in your wealth, / You kings of coal and steel! / You had your thrones, parasites, / At our backs erected. / All the factories, all the chambers – / All were made by our hands. / It's time! We demand the return / Of that which was stolen from us."

[21] Emphasis added.

[22] Translation from the Russian: "Enough of the will of kings / Stupefying us into the haze of war! / War to the tyrants! Peace to the people! / Go on strike, sons of the army! / And if the tyrants tell us / To fall heroically in battle for them — / Then, *murderers*, we will point / The muzzles of our cannons at you!"

In 1937, the anthem of the Soviet Union was also given a new musical twist: Shostakovich, who one year before had used "L'Internationale" for the movie soundtrack to the Soviet dramatic film *Girl Friends* (*Подруги*; TITUS 2016: 157–158), was ordered to arrange the music for a large symphonic orchestra with choir (KARABANOV 2015: 242). This version was played on the radio on festive occasions up until the Second World War.

The textual completion and musical reinvention of "L'Internationale" in Russia(n) should not be seen as an unequivocal promotion of the song. They contributed to the song's monumentalization, which in practice went hand in hand with the neutralization of its remaining revolutionary potential. Kots's translation was indeed consistent with the then-ongoing struggle against parasitism, and served as a fine propaganda tool to facilitate the replacement of the 1924 Constitution by the Stalin Constitution. At the same time, the song was becoming a problem that had to be taken care of. In the first place, this was due to Stalin's new understanding of Marxist doctrine.

While for Lenin communism in one country was unthinkable, Stalin proclaimed that the proletariat can and must build a socialist society in one country. In the course of the late 1920s, the theory of socialism in one country – the idea that socialism could be developed just in the Soviet Union, and that a world revolution was not a prerequisite – gradually became the ideological norm. In the early 1930s, it was adopted as Soviet state policy (Karabanov 2015: 238). From 1932, Stalin decided to curb the work of the Comintern, and liquidated its ranks and institutions. In the same period, Russian patriotism was again made negotiable, in the sense that the Soviet state system was presented as historically rooted in the Russian empire. In 1934, the concept of Soviet patriotism emerged – which had been completely impossible under Lenin.

Because by the end of the 1930s the new Soviet patriotism had penetrated Soviet musical culture (KARABANOV 2015: 240), "L'Internationale", in which not a trace of patriotism can be found, had become an old-fashioned song. In the late 1930s, it was deleted from the repertoire of the Red Army (KARABANOV 2015: 242) – a decision which may have been influenced by the fact that the song calls for an army strike. Yet, the song could not easily be discarded as the anthem of the Soviet Union: after all, the consecration of the song was a personal achievement of Lenin, who was the object of a personality cult.

During the so-called Great Patriotic War, "L'Internationale" was also a diplomatic problem. After the Nazi troops invaded Russia in 1941, Soviet radios started to broadcast the anthem of the Soviet Union, in Shostakovich's performance, to boost the troops' morale (KARABANOV 2015: 242). Churchill promptly declared his support for Russia through a discourse broadcast on the BBC. However, he was strongly opposed to playing the Soviet anthem. He even had sent word to the BBC that "the PM has issued the instruction to the Ministry of Information that "The Internationale" is *on no account* to be played by the B.B.C." (MINER 2003: 207). Instead, the British radio played the well-known Soviet song "Wide is My Motherland" ("Широка страна моя родная") by Isaak Dunayevsky (HERMISTON 2016: 116).

Churchill's speech paved the way for the alliance that was forged between the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union in late 1941– early 1942. During the

ceremonial parts of the diplomatic meetings that took place during the Second World War, national anthems were played. Stalin, who was keen to obtain the opening of a second front, did not want to upset his interlocutors by echoing an anthem calling for an international revolution with phrases such as "We will destroy this world of violence" (KARABANOV 2015: 245). In this context, in 1942, Stalin made his old comrade Kliment Voroshilov (who had some musical expertise) put together a committee to launch a competition for the creation of a new, now official state anthem (KARABANOV 2015: 243). By June 1943, the commission was in operation (ibid.: 243). In the first stage, a select group of renowned poets and composers, including Shostakovich, were asked to work out proposals. However, not a single song submitted was found suitable enough (ibid.: 244). Eventually, an open competition with attractive prize money was launched, attracting submissions from more than 170 candidate composers and 40 poets (ibid.: 249). The committee heard 223 anthems over the next six months. To settle the matter, Stalin personally interfered (ibid.: 247). In the end, Stalin's favourite tune, a composition by A. V. Aleksandrov, won the competition (ibid.: 261). The lyrics of the winning song were very Soviet-patriotic. The first two verses, written by Sergey Mikhalkov and El' Registan, read "Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics, / Great Russia has welded forever to stand" ("Союз нерушимый республик свободных / сплотила навеки Великая Русь"), rehabilitating Russia's imperialist past. What's more, the winning song also contributed to the personality cult of Lenin and of Stalin. The internationalist, anti-nationalist song that called for a global revolution against the establishment without personal heroism was to be replaced by a chauvinist song that affirmed the political status quo and personality cult of the ruler.

Kots's "L'Internationale" was last played on the Spasskaya Bashnya in December 1943 (DREYDEN 1981: 145). The Politburo adopted the new Soviet anthem as the official "state anthem" ("государственный гимн") of the Soviet Union, which was lauded as a logical decision in the Soviet newspapers (KARABANOV 2015: 248). As a result of its abolition as the anthem of the Soviet Union, Pottier's song was in danger of being forgotten in Russia. However, in 1944, the Soviet Union's Bolshevik party, later renamed KPSS, (re)adopted "L'Internationale" as its official party anthem (SHAPOCHKIN 2013: 134).

Because Arkadiy Kots had died of throat cancer in Sverdlovsk in 1943 during the Second World War – according to Dreyden (1988: 205), while he was working on new translations of Pottier – he had not experienced the degradation of his song himself. His name did not disappear from collective consciousness: in the post-war Stalin period, Kots received more recognition as a poet than he had received while alive. A milestone was the fact that in 1951 Shostakovich set one of his poems ("9 January", dedicated to Bloody Sunday), to music, along with nine other "Revolutionary Songs". For this composition, Shostakovich was awarded the Stalin Prize in the second grade the following year. Another posthumous tribute paid to Kots was the publication in 1957 in Moscow of his poetry collection *Poems (Стихотворения)*, which also included translations and memoirs.

The memory of Kots was kept alive until the end of the Soviet Union. In 1973, to mark the centennial of his birth, a commemorative plaque was placed on the façade of the former Mining Institute in Donetsk, where he had studied. In the exhibition room of

the same institute, some space was made for a biography of Kots. In 1986, Soviet printing presses printed a letter cover with Kots's image on it. A commemorative plaque was also mounted at the poet's last residence in Sverlovsk. According to testimonies, in the 1980s, people still made regular excursions to his grave. This status was primarily due to his merits as a translator of "L'Internationale", which until the end of the Soviet period was seen as the most famous song in the world (SIDOROVSKIY 1987: 5).

**Reincarnation**

With the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991, the October Revolution, which was considered during the Soviet era to be the most important event in human history, was suddenly relegated to the periphery of Russian social consciousness (SIBIRYAKOV 2018: 17). Kots's "L'Internationale", which had been sung countless times to initiate and celebrate the Revolution, degenerated into a hopelessly outdated tune. Yet, the song was fished up by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation as a kind of relic and has kept it as its party anthem to the present day.

The translator, in turn, fell prey to oblivion. The memorial at his last home in Sverdlovsk, renamed as Yekaterinburg, disappeared in the 1990s. His grave no longer attracted visitors, and deteriorated to the point of becoming unrecognizable. Over the past fifteen years, however, there has been a renewed focus on the figure of Arkadiy Kots. In 2005, a new commemorative plaque appeared at the translator's last residence in Yekaterinburg. On 4 November 2008, a new, albeit very modest, monument was placed on Kots's grave, which had been re-identified in 2004. This initiative came not from the Russian authorities, who have no interest in the heroes of the socialist era (CHERNYAYEV 2023), but from local communists.

As the memory of Arkadiy Kots was neglected by the authorities of post-Soviet Russia, he could once again become of interest to counter-culture. Not surprisingly, his revolutionary potential was reactivated by activists on the utter left of the political spectrum. Today, Arkadiy Kots is not just a twentieth-century poet and translator, but also the name of a folk-punk, combat folk, and hard-core music group. "Arkadiy Kots" was created in 2010 by poet, translator and activist Kirill Medvedev (guitar, vocals), and sociologist and activist Oleg Zhuravlev (violin, keyboards, vocals). In the following years, the band was joined by artist and activist Nikolay Oleynikov (harmonica, percussion, vocals) and activist and sound engineer Anna Petrovitch (accordion, keyboards, vocals). The band has mutated many times and today records music and gives concerts as a ten-piece ensemble.

Kirill Medvedev, who with his group Arkadiy Kots has emerged as the bard of political activism, under Putin advocates the rehabilitation of the October Revolution as an "anti-war, anti-colonial, emancipatory and cultural project" (JOVOVICH 2021: 479). The choice of name should therefore come as no surprise. The band underscores the fact that in Kots's version, the song became the first official anthem of the Soviet Union. In or Facebook Messenger exchange on 8 March 2023, Kirill Medvedev explained the choice of name as follows:

*We named it after him because our ambition from the beginning was to make anthems for the labour and protest movement, including translating and adapting such songs from other languages. Besides, we liked the fact that he combined creativity, activism and even science like us.*[23]

The ambition to create songs and anthems for workers and protest movements has been realized by Arkadiy Kots on numerous occasions. For example, in 2015, they released their second long-player *Music for the Working Class* (figure 2), a collection of workers' movement songs. In 2018, their single "Boss Wants Me Workin' Till I Die" became the soundtrack to the massive rallies against the pension reforms in Russia. Another socialist song was released in 2021 under the title "Ten Nurses", in support of the social struggle waged by a medical union. The most famous song by Arkadiy Kots is, however, its Russian cover of "L'Estaca" by Luis Llach.


Figure 2: cover image of the CD *Music for the Working Class* (2015) by Arkadiy Kots[24]

[23] Original text: "Назвали в честь него потому что нашей амбицией изначально было делать гимны для рабочего и протестного движения, в том числе переводить и адаптировать такие песни с других языков. Кроме того, нам нравилось, что он как и мы совмещал творчество, активизм и даже науку."

[24] Work reproduced with permission of the Arkadiy Kots band. Retrieved from: https://arkadiy.bandcamp.com/album/music-for-the-working-class

Written in 1968 in Catalan, "L'Estaca" called for mass resistance against the Franco dictatorship. It has since become one of the most famous protest songs in the world. Although the song was initially meant as a support for the right to self-determination of Catalonia, it grew into a symbol of popular rebellion, in a large variety of languages. In 1978, after listening to a recording of "L'Estaca", the Polish singer/songwriter Jacek Kaczmarski created his own version. His Polish song "Mury" became the unofficial anthem of the Solidarność movement (HOFFMANN 2018). In 2010, during a wave of protests in Belarus, the Belarusian poet Andrei Khadanovich translated the Polish version into Belarusian. The Russian version created afterwards by Arkadiy Kots is said to be close to Llach's original. Still, there are interesting micro-textual shifts to be noted: in the Catalan song, injustice is symbolized by a stake. In the Russian-language version by Arkadiy Kots, this symbol is replaced by the more readily understandable symbol of long-decaying prison walls.

It is not farfetched to see "The Walls" by Arkadiy Kots (the band) as a kind of reincarnation of "L'Internationale" by Arkadiy Kots (the translator). The song indeed, has made a real contribution to the struggle against the current Russian regime. In 2011–2012, it became the musical symbol of the anti-Putin protests in Moscow. Arkadiy Kots performed it on Bolotnaya Square in 2012, and went viral. As Medvedev commented in our Facebook Messenger exchange on 8 March 2022: "when 'L'Estaca'/'Steny' (which is sometimes referred to as the new 'Internationale') in our translation became the anthem of the protests in the Russian Federation, we understood that we had chosen the name of the group correctly."[25] After the 2020 August elections in Belarus, the Russian-language version of "L'Estaca" was sung by protesters outside the Belarusian embassy in Moscow. During the following Belarusian protests, along with the Belarussian version, the Russian version of the song could also be heard in many streets in Belarus (GIBBONS & JÄRVINIEMI 2020).

**By way of conclusion**

In one of his last articles, Shostakovich called "L'Internationale" stronger than an armada of tanks and airplanes (DREYDEN 1988: 208). At the very least, this iconic song, coincidentally in the translation by Kots, has played a key role in Russian society, in shifting historical and political contexts. Before the Revolution, it was the object of *weaponization*, in the Early Soviet years, it was *consecrated*, and it became *monumentalized* under Stalin. Today, it is present in Russia as a relic of the past, as the anthem of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Since this party no longer strives towards a global revolution against capitalism, the revolutionary potential of Arkadiy Kots could appear to have been neutralized. At the same time, Kots's translation of '"L'Internationale"' has become an inspiration for continued protest and a struggle

[25] Original text: „[К]огда песня L;Estaca\Стены, (которую еще иногда назыают новым Интернационалом) в нашем переводе стала гимном протестов в РФ, мы поняли, что правильно назвали группу."

against oppression under his name. We seem to have come full circle, but it remains to be seen when the indignation of the Russian people, to which "Steny" adds fuel, will suffice to make the walls fall down.

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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.

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## 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*

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

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

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

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**Erwin Snauwaert**

# "L'Internationale" and its Spanish Versions Between Translation and Adaptation

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## Abstract

*This contribution proposes to examine the intercultural transfer of "L'Internationale", the hymn of the socialist and communist movements, into the Spanish-speaking world. The original lyrics were written in French by Eugène Pottier in 1871 to commemorate the Paris Commune, a workers' rebellion which took place in that same year, and were set to music in 1888 by Pierre De Geyter, a Belgian socialist composer. They were promptly translated into an impressive number of other languages. The first Spanish translation was made in 1899. It still serves as the anthem of the Partido Comunista de España and differs from two later versions, which can be considered adaptations. One version is a rewriting from a sociopolitical perspective that adjusts itself to the principles of the FAI, an anarchist movement of the 1920s–1930s in Spain and Portugal. Another was influenced by the historical and geographical setting of the Cuban revolution and is used by many Latin American leftist movements as well as by the PSOE, the Spanish socialist party. This article contextualizes and compares these three versions, drawing on the concepts of rewriting and adaptation to frame the analysis.*

*Keywords: L'Internationale, intercultural transfer, translation into Spanish, adaptation*

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**Erwin Snauwaert**

# "L'Internationale" and its Spanish Versions
## Between Translation and Adaptation

*This contribution proposes to examine the intercultural transfer of "L'Internationale", the hymn of the socialist and communist movements, into the Spanish-speaking world. The original lyrics were written in French by Eugène Pottier in 1871 to commemorate the Paris Commune, a workers' rebellion which took place in that same year, and were set to music in 1888 by Pierre De Geyter, a Belgian socialist composer. They were promptly translated into an impressive number of other languages. The first Spanish translation was made in 1899. It still serves as the anthem of the Partido Comunista de España and differs from two later versions, which can be considered adaptations. One version is a rewriting from a sociopolitical perspective that adjusts itself to the principles of the FAI, an anarchist movement of the 1920s–1930s in Spain and Portugal. Another was influenced by the historical and geographical setting of the Cuban revolution and is used by many Latin American leftist movements as well as by the PSOE, the Spanish socialist party. This article contextualizes and compares these three versions, drawing on the concepts of rewriting and adaptation to frame the analysis.*

### Introduction

Given that "L'Internationale" is an unambiguous expression of the working class during the Paris Commune – a rebellion crushed by the conservative French government in Versailles shortly after the Franco-Prussian War (1871) – and since then symbolizes worldwide social struggle, it is relevant to examine how this so-called 'international' hymn has been integrated into different cultural contexts. As Kuzar (2002: 88) states, "Socialists have always sought to foster a collective sense of community, based on class consciousness and solidarity, which transcends the national sentiment" and which materialized in "concrete assets of popular culture" such as rites, ceremonies, and canonical texts and slogans". This is specifically true for "L'Internationale", originally "merely a poem [that] became a song only in 1887" (ibid.: 90) and eventually became "the official anthem of the Second International (1889–1916), of the Comintern (the Third International, 1919–1943), and between 1921 and 1944 also of the Soviet Union" (ibid.: 89; see Pieter Boulogne's article in this focus issue for more on the song in the Russian context). From the viewpoint of intercultural transfer, it is challenging to investigate to what extent the song's universal message may have been affected by changes in its circulation through different cultural contexts.

As the universal character of "L'Internationale" is highly determined by its 'singability' (Franzon 2008: 374), which remains constant – that is to say, the melody does not change even if the language of the lyrics does – we will consider the intercultural transfer

from a textual viewpoint. As a consequence, we will not adhere to a multimodal approach, a very common research avenue in the study of songs, which often examines the "equivalence […] between music and text (and by extension the visual arts)" (MINORS 2013: 2). Rather, our focus is on the translations of the lyrics from the French original into one specific foreign language: Spanish. According to Apter (2016: 2), such "a singable translation must somehow set words of a language with one prosody to music composed to fit the prosody of a different language". Given that the prosodic and formal poetic features are not significantly modified in the case of "L'Internationale", the emphasis of the translation analysis will be placed on the "semantic-reflexive match", focusing on textual aspects such as "the story told, mood conveyed, character(s) expressed, description (word-painting) [and] metaphor" (FRANZON 2008: 390). This 'semantic reflexivity' is considered "the most subtle aspect" (ibid.: 394) for the "musico-verbal unity between text and composition", which makes "lyrics […] carry their meaning across and deliver their message in cooperation with the music" (ibid.: 375).

**Translation and/or adaptation**

According to Franzon, the translation of songs – an issue that only scarcely has been dealt with in translation studies because of a general "lack of clarity as to the professional identity" of the translators – mainly depends on the question of whether the "translation [is] going to be singable or not" (ibid.: 374). Since the answer to this question is positive in the case of "L'Internationale", whose worldwide dissemination is partially determined by its invariable melody, the study of its translation will basically focus on how the translators intended to match the text with the original music.[1] Although "one may plausibly surmise that the translators of the anthem have been committed to replicating the French original as closely as they could, not only because of the underlying premises of felicitous translation in general, but also because the anthem flagged a message of unity and uniformity" and, from such a perspective "only technical constraints of prosody, meter, and rhyme in the target language could count as justified causes of deviation" (KUZAR 2002: 89), the analysis of possible shifts in the translated lyrics may reveal deviant text interpretations in the target system. Kuzar delves into such modifications in the specific case of "L'Internationale" and, through his analysis of the English and Hebrew versions, distinguishes two kinds of textual changes: those that "overtly encode the standard version, but may covertly add accents which highlight interests particular to a certain sector or society" and others by which the anthem "is claimed to no longer express the spirit of the

[1] Franzon (2008: 376) proposes "adapting the translation to the original music" as one of five options for song translation. The others are "leaving the song untranslated", "[t]ranslating the lyrics but not taking the music into account", "[w]riting new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics" and "[t]ranslating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly sometimes to the extent that a brand new composition is deemed necessary".

times, and parts of it are erased and substituted to fit a modified ideology" (ibid.: 89).[2] Such a bias invites us to consider lyrical translation not only in its technical aspects but also from its ideological implications, as Kaindl (2013: 151) suggests:

*The focus is no longer on the definition of a (good) translation, but on three central issues: how the translations react to social discourse; how the mental dimension of culture is interpreted; and what social function the translation project fulfills. Translation is not the copy of a source text, but the objectification of a discourse formed out of a dialogue between the Other and the familiar.*

In such a scope, translation is definitely conceived as a process of rewriting, which is capable of manipulating the source text in favor of the perspective of the target culture and which is described by Lefevere (2002: xi) in the following terms:

*All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature are exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live.*

By relating translation to rewriting procedures such as additions, "passages that are most emphatically not in the original" (ibid.: 42), "ideological omissions" (ibid.: 64), and "explanatory note[s]" (ibid.: 50), Lefevere labels translation as "potentially the most influential [manipulation strategy] because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin" (ibid.: 9). In this regard, translation fits in with the concept of "refracted text", which was coined by Lefevre (1981: 72) and covers "texts that have been processed for a certain audience […] or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology". Generally, these practices have to do with "any processing of a text whether in the same or in another language or in another medium" and commonly include "translation, criticism, reviewing, summary, adaptation for children, anthologizing, making into a comic strip or TV film" (Hermans 2004: 127).

[2] In his analysis of the English and Hebrew translations of "L'Internationale", Kuzar (2002: 106) discovered "a wide range of discursive strategies contingent upon the local representation of socio-political reality", oscillating between "a close translation which only tolerates deviation for reasons of rhyme and meter" and rewritings which "reduce [the] socialist revolutionary message and adapt the anthem to the socio-liberal discourse of the respective domestic national agenda".

Such rewritings have become a focus of translation research since the 'cultural turn' of the 1990s and clarify "that a study of the processes of translation combined with the praxis of translating could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual processes take place" (BASSNETT 1998: 123). As the scope of "L'Internationale" is basically ideological – the versions in different languages should not primarily be regarded as a singable song but as a "written TT [target text]" which "has above all the role of conveying a song's global meaning" (LOW 2016: 26) – such manipulations may be rather frequent.

This is specifically true for "L'Internationale" in the Spanish context. In his study of song's "global travel" into different countries and languages, Gielkens (1997: 76) states that, according to the Russian musicologist Drejden, a translation into Spanish already existed in 1899, without further information about its authorship.[3] This translation, which adheres to the original poem and was sung by communists, was followed by two shorter versions that do not refer to any decisive actors such as translators or publishers either: one is attributed to the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica), an anarchist vanguard organization that operated during Spanish Civil War; the other was used by the Spanish socialist party and by the leftist movements in Latin America after the Cuban revolution.[4]

As these versions only remotely reflect the French original, they contrast with the first translation and should be viewed as adaptations. Although "adaptation" is frequently used in an intersemiotic context, according to Chan (2012: 414), it basically refers to a "type of translation". The affinity between the two concepts gave birth to many discussions about/at the disciplinary borders between translation studies and adaptation studies, generally leading to conclude that the difference between both concepts "is never an essential, but always a gradual one" (VAN DOORSLAER & RAW 2016: 200). According to van Doorslaer and Raw (ibid.: 197), adaptation is frequently used in translation studies "for several transfer types involving significant changes in wording, style, mode or medium" and significantly illustrated by "adaptations in political discourse, in children's literature or in localization processes". As such adaptations are "performed under certain constraints and for certain purposes […] and the guidelines of translation are defined to serve this purpose by the translator and/or by those who initiate translation activity" (SHUPING 2013: 56), they are closely related to the context wherein they have been created

[3] At this stage, it is relevant to point out that, although many scholars in translation studies "have advocated a rapprochement in the perception of authors and translators […], others insist on keeping a categorical distinction between the two" since authors have a higher "responsibility or representational relationship to the text", conditioned by their personal involvement as creators (VAN DOORSLAER & RAW 2016: 195).

[4] It should be mentioned that a Catalan version (1937) exists which has been translated word for word into a Spanish version that was never officially used by any leftist movement. Moreover, in the years of the Transition, between 1975 and 1978, a version in Basque and another in Galician appeared and there are also references to an older one, in the Balearic language, which allegedly would have been the first to have been sung in Spain (DAY 2003: 181).

and may shed an interesting light on the circulation of "L'Internationale" in the Spanish-speaking world.

**An adequate translation: The communist PCE version**

As mentioned above, the first Spanish version of "L'Internationale", "La Internacional", dates back to 1899 (GIELKENS 1997: 76) and aroused the interest of many Spanish leftist parties until the end of the Second Republic (1931–1936). The message of freedom and self-determination propagated by the anthem fit the spirit of the times that followed the reign of Alfonso XIII (1902–1923) and the subsequent dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–1930). Characterized by a growing opposition to traditional forces such as the Catholic Church and the Army, those years promised a political change that filled the popular classes with enthusiasm and excited intellectuals, artists and avant-garde poets of the first order such as Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), Gerardo Diego (1896–1987) and Rafael Alberti (1902–1999). As this version clearly reproduces the leftist ideology, it also featured in *Land and Freedom* (1995), a film by Ken Loach about the struggle of the international brigades to save the Republican ideals during the Spanish Civil War, and was sung in 1999 at the funeral of Alberti, one of the aforementioned writers and a militant member of the communist party.

Although it is impossible to trace the exact circulation of this version of "L'Internationale" in that period, it is certain that in 1921 it was officially claimed by the PCE, the Communist Party of Spain. The adoption of the translated hymn is endowed with a high symbolic value since it coincides with the foundation of the PCE. In that same year, the PCE separated from the socialist PSOE, which it reproached for a too pronounced social-democratic interpretation of Marxism. This version of the anthem shows evident similarities with the original,[5] as can be seen in the text reproduced below.

| French original final version | Spanish communist version |
|---|---|
| (1) Debout ! les damnés de la terre ! | (1)¡Arriba parias de la Tierra! |
| Debout ! les forçats de la faim ! | ¡En pie famélica legión! |
| La raison tonne en son cratère, | Atruena la razón en marcha: |
| C'est l'éruption de la fin. | es el fin de la opresión. |
| Du passé faisons table rase, | Del pasado hay que hacer añicos. |
| Foule esclave, debout ! debout ! | ¡Legión esclava en pie a vencer! |

[5] It should be noted that we take the original in its final (published) version as a point of comparison, which, according to Brécy (1974: 300–301), is quite different from the manuscript: "Il est probable que Pottier n'attachait pas à L'Internationale l'importance qui lui a été attribuée par la suite. Mais il y a aussi une autre raison que l'on peut inférer de l'existence d'un manuscrit conservé à Amsterdam: Pottier n'était pas satisfait de ce texte et ne s'est décidé à le publier qu'après l'avoir largement corrigé et remanié, ainsi qu'on peut le constater par la juxtaposition des deux versions, celle du manuscrit de Pottier et celle de l'édition de 1887. Précisons toutefois que rien ne prouve qu'il s'agisse d'un premier jet... Au contraire, l'absence de repentirs laisse penser que ce manuscrit non daté est déjà postérieur au texte primitif que Pottier aurait écrit, traqué à Paris, en juin 1871".

| | |
|---|---|
| Le monde va changer de base :<br>Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout ! | El mundo va a cambiar de base.<br>Los nada de hoy todo han de ser. |
| (2) Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes,<br>Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun,<br>Producteurs sauvons-nous nous-mêmes !<br>Décrétons le salut commun !<br>Pour que le voleur rende gorge,<br>Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot,<br>Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge,<br>Battons le fer quand il est chaud ! | (2) Ni en dioses, reyes ni tribunos,<br>está el supremo salvador.<br>Nosotros mismos realicemos<br>el esfuerzo redentor.<br>Para hacer que el tirano caiga<br>y el mundo esclavo liberar<br>soplemos la potente fragua<br>que el hombre libre ha de forjar. |
| (3) L'État comprime et la loi triche,<br>L'impôt saigne le malheureux ;<br>Nul devoir ne s'impose au riche,<br>Le droit du pauvre est un mot creux.<br>C'est assez languir en tutelle,<br>L'égalité veut d'autres lois :<br>« Pas de droits sans devoirs, dit-elle,<br>Égaux, pas de devoirs sans droits ! » | (3) La ley nos burla y el Estado<br>oprime y sangra al productor;<br>nos da derechos irrisorios,<br>no hay deberes del señor.<br>Basta ya de tutela odiosa,<br>que la igualdad ley ha de ser:<br>"No más deberes sin derechos,<br>ningún derecho sin deber" |
| (4) (5) (6) | |
| Refrain<br>C'est la lutte finale<br>Groupons-nous, et demain,<br>L'Internationale,<br>Sera le genre humain. (bis) | Refrain<br>Agrupémonos todos<br>en la lucha final.<br>El género humano<br>es la internacional (bis) |

Figure 1: French original version and Spanish communist version of "L'Internationale"

Skating over the compelling role prosody may play in song translation and focusing on its textual aspects,[6] Franzon (2008: 386) states that "[i]f the music must be performed as originally scored, as in stage musicals or operas, it must be the translator who modifies the verbal rendering, by approximating more loosely, by paraphrasing or by deleting from and adding to the content of the source lyrics". In this regard, the most striking difference between the French original and the Spanish translation is the elimination of the last three of the six stanzas from the original.[7] Furthermore, both versions appear to

[6] Even though the present article does not broach prosodic issues, it appears that the three Spanish versions invariably substitute the octosyllables in the stanzas and the hexasyllables of the refrain by respectively eneasyllabic and heptasyllabic verses. This is a logical option since this Spanish versification systematically stresses the eighth and the sixth foot, just like the original.

[7] These are the original French stanzas, which have not been translated into any of the Spanish versions:

be rather similar. The first stanza maintains the exhortation ("Debout !"/ "¡Arriba!") to the dispossessed ("damnés de la terre"/ "parias de la Tierra") and their starving condition ("forçats de la faim" / "famélica legión") as well as the allusion to the seismic power ("La raison tonne en son cratère" / "Atruena la razón en marcha") with which the revolutionary ideas will put an end to exploitation ("l'éruption de la fin" / "el fin de la opresión"). In the second part, the imperative to cut with the past ("Du passé faisons table rase" / "Del pasado hay que hacer añicos") which is given to a slave crowd ("foule esclave" / "legión esclava") is preserved, as is the promise of change ("Le monde va changer de base" / "El mundo va a cambiar de base"). This objective will upend the relations of social forces ("Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout" / "Los nada de hoy todo han de ser"), although the translation does not reproduce the first person pronoun: "we" ("nous") versus "them" ("los nada de hoy").

The translation of the second stanza respects the imaginary world of the original in a similar way: the major powers will be superfluous ("Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun" / "Ni en Dioses, reyes ni tribunos") and will give way to one's own initiative ("sauvons-nous nous-mêmes!" / "Nosotros mismos") in order to realize the common salvation ("Décrétons le salut commun! / "realicemos el esfuerzo redentor"). While the Spanish version directs its vengeance at the powerful ("para hacer que el tirano caiga") and the French version calls them thieves ("pour que le voleur rende gorge") the two texts come together in the image of the forge ("Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge" / "soplemos la potente forgua") that will shape future life. At this point, the French text insists on the need to seize the historic

(4) 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.
(5) Les Rois nous saoûlaient de fumées,
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.
(6) 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 !

opportunity by alluding to the figurative meaning "strike while the iron is hot" ("Battons le fer quand il est chaud!") and the Spanish one considers the forge mainly as an instrument that can give shape to the idea of freedom ("[la fragua] que el hombre libre ha de forjar").

The third stanza focuses on the law and the State, albeit in a different order ("L'État comprime et la loi triche" / "La ley nos burla y el Estado nos oprime"), which in the French text affects rather globally the unfortunate ("le malheureux") and in the Spanish version one specific economic actor, the producer ("el productor"). The two versions share the reference to rights and duties, even though the French version does so in more general terms ("Nul devoir ne s'impose au riche / Le droit du pauvre est un mot creux") while the Spanish version includes the reader/listener by using the first person plural "nos" ("El Estado nos da derechos irrisorios / no hay deberes del señor"). The last part opposes governance from above ("C'est assez languir en tutelle" / "basta ya de tutela odiosa") to social justice in both cases. The requirement for human equality appears more explicitly in the Spanish text ("L'égalité veut d'autres lois" / "que la igualdad ley ha de ser"), although the more balanced proportion between rights and duties expressed is intensified in the original by the personification of 'Equality', whose words are reproduced ("Pas de droits sans devoirs, dit-elle / Égaux, pas de devoirs sans droits !" / "No más deberes sin derechos / ningún derecho sin deber").

The translation of the refrain also follows the French text almost scrupulously, except for the verses' order ("C'est la lutte finale Groupons-nous, et demain [...]" / "Agrupémonos todos en la lucha final") and the imminent perspective of "tomorrow" ("demain"), which disappears in Spanish. This observation is also valid for the last lines ("L'Internationale / Sera le genre humain" / "El género humano / es la Internacional"), where the Spanish version exchanges the future for the present.

Despite the commented minor alterations, the communist Spanish translation of "L'Internationale" can be labeled as 'adequate' or 'foreignizing' (LAMBERT & VAN GORP 2006: 39) as it aims to reproduce as accurately as possible the linguistic and literary particularities of the source text, in contrast with an 'acceptable' or 'domesticating' strategy, by which the translator adapts the original to the expectations of the readers in the target language.[8] This foreignizing ambition valorizes the perspective of the source culture by "developing affiliations with marginal linguistic and literary values" and connecting with "foreign cultures that have been excluded because of their own resistance to dominant values" (VENUTI 2002: 148). Such a strategy ensures that "function and performance", which are of "primary importance for singable song translation" (FRANZON 2008: 389), are affected as little as possible. According to Franzon (ibid.), "respect for the original

[8] A translation that scrupulously follows the French source text, seeking an almost absolute lexical equivalence and even including the last three stanzas, was made by the Germinal Group, a Marxist cenacle created in 1988. Given that sometimes "amateur fans […] use the internet to display or exchange their own translations" (FRANZON 2008: 374), such a version is not exceptional, but since it is limited to its reproduction on the web page of this group http://grupgerminal.org/?q=system/files/Letra+original+de+la+Internacional+de+Eug%C3%A8ne+Pottier.html, and lacks official recognition, we will not take it into consideration.

lyrics must be shown, or assessed, contextually" and, in the present case, this respect is only slightly altered by a few fragments, which refer to more specific economic actors – the "producer" – or substitute the original's orientation to the future with the present. In this regard, the first Spanish version fits in with "[m]ost of the translations of the anthem into the major European languages [...], since they represented a similar socio-political situation at a similar point in history as did the French original" (KUZAR 2002: 106).

**Two adaptations**

In spite of the affirmation that the translations into most of the European languages "overtly encode the standard version", Kuzar (ibid.: 89) admits that other versions "may covertly add accents which highlight interests particular to a certain sector or society. In the more radical case, *The Internationale* is claimed to no longer express the spirit of the times, and parts of it are erased and substituted to fit a modified ideology". As such practices tend to convey a more specific message by challenging "the uniting force of *The Internationale* as an anthem of proletarian solidarity [...] at different degrees of strength by forces of dissent" or by empowering it "either by a further radicalization of a waning proletarian zeal or by a socio-liberal orientation which purports to supersede *The Internationale*'s faded message" (ibid.: 106), they are to be regarded more as adaptations than as translations or retranslations. Although, from an operational viewpoint, we agree with Chan (2012: 415) that, "after all, adaptations are like domesticated translations, where target values, conventions, and norms are superimposed on the source text, cultural differences are erased, and the foreign becomes palatable for the local audience", (re) translations and adaptations basically have a different purpose. According to Apter (2016: 65), (re)translations create a new target text because the existing translations are "bad" or "dated",[9] while adaptations "move the work into the target culture and/or update it to a contemporary, or at least more recent, time period" and simultaneously seek "to provide relevancy" for a certain group (ibid.: 60), a process which Low relates to a deliberate modification of the source text:

*A translation is a TT where all significant details of meaning have been transferred. An adaptation is a derivative text where significant details of meaning have not been transferred which easily could have been. These are distinguishing definitions which offer a practical litmus test: to apply it one simply compares the actual wording of the ST and the TT. Both translation and adaptation draw on the ST, but only one has willfully modified it.* (LOW 2016: 116)

[9] Apter (2016: 157) distinguishes "re-translation" from "multiple translations" which "are purposefully designed to elucidate one or more specific aspects of the original". For instance, "[w]here one translation might attempt to render literal meaning, another might strive to mimic poetic form, another to elucidate hidden meanings, another the cultural ambience. Where one translation might emphasize the cultural differences between the source and target cultures, another might emphasize similarities" (ibid.).

Exactly such intentional changes can be traced in the two remaining Spanish versions of "L'Internationale",[10] which aim at an anarchist and a socialist target audience, respectively influenced by the FAI and by the PSOE or the Latin American left-wing parties. These adaptations are reproduced in the figure below, which highlights the differences with the first translation in italics for the second version and in bold for the third version.

| Spanish version 1 (PCE) | Spanish version 2 (FAI) (changes in *italic*) | Spanish version 3 (PSOE + Latin America) (Changes in **bold**) |
|---|---|---|
| (1)¡Arriba parias de la Tierra!<br>¡En pie famélica legión!<br><br>Atruena la razón en marcha:<br>es el fin de la opresión.<br>Del pasado hay que hacer añicos.<br>¡Legión esclava en pie a vencer!<br>El mundo va a cambiar de base.<br>Los nada de hoy todo han de ser. | (1) Arriba *los pobres del mundo!*<br>*¡En pie los esclavos sin pan!*<br>*Alcémonos todos, que llega*<br>*La Revolución Social.*<br>*La Anarquía ha de emanciparnos*<br>*de toda la explotación.*<br><br>*El comunismo libertario*<br><br>*será nuestra redención.* | (1) Arriba *los pobres del mundo*<br>*En pie los esclavos sin pan*<br><br>*alcémonos* todos **al grito:**<br><br>**¡Viva la Internacional!**<br>**Removamos todas las trabas**<br>**que oprimen al proletario,**<br>**cambiemos el mundo de base**<br>**Hundiendo al imperio burgués.** |
| (2) Ni en dioses, reyes ni tribunos,<br>está el supremo salvador.<br><br>Nosotros mismos realicemos<br>el esfuerzo redentor.<br>Para hacer que el tirano caiga<br>y el mundo esclavo liberar<br><br>soplemos la potente fragua<br>que el hombre libre ha de forjar. | *(2) Color de sangre*<br>*tiene el fuego,*<br>*color negro tiene el volcán.*<br>*Colores rojo y negro tiene*<br>*nuestra bandera triunfal.*<br>*Los hombres han de ser hermanos,*<br>*cese la desigualdad.*<br><br>*La Tierra será paraíso*<br>*libre de la Humanidad.* | **(2) El día que el triunfo alcancemos**<br>**ni esclavos ni dueños habrá,**<br>**los odios que al mundo envenenan**<br>**al punto se extinguirán.**<br>**El hombre del hombre es hermano**<br>**derechos iguales tendrán**<br>**la Tierra será el paraíso,**<br>**patria de la Humanidad** |

[10] Furthermore, Low distinguishes "adaptation" from a "replacement text", which is "not a derivative text at all" but is "invented – not derived – by the music-first pattern" (LOW 2016: 117). Low also states that adaptation is "less difficult than translation" and does not require the same creativity as "the production of a replacement text" (ibid.: 119). Consequently, for adaptations Low "suggests a recipe: *to adapt a song, first try to translate it, and later – if you realise you have failed – transform your draft translation into an adaptation that works well in the TL*. Then at least something of the original song will have crossed the language border" (ibid.: 121, emphasis in the original).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (3)<br>Refrain<br>Agrupémonos todos<br>en la lucha final.<br>El género humano<br>es la internacional (bis) | Refrain<br>Agrupémonos todos<br>*a* la lucha *social.*<br>*Con la FAI lograremos*<br>*el éxito final (bis)* | Refrain<br>Agrupémonos todos,<br>en la lucha final,<br>**y se alcen los pueblos**<br>**por la Internacional/**<br>**alzan la voz los pueblos**<br>**con valor por la**<br>**Internacional**. |

Figure 2: comparison of the three Spanish versions of "L'Internationale"

Since both adaptations are rooted in a very specific historical period, we will first clarify their respective sociopolitical contexts. As Kaindl (2013: 151) puts it, this "sociological dimension" is closely related to "the semiotic complexity" of the target text and will subsequently enable us to assess the global intercultural transfer of "L'Internationale" into the Spanish-speaking area in a pertinent way.

**An anarchistic adaptation: the FAI version**

The second Spanish version was used by the organizations CNT and FAI. CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) was founded in 1910 at a conference held in Barcelona (ARNAL 2020: 21) and took up the anarcho-syndicalism ideology formulated by Mikhail Bakunin and spread in Spain by Giuseppe Fanelli (ibid.: 9)[11]. While it could continue its activities during the government of Primo de Rivera, it became a clandestine movement during Francoism and only reappeared after the reestablishment of democracy in 1979, with its name changed to CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo). In 1937 it split from the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) (VADILLO MUÑOZ 1981: 218), which was created in 1927, during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (ibid.: 114), and comprised three anarchists movements from Portugal and Spain: União Anarquista Portuguesa, Federación Nacional de Grupos Anarquistas de España, and Federación Nacional de Grupos Anarquistas de Lengua Española en el Exilio. Nowadays this Iberian organization is a part of the Internacional de Federaciones Anarquistas and publishes the journal *Tierra y Libertad.*

The FAI perspective that permeates the hymn, which is even further reduced than the first translation and only contains the first two stanzas of the original, is already clear in the refrain. While the first version adequately translates the French verses, the second changes them almost completely. The present text draws attention to the FAI acronym in the repeated refrain. Simultaneously it deletes the explicit reference to the international movement and modifies the "final" aspect of the struggle ("la lucha final") into a

[11] As far as Spanish anarcho-syndicalism is concerned, "L'Internationale" was not the only song that was adapted by its corresponding movements. During the Spanish Civil War, CNT also proclaimed as its hymn "A las barricadas". This song is also known as "La varsoviana" (ARNAL 2020: 29), a Spanish adaptation of the Polish composition "Warszawianka", by Wacław Święcicki.

"social" one ("la lucha social"), which should eventually lead mankind to "el éxito final" ["final success"].[12]

The first stanza is affected by this same bias: if the first two verses communicate an analogous image of poverty and malnutrition – the translations "parias de la Tierra" ["pariahs of the Earth"] is replaced by "pobres del mundo" [the poor of the world] and "famélica legión" ["starving legion"] by "esclavos sin pan" ["slaves without bread"] – the third and fourth verses constitute an exhortation, openly calling for revolution: "Alcémonos todos, que llega La Revolución Social" ["Let us all rise up, for the Social Revolution is coming"]. In the second part of the stanza, the ideological models that enable people to "emancipate [themselves] from all exploitation" ("emancipar[se] de toda la explotación") and consequently constitute their "redemption" ("redención") are made explicit: "Anarchy" ("Anarquía") and "Libertarian communism" ("El comunismo libertario").

In the first part of the second stanza, the reference to the FAI pervades the chromatic metaphor implied in the interplay between the "colores rojo y negro" [colours red and black]. If the colour black can refer to the ashes expelled by the volcano and thus recalls to a certain extent the seismic images of the "crater" and the "thunder" ("tonne en son cratère") of the French original, its contrast with "rojo" ["red"] or "sangre" ["blood"] mainly serves to allude to the "bandera triunfal" ["the triumphal banner"] of the anarchist movement, which is composed of these very colours. This triumph correlates with the emphasis put on the concept of equality – "Los hombres han de ser hermanos, cese la desigualdad" ["Men must be brothers, let inequality cease"] – and prepares an utopian discourse that foreshadows a totally "free Humanity" and "paradise" on "Earth" ("La Tierra será el paraíso libre de la Humanidad").

By conforming vocabulary and metaphors to the viewpoint of FAI, this second version significantly changes the source text. Such an explicit alteration can be explained as a claim for identity of the FAI-movement, given that the anarcho-syndicalism was expulsed from the Second International. While the First International (1864–1876) comprised (left-wing) socialists, communists, trade unions as well as anarchist groups, the Second International of 1872 proceeded to a schism between Marxists and anarchists, who adhered to the insights of Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin, respectively.[13] According to Munday (2009: 166), this version of the hymn "denotes a TT that draws on a ST but which has extensively modified it for a new cultural context": as it fully embodies the perseverance to disseminate the anarchist vision among the many other political ideologies that permeated the Spanish Second Republic, this version substantially and deliberately diverges from the original, and can be definitely classified as an adaptation.

[12] Although we will not delve deeper into formal features, the difference with the original is also visible in the lack of effort to respect rhyme.

[13] The inspiration of Third International (Comintern, Moscow, 1919), finally, was exclusively communist, which was due to the clash between the reformist socialists, who demonstrated a patriotic reflex in the First World War, and the revolutionary socialists, which interpreted this war as a conflict of the bourgeoisie that was irrelevant for the proletariat and which considered chauvinism to be incompatible with internationalism.

**A socialist adaptation: the version for PSOE, Cuba and Latin America**

The third version, which is reproduced in figure 2 as well, is the one used by the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español), the Spanish socialist party. The PSOE was founded by Pablo Iglesias Posse in 1879 and operated clandestinely during Franco's regime (1939–1977), returning to the political scene during the 'Transición', the transitional period between the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975 and the introduction of democracy in 1978. This version of "L'Internationale" was adopted by the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and, due to the increasing influence of Fidel Castro's ideology, also by other leftist regimes in Latin America (Day 2003: 181). This version is still performed at the assemblies of the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) and was also sung at important events for the Latin American left wing, such as the installation of Soviet missiles on Cuban territory in 1962 or the funeral of Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet and sympathizer of the socialist government of Allende, which was violently deposed a few days earlier by the military coup of Augusto Pinochet in 1973.

The refrain shares the first two verses of the first version but adds a more combative revolutionary tone to the last two with "se alcen los pueblos por la Internacional" ["may people stand up for the Internationale"], repeating them, moreover, with a variant that emphasizes the character of the revolutionary people, who are seen as "pueblos con valor" ["people with courage"].

This idea of rebellion permeates the two stanzas to which, as in the previous case, the third version of the hymn is limited. Even though both versions do not depend on each other, the first stanza of the third version repeats the first two lines of the second one, but subsequently formulates the exhortation "alcémonos todos al grito" ["let us all rise to the cry"] in terms of the International movement itself: "¡Viva la Internacional!" ["Long live the International!"]. The second part of the stanza points out that the class struggle will be achieved "hundiendo al imperio burgués" ["by destroying the bourgeois empire"]. By eliminating the representatives of wealthy classes, which "oprimen al proletario" ["oppress the proletarian"], there will be no more obstacles – "Removamos todas las trabas" ["Let us remove all obstacles"] – to realize a completely different world: "cambiemos el mundo de base" ["let us change the world's fundaments"].

Although the third version does not use such a specific vocabulary as the second, which focuses on a very peculiar faction, it puts forward a similar emancipatory message – "ni esclavos ni dueños habrá" ["there will be neither slaves nor masters"] – as well as the ambition to guarantee a peaceful coexistence: "los odios que al mundo envenenan al punto se extinguirán ["the hatreds that poison the world will eventually be extinguished"]. More specifically, the "upcoming triumph" ("el día que el triunfo alcancemos") is related to the ideal of fraternity – "el hombre del hombre es hermano" ["man is man's brother"] – and, most of all, of social equality – "derechos iguales tendrán" ["they will have equal rights"]. These principles, which are fundamental from a socialist perspective, will be the key to change the face of the world: "La Tierra será el paraíso, patria de la Humanidad" ["Earth will be paradise, the homeland of Humanity"].

This reference to an egalitarian and peaceful future society constitutes a significant and intentional bias to the source text, which is also traceable in some occasional Latin American variants such as the one proposed by Quilapayún, a Chilean band specialized in Andean music, which slightly modifies this last version. Apart from some minor changes,[14] it substitutes in the second stanza "los odios que al mundo envenenan [...] derechos iguales tendrán" by verses that focus on the peasant aspect: "Que la tierra dé todos sus frutos / dicha y paz a nuestro hogar / que el trabajo sea el sostén que a todos / de su abundancia hará gozar".[15] Through the words "land" ("tierra") and "fruits"("frutos"), this variant evokes two agricultural issues that are of great historical and political importance and adapts Latin American reality to the perspective of the indigenous. More specifically, the inclusion of these people, who are traditionally regarded as the oppressed, into a world of abundance, spans a promising vision over the whole continent. By overtly linking fraternity to equality, this third version demonstrates, both in the contexts of Spanish socialism and Latin American emancipation, to what extent it "follows the norms and conventions of the area in question" (KAINDL 2013: 160) and has to be read as an adaptation.

**Conclusions**

The analyses of the different versions illustrate the complexity of the intercultural transfer of "L'Internationale" in the Spanish-speaking context. More precisely, this process is governed by a tension between translation and adaptation. The first Spanish version, which was sung during the Second Republic and is still being used today by the Spanish communist party, can be read as an adequate translation, since it scrupulously respects the lexicon and the images of the French original. This strategy contrasts with those elaborated by the other two Spanish-language rewritings. The second version takes over the song, changing its universalist meaning for a message that refers to the anarchist designs of one specific faction, the FAI, to such an extent that it replaces the name of "L'Internationale" in the lyrics by this very acronym. The third version, finally, retains the universal

[14] As can be seen in the Quilapayún version (see https://www.letras.com/quilapayun/946135/), these changes affect the fragments "alcémonos todos al grito", "oprimen al proletario", "ni esclavos ni dueños habrá", and "patria de la Humanidad", which are respectively replaced by "gritemos todos unidos" ["let us shout all together"], "que nos impiden nuestro bien" ["that hinder our wellbeing"], "ni esclavos ni hambrientos" ["neither slaves nor starving people"], and "de toda la Humanidad" ["of all mankind"].

[15] A similar version of the last stanza is displayed on the Cuban website Ecured (see https://www.ecured.cu/La_Internacional) although it seems less authoritative as it contains some erroneous transcription of the lyrics: "removamos todas las ramas" ["let us remove all branches"] instead of "removamos todas las trabas" ["let us remove all obstacles"] and "cambiemos el mundo de fase. Un viento al imperio burgués" ["let us change the world's phase, a wind to the bourgeois empire"] instead of "cambiemos el mundo de base hundiendo al imperio burgués" ["let us change the word from the bottom up by destroying the bourgeois empire"]. Ecured also provides indications on how to sing the hymn: the hands are joined together while the arms are raised and movements are made from one side to the other. As the anthem also commemorates people killed by bourgeois intervention, it should be sung standing upright, with the right arm raised and the fist clenched.

projection of the original but unconditionally relates it to equality and brotherhood, which are seen as pillars of a social paradise, an ambition which is also included in the variant that alludes to the typically Latin American agricultural and emancipatory context. By deliberately reshaping the text according to the global socialist ideology, which applies to the Spanish PSOE, as well as to the principles of leftist Latin American cenacles where the Cuban Revolution found resonance, these last two versions should be considered adaptations and finally show how the intercultural transfer of "L'Internationale" in the Spanish-speaking world is determined by the target context into which the anthem has been integrated.

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# "Die Internationale": from Protest Song to Official Anthem and Back. Aspects of the German Reception of "L'Internationale" in the Early 1900s and After 1945.

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## Abstract

*The fate of the German translations of "L'Internationale" reflects some of the fates of the German left. Several translations were produced around 1900, before the Emil Luckhardt version would become canonized shortly after the First World War. When compared to a more scholarly translation–of which the very first one, by Sigmar Mehring, is a good example–, Luckhardt's is much less faithful to the Pottier original, but still quite effective. It is also less ideologically radical, so that it was acceptable within many strands of the German left. After the establishment of two German states following the Second World War, and even after the German unification in 1990, the song became a point of dispute for the left, even if at the same it also lost much of its original message in popular culture. This article examines the possible reasons for the lasting success of Luckhardt's translation, its shifts in relation to the source text and some of the contexts in which it has been used.*

*Keywords: reception, ideology, political poetry, song translation*

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**Jan Ceuppens**

# "Die Internationale": from Protest Song to Official Anthem and Back

## Aspects of the German Reception of "L'Internationale" in the Early 1900s and After 1945

*The fate of the German translations of "L'Internationale" reflects some of the fates of the German left. Several translations were produced around 1900, before the Emil Luckhardt version would become canonized shortly after the First World War. When compared to a more scholarly translation–of which the very first one, by Sigmar Mehring, is a good example–, Luckhardt's is much less faithful to the Pottier original, but still quite effective. It is also less ideologically radical, so that it was acceptable within many strands of the German left. After the establishment of two German states following the Second World War, and even after the German unification in 1990, the song became a point of dispute for the left, even if at the same it also lost much of its original message in popular culture. This article examines the possible reasons for the lasting success of Luckhardt's translation, its shifts in relation to the source text and some of the contexts in which it has been used.*

*Irgendwo wurde die Internationale angestimmt und in vielen Sprachen erklang die alte völkerverbindende Hymne der internationalen Arbeiterklasse.*

[Somewhere the Internationale was intoned, and the ancient anthem, uniting the international working class, resounded in many languages.]

Neues Deutschland, 07.10.1957

### Beginnings, national and international

When "L'Internationale" is being used at socialist or social democrat party rallies, at formal occasions in communist countries, or by trade unions and political activists all over the world, sometimes in a grand orchestral version (on tape or performed live), most often sung in unison by the participants, it is thought to create a solemn but also combative atmosphere of solidarity. The purely musical merits of the song are seldom acknowledged on such occasions; but then, aesthetics is not really the point, as Vernon Lidtke states of such workers' anthems in general:

*Es gab kaum je einen Anlaß, bei dem Massenlieder vor allem eine künstlerische Funktion erfüllten. Zweifellos fanden sie einige Mitglieder, vielleicht viele, schön und waren darum*

*auch ästhetisch befriedigt, wenn sie diese Lieder sangen oder hörten. Doch die Hauptfunktion lag anderswo. Arbeiterlieder wurden im Dienst der Arbeiterbewegung und der ihr angeschlossenen Organisationen geschaffen, nicht die Organisationen im Dienst der Lieder.* (LIDTKE 1979: 55)

*[There was hardly ever an occasion at which mass songs would primarily fulfill an artistic function. Doubtlessly some members, perhaps even many of them, would find these songs beautiful and found aesthetic pleasure whenever they sang or heard them. Their main function, however, lay elsewhere. Workers' songs were meant to serve the workers movements and their affiliated organizations, not the other way around].*

Nevertheless, thanks to their unsophisticated but very effective construction, both the music and the words of "L'Internationale" exert an immediate appeal to all those present. The same is true for other versions of the anthem, whether in Belgium, China, North Korea, or the USSR – one might say that it has fulfilled its own promise as being a truly international medium for the working class as well as its official representatives. One might assume that with these universal aspirations comes a logical commitment to faithful translation:

*The Internationale had to be translated into many languages, and since its message was universal, one may plausibly surmise that the translators of the anthem have been committed to replicating the French original as closely as they could, not only because of the underlying premises of felicitous translation in general, but also because the anthem flagged a message of unity and uniformity. Therefore, only technical constraints of prosody, meter, and rhyme in the target language could count as justified causes of deviation.* (KUZAR 2002: 89)

As Kuzar concedes, this assumption is a little naïve, not only in view of the pitfalls of translation and cultural mediation in general, but also of the anthem's concrete trajectory since its first appearance. Even in socialist countries its lyrics were subject to compromise, evidencing the paradoxes inherent to its national and/or institutionalized, state-backed forms. Furthermore, it has had to compete with other workers' songs and with national anthems (although it was the official USSR anthem between 1922 and 1944, as discussed by Pieter Boulgone in his contribution to this focus issue). The various translations of "L'Internationale" and their subsequent use throughout the twentieth century testify not only to national specificities, but also to internal controversies within the left, and its trajectory in Germany is a telling example.

The present article has two aims: to retrace the early history of "Die Internationale" in Germany by contrasting the 'canonized' translation with a more faithful, scholarly one, and to show how that canonized translation was and is used in very different ways by different actors in postwar and present-day Germany. Straddling descriptive translation theory, translation history and reception theory, it hopes to show the complicated

relationship between the supposed universal message and the particularities of the various receiving contexts.

Eugène Pottier's original poem "L'Internationale" was written in the aftermath of the Paris Commune,[1] when the fault lines within the International Workingmen's Association had not yet led to an open conflict, the anarchist movement had not yet distanced themselves completely from Marxist orthodoxy, and differences between revolutionary socialism and social democracy had not yet split the movement. The song "L'Internationale" was enthusiastically received in Germany soon after it was adopted as the official anthem at the 1896 convention of the French Workers' Party in Lille. According to Inge Lammel, who has done extensive research on the origins of the French text and its reception history for the Berlin *Arbeiterliedarchiv*, the original text and sheet music were in all probability brought to Germany by social democrat leader Karl Liebknecht, who attended the Lille convention (LAMMEL 2002: 213). In the course of the following decades, it would spawn at least eleven different translations, not counting parodies and alternative versions. Of course, much of this success was due to the march music composed by Pierre De Geyter – despite, or perhaps because of its generic character –, which could explain some of the liberties taken by its German translators as attempts to match the music. At a closer look, however, translations did not always concern themselves with singability any more than they did with faithfulness to Pottier's source text. Rather, they sought to adapt it to the specific context in which it was to be used. In that sense, the song gained a life of its own, its ultimately canonized version becoming part of German collective memory. It is only fitting, then, that literary historian Hermann Kurzke considered "Die Internationale" a *German* anthem in a book published in the year of German unification (KURZKE 1990: 109). In his view, the canonized German translation by Emil Luckhardt constitutes a substantial mitigation of Pottier's radical tone. Among other things it suppresses the infamous fifth stanza (especially for the line "nos balles / Sont pour nos propres généraux" [our bullets are for our own generals]) and introduces more conciliatory, even romanticizing imagery. In a recent study on the German reception, Michael Fischer (2021) connects this softening of the original message with the evolution of socialist and social-democrat movements in Germany from the late 1800s onwards. The question is whether the semantic shifts in the translation brought about changes in the affective potential and/or the addressees of the song.

At any rate, the very first German version is certainly an exception to the 'toning down' evolution outlined by Kurzke. It is a well-informed, even scholarly translation that will serve here as a contrast to the Luckhardt translation that would eventually become the standard.[2] It was produced by the German-Jewish poet and translator Sigmar Mehring,

[1] The circumstances surrounding the creation of the French original are detailed by Lammel (2002: 211) in a somewhat romanticized version, and more realistically by Fischer (2021: 148–149).

[2] Mehring's version is given more attention here because of its faithfulness to Pottier's original and because Mehring takes an almost scholarly approach. The most literal translation, by Walter Mossmann and Peter Schleuning (MOSSMANN & SCHLEUNING 1980), is not considered here, as it is a mere tool for understanding the original.

probably around the turn of the century, when he was preparing a collection of translations of recent French poetry (MEHRING 1900). That volume was eventually published by Baumert und Ronge, a publishing house that was open to recent literature, both translated and originally German (among others, its catalogue included texts from naturalist authors like Emile Zola and Julius Hart), but not specifically left leaning. Mehring was an experienced translator, quite knowledgeable about French literature (see HEUER 2008: 409–413), and he accorded much space to revolutionary and worker's poetry in this volume. His aim, he states right away, was to create faithful translations ["Die Übertragungen sind sämtlich sinngetreu", MEHRING 1900: VII]. In a short introduction, Mehring characterizes Eugène Pottier as "the man of the sharpest tone. His poetry has shed even the last glimmer of joie de vivre, the faintest bit of soothing humor" ["der Mann der schärfsten Tonart. Aus seinen Dichtungen ist auch der letzte Schimmer zarter Lebensfreude, der leiseste Klang eines mildernden Humors verschwunden." MEHRING 1900: 196]. He then offers a translation of one poem by Pottier, viz. *Jean Misère*, which he presents as a biographic document. Interestingly, however, Mehring did not include his translation of "L'Internationale" in this volume, although it must have belonged to the same manuscript (see FISCHER 2021). This indicates that it did not yet have the urgency it would soon acquire.[3] Mehring's translation was only published in 1924, when his son Walter, himself by then a renowned writer, put together a collection of French revolutionary poetry (MEHRING 1924). In his *Internationale*, Sigmar Mehring's intention seems to have been to demonstrate his appraisal of Pottier and his 'schärfste Tonart'; its radicalism may have been a reason why he did not publish it himself.[4]

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 !

Auf! Auf! Ihr glückbetrog'nen Toren
Auf! Sklaven ihr der Hungerzunft!
Hört ihr's im Krater nicht rumoren?
Zum Durchbruch kommt die Weltvernunft
Räumt auf mit allem morschen Plunder!
Und vorwärts mit der Kraft des Stiers!
Die alte Welt zerfall' wie Zunder,
Wir waren nichts und jetzt sind wir's!

[3] It should be noted that even Pottier himself initially attached no greater importance to "L'Internationale" than to his other politically inspired poems. It seems that it only acquired its canonical status after De Geyter selected it for use in a song.

[4] In Germany's political climate around 1900, publication of such a radical text could have resulted in court cases, even if translators were usually not held responsible. Mehring would have been wary after he had been sentenced to three months of incarceration ('Festungshaft') for defamation of the Catholic Church in 1899; see Heuer (2008: 409).

Chorus

C'est la lutte finale :
Groupons-nous, et demain,
L'Internationale
Sera le genre humain

Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes :
Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun,
Producteurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes !
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 !

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 ! »

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.

Les Rois nous soûlaient de fumées,
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.

Ouvriers, paysans, nous sommes
Le grand parti des travailleurs ;
La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes,
L'oisif ira loger ailleurs.

Refrain

Nun kämpft zum letzten Male!
Stürmt an! Schon winkt uns dort
Die Internationale,
Der Menschheit Ziel und Hort!

Es kann uns kein Erlöser retten.
Nicht Gott, noch Caesar, kein Idol.
Erlöst Euch selbst aus Euren Ketten!
Schafft selbst der Allgemeinheit Wohl!
Der Räuber, allzulang umfriedet,
Gab endlich uns die Beute preis!
Blast nur das Feuer an und schmiedet
Das Eisen noch, solang es heiß!

Der Staat erdrückt, Gesetz ist Schwindel!
Die Steuern trägt der Arbeitsknecht.
Man kennt nur Reiche und Gesindel,
Und Phrase ist des Armen Recht.
Die Gleichheit soll den Bann vernichten!
Und für das kommende Geschlecht
Gilt: „Keine Rechte ohne Pflichten!"
Und: „Nichts von Pflicht mehr, wo kein Recht!"

Die Minenherrn und Schlotbarone
In ihrem Hochmut ekelhaft,
Was taten sie auf ihrem Throne,
Als auszusaugen uns're Kraft?
Was wir gefördert, schließt die Klicke
In ihren Panzergeldschrank ein,
Und glüh'n danach des Volkes Blicke
So fordert's nur zurück, was sein!

Die Herrschgewalt hat uns benebelt,
Krieg ihnen, Frieden uns allein!
In Streik sei die Armee geknebelt,
Den Kolben hoch! In ihre Reih'n!
Wenn uns zu Helden zwingen wollen
Die Kannibalen, wagt das Spiel!
Wir werden feuern! Und dann sollen
Sie selbst sein uns'rer Kugeln Ziel!

Arbeiter! Bauern! Eilt geschlossen
Zur Proletarierpartei!
Die Welt gehört den Werkgenossen,
Und mit den Drohnen ist's vorbei.

| | |
|---|---|
| Combien de nos chairs se repaissent ! | Wieviel wir auch verloren haben, |
| Mais, si les corbeaux, les vautours, | Es kommt der Morgen, der die Schar |
| Un de ces matins, disparaissent, | Der Eulen fortjagt und der Raben! |
| Le soleil brillera toujours ! | Aufflammt die Sonne hell und klar! |

As can be seen, Mehring largely managed to preserve the meaning and wording of Pottier's source text, despite some deviations necessitated by rhyme and meter (e.g., the translation "Ihr glückbetrog'nen Toren" [fools deprived of happiness] for "les damnés", or the curious replacement of "vautours", vultures, by "Eulen", owls, in the final stanza). The radicalism of the original, its clear-cut opposition between capitalists and workers, including the image of an army shooting its own leaders, are not mitigated here. Mehring's attention to rhyme and meter is not surprising, as he had written a handbook on the matter (Mehring 1891); still, some of his solutions seem somewhat contrived ("Und vorwärts mit der Kraft des Stiers!" [forward with bullish force] for "Foule esclave, debout" [stand up, enslaved masses]). Also, it is improbable that Mehring was considering – or, indeed, knew – De Geyter's melody or, more generally, paid attention to singability, which does not solely hinge on meter.[5] Thus, if the chorus was an important reason for the success of "L'Internationale", the first line of that chorus in Mehring's version is much less effective than the original (Fischer even calls it "etwas farblos" [somewhat bland]; FISCHER 2021: 57) or some of the later translations. The point, of course, is moot, since Mehring's "Die Internationale" was only published decades later, at a time when those other translations were already widely accepted.
One would expect singability to be the main concern of many of those later translations, as they were often commissioned by workers' choral societies with an explicit reference to the music of De Geyter (DOWE 1978; LIDTKE 1979). In 1902, the periodical *Lieder-Gemeinschaft der Arbeiter-Sängervereinigungen Deutschlands* published a "liberal translation" of the "Lied der französischen Sozialisten" produced by left-leaning author Rudolf Lavant (nom de plume for Richard Cramer). Although not wholly unpo-

[5] Peter Low (2013), taking his cue from skopos theory, lists a number of criteria which song translation should meet, 'singability' (which he also labels 'performability') being paramount. A practical example is the avoidance of "under-sized vowels" (LOW 2013: 93), which is certainly an important consideration when translating a revolutionary song with a somewhat wider tonal range like "L'Internationale". The wider tonal range is also emphasized by Cloud and Feyh (2015: 307), when they state of De Geyter's composition that "it features wide (therefore difficult) vocal intervals. The reach from pitches lower to higher, however, is integral to the feeling of the music: one starts as 'naught' but *rises* from prisoner-status to become 'all' in the final conflict. To strain for those high notes in the final stanzas enacts in microcosm the collective effort of building revolutionary consciousness and organization". Kurzke makes a similar observation where he contrasts 'combative' anthems (like "La Marseillaise" and "L'Internationale") with more 'solemn' ones (for which "God Saves the King" is the prototype). Mehring's otherwise admirable translation does not entirely live up to this standard.

etical, its meter makes it hard to sing, and it was probably intended as an aid for understanding the original rather than as lyrics in their own right, or even a new version intended for the German workers.

Lieder-Gemeinschaft

der Arbeiter-Sängervereinigungen Deutschlands.

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## Die Internationale.

Von Eugen Pottier.

Frei übersetzt von Rudolf Lavant. Lied der französischen Sozialisten. Komponirt von Degeyter.

Empor, ihr Enterbten der Erde!
Ihr Sklaven des Hungers, empor!
Und der Ausbruch des Kraters, er werde
Vernichtend wie niemals zuvor!
Das Alte ist faul und verrottet —
Reißt das morsche Gerümpel denn ein!
Und wir, die man tritt und verspottet,
Wir werden die Herrschenden sein!
Auf zum letzten Kampfe
Schließet Eure Reih'n,
Die Internationale
Wird dann die Losung sein.

Keine Gottheit zerbricht uns're Ketten,
Kein Cäsar wird je, kein Tribun
Aus entnervendem Elend uns retten.
Wir müssen es selber thun!
Nur dann ist uns Wohlfahrt beschieden,
Nur dann lacht der Diebe der Fleiß,
Wenn wir selber das Eisen zu schmieden
Verstehen, so lange es heiß.
Auf zum letzten Kampfe
Schließet Eure Reih'n,
Die Internationale
Wird dann die Losung sein.

Der Staat, die Gesetze erbarmen
Der duldenden Massen sich nicht.
Wo giebt es ein Recht für den Armen?
Wo bindet den Reichen die Pflicht?
Man verdammt uns zum Loose der Knechte,
Doch die Gleichheit, die zürnende, spricht:
Hinfort keine Pflicht ohne Rechte,
Hinfort auch kein Recht ohne Pflicht!
Auf zum letzten Kampfe
Schließet Eure Reih'n,
Die Internationale
Wird dann die Losung sein.

Die Herren der Gruben und Schienen,
Sie werden von Schmeichlern geehrt —
Doch wo ist die Arbeit erschienen
Daneben nach Würde und Werth?
Sie füllte die Kisten und Kasten
Der Bande, die nie wir gerührt.
Wenn wir sie des Mammons entlasten,
So wird uns nur, was uns gebührt.
Auf zum letzten Kampfe
Schließet Eure Reih'n,
Die Internationale
Wird dann die Losung sein.

Die Erde gehört nur dem Schweiße,
Der von brennenden Sternen fiel.
Und wer da zu stolz ist zum Fleiße,
Der suche ein andres Asyl.
Wenn die Raben und Geier verschwinden,
Die vom Fleisch sich der Armuth genährt —
Die Fluren der Erde, wir finden
Sie sicher dann sonnig verklärt!
Auf zum letzten Kampfe
Schließet Eure Reih'n,
Die Internationale
Wird dann die Losung sein.

Figure 1: Rudolf Lavant's translation of "L'Internationale" as published in the periodical of the German workers' choir associations

The socialist poet and prose writer Franz Diederich produced two more liberal translations, one around 1901 and one in 1907. Both Lavant's translation and Diederich's second version tellingly omit Pottier's fifth stanza. In later decades, more renowned poets would try their hand at a translation, adapting Pottier's original to specific needs. Thus, the anarchist writer and journalist Erich Mühsam would write a version in the context of the short-lived Munich *Räterepublik*, translating the first three stanzas of Pottier's poem and adding a stanza that specifically addressed the new circumstances, although it was only written in 1920, after the demise of said republic. The poet Erich Weinert, a member of the German communist party since 1924 and later an important advocate of German-Soviet cooperation, produced a faithful translation of "L'Internationale" for the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War in 1937, but by that time, much to Weinert's dismay, another version had already acquired canonical status.

As stated before, it was not a translation by an established poet or translator that would ultimately prevail, but the 1906 version by Emil Luckhardt (1880–1914). Its author was not a scholar, nor was he a musician or songwriter: he was a beer brewer and trade unionist from Wuppertal, born in nearby Barmen, and a member of various workers' associations, such as the *Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund*.[6] It was in this context that he was prompted by choir leader Adolph Uthmann to write a German version of Pottier's poem, fitting De Geyter's melody. Uthmann, who like Luckhardt was from Barmen, had already published several collections of militant workers' songs, including not only his own compositions to texts of contemporary proletarian poets, but also arrangements of existing German songs and translations, including "Die Internationale".[7] However, it was Luckhardt's translation that was eventually adopted by the choir association, which guaranteed its wider dissemination: workers' choirs started using it all over Germany around 1918 (Fischer 2021: 159). This version, consisting of only four stanzas, is quite liberal. Luckhardt omitted the third and fifth stanza from Pottier's text; his own third stanza (which is most often left out when the anthem is sung today) only has a faint resemblance to Pottier's fourth. More generally, as already mentioned, the Luckhardt translation is not nearly as radical as Pottier's poem.

| | |
|---|---|
| Debout ! les damnés de la terre ! | Wacht auf, Verdammte dieser Erde, |
| Debout ! les forçats de la faim ! | die stets man noch zum Hungern zwingt! |
| La raison tonne en son cratère : | Das Recht wie Glut im Kraterherde |
| C'est l'éruption de la fin. | nun mit Macht zum Durchbruch dringt. |
| Du passé faisons table rase, | Reinen Tisch macht mit dem Bedränger! |
| Foule esclave, debout ! debout ! | Heer der Sklaven, wache auf! |
| Le monde va changer de base : | Ein Nichts zu sein, tragt es nicht länger |
| Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout ! | Alles zu werden, strömt zuhauf! |
| | |
| C'est la lutte finale : | Völker, hört die Signale! |
| Groupons-nous, et demain, | Auf zum letzten Gefecht! |
| L'Internationale | Die Internationale |
| Sera le genre humain (2 x) | erkämpft das Menschenrecht. |
| | |
| Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes : | Es rettet uns kein höh'res Wesen, |
| Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun, | kein Gott, kein Kaiser noch Tribun |
| Producteurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes ! | Uns aus dem Elend zu erlösen |
| Décrétons le salut commun ! | können wir nur selber tun! |
| Pour que le voleur rende gorge, | Leeres Wort: des Armen Rechte, |

[6] Before the Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund was officially founded in 1908, a number of similar societies within the socialist and social-democrat movements had already been established and were important hubs for these ideologies (see DOWE 1978; VOIGT 2020).

[7] Unfortunately, very little information can be found on Uthmann's own translation, which may have been written around the same time as Luckhardt's (cf. FISCHER 2021: 159); a version (starting with the lines "Nun Mut, Verfemte dieser Erde, empor, du Volk von Joch und Not") can be found in the *Liederbuch* published by the Berlin section of the Arbeiter-Sängerbund in 1922.

Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot,
Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge,
Battons le fer quand il est chaud !

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 ! »

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.

Les Rois nous soûlaient de fumées,
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.

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 !

Leeres Wort: des Reichen Pflicht!
Unmündig nennt man uns und Knechte,
duldet die Schmach nun länger nicht!

Gewölbe stark und fest bewehret
die bergen, was man dir entzog,
dort liegt das Gut, das dir gehöret
und um das man dich betrog!
Ausgebeutet bist du worden
ausgesogen stets dein Mark!
Auf Erden rings, in Süd und Norden
das Recht ist schwach, die Willkür stark!

In Stadt und Land, ihr Arbeitsleute,
wir sind die stärkste der Partei'n
Die Müßiggänger schiebt beiseite!
Diese Welt muss unser sein;
Unser Blut sei nicht mehr der Raben,
Nicht der mächt'gen Geier Fraß!
Erst wenn wir sie vertrieben haben
dann scheint die Sonn' ohn' Unterlass!

As Hermann Kurzke (1990: 116) emphasizes in his analysis, Luckhardt's wording caters more to a general, democracy-minded, liberal audience than Pottier's original, by using much more general and/or romanticizing terms and culminating in a struggle for human rights rather than the working class' victory ("Verallgemeinerung, [...] Romantisierung, [...] Verbürgerlichung"). Furthermore, the class enemy, who is clearly

identified in Pottier's third, fourth and fifth stanzas, remains quite vague in the Luckhardt translation. In other words, the antagonism is much less straightforward, so that the addressee no longer seems to be the working class alone.[8] In an essay on Eugène Pottier and the German translations of his work, Erich Weinert levels a more general criticism against the Luckhardt version. He faults it for thwarting recognition for Pottier in Germany:

*Nun ist der deutsche Text der INTERNATIONALE, den wir Deutschen allgemein singen, allerdings nicht angetan, das literarische Interesse für ihren Autor zu wecken; er ist undichterisch, hat wenig von der Kraft des Originals und entspricht auch inhaltlich nicht dem Urtext.* (WEINERT 1937: 156)

*[Now the German text of the INTERNATIONALE which we Germans usually sing will hardly awaken literary interest in its author; it is unpoetic, it lacks the power of the original, and it does not match its content.]*

While it is clearly unfaithful in many respects, Luckhardt's translation does use a relatively modern and straightforward language, and it is quite easy to memorize and sing. Kurzke maintains that the vocabulary of the Luckhardt version no longer addresses the working class, but that is not necessarily how the working class itself perceived it. Its singability and its propagation through workers' choirs have probably been the key to its success and eventual canonization by most socialist movements after the First World War. Moreover, it mirrors the shifts within the various working-class movements, many of which were now, in their institutionalized form as trade unions or parties, somewhat less disposed to direct violent revolution. In that sense, "Die Internationale" does meet the criteria for what Cloud and Feyh (2015: 301) call 'fidelity': "Fidelity describes the emergent fit between a rhetorical hailing and the experiences of those hailed."[9] It soon replaced the workers' anthems that had been used until then, more particularly Jakob Audorf's "Arbeiter-Marseillaise", which was mainly a song of praise for Ferdinand Lasalle, an icon of social democracy in Germany at the time, or Max Kegel's "Sozialisten-Marsch", written for the 1892 social democrat party convention (cf. LIDTKE 1979); the only contender in terms of popularity was, and still is, Hermann Scherchen's "Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit" (see below). Luckhardt himself would never enjoy his song's success, as he died in a trench in Flanders in 1914 – during what might be considered the ultimate failure of the international call for solidarity evoked by Pottier's song, and its translations. On the other hand, it might be precisely this failure that made the song

[8] Interestingly, this tendency towards generalization and 'blurring' of class antagonisms can also be found in a much more recent English translation by Billy Bragg, as analyzed by Cloud and Feyh (2015) and Christophe Declercq in this focus issue.

[9] Admittedly, this concept remains hard to operationalize: Cloud and Feyh (2015) make a somewhat strenuous attempt to distinguish between genuine working-class anthems and populist ones, eventually even rejecting Billy Bragg's version as belonging to the latter.

appealing, not only for workers' movements, but for left-wing movements in general, as it would acquire its place in the canon.

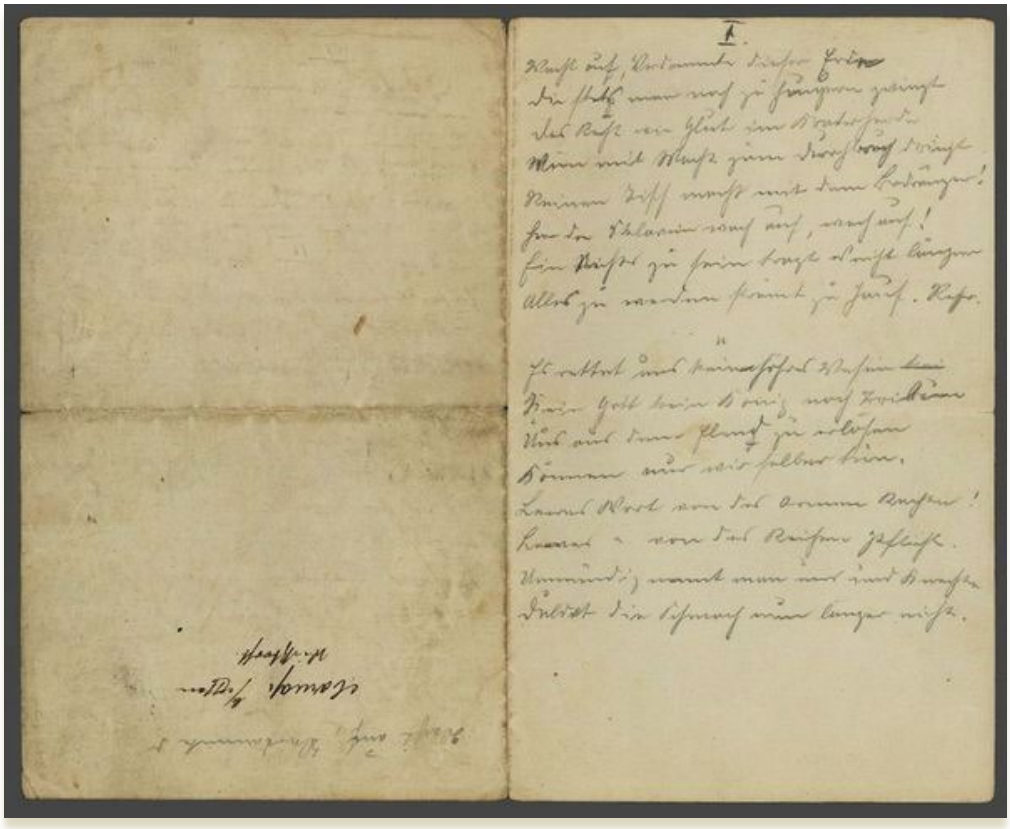

Figure 2: the manuscript of the Luckhardt translation, Museum Industriekultur Wuppertal

**Party contexts: song competition**

As mentioned above, the Luckhardt version of "Die Internationale" has become part of Germany's cultural heritage, at the very latest since the end of the Cold War. The question, then, is whether it is now completely devoid of any real political meaning, reduced to mere tradition or even part of the *Bildungsbürgertum*'s repertoire, or if it still retains a core of revolutionary potential. To answer that, it could be interesting to look at how it has been used in Germany since 1945.

It seems obvious that the anthem would be adopted by the newly founded German Democratic Republic; after all, the Russian version had been the national anthem of the Soviet Union until 1944, the German version had been sung at communist party rallies and at formal or informal occasions by workers ever since the First World War; neither the 'bourgeois' tendencies diagnosed by Kurzke nor the stylistic flaws criticized by Weinert seemed to matter. Indeed, if "Die Internationale" did not become the GDR's 'national' anthem, it would be sung at the very first conference of the unified socialist party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) in 1946 – three years before the new East German state was founded – to celebrate the (enforced) merger of

the social democrat SPD and the communist KPD. During all later SED party conferences, the almost compulsory closing event was the singing of "Die Internationale" by all those present. It was also sung on military parades by the *Nationale Volksarmee* as well as paramilitary 'Arbeiterkampfgruppen' [workers combat groups].[10]
However, this does not mean that it had a privileged position. On many other political occasions and from the very beginning of the GDR, the anthem was accompanied or at times replaced by other songs with a similarly long standing in workers' movements. An interesting instance of this ritualistic combination of workers' anthems is the symphonic "Festouvertüre 1948" by Ottmar Gerster. It was commissioned by the Thuringian section of the newly founded SED on the occasion of the centenary of Germany's 1848 revolutions. The overture is spun around quotes from various well-known songs. Instantly recognizable is the Marseillaise, which constituted a blueprint of sorts for many revolutionary anthems; indeed, the German version mentioned above, the so-called "Arbeiter-Marseillaise", written in 1864 by poet and activist Jacob Audorf, would have been the obvious association for most of the original audience in 1948. This melody is then combined with another staple from GDR party rallies, Hermann Scherchen's aforementioned "Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit" ("Brothers, Towards the Sun, Towards Freedom"), the German version of "Smelo, towarischtschi, w nogu" ("Brave, Comrades, In Step"). Finally, "Die Internationale" is also included in this short "Festouvertüre". Although it concerns an instrumental piece, knowledge of these songs' texts was considered a given; the overture sought to activate the emotional content associated with the popular music and consolidate a new collective within a new state, as Norbert Albrecht observes:

*Das, worauf Ottmar Gerster vor allem abhebt, ist das Zitat, und zwar das Zitat von Liedern, deren Text allgemein geläufig gewesen ist. Für Gerster ist das Lied-Zitat nicht aus musikalischer Sicht wichtig gewesen (dazu waren sie künstlerisch zu anspruchslos), sondern wegen des Textes […] Auf neue Erfahrung, auf Erkenntnisgewinn zielte diese Musik nicht. Aber ihre Stereotypie besaß eine nicht geringe Symbolkraft und seit langem ein ästhetisches, sogar politisches Prestige. Gerster muß sich dessen bewußt gewesen sein: In der anhebenden Geschichte seines Landes seien Kampf und Sieg vergangener Zeiten aufgehoben oder doch auf eine höhere Stufe gehoben; der zeitgenössische Hörer war der Protagonist und seine individuelle Leistung als historische Leistung musikalisch bestätigt.* (ALBRECHT 1999: 313–14)

*[What Ottmar Gerster focuses on in particular is the quotation, and specifically the quotation of songs whose text would have been familiar to most. For Gerster, the quotation of songs was not important from a musical point of view (they were too artistically unassuming for that), but because of the text. This music did not aim at new experiences or the gaining of knowledge. Its stereotypicality, however, had considerable symbolic power,*

[10] Evidence of this can be found in original footage freely available on internet sources. (See, for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDNe6Ra4__M, retrieved 15.05.2025)

*and for a long time, it had had an aesthetic, even political prestige. Gerster must have been aware of this: in the rising history of his country, the struggle and victory of past times had reached their apogee or had at least been elevated to a higher level; the contemporary listener was the protagonist, and his individual achievement was confirmed as a historical achievement through the music.]*

The versatility of Pottier/Luckhardt's poem in De Geyter's musical setting was demonstrated again during the peaceful 1989 revolution, which would see the end of the GDR. While at the very last SED party conference in East Berlin on 7 October, "Die Internationale" was sung by all attendees – including Mikhail Gorbachev, who was on a state visit, and obviously joined in in Russian –, the protesters in the so-called Montagsdemonstrationen in Leipzig would recite the sentence "Wir sind das Volk", setting them apart from those in power, but also sing "Die Internationale", which in its German version invokes universal human rights, after all:

*Auf der Leipziger Montagsdemonstration vom 9. Oktober 1989 mussten die Funktionäre erleben, dass Tausende die 'Internationale' anstimmten – das Lied der Weltrevolution, das an den Schulen eingeübt worden war, um den 'Klassenfeind' in Schach zu halten. Jetzt sprach der Ruf 'Völker, hört die Signale' unmittelbar diejenigen an, die noch ängstlich und zögernd hinter den Gardinen verharrten und unschlüssig hinunter auf die sich straßenbreit voranwälzende Menschenmenge blickten. Das unverfängliche Wort 'Menschenrecht' – es enthüllte mit ungeahnter Urgewalt seinen wahren, den Stasi-Staat unterminierenden Sinn.* (GURATZSCH 2014)

*[At the Monday demonstration in Leipzig on 9 October 1989, the functionaries had to experience that thousands sang the 'Internationale' – the song of the world revolution that had been practiced in schools to keep the 'class enemy' at bay. Now the call 'Völker, hört die Signale' spoke directly to those who remained fearful and hesitant behind the curtains, gazing indecisively down at the crowds of people advancing along the street. The innocuous word 'human rights' – it revealed its true meaning, undermining the Stasi state, with unexpected elemental force.]*

Of course, protesters would later resort to another and more lasting rally cry: "Deutschland einig Vaterland" – a line from the original GDR anthem, composed by Hanns Eisler to lyrics by Johannes R. Becher.[11] Nevertheless, "Die Internationale" proved to be resilient enough to accompany another revolution, contradicting Kurzke's hypothesis that the song would not be able to express the feelings of the people of the GDR because of its association with state power (cf. KURZKE 1990: 119).
While the use of socialist anthems was institutionalized in the GDR and constituted a living tradition for its citizens that they could even turn against their leaders, things

[11] As the GDR consolidated into a state in its own right, that anthem was only played in an instrumental version from the late 1960s onwards.

were a bit more complicated in the west, and it would seem they remain so to this day. During the Cold War period and the period of reconstruction (often termed *Wirtschaftswunder* or, after the first chancelor, *Adenauerzeit*), conservative powers would prevail in the Federal Republic of Germany. The communist party (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, KPD) was banned in 1956.[12] The social democrat SPD would not be in government until 1966, after having renounced its Marxist foundations under the so-called Godesberger Programm in 1959, which the party hoped would make it acceptable for a wider group of voters (turning it into a *Volkspartei*). This may explain why "Die Internationale", although still in use on International Workers Day, would no longer be sung at the end of the yearly SPD party conventions. Other songs were chosen instead, one of them being the aforementioned "Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit", which has a more conciliatory, less combative text, and is also traditionally used at gatherings of Germany's biggest trade union federation, the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB).

"Die Internationale", however, still holds its symbolic value for other left-wing movements. Outside parties and related organizations, "Die Internationale" was adopted by the student movement of the late 1960s and its heirs from the 1970s onwards. The singer-songwriter Hannes Wader in particular should be mentioned, as his performances of workers' songs during the 1970s also brought "Die Internationale" to younger audiences.[13] After 1990, the party *Die Linke*, historically the heir of the GDR state party SED, used the song at the end of its party conventions.[14] It seems logical that social democrats want to steer clear of this association, even if they have forged coalitions with *Die Linke* in a number of states (viz. Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Berlin, and, most recently, Bremen). But interestingly, the SPD's youth organization, the *Jungsozialisten* or JuSos, did preserve "Die Internationale" at the closing of their national conventions, in a way defying the party's more conformist choices. This became apparent at a small uproar during the 2019 SPD party convention. As had been customary since 1966, when the convention ended on Sunday, the audience sang "Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'", a song written in 1914 by Hermann Claudius and set to music by Michael Englert. It paints an almost idyllic scene of workers going to the countryside (and, as is almost compulsory for Germans, into the woods) after a hard week's work. The contrast to "Die Internationale" could hardly be greater. On the previous

[12] This concerns the traditional communist party which was founded in 1919; in 1968, the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP) assumed its legacy, but it would never play any role in German politics.

[13] Wader's 1977 live recording "Hannes Wader singt Arbeiterlieder" (Philips 6305 342) is somewhat of a classic. It sold very well despite negative reviews and a ban on most radio stations. Around the time of its release, Wader became a member of the DKP and would remain in the party until 1991 (see Wader's autobiography, Wader 2019, as well as Holler 2007).

[14] The importance the party still attaches to the song is demonstrated on its YouTube channel, where a singalong version was posted on the occasion of the song's 150 years celebration (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p41mETuQQ-E, retrieved 15.05.2025).

day of the convention, however, "Die Internationale" was sung, mainly at the instigation of JuSo representatives, prompting a number of conservative commentators to lament the radicalization of social democracy (which, in turn, was ironically commented by left-leaning newspaper *taz*; see BEUCKER 2019). In hindsight, this may have been a wise choice, as the author of "Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'", although a social democrat at first, became a staunch national socialist in the 1930s and did not really distance himself from this ideology after the Second World War. Claudius' text was so unspecific that it lent itself to various political uses. It was even included in the SS songbook (SS-Liederbuch 1942). In 2021, the SPD decided to cancel the song, and are now looking for a new anthem. It remains to be seen whether "Die Internationale" is a contender. The reluctance against it may indicate that the song retains a revolutionary kernel even today, or that its association with the GDR or the Soviet Union is still too powerful. Prompted by the commotion surrounding the song at the 2019 SPD convention, German poet, songwriter and former GDR dissident Wolf Biermann wrote a short column in favor of Luckhardt's version, again emphasizing its more universal appeal:

*In der altmodisch pathetischen Hymne leuchtet im Aschehaufen immer noch der humanistische Glutkern der Revolution – die Hoffnung auf Freiheit, auf Gerechtigkeit und Humanität. Es steckt in der Internationale die immer wieder auch zerstörbare Hoffnung auf die „Victoire de la condition humaine". Die Menschenrechte gehören seit 1948 zum Grundgesetz der Völkerfamilie: der UN Declaration of Human Rights.* (BIERMANN 2019)

*[In this unfashionably anthem, within the heap of ashes there still glows the humanist core of revolution – the hope of freedom, of justice and humanitarianism. Within Die Internationale lies this hope, ever prone to destruction, of the "Victoire de la condition humaine". Since 1948 human rights have been part of that constitution of the family of peoples: the UN Declaration of Human Rights.]*

It might be said, of course, that the song (rather than the poem) "L'Internationale"/"Die Internationale" has lent itself to various contexts and purposes mainly because De Geyter's music, even if it was not particularly imaginative, has proved to be very effective. The question, then, is whether the translation needed to be all that true to Pottier's very radical source text, embedded in its specific political context as it was. As long as a number of key words were preserved, the message may always have been more in the performance than in the content. And perhaps the success of the Luckhardt version, besides being heavily promoted by workers' choral societies, was also due to its adaptability, which made it acceptable to moderate social democrats as well as far left activists. Yet even as it has become part of German collective memory and risks being reduced to a museum piece, recent events have shown that when controversy arises, the text of "Die Internationale" can still transport what Biermann calls the "humanist core of revolution".

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**Christophe Declercq**

# “You have nothing if you have no rights”

## Reiterations of communal freedom through Billy Bragg’s translation of “The Internationale”

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**Abstract**

*This study undertakes an analysis of Billy Bragg’s translation of “The Internationale” as performed in 1989 at the Vancouver Folk Festival and featured on his 1990 album with the same title. The translator’s agency is examined through an exploration of textual features, including translation strategies, alongside metatextual factors, encompassing paratextual (presentation), extratextual (intention and purpose), and contextual parameters (socio-cultural and political elements). The concept of recontextualization is substantiated through two comparisons: (1) between the original 1871/1888 version (comprising lyrics by the Frenchman Eugène Pottier and music by the Belgian Pierre De Geyter) and Bragg’s new translation over a century later, and (2) between Bragg’s translation and earlier English translations. This multifaceted analysis provides insights into Bragg’s approach to rendering “The Internationale” into English, highlighting how the translator’s agency contributes to the translation’s recontextualisation.*

*Keywords: Billy Bragg, Pete Seeger, The Internationale, translation, adaptation, rewriting, context*

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## Reiterations of communal freedom through Billy Bragg's translation of *"The Internationale"*

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### Introduction

On 12 October 2022, the English singer-songwriter and musician Billy Bragg (1957), renowned for his activism in support of workers' rights, performed a few songs to show solidarity for the Starbucks Workers United people in Buffalo, New York.[1] He had just visited an ongoing strike at the Elmwood store a week earlier (Kress 2022). His repeated visits to several picket lines conveyed that his appearances were more than just stop-overs on his North American tour and that the politically active musician was determined as ever to convey his public support for yet another case of the infringement of workers' rights.[2]

In front of the pickets in the United States, Bragg performed the popular trade union anthem *Solidarity Forever*, the lyrics of which were written in 1915 by the labour activist Ralph Chaplin (1887–1961). In the past, this song of empathy with workers' causes has inspired such artists as Pete Seeger (1919–2014) and Leonard Cohen (1934–2016), and has been an integral part of the repertoire of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) since its establishment in 1905. Billy Bragg tapped into a rich tradition

[1] At the time of the action, Starbucks Workers United represented approximately 6,500 workers at over 250 locations (Canham-Clyne 2022).

[2] Several picket lines demanded fair working conditions. Unionised workers were also being targeted by retaliation tactics after they voted to form a union less than a year earlier (Christmann 2022; Kress 2022).

of solidarity songs that continue to resonate through time, with ever changing historical contexts serving as a driving force for contemporary interpretations and recontextualisations. In support of the actions, Bragg proclaimed: "What is there to fear in empathy? And the reason they are so afraid of empathy is because if you mix empathy with activism, you get solidarity" (KRESS 2022).[3] His words highlighted the profound connection between empathy, activism, and the spirit of solidarity that underpins Bragg's unwavering commitment to workers' rights causes, a tradition that so epitomised the lives of folk and protest singers like Woody Guthrie (1912–1967) and Phil Ochs (1940–1976).

*Few artists epitomize the folk-music tradition like […] Billy Bragg. […] [He] has turned into one of the world's leading voices speaking out against injustice on every front. […] Whether his forum is a concert stage, a political rally, a gathering of union representatives or a conference of fellow folkies, he never fails to inspire.* (MARGOLIS 2017: n.p.)

This chapter focuses on exploring a song of solidarity that holds significance not only within Billy Bragg's repertoire but also within the broader tradition of protest songs advocating communal freedom: "L'Internationale/The Internationale" (henceforth, LI/TI). Because of its message of transnational solidarity, which resonates universally but predominantly within Western, if not largely European contexts, LI/TI has undergone numerous translations into various languages (KUZAR 2002: 89). At the Vancouver Folk Festival in 1989, Billy Bragg was tasked by Pete Seeger to write a new English version of "The Internationale" (BRAGG 2022). This version also appeared on Bragg's 1990 record, an album with the same name. A comparative analysis of this 1989/1990 translation with the original text and earlier English renditions operates on multiple levels, all of which are addressed in the 'Research context' section below. Guided by a clear intention and a renewed purpose to present the new translation to the festival audience, Bragg's rendition of LI/TI emerges as a recontextualisation of the original with a discernible functional-pragmatic imprint. Recontextualisations refer to the process of adapting, or even merely translating, a text from one context to another.[4] In this process, the original text is extracted from its original context and reinserted into a different context, often leading to a shift in its significance and implications. The concept highlights the dynamic and transformative nature of texts as they interact with different contexts. Also, the Bragg version as well as other adaptations intersect within the realms of music and translation, particularly in the domain of (political) song translation. The different adaptations make a case for retranslation comparison.
This chapter therefore aims to examine how the translation of "L'Internationale" by Billy Bragg responds to the rich history of the song and the contexts of earlier versions

[3] Video coverage of episode can be found on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aRiahmC_hg

[4] As a reviewer of an earlier version of this chapter rightly pointed out, ultimately, all messages are re-entextualised and recontextualised (SILVERSTEIN & URBAN 1996).

in English in order to provide a more contemporary recontextualisation. In providing an answer to the question "How does the 1989 translation of "L'Internationale" by Billy Bragg respond to the rich history of the song and the contexts of earlier versions in English in order to provide a modernised adaptation?", the different translations of LI/TI into English are analysed using a descriptive sociological approach that focuses on elements drawn from the respective texts and on extratextual and contextual factors of those texts. The latter is supported by statements made by the translator, Billy Bragg, drawn from existing material online as well as from a semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher. In order to provide a heuristic framework to answer the research question, relevant literature was reviewed. Elements were drawn from functionalism and song translation research, and to a lesser extent also from translation criticism and retranslation research.

The expected outcome of this study is that contextual elements surrounding the 1989/1990 translation of LI/TI into English coalesce to create a new reality for the anthem, rendering it more amenable to adaptation and recontextualisation. By examining the interplay between these contextual factors, the research seeks to shed light on how the 1989/1990 translation strikes a delicate balance between preserving historical continuity and embracing contemporary reinterpretations.

**Research context**

When aiming to analyse the 1989/1990 translation of "L'Internationale" by Billy Bragg, several types of theoretical conceptualisation play in the translational relationship between source text and target text, including previous translations into English, and – more importantly – their respective cultural contexts. Translation, understood both as a process and a product, consists of many spheres, many of which have been dissected and studied by different scholars in different but sometimes complementary ways. Early approaches to translation analysis primarily centred on textual comparison, but from 1970 onwards the polysystem framework introduced a more comprehensive understanding of translations by recognising their place within the broader target (literary) language system (Shuttleworth 2009: 197; Baker 2009: 189–190). Focus shifted from viewing translations as isolated phenomena to a comprehensive examination that took contextual parameters into consideration (Baker 2009: 190). Similarly, rather than prescribing how translations should be, Gideon Toury (1978; 1981) centred his research on the description of actual translation behaviour, an empirical approach that provides valuable insights into the inherent characteristics of translation practices and the underlying patterns governing translators' decisions. By contextualising translated texts within historical and social dimensions and by recognising translations as an integrated part of the target (literary) language system, polysystem researchers provided a pathway into a more sophisticated understanding of translation processes (Batchelor 2019). While not usually labelled functionalist, Toury's work emphasised the importance of the target text's function within its cultural context. This approach acknowledges the impact on the

translator's decision-making process by taking into account metatextual elements that surround the main text and paratextual, extratextual and contextual factors.

Paratextual parameters serve as an intermediate sphere between the (literary) source text and the surrounding world. They encompass the composition of a published work in which a text or translation appears, such as titles, prefaces, footnotes, illustrations, and glossaries (Genette's peritexts), but also prolongations of the original work beyond the material text itself, such as interviews or advertisements, Genette's epitexts (GENETTE 1987; ALVSTAD 2011).[5] These parameters accompany the main text and exert considerable influence not only on its reading and interpretation but also on its translation (GENETTE & MACLEAN 1991; BUENDÍA 2013). Conversely, extratextual parameters pertain to external factors that shape the translation process, including the intended audience, the purpose of the translation, and the function of the target text. These factors are central to functionalist approaches to translation, most notably exemplified by Hans J. Vermeer and Katharina Reiss's skopos theory proposed in 1984. According to this theory, translations should be guided by the specific purpose (skopos) they aim to fulfil within the target culture (REISS & VERMEER 2014). Christiane Nord further expanded upon this concept, placing added emphasis on the target text's function within specific cultural and communicative contexts (NORD 2018). Contextual parameters constitute another crucial aspect influencing translation choices. These parameters encompass broader social, historical, and cultural factors. In his empirical approach, Toury duly acknowledges the impact of these contextual elements on the translator's decision-making process (TOURY 1995). As such, contextual factors play an integral role in shaping the translator's approach to rendering the source text into the target language.

The process and outcome of translation are inherently context-driven. Even when contextual parameters appear concealed, they still manifest within the target text. This profoundly function-oriented approach to translation aligns seamlessly with the evolution of a focus on translation sociology within translation studies. In essence, understanding the cultural and historical contexts that influence translations provides crucial insights into the multifaceted nature of this intricate linguistic and communicative practice. By embracing a context-driven perspective, translation scholars can uncover the intricate web of factors that shape the translation process and its resultant products.

Influenced by sociological models of Pierre Bourdieu, but also others, translation researchers turned to uncovering "the function, influence and value of translation in the target context, the mapping of translations and the analysis of the effects of translation upon the context" (ROSA 2010: 96), recognising that eventually all translation involves a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose (HERMANS 1985: 11). Translators not only translate; they also actively participate in how the respective translation is perceived by the audiences it aims to reach. This vision of translation practice is a clear activist and sociological take on pragmatic-functionalism, but it does not reduce translations to consumer goods, nor is the discourse of translation dedicated entirely to

[5] Peritextual elements can also relate to the overall physical presentation (book covers, book size, book binding) and layout of the text, such as typography (choice of font, font size, spacing, etc.).

functionalism or mechanism (GOUANVIC 2010: 121). With translations squarely positioned within a social theory of symbolic goods, the agency of the translator can act, and the cultural capital of a translation can come to fruition.

Given the object under study, one aspect of the social networks that act as recipient audience of a translation of a song is the sense of sharedness, which can only take place with the acknowledgement of both the text and spirit of the lyric and the empathy aroused by the tune. To identify specific functions of song translations (purposes/skopoi), Peter Low builds on the skopos theory and proposes five translation strategies that correspond to these particular skopoi (LOW 2003). Low introduces the "pentathlon principle," which addresses the challenge of ensuring that the target text of a song aligns with the music and remains singable (LOW 2010). Translators, who may also be performers or be considering specific performances, take into account singability, coherence of meaning, naturalness, adherence to rhyme, and adherence to rhythm when translating songs (LOW 2010). Similar to skopos theory, Low advocates an approach that embraces flexibility and adaptability to increase the likelihood of creating a successful and favourably received target text. Low's pentathlon rebuilds interconnections between the textual (rhyme and rhythm as drivers of translation strategies within the target text), the paratextual (the performance) and the implied extratextual (the perceived singability and naturalness). Franzon utilises micro-structure analyses to elucidate the challenges faced by translators when translating songs, providing insight into the intricate process involved in song translation: metaphrase (literal, near word-for-word translations), paraphrase (using other words for conveying the same meaning), reorganisation, and addition/omission (FRANZON 2009). This approach showcases the translator's agency, wherein fidelity extends beyond mere semantic imitation (FRANZON 2009).[6] Notably, fidelity is not only directed towards the original text but also towards the music itself, encompassing the aspect of presentation, singability, as emphasised by Low.

The presentation of translated songs is a multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing both performance and contextual considerations. Translated songs can be stand-alone performances or part of a sequence of other translations or performances. They may be intended for repeated renditions in diverse contexts. For instance, when a translated song is included on a CD or streaming platform, its purpose is to be actively listened to and sung along with by members of varying audiences. Alternatively, if featured in a live performance, it aims to resonate with physical audiences repeatedly, creating a sense of sharedness within the performance space. Intention of the translation and matching with the intended audience are key functions when it comes to comparing a target text with its original or assessing the quality of the translation as a new text. In translation criticism, typically two approaches prevail. The first involves including the source text to allow for a thorough comparison between the source and target texts based on a set of selected evaluative parameters (DE BEAUGRANDE 1978; HATIM & MASON 1990). The second approach, seen in models like Toury's (1978), focuses on the function of the translation within the target culture. In this case, the translation may reflect the translator's

[6] Based on a translation from Swedish by Åkerström (2010).

particular identity, motivation, and intention to reach the target audience and align with several contextual dimensions of the text (VALERO 1995: 204). Texts are not written in a vacuum, and as translators rewrite texts within the parameters set by the culture for which they translate, nor are translations (LEFEVERE 1992). This not only concerns translating but also rewriting previous translations and retranslating.

Retranslation involves deliberately departing from previous translations and aligns with a renewed agency, intention, and purpose, i.e., retranslations are recontextualised translations.[7] Retranslations often entail aspects of adaptation, especially when the new intention itself needs to be translated (for want of a better word) into a new function, for which approaches are used that can be organised along Franzon's categories of metaphrase, paraphrase, reorganisation and addition/omission in order to support each of Low's parameters. The context for creating the new translation then prompts data, including intertextual relations between source text and existing previous translations, between previous translations and the new adaptation, and between the original and the recontextualised new translation.

**Methodology**

In translation analysis, drawing from both the polysystem theory of the early-to-mid-1970s and the functionalist theories of the 1980s, contextual dimensions form an integral part of systemic descriptive approaches. As such, translation itself should be regarded as a cultural and historical phenomenon, inviting exploration into its context and the factors that shape its nature. As Hermans (1999) aptly puts it, this endeavour allows us to seek grounds that elucidate the reasons behind the existence of translation in its various forms. In order to provide an answer to the research question, my analysis of different translations of LI/TI into English therefore employs an interdependent approach. Textual elements derived from the respective texts and metatextual elements derived from the circumstances surrounding the creation of those texts, including authorial information drawn from a semi-structured interview with the translator of the 1989/1990 version, are amalgamated with a comparative analysis predominantly focused on the target text.

| Paratextual | Extratextual | Contextual |
|---|---|---|
| peritexts: titles, prefaces, footnotes, illustrations, and glossaries (presentation)<br>epitexts: interviews or advertisements | the intended audience, the purpose of the translation, the function of the target text | broader social, historical, and cultural factors |

Figure 1: metatextual elements that surround a text and that affect the translator's decision-making process

[7] For more on retranslation and multimodality in translation studies, see Albachten and Gürçağlar (2020).

***Comparative analysis***

The 1989/1990 translation of LI/TI by Billy Bragg only retained three stanzas and the chorus from the French original (see FRANZON 2009, discussed above, for omission as a translation strategy). Based on a social ecology of the music industry (the dimensions of creative production, recording and performing all include the creator-translator, the music company, the touring entourage, the performer and the audience) and on the intention of the translator-performer to limit the number of stanzas in comparison to the original, the three stanzas and the chorus of the 1989/90 translation form the basis of the subsequent comparison with earlier translations. Only those same parts are analysed for the source text and other translations. In order to differentiate between the different versions, only the first few lines are retained below.

As previously noted, the source text in question is a tune composed by Pierre De Geyter in 1888, which drew inspiration from Eugene Pottier's 1871 poem. Pottier, a member of the International Workingman's Association (The First International), penned the poem in the aftermath of the Paris Commune and the ensuing massacre (LI/TI-0, 1871/1888).

*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*

It is not easy to retrieve the origins of different translations of LI/TI. Translations appeared in songbooks, pamphlets, journals, magazines, and are often not complete either. This is confirmed by Kuzar (2002: 91) who also had difficulty in attributing the details of providence of several translations into Hebrew.

The first translation of "L'Internationale" into English, LI/TI-1 (1900/1901), was arguably produced by the American publisher Charles H. Kerr (1860–1944). This version became known as the version of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) (DUBOFSKY 2000: 87). No clear timestamp has been found, but a first appearance seems to be by Kerr himself in January 1900, and formed part of the booklet *Socialist Songs*, even though the title given there was *The International Party*, the same title used for an iteration in the *International Socialist Review* of December 1900:

*Arise ye pris'ners of starvation / Arise ye wretched of the earth*
*For justice thunders condemnation / A better world's in birth!*[8]

[8] Kuzar (2002: 92) connects his version to the Peace and Freedom Party of California, but attributes no year. He also has the South-African version start with the same line, although the version then diverges from the Kerr one: *Arise ye prisoners of starvation / Arise ye toilers of the earth ...* (ibid.: 91).

Another early translation was retrieved from a document published in 1920 (*Hearings before …* 1920), but references to the first lines of this translation in the American journal *The Daily People* in 1912 predates that publication. This is referred to as LI/TI-2 (1912/1920):

*Stand up! Ye wretched ones who labor / Stand up! Ye galley-slaves of want.*
*Man's reason thunders from its crater / 'Tis th' eruption naught can daunt.*

One English translation that is sometimes attributed to Pottier himself – which is not very likely (*The International* n.d.) – appears in print (and online these days) without further acknowledgement. A recorded testimony of Reg Weston's experiences during the Battle of Cable Street, 4 October 1936, mentioned references to standing in unity and singing that very version.[9] However, there was no reference to the time of recording, which is why the source is not included in the reference section. However, the oldest occurrence retrieved was by the rather anonymous "A.P.H." from the pages of *Punch* in December 1920. This version is referred to as LI/TI-3 (1920). Kuzar 2002 refers to this translation as the Standard English version (91). In June 1975, the LI/TI-3 version was still included in *Songs of the Workers*, a booklet published by The Socialist Party of Ireland:

*Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers / Arise ye criminals of want*
*For reason in revolt now thunders / And at last ends the age of cant.*[10]

Both printed and online sources of different kinds, from books by renowned publishers to more obscure and anonymous sites, struggle with the dates of the different translations in English. It is no surprise then that, in 1976, the Communist Federation of Britain decided to retain the newest translation as it was deemed better and politically more correct. However, they were referring to LI/TI-3 (1920), a few lines of which had already been published around the same time as LI/TI-2 (1912/1920), but above all a translation that was over half a century old.
The modern adaptation of LI/TI translated by Billy Bragg (LI/TI-4, 1989/1990) was performed first at the 1989 Vancouver Festival, and released in 1990 as one of the tracks from his album, *The Internationale*:

*Stand up, all victims of oppression / For the tyrants fear your might*
*Don't cling so hard to your possessions / For you have nothing, if you have no rights*

[9] https://tinyurl.com/2zcw5ru9

[10] A similar translation, arguably an even more literal one, uses the following lines: "Arise ye workers from your slumbers / Arise ye prisoners of want / For reason in revolt now thunders / And at last ends the age of cant." This version was referenced as being used in the mid-1930s by a group of people including Elia Kazan (BUTLER 2022: 174), so it dates to the same period as the similar and related version.

In the discussion, two comparative analyses converge: one comparative analysis puts the three above translations in parallel, and one target text-oriented approach aligns the Bragg translation with the source text. There is a focus on textual elements that are considered representative for the context from which it emerged, especially for LI/TI-4.

***Semi-structured interview***

If textual data form the basis for the comparative analysis of the different translations, that target-text-oriented analysis is supplemented by material drawn from a semi-structured interview with Billy Bragg, which can be considered a peritext of the translation. After a first contact at the start of the summer of 2022, Billy Bragg's management and the singer himself agreed to respond to questions about LI/TI and the 1989/1990 version. Subsequently, a seven-page document was sent by the author to Billy Bragg on 17 August 2022 with the following intention:

*The questions I would like to put to you concern acknowledgement of facts about the emergence of that version, your view of that version in comparison with the original, the use and value of both the original and your version(s) today.*

The document contained a one-page introduction about the author of the chapter and the aims in relation to the intended publication. The second page covered a succinct contextualisation of "L'Internationale" and the 1989/1990 translation. The background against which the 1989/1990 translation took shape was covered in several online sources, not least of which two YouTube clips,[11] and detailed specific extratextual and contextual aspects of the translation. The intention of the interview with the singer was to expand on known facts on the basis of the target text. The document concluded with a four-column table, including the full Bragg translation, the respective source text parts and two other English translations, LI/TI-1 (1900/1901) and LI/TI-2 (1912/1920).

On the basis of the available information about the circumstances and of a prior analysis of the Bragg lyrics of LI/TI-4, several pages of open questions followed, asking not only about choices in the translation but also about motivations behind specific translation choices. The open questions were phrased to prompt discussion. The opportunity for the singer-translator to elaborate on the open questions came during a forty-five-minute online interview on 31 August 2022 (referred to below as BRAGG 2022). Both interviewer and interviewee explored specific themes further. It was agreed that prior to publication the translator-singer should be able to review his contributions to the chapter and suggest alterations if necessary.

[11]See Billy Bragg and Côr Gobaith (2009) singing Bragg's version in Aberystwyth (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg7Bb4J6-jY) and Billy Bragg (2020) singing his version at the celebration commemorating Pete Seeger's 101st birthday (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBgfNy7dk4I). (Seeger died in 2014, aged 94.)

## Discussion

### *Context of the source text*

Both contextual and extratextual factors that shaped the original are well-known. The 1871 Paris Commune, however short-lived, was a very temporary idealistic, as well as egalitarian, attempt on the part of the Paris workers to install revolutionary reforms. Although crushed within a matter of days – 30,000 were slaughtered at the barricades and another 60,000 executed afterwards (MARX 1988) – collective consciousness and new "complexes of feelings and thoughts" emerged (TROTSKY 1923: n.p.) and LI/TI became one of their most noted expressions. With lyrics by the Frenchman Eugène Pottier (1816–1887) and music by the Belgian Pierre De Geyter (1848–1932), "L'Internationale" had become a rousing anthem for labourers by the end of the nineteenth century. LI/TI also became one the most translated songs in history, serving rallying movements across the globe (GIELKENS 1996). The workers' hymn became the mobilisation for emotion and, through its global adoption, effectively became an anthem prompting the oppressed to fight for their rights: written in the aftermath of the Commune and composed in the decade after, the hymn became an anthem for, among others, the Communist Party, the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, strikers in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912, students and workers in Paris in 1968 and the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests (FERRO 1996; BRETON 2000; DAWSON 2009; ZHANG et al. 2002; CLOUD & FEYH 2015).

Songs have long played a vital role in spreading a message of solidarity among workers. A prominent production of this desire to share songs of protest was the paratextual aspect of inclusion in songbooks like the *Little Red Songbook*, published by the Industrial Workers of the World in 1909.[12] In the first songbook, labour activist songs by Ralph Chaplin, Charles Seeger (1886–1979), Pete Seeger's father, Joe Hill (1879–1915) and T. Bone Slim (1880–c. 1942) appeared alongside "The Internationale", positioning the Pottier/De Geyter anthem squarely within the activist spirit, "the collective experience of being among a group of people all singing the same song" (BRAGG 2022) for a shared moral purpose.

The use of LI/TI, in whatever language, serves a purpose that has long transcended the era of the Paris Commune and its immediate aftermath and has had reiterations. In their analysis of LI/TI's rhetorical work, Cloud and Feyh reveal that "the text itself affords theorists and critics evaluative criteria based on the construction of the collective working class agent, identification of the text's antagonistic demands, and a theory of *reasonable* [sic] emotion specific to particular class standpoints" (2015: 302). If extratextual and contextual features drive the spirit of LI/TI, then clearly the prime purpose of a translation of "L'Internationale" is to replicate that construction, identification and emotion within the spatial and temporal timeframe in which it was created. This construction and identification relate to the prominent, if not the dominant, pragmatic factor in Low's pentathlon and also warrants the use of more contemporary language.

[12] Thirty-six editions of the Little Red Songbook were published between 1909 and 1995.

Seeing that 'contemporary' shifts along temporal progress, this creates an opportunity for adaptations of LI/TI that can perhaps be adopted more easily (than earlier versions, nowadays considered more dated and stilted). Translations and retranslations of LI/TI therefore become additional dimensions, new versions of that source text with added contextual parameters and functional requirements.

***Different translations of the first verse***

As mentioned earlier, the comparison of the different versions of LI/TI is based on the length of the 1989/1990, i.e., three stanzas and one chorus, a textual characteristic that also bears on the paratextual dimension of presentation. The first stanza of the source text relates to a situation in which working class people suffer from poverty and in which protest is often criminalised (GLUCKSTEIN 2008). At the time of the Commune, the Catholic church played a dubious role, barely providing any support for the protest. In fact, they upheld the notion of the divine organisation of society and objected to people's desires to change their institutions (ibid.). This justified the Commune's revolt and the accompanying rallying cry to ditch any superstitions or any institutional beliefs. Slaves of labour would be set free or would free themselves (LI/TI-1), providing the reason for the working class to cleanse the old tables (LI/TI-2) or to end the age of religious cant (LI/TI-3). Still, despite minor semantic differences, translators of the anthem had been loyal to replicating the French original closely (KUZAR 2002: 89), including its extratextual aspects of intention and purpose.

| | |
|---|---|
| *LI/TI-0 (1871/1888)* | *Debout, les damnés de la terre / Debout, les forçats de la faim*<br>*La raison tonne en son cratère, / C'est l'éruption de la fin.*<br>*Du passé faisons table rase, / Foule esclave, debout, debouts*<br>*Le monde va changer de base / Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout* |
| LI/TI-1 (1900/1901) | Arise ye pris'ners of starvation / Arise ye wretched of the earth<br>For justice thunders condemnation / A better world's in birth!<br>No more tradition's chains shall bind us / Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall;<br>The earth shall rise on new foundations / We have been naught we shall be all. |
| LI/TI-2 (1912/1920) | Stand up! Ye wretched ones who labor, / Stand up! Ye galley-slaves of want.<br>Man's reason thunders from its crater, / 'Tis th' eruption naught can daunt.<br>Of the past let us cleanse the tables, / Mass enslaved, fling back the call,<br>Old Earth is changing her foundations, / We have been nothing, now be all. |
| LI/TI-3 (1920) | Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers / Arise ye criminals of want.<br>For reason in revolt now slumbers / And at last ends the age of cant.<br>So away with all your superstitions / Servile masses arise, arise,<br>We'll change forthwith the old conditions / And spurn the dust to win the prize. |
| LI/TI-4 (1989/1990) | Stand up, all victims of oppression / For the tyrants fear your might<br>Don't cling so hard to your possessions / For you have nothing, if you have no rights<br>Let racist ignorance be ended / For respect makes the empires fall<br>Freedom is merely privilege extended / Unless enjoyed by one and all |

Figure 2: first stanza of "L'Internationale" in French and four translations in English.

Not only did Billy Bragg adapt the language in the 1989/1990 version, but the theme of religion has also shifted towards worldly possessions, which lull working people into a false sense of security, just like institutions do. Although the original invokes that reason is the basis for both understanding and morality, still upheld in LI/TI2, this aspect is present in Bragg's version in a more implied manner: religions and institutions no longer form the foundation of knowing what is allowed or permitted. The Bragg version also included a much more contemporary postcolonial stance in which racist ignorance should be replaced by respect in order to attack a racist colonial past. Kuzar (2002: 92) views the approach as a clear encoding of the song in "discourse of the European-American liberal-democratic tradition". Also, whereas in earlier versions there was a need to revert to what the institutional elite deemed to be unworthy, Bragg extends the compelling need for respect to the duty of sharing freedom with everybody. This collective sense of community through class consciousness and solidarity (KUZAR 2000: 88) can only be achieved by uniting the human race in song. Here extratextual factors and contextual aspects intertwine and shape the recontextualisation.
Whereas previous translations covered the chorus in a very linear manner, as a repeat of the corresponding source text line, the Bragg adaptation avoids that repetition and divides the message contained in the original across two related rallying cries: struggle is shared among all labourers, regardless of where they are from, and "The Internationale" is the prime uniting song. Freedom can only be a liberal value when it is shared by everyone (cf. KUZAR 2002: 92).

*As long as you're not expecting music to change the world, what it can do is change people's emotional state, make them feel as if they are not alone. And then when you bring that into activism, music can play an important role in helping people to recharge their activism and to find the courage of their convictions.* (BRAGG 2022)

The folk tradition also adds to the Bragg version of LI/TI and as such perpetuates the idea behind the original and the purpose of the song itself, through Bragg's words but also through ad hoc adaptations.

*Choirs do that for themselves. Often I go and see a choir and they have changed it a bit and that's alright. I do not own "The Internationale" … The mainstream political parties have been captured and ordinary working people are going to have to stand up for themselves and organise. There is a lot of sympathy for that!* (BRAGG 2022)

Although the target text is more of an adaptation than a translation, its core message still remains very truthful to the original as "time and place" equally represent the location of "groupons nous" and the time of "demain". Unity in song and communal freedom as the core characteristics of all is both "le genre humain" and "the human race", presenting a strong sense of idealistic internationalism.

| | |
|---|---|
| LI/TI-0<br>(1871/1888) | C'est la lutte finale ; / Groupons nous et demain<br>L'Internationale / Sera le genre humain. |
| LI/TI-4<br>(1989/1990) | So come brothers and sisters / For the struggle carries on<br>The Internationale / Unites the world in song<br><br>So comrades come rally / For this is the time and place<br>The international ideal / Unites the human race |

Figure 3: the original chorus and the Bragg adaptation.

***The context of the 1989/1990 Bragg translation***

The Bragg translation was triggered by specific contextual circumstances relating directly to the activist singer-translator personally as well as to more global contemporary geo-political developments that urged activists and socialists to re-align themselves; longstanding alliances and institutionalised dissent had to be modernised, doing away with the now older and sometimes even archaic language of earlier translations into English. In 1989, more than a century after De Geyter had put the Pottier poem to music, Billy Bragg presented his version of "The Internationale" at the Vancouver Folk Festival in July 1989 (Bragg 2022), aiming to recast the adaptation "for the twenty-first century" (ibid.). At the festival in July 1989, Pete Seeger urged Billy Bragg to come up with a fresh, new version of song – a modern British version to replace the existing ones that were deemed outdated (a functionalist extratextual intention and purpose). Bragg's translation – with some distinct adaptations in comparison with the source text[13] – appeared on Bragg's 1990 album (Utility Records) with the same name. The core message of the source text and the spirit in which the anthem was sung in solidarity was echoed in the modernised Bragg translation with adaptations such as the line "You have nothing if you have no rights" (BRAGG 1989/1990).

The original song as well as early iterations of it were associated with communist regimes, but these were rumbling by the time of Bragg's version. Earlier that year, in June, the clamp down on student protests on Tiananmen Square in Beijing required activists and socialists alike to seek a new direction and purpose for the songs that praised solidarity and safeguarding one's rights. Rephrasing the archaic words of dissent – echoes from a troubled (recent) past – into a more contemporary melody of empathy and union was the key function of the new translation.

In 1989, Bragg – at a national level already a staunch anti-Thatcherite over her crushing of unions and unjust social policies – felt that with Tiananmen, where demonstrations had been suppressed in a cruel manner by the communist authorities, and, later on, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, traditional socialist culture was being thrown into the bin on an international level as well (BRAGG 2022). Hoping that music is still "the way that young people talk to one another and to the generation of their parents" and knowing that "music still has the power to make people feel that they're not alone" (BRAGG 2022), the Bragg translation aimed to free LI/TI from the shackles of a troubled

[13] See, for instance, the omission of religious institutions and the inclusion of empire and racism, explained above.

past – "the terrible shadow of Stalin" (ibid.). Bragg felt that through an adaptation of "The Internationale" he might be able to salvage it as well as maintain the tradition of internationalism that underpins it. This reinvigorated sense of respect for older protest songs was felt throughout the wider context of each of the songs featuring in his 1990 album, aptly called *The Internationale*.

The album contained seven tracks, each of which represented a legacy of discontent, protest and unity. In making the value of the paratextual presentation explicit, Bragg argued that the collection of songs on the album was "a reassertion of my rights as an individual" (COLLINS 2013: 215) and through the album title and inclusion of LI/TI-4, the 1989/1990 version was built around the spirit of "The Internationale", the internationalist drive towards unity in demanding and/or upholding your rights. "I Dreamed I Saw Phil Ochs Last Night" was Bragg's interpretation of "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night", a song about an American trade unionist who was allegedly framed on a murder charge and executed in 1915. The poem had been written around 1930 by the British novelist and poet Alfred Hayes (1911–1985), set to music by the American Earl Robinson (1910–1991) in 1936 and made famous by the American activist-singer Paul Robeson (1898–1976) first, and next by the likes of Pete Seeger (1919–2014) and Joan Baez (˚1941). Bragg changed the name in the title to Phil Ochs (1940–1976), the American protest singer who joined rallies to support civil rights and who objected to the Vietnam War.

As recently as 2014, "Joe Hill" appeared to be one of the three most requested songs by British Labour Party politicians on the radio programme Desert Island Discs, along with William Blake's "Jerusalem" (Weaver & Arnett 2014), the unofficial English anthem. "Jerusalem" – Blake's rallying cry for a better society in England's green and pleasant land (ibid.) – was also recorded by Bragg on the same album in 1990.[14] Blake puts forward the idea that people are chaining themselves up if they refuse to open their minds, an idea included in Bragg's "The Internationale" almost verbatim.[15]

Another song, also in the 1990 *The Internationale* album by Bragg, was "The Red Flag", which appeared as the first song in the first *Little Red Songbook* in 1909.[16] "The Red Flag" – written by the Irish political activist, Jim Connell (1852–1929) and inspired by the 1889 London Docks Strike – has been an anthem of the British Labour Party ever since it was established and is typically sung at the end of party conferences, along with "Jerusalem". In part building on the 1909 *Songbook*, the 1990 album *The Internationale*

[14] "One of the first things I did in the Labour Party was in 1984 at an event for the European elections at Manchester Free Trade Hall. They handed out Labour songs, among which was "The Red Flag", and "Jerusalem" was there, like the third on the list. So it has always been a song of the left." (BRAGG 2022)

[15] A reviewer of the text added that the idea also persists in other popular songs and referred to two songs: the anti-war song turned anti-establishment and pro-social change "Revolution" by The Beatles (The White Album, 1968) and "Redemption Song" by Bob Marley (UPRISING 1980).

[16] Clearly, the *Little Red Songbook* was of much inspiration to Billy Bragg as other songs have also been covered and recorded by Bragg, such as "Bread and Circuses" and "Which Side Are You On?".

– especially the title song, the spirit of "Jerusalem" and the context of "The Red Flag" – provided several elements that seem to come straight from the 1871/1888 "L'Internationale" pedigree: socialists, protest songs, political activism, reassertion of rights, a transnational call and international appeal.

From the Bragg translation of "L'Internationale" – despite, and also, because of the changes that were not motivated by the lyrics themselves but the ideas contained within them, as is clearly evident in his Joe Hill / Phil Ochs twist – a clear vision emerges. Fidelity to the original source text is not always fit for the purpose, most definitely not when adapting the language and the ideas behind the words to a more contemporary audience that is one century removed from the original song. Billy Bragg was always going to use "The Internationale" with as much respect as possible, but he moulded it equally into an attitude of resistance, a weapon against the establishment in the tradition of Woody Guthrie, Phil Ochs and Pete Seeger, all firm believers in the power of song as a vehicle for social change.

Bragg's 1989 translation of "L'Internationale" and its subsequent inclusion on the 1990 album share a context and metatextual setting that clearly align the agency of the singer-translator with that of the original authors and earlier translators. The recontextualization undertaken by Bragg not only preserves the spirit and purpose of the original but also infuses it with a renewed vitality, rendering it relevant to workers actively advocating for their rights through action and to supporters who align with worker's causes or who object to social injustices. This approach persists in Bragg's translation of the second and third verses as well.

***Bragg's translation of the second and third verse***

The second verse of the Bragg translation is most likely the version that is mostly representative of both Bragg's spirit of adaptation and the maintenance of the source text sentiments. Stressing once again that the working class should free itself from the shackles of exploitation, a very Marxist idea in itself, all labourers should indeed be united and undivided ("let no one build walls to divide us"). Added to that idea is the idea that we all inhabit this one planet and that no national borders should stand in the way of social justice.

| | |
|---|---|
| LI/TI-4<br>(1989/1990) | Let no one build walls to divide us / Walls of hatred nor walls of stone<br>Come greet the dawn and stand beside us / We'll live together or we'll die alone<br>In our world poisoned by exploitation / Those who have taken, now they must give<br>And end the vanity of nations / We've but one Earth on which to live |

Figure 4: the second verse of the Bragg translation.

At the start of the third verse, Bragg compensates for the loss of "lutte finale" in the translation of the chorus through "the final drama". In a more typical intertextual approach, "unbowed" could be viewed as an echo from the past. In the poem "Invictus"

(written in 1875 and published in 1888 – at exactly the same period as "L'Internationale"), William Henley (1849–1903) used the phrase "my head is bloody but unbowed". Although the reference was not intentional (BRAGG 2022), the word 'unbowed' does have a long tradition of representing an attitude of resilience. The image of standing unbowed in front of armour also resonates with the world-renowned image of one single student-protester at Tiananmen holding up a line of tanks, representing the courage behind anyone's cry for action against oppressors – "definitely a no pasarán thing" (ibid.).[17] In 2020, an edit was introduced into the translation, "like and love" became "life and love" (ibid.). If you love life, you also cherish likeminded activists.

| | |
|---|---|
| LI/TI-4<br>(1989/1990) | And so begins the final drama / In the streets and in the fields<br>We stand unbowed before their armour / We defy their guns and shields<br>When we fight, provoked by their aggression / Let us be inspired by life and love<br>For though they offer us concessions / Change will not come from above |

Figure 5: the third and last verse of the Bragg translation.

**Conclusion**

The 1989/1990 Bragg version of "L'Internationale" favoured a choice for adequacy of spirit and connotation on the one hand and a choice for acceptability in the target cultural environment on the other. Even though the Bragg translation has elements of rewriting and adaptation, the singer-translator has built on the original with as much respect as possible, maintaining its empathetic lyrics and arousing tune in an attitude of resistance. On the day the author spoke to Billy Bragg about "The Internationale", the singer-songwriter had just returned from a set, supporting a picket line in Bridport, performing "to encourage people to engage with their sentiments" when singing together in social collectivity (BRAGG 2022).

The target audience of the Bragg translation of *L'Internationale* is not defined by language. With English being the lingua franca it is, spoken and recognised across the globe, specific activist anthems for labourers in their fight for their rights clearly transcend the 'English only' singability. The recognition of the tune will already play into the hands of those who sing it in English, maybe even without knowing much about its lyrics, but empathy will follow, sympathy among those who are singing the lyrics will become stronger, both during a specific event and across different events/sites/venues. Like earlier translations, the core messaging has been shifting; it has been recontextualised through selected translation strategies in support of the translator's agency and through application of metatextual parameters, not least paratextual ones such as presentation, and extratextual ones that allowed for a reinvigorated purpose in answer to the adapted contextual parameters that draw from different spatial and temporal settings.

The power of "L'Internationale" / "The Internationale", especially the Bragg version, is still capable of acting as a vehicle for communal freedom as well as social change,

[17] 'Unbowed' initially did not make it into the translation. "We bear our chest before their armour", Bragg's first solution, was discarded by Peggy Seeger who pointed out that both connotation and denotation were different for women (BRAGG 2022).

although limitations and other dimensions have affected that capacity. "You don't get to sing "The Internationale" every night [...] but there are moments when you bring that song out [...] you are connecting with something bigger than what you are doing there that day, you are connecting to a tradition" and this is very important as both social media and digitisation has changed reception of culture and perception of sharedness (ibid.).

Bragg adapted the song and its lyrics to our contemporary world, even though the internationalism of "The Internationale" is battling it out with globalisation – that ultimate exploitation of people somewhere for the benefit of people elsewhere, whilst the latter have become detached from the rights of the former. The anthem, now nearly 150 years old, therefore remains a symbol of internationalism, of cross-cultural solidarity, trying to encourage people to feel something beyond their own personal experience, to allow music to draw out emotions, see that music is empathy and that you are not alone (cf. ibid.) and that indeed you have nothing if you have no rights. It should therefore be noted that, in light of the predominantly male-dominated realm surrounding "L'Internationale" (both the original and the various English translations), and in light of acknowledging the persisting challenges women face in engaging with the music industry compared to their male counterparts (cf. ibid.), the translator-performer Billy Bragg has been extensively involved in bringing attention to social injustices rooted in gender disparities.

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# Representing translation in a documentary about one of the world's most translated songs. 'Translatedness' in Peter Miller's *The Internationale* (2000).

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**Abstract**

*This paper analyses 'translatedness' – representations of translation and the ways and extent to which the act of translation are made explicit – in the short documentary* The Internationale *(2000). How is translation represented in a film about one of the world's most widely translated and disseminated songs? Drawing inspiration from film narratology, it first examines the auditive and visual meaning-making resources at work in the documentary, keying in on how these combine in complex ways to render translatedness and give it meaning. Four representation types emerge from the analysis: translation as music; translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide dissemination; (non)translation and multilingual choruses; and cultural translation. These inform a discussion of the ideological implications of a documentary narrative that acknowledges the pivotal role of translation in the song's international dissemination but ultimately portrays (re)translation into English as the best way to revive its change potential and redeem it from past misuses. This seeming Anglocentrism sits somewhat uneasily alongside the song's long and varied translation history and its past ideological investments.*

*Keywords: translatedness, documentary film, representation of translation, The Internationale, film narratology*

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**Jack McMartin**

# Representing translation in a documentary about one of the world's most translated songs

## 'Translatedness' in Peter Miller's *The Internationale* (2000)

*This paper analyses 'translatedness' – representations of translation and the ways and extent to which the act of translation are made explicit – in the short documentary* The Internationale *(2000). How is translation represented in a film about one of the world's most widely translated and disseminated songs? Drawing inspiration from film narratology, it first examines the auditive and visual meaning-making resources at work in the documentary, keying in on how these combine in complex ways to render translatedness and give it meaning. Four representation types emerge from the analysis: translation as music; translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide dissemination; (non)translation and multilingual choruses; and cultural translation. These inform a discussion of the ideological implications of a documentary narrative that acknowledges the pivotal role of translation in the song's international dissemination but ultimately portrays (re)translation into English as the best way to revive its change potential and redeem it from past misuses. This seeming Anglocentrism sits somewhat uneasily alongside the song's long and varied translation history and its past ideological investments.*

### Introduction

In a public lecture delivered in London on 17 May 2019,[1] Robin D. G. Kelley, the prominent American historian of music and Marxism in the African American diaspora, called "L'Internationale" "the only song to change the world".[2] He likens the anthem of international solidarity and revolution to a blues, thereby sounding the argument that, through the song – and particularly through the *music* of the song – a politics of intersectional solidary becomes possible, connecting racial struggles with those of the international working class. This transpositioning of "L'Internationale" as an expression of the Black American experience is just one example of the song's specific social uses among many others, including those collected in this focus issue. The song's complex dissemination history, spanning a century and a half and all corners of the globe, goes hand in hand with its many lives in translation. Indeed, "L'Internationale" was made to be sung in every language. And, as Kelley notes in his remarks on a recent Afrikaans rendition of the song by Liela Groenewald,[3] the *way* the song is performed

[1] See https://soundcloud.com/lsepodcasts/internationale-blues.

[2] Throughout the paper, I use "L'Internationale" to refer to the song and *The Internationale* to refer to the film.

[3] See https://archive.org/details/the-internationale-afrikaans-die-internasionale-afrikaans.

has as much change potential as the message carried in its lyrics. In his example, the Afrikaans of Groenewald is "translated" (Kelley's words) to a post-Apartheid reality through the rendition's bluesy musicality, countering the status of Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor and inscribing it instead within a musical language of shared, open-ended struggle. As we will see, our artifact also seeks to link the song's musicality with new social uses, ultimately arguing for its revitalisation through a new rendition with revised English lyrics.

All these aspects – the song's worldwide dissemination, its myriad social uses, its constant musical and lyrical adaptation – point to complex forms of translation and illustrate the challenge that chroniclers of the song's translation history face: how to tell the story of "L'Internationale"? This paper takes up the specific case of the short documentary *The Internationale* (2000, First Run/Icarus Films, 30 min.), directed and produced by Peter Miller and narrated by the folk singer Pete Seeger. It asks: how is translation represented in a documentary film about a widely translated and disseminated song and what do its representations of translation reveal about the film's ideological investments vis-à-vis translation?

**Conceptual framework**

In the age of global media convergence, documentary film has become a dominant form of non-fiction storytelling. 'Translation', in the context of documentary filmmaking, is a complex matter because meaning-making (and its referent in this genre, 'truth-making', cf. NICHOLS 2016) involves combining written, oral, aural and visual inputs, which are constantly being mixed and remixed to construct a discourse of factuality and truthfulness. In the case of a documentary film about a widely translated song, translation also becomes *part of the story*: it is both a frame for parsing polysemiotic meaning-making resources and something these resources are made to represent. It is from this dual awareness that I attempt an analysis of 'translatedness' in the short documentary film *The Internationale*.

Venuti's lamentations on the invisibility of the translator are well known (Venuti 2018 [1995]), but less is known about how translators, translation and multilingualism are made visible in terms of expressive techniques and narrative motifs. By focusing on translatedness in *The Internationale*, this study contributes to a small but growing body of research on representations of translation in literature and film (see KRIPPER 2023; DRANENKO 2022; KAINDL 2012; CRONIN 2009; DELABASTITA & GRUTMAN 2005), including in documentary film (see VAN HECKE & LANSLOTS 2020). Because the film's subject is a widely translated song, it also taps into research on song translation (see FRANZON et al. 2021; SUSAM-SARAJEVA 2008). Concretely, it explores how a song's musicality can be synonymised cinematically with translation (see below).

I define translatedness as representations of translation in a text and the ways and extent to which translation is made explicit, grounding this definition in film narratology. As audiovisual texts rely on polysemiotic meaning-making resources to create representations, film narratology (VERSTRATEN 2009) provides a useful starting point for

analysis. Bringing Mieke Bal's (2009 [1980]) seminal theory of narrative to film studies, Verstraten provides a framework for analysing cinematic techniques as narrative, including external and internal narration, visual and auditive focalization, the narrative force of sound and music, and the ambiguities caused by voice-overs, flashbacks and montages. Narratology has meanwhile been widely applied to analyse filmic representations (see KUHN & SCHMIDT 2013), but has only seldom been used to examine filmic representations of translation.

Narratology has also on occasion converged with other areas in translation studies, for instance on the topic of audiovisual translation and, more specifically, audio-description (MATAMALA RIPOOL & REMAEL 2015; VERCAUTEREN 2014, 2012; VANDAELE 2012; KRUGER 2010). Within this discourse, film narratology is used as a framework for systematizing available audio-description strategies. Film narratology has also been taken up by researchers in the neighbouring discipline of media studies as part of an ongoing effort to develop a "genuinely transmedial narratology" that "allows for the analysis of *transmedial strategies of narrative representation* and their realization within the specific mediality of contemporary films" (THON 2016, emphasis in the original). Separately, film studies scholars have looked at how truth is rendered in documentary film, and to what artistic and social effects (e.g., NICHOLS 2016, 1991; NISBET & AUFDERHEIDE 2009). One such effect that I will return to later in the paper is what Alison Landsberg (2004; 2018) calls 'prosthetic memory', which advances from the idea that "memories bridge the temporal chasms that separate individuals from the meaningful and potentially interpellative events of the past" and furthermore that (documentary) films and other memory sites make it "possible to have an intimate relationship to memories of events through which one did not live" (LANDSBERG 2018: 148). In this discourse, documentary films are considered not only "part of a larger effort to spark debate, mold public opinion, shape policy, and build activist networks" (NISBET & AUFDERHEIDE 2009), but also as "a catalyst for [...] progressive politics and collective action" (LANDSBERG 2018: 144), precisely because they instrumentalise prosthetic memory in the service of progressive political alliances and solidarities. This "cinematic technology" (ibid.: 153) relies on techniques that aim to 'translate the real to the reel', including talking-head eyewitness interviews, archival footage, montages, and expert voice-overs (see SANCHEZ 2022 for a translation studies perspective on documentary film). These same conventions can also be used to ironic, humorous, or subversive effect, as the mockumentary subgenre demonstrates (WALLACE 2019).

These conceptual lines – film narratology, transmediality, conventions of documentary film – are called upon in this paper to single out how translatedness contributes to truth-making in *The Internationale*. The question becomes to what extent translation is presented as part of an 'objective' story of the worldwide diffusion of "L'Internationale", and how, and with what evidence, that narrative is constructed. As with any analysis of representation, my focus is not only on how representation is achieved in technical terms, but also on what is represented (and what is not). This opens room to examine the ideological stakes involved in the story told in *The Internationale*, and specifically the ideology that is conveyed through its representations of translation.

Ideology is a notoriously elusive concept to define, including in relation to translation (BAUMGARTEN 2012: 59). However, for the sake of this analysis, ideology is taken to refer to the beliefs, values, and perspectives that shape how *The Internationale*'s filmmaker interprets and represents reality. These are assumed to be perceivable in the filmic text and interpretable by the researcher: just as the ideological mediation of a translator can be gleaned from their 'voice' or 'discursive presence' in the translated text (HERMANS 1996), so too can the ideological mediation of the documentary filmmaker be gleaned from how they actively select, arrange, and interpret footage, interviews, and other elements to construct a coherent truth narrative. This narrative is not a neutral recounting of events but a crafted story that reflects an ideological stance. Through narrative choices such as what stories to tell, whose voices to highlight, and how translatedness is achieved (or not), the filmmaker's ideology subtly or overtly influences the audience's perception of the fact of translation. The interplay between ideology and narrative highlights the inherent subjectivity in documentary filmmaking and the power of the filmmaker to shape discourses of truth. This observation invites a connection to broader discussions about translation and ideology and places the (documentary) filmmaker in a mediating role not unlike that of the translator (see MUNDAY 2007).

## *The Internationale*'s contexts of production and reception

As Maria Tymoczko (2003: 183) emphasises in her widely cited chapter "Ideology and the Position of the Translator", "the ideology of a translation resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator, and in its relevance to the receiving audience." Likewise, before turning to the documentary film itself, it is helpful to situate *The Internationale* in its "'place' of enunciation" (ibid.) by briefly profiling Peter Miller, the film's producer and director, and by describing its contexts of production and reception.[4] Miller is an Emmy- and Peabody-award winning documentary filmmaker and had worked as a co-producer with the well-known filmmaker Ken Burns on several documentaries before *The Internationale*, including the acclaimed ten-episode documentary series *Jazz* (2001). Miller's activism is evident in other, earlier work, including as a co-producer for Barbara Kopple's 1990 documentary of the Hormel meat-packer's strike, *The American Dream* (NEKOLA 2003: 150). Since *The Internationale*, Miller has accrued twenty-one credits as a director or producer of documentary films, winning an Emmy in 2018 for his documentary *Man of Many Voices* (2016), on the conductor Robert Shaw, among other awards.

[4] Another prominent figure implicated in the *The Internationale*'s production and reception context is its main narrator, the American folk singer and activist Pete Seeger (1919–2014). Seeger also played a key role in the latest chapter of the song's English-language translation history by encouraging the English singer-songwriter and activist Billy Bragg to revamp the English lyrics and realign the song to new groups and causes (see Christophe Declercq's contribution in this focus issue). Bragg's version receives outsized attention in the film and is pivotal to its overall narrative arc, as discussed below.

At thirty minutes long, the film falls in the 'documentary short' category. This signals one of its important social uses: unlike long-form documentaries made for broadcast television or movie theatres, *The Internationale* was meant to be shown at union meetings, political gatherings, and in classrooms. Although a made-for-television or cinematic format could potentially have offered a broader audience, it "[did] not always match the needs of activists, labor educators, and college and high school teachers" (FLETCHER 2002: 190) in the United States, which were the film's primary intended audience. The film also reached limited television audiences via regional affiliates of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), which aired the film regularly throughout the 2000s.

*The Internationale* was produced and distributed as a VHS tape in 2000 by the Brooklyn, New York-based independent production house First Run/Icarus Films. Attempts to track down information about production budget and distribution figures were unsuccessful, but the film has a high production value and was commercially available. It was screened on the independent film festival circuit in 2001, winning one accolade, the jury prize for Best Documentary Short Film at the 2001 Woodstock Film Festival. A smattering of reviews appeared in specialised academic journals and left-leaning cinephile media outlets in the two years following its release. A few additional reviews appeared when the film was re-released on DVD in 2006–2007. In all, I was able to find eleven English-language reviews of the film, which range in length from one to three pages and were generally favourable and sympathetic to the cause.

Interestingly, among the special features included on the DVD was a Second World War-era television performance of an all-Allies version of *Hymn of the Nations*, which was originally produced for inclusion in a US Office of War Information documentary and features Arturo Toscanini's arrangement mixing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "L'Internationale" in the same musical score. (A Russian version of "L'Internationale" was adopted as the official anthem of Russia in 1918 and of the Soviet Union in 1922 and relinquished in 1944, shortly after Toscanini's filmed performance. See Pieter Boulogne's contribution to this focus issue for more on "L'Internationale" in Russian.) This is notable because "L'Internationale" had been cut from the film version of *Hymn of the Nations* at the onset of the Cold War. Its inclusion among the DVD's special features harkens back to a time when the United States and the Soviet Union were allies and performs a rapprochement of sorts between West and East, a decade-and-a-half after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The DVD also included a booklet containing "A Brief History of the 'The Internationale'" and song lyrics in several different languages. (Although these paratextual materials certainly bear on the 'translatedness' of the material object that is the DVD, I leave them out of the analysis below in order to focus on the film itself.)

The narrow diffusion and reception of *The Internationale* in the United States should be seen against the lingering presence of Cold-War antagonisms in the post-Cold War period. Although the film condemns the connotations of state communism that the song acquired when it was adopted as the official anthem of the Soviet Union, its association with 'the Reds' in inverted commas and the long-standing (and still-ongoing)

suppression of communist and socialist ideologies in the United States more generally contribute to the song's relative obscurity in the American context. As Anna Nekola notes,

*Music and text for "The Internationale" are rarely printed in the many published collections of American folksongs or American work and labor songs produced after 1930. Instead, the song appears to be confined to collections of socialist songs, published most often by small, independent, and often radical presses.* (2003: 51)

*The Internationale*, too, seems to have had a similarly restricted diffusion. Produced by a left-leaning, independent production house for audiences sympathetic to the cause, its reception was largely limited to this specific sub-culture: specialised academic journals, cinephile media outlets, and activist audiences.

**How to analyse 'translatedness' in an audiovisual text**

As mentioned, I define translatedness as representations of translation in a text and the ways and extent to which translation is made explicit. The text I analyse here is both *multimodal*, in that it combines multiple modes or channels of communication within a single (filmic) medium, including written and spoken language, still and moving images, audio and music, and *multimedial*, in that it uses multiple types of media (archival film footage, archival still images, original interview footage and the music itself in various styles and with lyrics in different languages) to tell a coherent story. Two interconnected questions can help unpack this complex semantic situation. One is keyed into the narrative aspect: what is the film's narrative structure and how is translation narrativized within in? A second is keyed into the technical aspect: how is translatedness rendered cinematically? Answers to these questions can help to address a second-order, interpretive question that is taken up in the concluding section of this paper: what ideological investments are projected in the film with regards to translation?

Proceeding from Verstraten's (2009) film-narratological model, I distinguish between two key tracks in filmic texts: the auditive track and the visual track. The visual track refers to a film's visual resources: still and moving images. Both the auditive and visual tracks may contain verbal resources (spoken word and written word, respectively), and both the auditive and visual tracks may at any time consist of multiple superimposed layers: the auditive track may include voice overlayed with ambient sound overlayed with music, for instance, whereas the visual track may include moving images and a graphic overlay, as when an interviewee appears on screen and their name is displayed in a lower third, for instance, or when English subtitles are shown under footage of "L'Internationale" being sung in other languages. In the filmic medium, the auditive track and the visual track are superimposed on one another in such a way that sound resources and visual resources are constantly co-constructing meaning.

*The Internationale* depends heavily on auditive resources (especially music), and this calls for particular care in parsing and analysing the auditive track. The auditive track

refers to all sound resources, be it intradiegetic sound (sound that is part of the story itself, or sound that can be assumed to be heard or made by the subjects being visually portrayed) or extradiegetic sound (sound added by the auditive narrator, or sound that can be assumed *not* to be heard or made by the subjects being visually portrayed). Given that the criterion distinguishing intra- and extradiegetic sound is whether the sound corresponds to what is being portrayed visually, it is possible that a single sound resource may shift from intra- to extradiegetic though the course of its duration, depending on the visual track to which it is paired. This happens, for example, when a 'talking-head' shot (where the visual resource is the interviewee speaking on camera and the sound resource is the interviewee's voice) cuts to a shot where the visual resource is something else (such as a montage of archival footage) while the sound resource remains the interviewee's voice, which now 'voices over' the visual resources. Voice-overs are a common technique in documentary films because the visual component helps amplify and illustrate the speaker's words. At the same time, the speaker's words add a contextualising layer to the visuals, often serving to authenticate or validate the visuals as being what the speaker says they are. *The Internationale* makes ample use of voice-overs to connect the interviewees' testimonies to archival materials in this way.

Music, a sound resource that is almost omnipresent in *The Internationale*, may also be either intra- or extra-diegetic. In a shot portraying a group of people singing accompanied by the sound of those people singing, the music is intradiegetic, whereas in a shot of protesters marching overlayed with a soundtrack of "L'Internationale", the music is extradiegetic. A combination of intradiegetic and extradiegetic music is also possible, as in a shot portraying a group of people singing accompanied by both the sound of those people singing and a soundtrack overlay of the song.

In terms of analysing translatedness, being attuned to the intra- and extradiegetic status of sound resources and their connection to the visuals being shown becomes particularly important in complex sequences, such as those that combine ambient (intradiegetic) sound, multiple versions of the song (music, be it extradiegetic or intradiegetic), archival footage portraying scenes from many different contexts (linked ostensibly to the context of the music), and subtitles (written verbal material linked ostensibly to the spoken/sung words). In such a complex semantic situation, any combination of these different resources can have a bearing on translatedness.

To identify the narrative structure of the film, I first separated the documentary into its constitutive segments, taking fade-in and fade-out markers as start and stop points for each segment. This not only produced an overview of the film's structure (see table 1), but it also made it possible to infer some of the segmenting criteria used by the filmmaker. Much of the film proceeds chronologically, for instance, and many of its segments present self-enclosed vignettes of the song in discrete spatio-temporal contexts. Each vignette features one or two 'talking heads' speaking retrospectively about their personal experience with the song in relation to that particular context, interspersed with music and other auditive resources. The visual track switches between talking-head shots and archival footage. Some talking heads were involved in multiple

vignettes. For example, Bill Susman appears in the vignette on the first May Day demonstrations in the United States (because he attended them) as well as in the vignette on the Spanish Civil War (because he participated in it). At the beginning, middle and end of the film are segments of people actually singing the song: the opening segment is an English-subtitled montage of footage of people singing the song in different languages, times, and places; a middle segment has the various talking heads singing the song in their respective mother tongues; the closing segment has a women's choir singing Billy Bragg's English remake. I will argue that this structure is not random and demonstrates a clear narrative progression in service of clear ideological investments in relation to translation.

For each segment, I furthermore identified the auditive and visual resources used, paying special attention to how resources were combined, and which forms of media content were used. A schematic reconstruction of all story segments and their auditive and visual meaning-making resources was made and analysed in light of the research questions: how is translatedness rendered in technical terms? What meanings are ascribed to translation in the narrative? These questions were applied at two levels of analysis: the film's narrative structure as a whole (comprising all story segments) and select translation-relevant segments. The results generated by this methodology inform the discussion of 'translatedness' below, as well as the concluding remarks.

## Translatedness in *The Internationale*

Throughout the film, representations of translation are omnipresent, but the film's complexity as a multimodal text make the task of extracting these representations complex as well. Representations of translation ranged from the explicit, as when Seeger narrates in segment 2 that the song "spread throughout France, it spread throughout Europe. They translated it in dozens of languages, maybe hundreds for all I know," to complex representations, as in the opening segment, where Miller creates a visual and auditive montage blending renditions of the song in different languages with a sequence of historical and contemporary film clips from diverse settings. In the following sections, I analyse examples of translatedness in *The Internationale*, first in relation to the film's overall narrative structure, taking into account the content and arrangement of its constituent story segments, and then in relation to four distinct types of representations of translation that emerge in the film: translation as music; translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide dissemination; (non)translation and multilingual choruses; and cultural translation.

## The Internationale*'s narrative structure*

In eighteen segments separated by fade-in and fade-out transitions, *The Internationale* tells the story of the song by recounting the associations that various activists have with it and connecting these individual experiences to larger societal shifts and shared themes, including through the act of communal singing of the song itself. By linking the individual to the collective in this way, the song becomes a vehicle for scrutinizing

the uncertain prospects of the leftist movements around the world that embraced it, culminating in a forward-looking expression of hope that the revised British English version by Billy Bragg, stripped of past "baggage that we need to get rid of", in Bragg's words, would revitalize the song and appeal to new generations and contexts.

Three segment types characterise the narrative and build its structure: episodic segments (segments 2–9, 16), which are ordered more or less chronologically and focus on the song in a specific time and place; thematic segments (segments 10–12, 14 and 15), which draw on different historical and geographic contexts to criticise or advocate a particular aspect of the song's perceived uses and misuses; and musical segments (segments 1, 13 and 18), which feature the singing of the song in various languages and which bookend the two main components of the film's narrative arc: retrospective reflections (segments 2–12), and forward-looking projections (segments 14–17).

After the opening musical segment (see the section on 'Translation as music' below), the film's narrative begins in earnest with a segment narrated by Pete Seeger chronicling the emergence and early dissemination of the French original, starting in 1871 with Eugène Pottier's penning of the poem at the fall of the Paris Commune, Pierre Degeyter's addition of a melody seventeen years later, and the song's subsequent spread throughout France, the rest of Europe, and eventually other parts of the world. The segment finishes with Seeger playing the melody on his acoustic guitar and singing the closing lines of the song in his heavily accented French, the only time the song is heard in the film with its original French lyrics.

Through a combination of archival footage interspersed with talking-head testimonies and song overlays, the eight segments that follow trace the social uses of the song in discrete times, places, and languages, narrated (in English) by activists connected to them: as a rallying cry sung by labour organisers at early May Day demonstrations across the United States (segment 3) and at the 1912 Bread and Roses strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts (segment 4), narrated by the socialist literary critic Annette Rubenstein and activist Bill Susman; as the national anthem of Russia following the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in the October Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922, narrated by the Russian music historian Vladimir Zak (segment 5); as a protest song of the socialist kibbutzim of the 1940s, in what is today Israel, narrated by kibbutznik Yehoshua Zamir (segment 6); as a childhood lullaby sung to Marina-Feleo Gonzalez, the daughter of the peasant leader and politician Juan Feleo, whose assassination in 1946 sparked the Huk Rebellion during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines; as a song sung by the American labour organiser Dorothy Ray Healy in a San Jose county jail after being arrested with striking Mexican migrant workers in 1931 (segment 8); as a martial song sung by foreign volunteers supporting the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), narrated by Bill Susman, who returns to the narrative in his capacity as an Abraham Lincoln Brigade veteran (segment 9).

Following these episodic segments, several thematic segments draw on events from different historical and geographic contexts to advocate or criticise a particular aspect of the song. Segment 10, narrated by the American labourlorist Archie Green and folk

singer Pete Seeger, laments the transition of "L'Internationale" from a general protest song that could be used by anarchists, socialists, communists and trade unionists alike to one that became predominantly and pejoratively linked to the Soviet Union and state communism – a link, the film points out, that was exploited by motion picture newsreels and television broadcasters in the United States during the Red Scare. The short segment on reggae renditions of the song in Jamaica, narrated by the Jamaican activist Maurice Jackson, focuses on how "older comrades couldn't understand how the song could be bastardized" (segment 11). In segment 12, Archie Green and Dorothy Ray Healy return to comment on an internal tension in the English lyrics of the song, particularly the line "No more tradition's chains shall bind us", which harkens a post-capitalist and post-church clean slate but naively fails to imagine what might come after. Here, the filmmaker offers an answer through clever editing: the usual talking-head and archival materials are present in this segment but are overlayed with in-colour audiovisuals of an all-male Soviet military choir full-throatily singing "L'Internationale" in Russian, reiterating the lament expressed in segment 10 that the song's idealism had been co-opted by state communism.

These vignettes culminate with a second musical montage (segment 13) of the above interviewees singing "L'Internationale" in different languages, echoing the opening sequence in its sounding of multilingualism and in its featuring the singing of the song; however, where the opening segment relied on historical visual and auditive materials and provided English subtitles, segment 13 uses 'native' materials of the interviewees singing themselves, this time without subtitles. This technique simultaneously connects the collective to the individual and the extradiegetic to the intradiegetic and insinuates the narrative's denouement: the need for a new English version.

In terms of its order in the overall narrative structure of the film, the second musical segment serves to segue from the episodic and thematic segments discussed above, which are retrospective, to the remaining segments of the film, which are forward-looking: segments 14 and 15 introspectively revive a youthful vitality for the song by linking it to student activists in the United States and China after Tiananmen, setting up two final segments presenting Billy Bragg's English adaptation as a new riff on a familiar tune: by retaining the melody of the song but grafting on new lyrics, the Bragg rendition is presented as fit for future generations and new uses (segments 16 and 17).

| **Segment #** | **Segment type** | **Segment perspective** | **Segment topic** | **Segment timecode** | **Segment time elapsed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Musical | | Opening montage | 0:00–1:01 | 1:01 |
| 2 | Episodic | Retrospective | Paris Commune | 1:02–3:01 | 1:59 |
| 3 | Episodic | Retrospective | May Day demonstrations in the US | 3:02–4:02 | 1:00 |
| 4 | Episodic | Retrospective | Workers' strike in Lawrence, MA | 4:03–4:37 | 0:34 |
| 5 | Episodic | Retrospective | Bolsheviks embrace song | 4:37–5:36 | 0:59 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Episodic | Retrospective | Israeli kibbutz | 5:36–6:28 | 0:52 |
| 7 | Episodic | Retrospective | Assassination of Filipino organizer Juan Feleo | 6:29–8:32 | 2:03 |
| 8 | Episodic | Retrospective | The San Jose pickers' strike | 8:33–9:46 | 1:13 |
| 9 | Episodic | Retrospective | The rise of fascism and the Spanish Civil War | 9:47–12:26 | 2:39 |
| 10 | Thematic | Retrospective | From general radical song to Soviet song | 12:26–13:47 | 1:21 |
| 11 | Thematic | Retrospective | Jamaican reggae rendition | 13:47–14:27 | 0:40 |
| 12 | Thematic | Retrospective | "No more traditions' chain shall bind us"? | 14:27–16:26 | 1:59 |
| 13 | Musical | | Interviewees singing in different languages | 16:27–17:21 | 0:54 |
| 14 | Thematic | Forward-looking | The tragedy of idealism | 17:22–21:19 | 3:54 |
| 15 | Thematic | Forward-looking | Students from Texas to Tiananmen | 21:20–23:30 | 2:10 |
| 16 | Episodic | Forward-looking | Billy Bragg's rendition | 23:31–26:00 | 2:29 |
| 17 | Thematic | Forward-looking | Reviving and reliving the dream? | 26:00–27:08 | 1:08 |
| 18 | Musical | | Closing sequence (women's choir singing Bragg's rendition) | 27:08–28:47 | 1:39 |
| 19 | Musical | | Credits | 28:48–30:00 | 1:12 |

Table 1: story segments in *The Internationale* by type, perspective, topic, chronology, and elapsed time. The documentary is viewable on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGmx3D2n5IU). Readers can use the timecodes provided to navigate through the segments.

### ***Representations of translation in*** **The Internationale**

While space constraints prohibit an exhaustive explication of translatedness in every segment of *The Internationale*, I consolidate translation-relevant components of different segments into four main types of representations that emerged in the film: translation as music, translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide dissemination, (non)translation and multilingual choruses, and cultural translation.

#### *Translation as music*

The documentary opens with an entreaty spoken in a tinny voice fit for a 1930's American newsreel: "Now let's all sing the International!" This sets up a striking visual montage that stitches together archival footage from rallies, strikes, marching troops, and singing masses in different decades and places, set against a synchronous audio montage of the opening verse of "L'Internationale" in different languages, tempos and musical styles. Each line of the song introduces a different historical context and language

version – we hear Chinese, Russian, Filipino, Spanish and English and are shown images of Tiananmen, euphoric Bolsheviks, striking peasants, Spanish Republican soldiers on the march, and May Day protesters. (These are also the contexts covered in the specific vignettes that follow later in the film.) Notably, the archival footage is overlayed with a second visual track: English subtitles. The text displayed is Charles Hope Kerr's 1900 American English translation, very slightly adapted (the *ye*'s are changed to *you*'s). The montage finishes with Pete Seeger singing the closing lines of the refrain in French: "L'Internationale / Sera le genre humain." This visual and auditive montage combines to become more than the sum of its parts: by building one spatial-temporal context on top of another, and sounding these with one language after another, the montage has the effect of compounding, swelling and expanding until its common denominator – the melody of the song – seems to encompass all the world, and all its languages.

Translatedness is signaled here by the song itself, in that it enables a common mode of communication and shared experience across linguistic and spatio-temporal boundaries. Such a representation of translation keys into the truism attributed to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that 'music is the universal language of mankind' (a truism that has also recently become a topic of serious scientific investigation, e.g., MEHR et al. 2019): even if one cannot understand the lyrics, one can 'feel' the rhythm and hear the melody to understand the message conveyed by the song, a message that resonates similarly in different social contexts, and for different audiences, all over the world. Indeed, this is a sentiment that is reiterated in the testimonies of several of the interviewees later in the film. For example, Li Lu, a student leader of the Tiananmen Square protests, states, "I never paid much attention to [the] words of '[the] Internationale'. But the melody of the song always [brought] me into a very special mood." Marina Feleo Gonzales, daughter of Juan Feleo, reminisces about her response to the song as an infant: "It was [sung] to me, actually, like a lullaby. And, you know, I was a baby. I didn't know the difference between Brahms' 'Lullaby' and 'The Internationale' and somehow, I loved 'The Internationale' better." Dorothy Ray Heely, referring to the experience of singing the song in a multilingual chorus with her Spanish-speaking cellmates, says, "It was just kind of an immediate means of communication, of identification, across language barriers, across country barriers. The song bridged all the countries of the world."

In another way, translatedness is also signaled in this segment by the English subtitles that are overlayed on the visual track and that portend to offer an interlingual translation of the various language versions heard in the primary audio track. In light of the discussion above, it is notable that the verbal resources used in the subtitles are not Billy Bragg's lyrics but rather those of Kerr's English translation, made a century earlier. This is consistent with how the overall narrative of the film proceeds, with chronologically ordered, retrospective vignettes leading to a dénouement offered by Bragg's new version. Both ways of representing translation – as something achieved by a common melody that transcends languages, and as a multilingual artifact that requires translation to be understood by an Anglophone audience – seem to be at odds but nonetheless

exist together in this segment, a good illustration of the complex, multimodal rendering of translatedness in the film.

*Translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide diffusion*
The musical montage is followed by a second segment in which the main narrator, Pete Seeger, provides information about the early provenance of the song and the poem-cum-lyrics while playing the melody on his acoustic guitar. He has just finished singing the French version. His manner is folksy, colloquial, understated. He reports the following information as if it were relayed to him by a friend, feigning ignorance when confronted with foreign-sounding names and factual information, and even at times adding a layer of comedic irony:

*This is the original French of a famous socialist song, a famous revolutionary song. The words were written in May 1871. The Paris Commune had fallen. A man, I think he was in his forties at the time, had been elected mayor of one of the districts of Paris but now he was fleeing for his life. He was in hiding. Eugène Potier — I think that's how he pronounced his name — and that very month of May 1871 he writes six long verses and a chorus, calling on all hard-working people of the entire world to overthrow their masters, and he was quite confident that they would, soon. A few years later, the book happens into the hands of a younger man, Pierre De Geyter. He led a chorus in his factory, and, I'm told, in a basement apartment, on his pump organ, he made up a melody. Uh, this young musician had a hit song, at least in certain circles.*

The visual resources switch back and forth between a full body shot of a guitar-slinging Seeger speaking and a Ken Burns montage of black-and-white images of the Paris Commune, Potier and De Geyter. The auditive resources, alongside Seeger's voice and guitar, blend historical recordings of the song being played on a pump organ, cued to the verbal resources stating that De Geyter composed the melody on a similar instrument.
The first overt mention of (interlingual) translation in the film follows this origin story. Seeger recounts: "It spread throughout France, it spread throughout Europe. They translated it in dozens of languages. Maybe hundreds for all I know. It was sung all around the world, still is, by socialists, communists, anarchists. All sorts of people sing this song." This auditive material is accompanied by visuals showing a pan shot of old sheet music with trilingual lyrics in French, German and Polish. The meaning-making behind this first explicit mention of translation is notable for various reasons. One is Seeger's imprecision – is it dozens or hundreds of translations? Cross-referencing with the visual materials, one is shown only two translations alongside the original French. It is enough, apparently, to signal translation by showing verbal material from a handful of foreign languages in the same shot while at the same time stating that a great many translations exist. This imprecise accounting for the fact of translation, I argue, is calculated: it lets translation stand as an indicator of the song's widespread diffusion without bothering with the specifics of each language version's and each rendition's

genesis and uses.[5] Translation is taken for granted here; it is not represented as the means through which the song's dissemination was made possible, but rather as a logical by-product of the song's broad appeal among 'all sorts of people'. It is a motif for expressing worldwide dissemination and not much more.

*(Non)translation and multilingual choruses*

Other segments echo the notion of translatedness as it appeared in the opening montage – that the song's common melody transcends languages, time and space and therefore is itself a form of translation in its own right. In such an act of musical translation, each singer contributes their own language to the multilingual chorus. Segment 4, for example, recalls the singing of "L'Internationale" in 1912 at the "Bread and Roses" strike, a pivotal event in the history of the American labour movement involving primarily immigrant textile workers. We hear a voice-over by Seegers and see visuals showing a photo montage of black-and-white images from labour rallies across the United States, fading into a folk painting of Big Bill Hayward on his horse. Seegers recounts:

*In 1912 it was sung in many different languages simultaneously by the strikers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The famous strike led by the wildling Big Bill Hayward. [He] came up there to speak. Nobody thought they could stick together. They had Irish and German and Italian and Polish and all. And they all sang, in their own language, this song.*

A similar experience and sense of translatedness is recounted by Dorothy Healy in segment 8 on the San Jose pickers' strike. Healy shares how she was arrested with migratory lettuce pickers in the Imperial Valley and held in jail for 180 days. We see footage of police breaking up strikes and meetings, and images of the jailhouse. The background music from Seeger's guitar returns and Healy recounts:

*One of the ways in which I passed the time was teaching my fellow prisoners how to sing radical songs. The strikers were part of that generation of Mexicans who had grown up with the Mexican revolution so that both the strikers and the women prisoners also knew "The International" in Spanish. [The visual track shows a slow pan over a document with the Spanish lyrics.] It was just kind of an immediate means of communication, of identification, across language barriers, across country barriers. The song bridged all the countries of the world.*

Bill Susman, who was wounded in action while fighting with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, recounts how he and the other patients recovering at a military hospital sang the song to keep morale high:

[5] A Wikidata page on the song counts translations in no less than 100 languages. (See https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q49617)

*One day when they ran out of entertainers and we had to fall back on our own resources, the chief of entertainment called on us all to come up on the stage one at a time and sing "The Internationale" in whatever language was our own language. And well over forty languages were represented on the stage. Each one would sing a few words in their own language and then go on to the next one – or we would have been there all night. And then finally everybody sang the song together in their own languages, so that we heard it sung in Javanese, and we heard it sung in Tamil, and we heard it sung in Hindi and English and French and German and Russian and Spanish and every which language you could think of and more, and many, many more.*

These examples contribute an additional component to the music-as-translation representation: not only do they underwrite the idea that the music is what achieves mutual understanding regardless of the lyrics; the singing of one's own language version, in chorus with others, actually enhanced the bridging aspect of the song ("nobody thought they could stick together") and made it more enjoyable to sing ("we had to fall back on our own resources"). In this way, the representation of translation-as-music actually celebrates multilingualism and what might be called non-translation in the conventional sense, attributing translational power to the music and to the act of communal singing, the more languages the better.

*Cultural translation*

A final grouping of representations of translation can be related to what Homi K. Bhabha expounded as 'cultural translation' (1994). Bhabha writes that "translation is the performative nature of cultural communication" (228). This meaning of translation, which stems from a postcolonial and postmodernist discourse (and yet accommodates post-Marxist ideologies, as we will see), differs from the others signalled in the film in that it understands translation not strictly in a textual, linguistic or even musical sense but rather as a requisite form of expression imposed on all itinerant people – particularly migrants and others who live between cultures. Bhabha and others who discuss translation in this vein roughly equate translation with migrancy and the translation event with any and all expressions of multicultural, transnational life. Often, this brings with it an emphasis on hybrid and fragmented expressions of self, and always it carries with it an awareness that the structures of culture are subject to hegemonic power. This condition, for Bhabha, is what informs Salman Rushdie's remark that he and other diasporic postcolonial writers "are translated men" (1991: 16). The hegemon, for Bhabha and Rushdie, was the British empire and its constituent Western cultural forms. However, transposed to the lives and contexts chronicled in *The Internationale*, the hegemon can better be understood in the Gramscian sense to refer to the cultural, ideological and moral leadership exercised by the Marxist social order.

Cultural translation, as something intimately linked to itineracy and to hybridised personal expression emerging in between unequal cultures, seems to especially undergird the four forward-looking segments that conclude the film, which create personal, historical and ideological separation from the retrospective segments while also holding

fast to a collective past vested in the "spirit" of the song. Filling the space in between are imaginings of post-Marxist futures, grafted onto the song through acts of cultural translation.

Segment 14, the first forward-looking segment, is the film's longest, running nearly four minutes. It recounts the internal conflict felt by two of the film's previous interviewees, Zamir and Zak, when reconciling their own youthful idealism towards Marxist orthodoxy with the tragic history of "L'Internationale" in the twentieth century. The segment opens with Zamir stating,

*Many times when I sang this song, I really hoped, I really believed, that there would be a time that there would be no wars. That's something maybe when we were young we could sing without thinking twice. [...] The words that this would be the last battle, the last war, something so many people have wished, has not come to life yet.*

Zamir's words are voiced over a second, extradiegetic audio track of a particularly melancholic instrumental version of "L'Internationale". The accompanying visual track shows a slow pan of the sheet music and lyrics of Charles Hope Kerr's 1900 English version, fading into a black-and-white image of a younger Zamir, and then to colour footage of an older Zamir speaking to the camera. Notwithstanding Zamir's multilingual, Hebrew-English background, the effect achieved by this audiovisual arrangement is to attach earlier English versions of the song to his disillusionment. Zak, the Russian musicologist, does something similar with the Russian when he talks about how, for him, "L'Internationale" has come to represent the disillusionment of his father after the fall of the Soviet Union.

This sets up a transition to segment 15, which moves us to 1989 and juxtaposes the use of the song by student groups in the United States and China immediately following the Tiananmen Square protests. In a first shot, a small gathering of American students sing "L'Internationale" unsteadily from songbooks, many presumably for the first time. Some hold limp fists in the air. Student activist Jeff Lacher narrates,

*The first time I heard it, I was thinking to myself, 'This is kinda corny. We have a group song', you know? [...] The second time I heard it, I heard the words and understood what was going on and what the thoughts were. And now when I hear it, I have fifty different images that run through my mind. I may be thinking about the Abraham Lincoln Brigades fighting fascists in Spain; I may be thinking about the people in Chiapas; I may be thinking about people in Virginia and elsewhere that are fighting for justice. That song gave them strength. It gave them a feeling of being connected with generations before them and with their brothers and sisters in other countries.*

The visuals alternate between a talking-head of Lacher and black-and-white archival footage of the various historical flashpoints he mentions. By his own description, his experience of "L'Internationale" is iterative – the more he hears the song, the more strongly he identifies with the people, places and events he attaches to it – but it is also

*indirect*; his own attachment to these histories is mediated through the song itself and through his perceptions of the experiences of others. Although this involves a certain kind of itinerancy – the "fifty different images" that run through his mind 'transport' him mentally –, those people and places are not him or his and are accessible only through a postmodern litany of historical references and the exercise of empathy. In Bhaba's terms, Lacher is itinerant-by-imagination; his experience of the past is abstract and prompted by the song rather than lived and immediate.

A similarly mediated itineracy is offered to the viewer, who is given virtual access to the places Lacher mentions through savvy editing. Cultural translation is represented here as something conjured through a vicarious but artificial experience of a collective past, a technique captured well by Alison Landsberg's term 'prosthetic memory', which, fittingly, she initially discussed in the context of cinematic representations. "This new form of memory," she writes, "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past" and is mediated "through an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum," or, in our case, (a film about) a song. "In this moment of contact, an experience occurs through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history [...]. The person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live" (LANDSBERG 2004: 2).

The segment continues with a hard cut to video footage of Chinese students singing "L'Internationale" in Tiananmen Square, seemingly juxtaposing the abstract Marxist engagement of Lacher and the North American students for which he is the stand-in with the direct, pro-democracy activism of their Chinese counterparts. We see a talking-head of Li Lu, one of the student leaders pictured in the immediately preceding footage, reflecting on his experience a decade after the Tiananmen events. He describes how he has come to a new appreciation of the song, now recognising the Confucian ideal of ethical engagement and self-sacrifice where an erstwhile socialist message once was. His words are overlayed on top of student activists singing the song in Chinese:

*I don't think any students who were singing "The Internationale" in Tiananmen Square were thinking about communism or socialism. I think we're singing "The Internationale" to reassure ourselves to feel that we're a part of a greater, larger, perpetual human movement towards perfection. I never paid much attention to words of "[The] Internationale". But the melody of the song always [brought] me into a very special mood. And for a long time, I was thinking what it is. And I think I sort of know it now. I think it captures the essence of traditional Chinese thought, which is Confucianism, and their convictions of fighting for what you believed in, and, if necessary, they also need to sacrifice themself, and their sacrifice will be rewarded in history.*

The act of cultural translation effected here, embodied by Li Lu, lies in Lu's connecting the song not to communism or socialism but to Confucianism. (For more, see the documentary film on Lu's life, *Moving the Mountain*,[6] which appeared six years before *The International* and potentially prompted Peter Miller to cast Lu as an interviewee. Lu went on to become a hedge fund billionaire in the United States, another act of cultural translation along a remarkable personal trajectory spanning the Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen and Wall Street.)

It was purportedly also the Tiananmen events that prompted Billy Bragg to imbue the song with an ideological signature of his own. Analogous to Li Lu's efforts to link the song to Confucianism, Bragg's new English lyrics are an attempt to "translate" (his words) the song into a post-Marxist socialist project, with the important difference that whereas Lu's act of cultural translation was constrained to his own life as a 'translated man' straddling Chinese and western worlds, Bragg, himself straddling Marxist and post-Marxist perspectives, undertook to actually rewrite the English lyrics:

*I came to write a new version of "The International" after being encouraged by Pete Seeger at the Vancouver Folk Festival. This was in 1989, just after the Tiananmen Square episode. And we were all aware that the Chinese students had sang "The International" in Tiananmen Square and that's why we wanted to sing it at the folk festival. So I said, well I'd love to come and sing with the people. I know the British lyrics, which are different. And also they're very archaic to sing. I mean it is an old song, it's a very old song, but it has picked up a lot of baggage on the way. You know, the baggage of state communism. But I have argued with people that it's the baggage that we need to get rid of and not the actual spirit of the song itself. So with this idea I wrote a few more verses: "Stand up all victims of oppression, for the tyrants fear your might. Don't cling so hard to your possessions, for you have nothing if you have no rights. Let racist ignorance be ended." I think we're at a time now in our politics where we're in an interesting position where it's down to this generation to redefine what socialism and what communism means in a post-Marxist sense. And I think re-evaluating the old culture is important. And when we find something that still has meaning as an icon, "The Internationale", I think it's a good time to perhaps take it away from being an icon and put some new lyrics on it and see if it can translate into the twenty-first century.*

These statements seem at face value to harken back to the idea that the song was made to accommodate as many contexts and languages as possible, so long as its urtext remained a message of international solidarity. Both men insist that their reinterpretations can be traced back to the 'core' of the song. Li Lu speaks of its "very special mood" and Bragg of its "actual spirit". However, the viewer accepts Li Lu's transposition from Marxism to Confucianism and Bragg's proposition to strip the song of its baggage and iconicity – two acts of cultural translation – at their own peril. As the film historian Anna Nekola critiques:

[6] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6kQmoAke2A.

*When Billy Bragg speaks of changing the lyrics to make the song more relevant for the twenty-first century, I would have found it both helpful and interesting to have both the new and the old texts laid out together with the changes highlighted and explained. An analysis of the text and its permutations across time and place would also have contributed to a more complex understanding of the differences, as well as the similarities, among the many groups of people who have sung this song.* (2003: 150–151)

**Concluding remarks**

The question that has concerned us thus far has been how these differences and similarities were represented in *The Internationale*. While my approach is different from the careful comparative analysis of various language versions and adaptations Nekola calls for (and the other contributors to this focus issue heed), the emphasis on cinematic techniques of representation and on the representations of translation themselves does allow to highlight and explain what the possible *effects*, particularly the ideological effects, of those representations could be. Nekola criticises the film's treatment of Bragg's adaptation for blanketing over the many changes he introduced (his revised lyrics drop any mention of class conflict, for instance, instead condemning all forms of oppression and exploitation and introducing racism, environmental degradation, and preservation of human rights as common struggles). This turns out to be in line with how the film portrays translation overall. As we saw, the four main types of representations that emerged in the film – translation as music, translation as a result (rather than as a prerequisite) of worldwide dissemination, (non)translation and multilingual choruses, and cultural translation – all deemphasise the specificities of the great many translation events that constitute the worldwide dissemination of "L'Internationale", each event subject to their own unique set of situational, contextual, linguistic, etc., constraints. Instead, translation in the film is made to foreground the communicative power of music and its ability to transcend linguistic, political and generational boundaries. In other words, the film ostensibly assigns translational power to the song's melody, rhythm and emotive potential, rendering interlingual translation unproblematic (and easy to overcome with English subtitles) and implicitly underwriting an instrumentalist view of translation in Venuti's sense – that is, translation as "the reproduction or transfer of an invariant that is contained in or caused by the source text" (2019: 1), something presumed by the film to be achieved through instantly recognisable and universally felt music. This is carried through to the extent that translation in the context of multilingual choruses is seen as unnecessary or, in some cases, even unhelpful.

The film's representations of cultural translation furthermore serve to advance an underlying narrative of revival and an openness to new uses in a post-Marxist imagined future. As the analysis of the narrative structure of the film shows, the filmmaker assigns an especially important role to English, and specifically to Bragg's revised English lyrics, in bringing this future about. The song's English lifecycles are highlighted in five of the eleven retrospective segments and English is the central concern in all of the

forward-looking segments (with a minor role for Chinese). All testimonials are in English, a second language for several of the interviewees. When the song *is* sung in other languages by these same interviewees (segment 13), the Spanish and French versions are sung by Anglophones. When other languages are treated in the narrative, they fit in a clear story arch, with English playing a prominent role in the innocent early years as a language of diffusion, other language versions (especially the Russian) being implicated in failures and co-opting by the state, and English returning in the end as a source of rebirth. I argue that this seeming Anglocentrism is obscured by the way the film represents translation. Stated more strongly, the particular representations of translation discussed above serve to render the film's Anglocentrism largely invisible, at least on a surface level.

One technique that is implicated in this is the film's episodic segmentation; that is, its treatment of the song in specific spatio-temporal contexts, and the montaging of personal reflections with archival footage. Landsburg's notion of prosthetic memory helps to identify the potential effect this technique has on the viewer. Not only are each of the various episodes "a privately felt public memory" (LANDSBURG 2004: 2), they are also *portrayed* as such by the filmmaker. This underwrites the idea that film, and particularly documentary film, can itself be an important tool for prosthetic memory-making. In this light, the entire narrative structure of *The Internationale*, with its retrospective vignettes, forward-looking segments and musical bookends, can be seen as an entreaty to the viewer to form their own prosthetic memories of the song and thereby to internalise its message.

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