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EVERYDAY LIFE: Agency and Social Structures



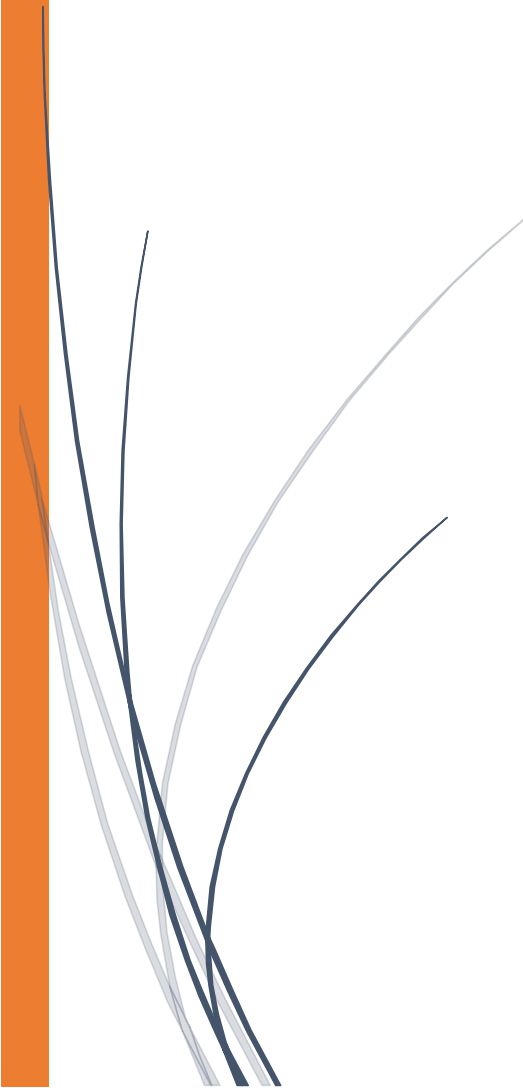
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Editor's Introduction

The notion of everyday life is representative of modernity, first appearing in common language in England at the beginning of the 17th century. At that time, the everyday life meant the routine of daily work, domestic relations, but also the artifacts of material culture, such as clothing and decorum¹. The "invention of the everyday life" takes place both through a theoretical scientific contribution, and through a practical one². We are therefore dealing with both theories of the everyday life and empirical analyses, which attempt to define, explain and interpret knowledge and habitual practices, moments of daily routine³.

With the social emancipation movements of the second part of the 20th century, valuing ordinary practices in opposition to institutional ones, the dimension of everyday life tends to include all spheres of existence, going beyond any convention or restriction⁴. However, despite the expansive tendency, gradually coming to include almost all aspects of existential order, everyday life can only exist in direct relationship with extraordinary living, with what exists beyond the quotidian. Conversely, everyday life is not just a residue of what remains of distinct and specialized activities, but rather the binder between these specialized activities, their meeting ground. Often times, everyday life is

confused with private life, with the form of existence defined by its private character, reserved, closed, protected from general curiosity. However, everyday life transcends the demarcation between public and private, including both the activities in sight, carried out in the street, being part of a general order of daily life, as well as the special, reserved activities, evaded from this general order, which gives them a strictly private character.

Everyday life indicates a singular, unique and unrepeatable experience, specific to each individual, but it also highlights certain collective characteristics of adherence to a collectivity, age group, generation. The studies of everyday life are thus determined by this dual nature of the field between particular and general, individual and collective, deepening either the singularity and individuality of life experiences, or the common structure of subjects belonging to a group of people. Approaching everyday life as a domain of general trends will tend to privilege social structures, institutions and discourse as manifestations of power, as forms of order internalization. To the extent that particular aspects are privileged, the ability of the subjects to create their own life path (agency), the tactics of resistance and non-conformity to social structures⁵ are predominantly analyzed. In other words, we are, every time, in a situation to navigate between these two poles of everyday life, regardless the specialization, privileging either general forms or

¹ Cohen (2006), 180.

² De Certeau (1990).

³ Cohen (2006), 180.

⁴ Highmore (2002), 1-38.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 5.

particular ones, either macro-level or micro-level analysis.

Everyday life develops as a field of study at the intersection of various socio-human disciplines. From an epistemological point of view, unlike history and sociology, which open to the everyday life in a relatively late phase, with the social transformations after the Second World War, anthropology is founded from the beginning as a field by excellence of the quotidian observed directly, through field investigation. The duty of the anthropologist, argues Bronisław Malinowski, is to pencil in the rules and regularities of tribal life, all that is permanent and fixed, to make the leap from particular to general, from the contingencies of everyday life to the permanent regularities of culture (perceived as stable and fixed). Clifford Geertz emphasized the constant pendulum that the anthropologist must make between the local and the global, with the intention of observing them simultaneously: "Anthropology does not study villages (tribes, cities, neighborhoods...); it studies in the villages"⁶. Anthropology will evolve, as a discipline, from a well-circumscribed and remote terrain to a terrain in its own culture and, subsequently, a terrain without topographical boundaries. Instead, it will remain until today a discipline extremely anchored in everyday life, but not reduced to the spontaneous recording of observable realities. The thick description that Geertz talks about proved to be not so much a recording of facts of daily life, but rather a form of interpretative textualization, a hermeneutic of observable realities, with the aim of understanding

⁶ Geertz (1973), 22.

existential meanings⁷. Ethnographic data, in general, are born from the face-to-face meeting of the anthropologist with social actors, from the interpretation of contexts of reciprocity, of realities always negotiated between the subjects involved in the dialogue⁸.

The "new history" of everyday life or mentalities, also called historical anthropology, which appeared towards the end of the '60s, focussed on the description and analysis of attitudes and behaviors that explain certain social processes and trends over the long duration of history. Aiming at the specific structures of historical eras and at the same time the regularizations from one era to another, historical anthropology will assert itself as "a history of behaviors and habits"⁹. In this perspective, the past is "like a foreign country"¹⁰, it is anthropological, belonging to social structures and not to chronology.

Following the model of economic and social history within the Annales School, historical anthropology sought to observe, starting from habits or collective behaviors, certain regularities, processes or tendencies, paradoxically disinterested in individuals and their existence. Blamed for the unexpected blurring of the human from the field of research, the "concreteness of subjective experiences", the history of the everyday life will later abandon the study of deep structures in favor of the biographies of simple people. By reducing the scale, microhistory focussed on the analysis of social relations at the small scale of the village, neighborhood, small

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Clifford (1986), 14-15.

⁹ Burguière (1986), 54.

¹⁰ Lowenthal (2002).

communities and, last but not least, at the level of individual biographies¹¹.

Starting from the '70s, with the proliferation of memorial events after the dramas experienced in the 20th century, a history of memory emerged, attentive to historicity and the processes of reactualization of the past in the present¹². Its sources of information and interpretation are mainly oral testimonies, which lead to the articulation of the way in which ordinary people live the major events of humanity, but also of their small, everyday lives.

The sociology of the everyday life diversified into at least three distinct branches, depending on the theories and methods applied: a sociology that tries to capture and explain systems of activities, a sociology oriented to the observation and analysis of stagings or interactive situations between individuals, and a sociology of resistance and diversionary tactics¹³. In Henri Lefebvre's view, the components of everyday life, such as work, private family life and leisure time form a unitary whole, a "global structure" or "total structure" of contemporary reality, but still differ from country to country and from one social class to another¹⁴. Contrary to this holistic view of the everyday life and the social in general, Ervin Goffman proposes a sociology on the scale of symbolic interactionism between the individuals that make up a society. In this case, everyday life is staged by social actors, who, like theater actors, perform various roles, interacting ritualistically. Thus, everyday life consists of a sequence of situations,

integrating a variable number of interactions that, in turn, command various social roles¹⁵. In a similar way, Michel de Certeau seeks to identify the everyday life procedures that do not conform to the discipline, the creative, hidden and effective actions of ordinary people, by which each one invents his own way of unfolding within the given framework. Everyday life, in Michel de Certeau's view, is a "science of singularity", a personal experience in particular circumstances¹⁶. Furthermore, the author uses notions taken from the military, strategy and tactics field. The strategy is the calculation of power relations by which subjects fold and "isolate" themselves in their "own" environment, which "serves as the basis of managing relations with a distinct exteriority"¹⁷. The creative capacity of individuals, to circumvent the rules, does not depend so much on strategies, which remain an instrument mainly for order control, but mostly on tactics. Unlike strategy, tactics do not call for a place of their own, therefore, they do not take into account limits. The tactic can only be carried out on the other's ground, insinuating itself partially, never totally, without being able to be fully detected and without being able to be kept at a distance. It is the "art of the weak", who does not fight head-on with the opponent, but seeks to detect the strength of the other by countering it, infiltrating in his strategic places, taking advantage of momentary opportunities for action¹⁸. Opposite to action through tactics, which acts on the territory of the other, the model based on

¹¹ Ginzburg (2006), 259.

¹² Delacroix (2018), 8.

¹³ Javeau (1982), 29.

¹⁴ Lefebvre (1958), 40-52.

¹⁵ Goffman (1959).

¹⁶ De Certeau (1990), IX.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, XLVI.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

strategy seeks to control a place chosen and declared as "its own", which it must protect against everything that does not belong to it and is situated on the outside. And how to control a place except by visibility, by the ability to observe? In this perspective, de Certeau shares the theory of Michel Foucault¹⁹, according to which modern society is built on the model of visual control, on distance, regularization and localization. Both theorists opt for the thorough investigation of the minuscule technical procedures that contribute to the redistribution of a generalized surveillance at the expense of observing the apparatus of established power. However, unlike Foucault, who privileges the production of discipline and the internalization of order through the analysis of the minuscule practices of "micropower", de Certeau, on the contrary, seeks to highlight the minuscule and everyday life procedures that conform to discipline only to circumvent it, highlighting themselves as sources of creation, inventing a personalized everyday life²⁰.

On the other hand, Pierre Bourdieu invented the notion of *habitus* in order to explain the reproduction and dominance mechanisms of social structures²¹. The *habitus* is nothing else but the hegemonic social structure internalized in human thought and behavior, through which social relations and relations of dominance are reproduced. Bourdieu pays particular attention to the way in which the order is reproduced and internalized by individuals, which does not mean that the latter are condemned entirely to passivity and lack of

reaction. The reproductive system of power always contains a margin of improvisation and individual resistance, of creation and circumvention of imposed rules.

It is precisely what the anthropologist James Scott manages to highlight, namely the daily resistance capacity of the dominated, adopting some of the most surprising tactics. Scott considers the "art of dissimulation" as essential to life, everyday acts unfolding between what belongs to the public interpretation (public transcript) and what belongs to the private, hidden sphere (hidden transcript). Public transcript includes aspects of the visible interaction between the dominated and the dominant, portraying deference and acquiescence as a tactic of the weak against the strong²². But powerful people will never fully control the scene of power, always remaining an uncontrolled, hidden sphere outside the public sphere. In reality, on the border between public transcript and hidden transcript, there is a permanent struggle between the dominated and the dominators, a fluid struggle, in turn, of groping, accommodation and everyday life resistance.

In Scott's view, the category of resistance includes both dramatic and visible forms such as revolts, rebellions, revolutions, demonstrations and other forms of organized struggle, as well as attenuated forms of everyday life resistance such as gossip, slander, theft, desertion, evasion to pay taxes or cause damage to property, regardless of whether the purpose of these acts is to "change the world" or to defend apparently selfish personal interests.

¹⁹ Foucault (1975).

²⁰ Proulx (1994), 176-177.

²¹ Bourdieu (1972).

²² Scott (1990), 2.

Daily life is, therefore, always structured by relations of power and dominance, covering, instead, an extremely wide range of existential relations. From this point of view, the articles contained in the current issue of *MemoScapes* highlight both strategies of adaptation to the dominant life framework and tactics of resistance and infiltration into the system. Everyday life manifests itself as an arena of the production and reproduction of power structures, but also as a terrain of invention, creation and resistance to forms of power as Claudia-Florentina Dobre points out in her article, *Daily Life during Bărăgan Deportation: Time of Chores and Space of Fear*. In the summer of 1951, about 44 000 people from Banat and Oltenia are forced to leave their homes being relocated in the Bărăgan area. State intervention in people's lives was extremely aggressive, but did not succeed in destroying their ability to resist, to preserve their own freedom. Claudia-Florentina Dobre captures the remarkable way in which the deportees manage to transform the suspended time of deportation into their own time of assimilation and "domestication" of the others, of the new space and the new habits, customs and practices. Their everyday life thus stands out as an example of resilience, of the ability to circumvent the rules imposed by the state and pass on their own values to the children through education.

The ability to resist state policies during communism is also underlined by Maria Mateoniu-Micu in her article, *The everyday life before and after 1989 between resistance and adaptation: The case study of Valea Jiului (Romania)*. The author analyses the power relations in socialism and in post-socialism in Valea Jiului, one of the regions most subject to changes determined

by the development policies of the state. Her approach is a holistic one, Maria Mateoniu-Micu discussing the various aspects of how the accelerated industrialization, but also the subsequent process of deindustrialization, takes place at the level of the region, with major repercussions in everyday life, shaping social relations, but also the psyche of the people. Perceived as a docile workforce in the economic and political machinery, ordinary people try to build their own lives by resisting abuses through various tactics, from strikes, refusing to blindly carry out abusive orders, sabotaging work, falsifying production figures to „carry out” the plans, mocking the management through banter, jokes and „staging” of humorous situations, retreating into private space and rural traditions.

In a similar manner, Iuliana Dumitru describes in her article, *Escaping the Everyday Life: Artists's Holidays at 2 Mai and Vama Veche in the Communist Era*, the various aspects of daily life in 2 Mai and Vama Veche villages, emphasizing the idea of resistance to power through imagination, creation and nonconformist manifestation. Under socialism, the two localities become places of refuge for an elite who refuse to conform to the way of life promoted by the regime. This elite or „la Boème”, as the author calls it, transforms the two neighboring villages into an oasis of nonconformity, freedom and unrestrained creativity. The places end up being invested symbolically as being different from the other seaside resorts through the creations of established artists and writers, but also through the practice of nudism as a manifestation of the free spirit. Although supervised by the agents of power, the space is constantly imagined as a place of

permanent return to the unaltered origins, of an idyllic rurality opposed to the socialist city.

On the other hand, Liviu Iancu describes in his article, *The passive resistance of the Securitate's informers. A Foucauldian perspective on the case of the archaeologist Nubar Hamparțumian*, the tactics used by an individual to undermine the efficiency of the political police in communist Romania. One of the causes of the inefficiency of the Security is the very resistance of the informants, who develop their own tactics to divert the purposes of the information notes, as it happens in the case of Nubar Hamparțumian who does not report anything that could harm the persons being followed, does not follow the instructions, motivating among other things the lack of time due to current duties, the fear of not making mistakes, lack of access to certain information due to certain circumstances. Inspired by Foucault's theories on modern surveillance and disciplinary institutions, Liviu Iancu noticed that the Security did not aim so much at the knowledge of secrets, but above all at disciplining individuals. The reports are thus more a method of discipline than of actual follow-up.

Antoine Heemeryck, in his study entitled, *Construction and legitimisation of hierarchies in the transnational organizations of Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania)*, describes and analyses the manner of building and legitimizing the hierarchical and dominance relationships in two organizations from Poland and Romania, in the context of preparation for the accession of the two countries to the EU. The two organizations (a micro-enterprise from Poland and an NGO from Romania) operate and legitimize their

competence-based status based on the articulation of two symbolic landmarks: the relationship with the West by appropriating the European foreigner and the relationship with the communist regime by distancing itself from the subordinates considered exponents of this past.

Anna Chudzińska also deals with Polish everyday past but from women's perspective. Her study, *In the Shadow of the Heroes. Women's Hardships of the Everyday Life During WWI in the Light of Memoirs*, depicts the tactics used by women to cope with the First World War and its consequences. Based on diaries and memoirs written by Polish women from diverse social strata, the author underlines both the emancipation of women and the traditional roles assigned to them.

Cornel Micu in his paper, *"We made up another collective farm... a third one!" Everyday Life and the Collectivisation of Agriculture*, analyzes the daily life in the Brăila plain circumscribed by repeated historical changes. From its integration to Wallachia, following the treaty of Adrianople in 1829, until the Second World War, the area witnessed the migration of people coming from other Romanian territories, mostly transhumant shepherds which started to give up their seasonal migration patterns, the grain production on large estates during the second half of the 19th century, an agrarian reform at the end of World War I, which shredded these large estates, and the collectivization of agriculture after World War II. The successive changes in land property and people inhabiting the area left their mark on that region, which can hardly be characterized as a traditional one as

patterns of life and daily routine changed from generation to generation.

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Maria Mateoniu-Micu is a senior researcher at National Romanian Peasant Museum (MTR). She was awarded her Ph.D. title by Université Laval in Québec in 2006. Her thesis, *La mémoire refuge. L'orthodoxie et le communisme au monastère de Saint-Nicolas (Roumanie)*, was published by Presses de l'Université Laval in 2015. She has published extensively on the memory of communism, on everyday life, on identity and tradition, on local and national heritage. Most recent publication: 'Laughter as a Strategy of Resistance in Socialist Romania. The Case of Jiu Valley', in *Ethnologia Balkanica*, no. 22, 2020, p. 77-89.

Claudia-Florentina Dobre

Daily Life during Bărăgan Deportation: Time of Chores and Space of Fear

Abstract

In June 1951, about 44 000 people were deported from the Banat-Oltenia region to the Bărăgan plain. Transported in cattle wagons in which people were crammed together with animals and goods, they crossed Romania from the south-west to the south-east, where habitation perimeters had already been established, most of them out in the fields. After disembarking from the trains, the “suspended citizens” of communist Romania were forced to build houses for themselves, as well as schools, the village hall, the police station, clinics, general stores and so on. During the summer and autumn of 1951, all these houses and administrative buildings sprang up from among the thistles of the Bărăgan. Eighteen villages would appear on the map of Romania in just a few months. The everyday life of the deportees was orchestrated by the authorities through work, education and leisure and through intrusion in their family life. Under constant surveillance, people submitted themselves to the demands and executed the chores established by the regime. However, from the very beginning they struggled to preserve their agency. This article, based on the memories of former deportees, underlines their capacity to resist repression, to overcome the social constraints and to create social groups parallel to the official ones.

Keywords: Deportation, Bărăgan Plain, Communism, Survival, Resistance, Adaptation, Chores

The Communist Deportation of 1951

The tense geopolitical situation due to the rebellion of Josip Broz Tito, who did not accept the Stalinist yoke, as well as the servitude of the Romanian communists created a complicated situation between Romania and Yugoslavia. The Romanian authorities did not only consider the southwestern border unsafe, they also judged the citizens living in the area as being potentially dangerous²³.

Those of Serbian or Croat origin were labeled as “Titoists” (supporters of Tito), consequently adversaries in the event of a military conflict. Those who did not adhere to communist ideas, the “chiaburi”²⁴, and those who supported the anti-communist armed resistance²⁵ in the mountains were also labelled as “enemies of the people”. All of them were deported in one of the most secret and rapid actions of the communist period that led to the displacement of approximately 44,000

²⁴ Well-to-do peasants, equivalent to the soviet `kulak`.

²⁵ The Romanian armed resistance was an anticommunist dispersed movement in the mountains and hills supported by peasants living in the near-by areas, which roughly lasted from 1946 to 1958.

²³ More on this aspect see Chiper et alii (2015).

Romanians from Banat and western Oltenia, Hungarians, Swabians, Aromanians, Megleno-Romanians, Bessarabians and Bukovinians, Jews, Czechs and Slovaks, Turks, etc. in the area of Bărăgan, on the territory of the current counties of Brăila, Călărași, Galați, and Ialomița.

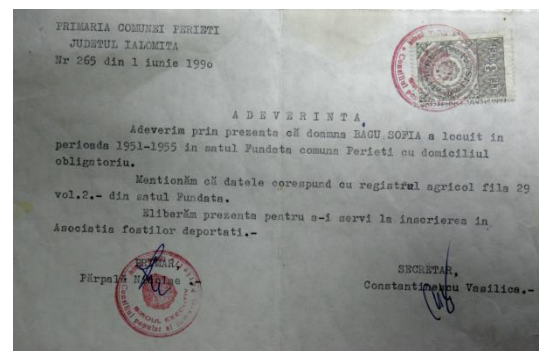
The deportation of these Romanian citizens was based on decision no. 200 from 1951 of the Ministry of Interior, which targeted those persons considered "dangerous" for the communist regime, persons who would have represented a factor of revolt both in the event of a war with Yugoslavia and in the collectivization process of agriculture. Thus, during several days, between 19 and 22 of June, 1951, 7,780 wagons left for Bărăgan in which there were 9,733 families, i.e. a total of 33,944 people²⁶. A few days later, another approximately 10,000 individuals headed in the same direction, thus increasing the number of those deported to around 44 000.

The lists of those who were to be deployed in Bărăgan were drawn up by the local authorities. Those on the deportation lists were allowed to take with them either "everything belonging to them" or "all food, clothing, furniture, tools, money, as well as books, radios, musical instruments, less piano". They could also take with them "a horse-wagon or an ox-cart, a milch or pregnant cow, and fodder for the horses or oxen"²⁷.

Their houses and lands were confiscated or bought back at ridiculous prices. The inventory was made by special commissions of 3-5 people from either the Militia or the Securitate²⁸, assisted by the

army. When the commissions sent from the center were overwhelmed by the situation, local commissions were also formed.

Haste and secrecy led to numerous abuses, not only in terms of the inventory, but even regarding people who were supposed to be deported. In order to increase their number, those in charge of deportation arrested people who were not on the lists, sometimes poor peasants, minors, and other workers. Other times, when the Militia officers came to take a family in, they found within the household visiting relatives or friends who were also deported just to keep the secret.



Certificate attesting the deportation from 1990.

They were all taken, either on foot or in wagons, to the railway stations in the area. After a few days of waiting, they were crowded into the cattle trains that headed east. Initially, many were frightened by the possibility of deportation to Siberia, especially since neither the fault for which they were evicted from home nor their final destination had been communicated to them. Some of the deportees, who had relatives working for the communist party or the local administration, learned of their fate and when possible spread the word. Others, especially the Bessarabians and the Bukovinians, lived for several days in fear until they reached Bărăgan, the Romanian

²⁶ Marineasa et al. (1996), 86.

²⁷ Calestru (2006), 332-338.

²⁸ Securitate was the secret political police which controlled everything during communism.

steppe less scary than the Russian one, but just as inhospitable.

In the Bărăgan area, they were pushed off the trains, loaded into wagons and trucks and taken to the fields, where nothing awaited them but holes and stakes in the ground. In some places, there was a well or a lake where they went to quench their thirst, but most of the time it was just the empty field from which the harvest had been gathered. Their IDs were confiscated and they were assigned to forced residence in the empty perimeters. After a few days, the authorities brought them some water and food and encouraged them to build their own houses and to help constructing the administrative buildings, and schools²⁹.

Through their hard work, in a few months, 18 new villages appeared on the Bărăgan map. At the beginning, all these "new" villages were under the strict supervision of the Militia, leaving them being punished in most cases with prison. People living in these villages had a stamp on their ID which defined their status: Compulsory Domicile (Domiciliu Obligatoriu-DO). They were allowed to work in the local state farms. Paid modest sums, periodically controlled and continuously supervised, the deportees stoically faced the vicissitudes of history and geography. Some of them lost their lives in the Bărăgan plain, but most of them survived³⁰.

The ordeal of deportation to Bărăgan lasted for 5 years. After the death of Stalin and the normalization of relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia, the situation of the deportees from Bărăgan also improved. Thus, decree no. 155 of April 4, 1953 and

several decisions of the Ministry of the Interior, decided the release of the deportees in 1955.

Once this moment arrived, not everyone benefited equally. A few deportees experienced a "partial mandatory domicile", they were able to settle in "any region of the country, with the exception of Bucharest, the surroundings of Bucharest and the border areas"³¹. Some others, especially those from Bessarabia and Bukovina, chose to stay in the "new" villages or in the neighboring area until 1967 when the deportation was declared illegal by Ceausescu³². As a result of his proclamation, the authorities decided to erase all the deportation villages.

10 of the 18 villages built by the deportees were totally destroyed in the '60s. In 1989, only 4 villages were still standing as a proof of the deportation: Fundata, created near the Perieți halt, Dâlga that appeared near an already existing village, Călmățui Valley and Rubla.

Problematics of Everyday Life

Daily life is considered to be the very space where the distinction between familiar and foreign takes shape³³. As Alfred Schütz pointed out, these are the most important categories for understanding the world around us³⁴. The familiar is built through daily life routine and practices. Its aim is to create a safe space for individuals and to generate "life forms which ... objectify the human

²⁹ Dobre (2020), 331-336.

³⁰ Dobre (2016), 11-12.

³¹ Calestru (2006), 191.

³² Vultur (2011), 16.

³³ Bégout (2005), 319.

³⁴ Schütz (2008), 233-234.

existence through ways of life, territories, rules, objects, and specific attitudes”³⁵.

The daily life is also the centre for the creation and affirmation of identity, representing that place where the individual not only learns and rehearses various roles, but also takes chances and displays agency. Agency has been defined as the individual’s capacity to overcome and/or avoid visible and/or subliminal social constraints, as the capacity which determines the individual to act independently or in opposition with constraining social structures and/or to create his own social groups/structures, parallel to the dominant system through his own will and capability to act³⁶. Judith Butler defined agency not only in terms of resistance to power relations, but also referred to the risks entailed by this resistance to domination³⁷.

Daily life belongs to the sphere of private life, in which stability, the natural, the familiar, habitual predominate and continuity in experiences, gestures, deeds and actions is preponderant. Daily life is, at the same time, the space in which the manifestations of dominant structures make their presence felt to a lesser degree. It is a place of intimacy which offers (or ought to offer) protection and security.

The communist ideology denied individuals the power of creative and critical thinking, treating people as not capable of taking rational decisions and thus aiming to deprive them of agency through public and private control of their life. Furthermore, through permanent surveillance, constant repression and

induced fear, they succeeded to invade the private sphere, to transform the familiar, calm and safe space of everyday life into a realm of anxiety, trouble, and disorder (notably at the beginning of the regime and in the late ‘80s).

The researches done in the communist countries by foreign scholars pointed out several aspects, which need to be taken into consideration when dealing with the issue of everyday life in repressive regimes. Gerard Creed³⁸ who was doing research in Bulgaria, in the ‘80s, in the village of Zamfirovo, stated that “communism was domesticated” by the rural population, which took advantage of the aptitude of the Bulgarian Communist Party to present its ideology and reality as coherent³⁹. David Kideckel who did his fieldwork in several villages of Țara Oltului (Romania) assessed that the daily life and institutional reproduction practices facilitated the domination of the state, while at the same time generating the conditions for its destruction⁴⁰. On the other hand, Adrian Nicolau wrote that, during communism, the individuals aimed at “fitting into the context”, to make themselves accepted by the system⁴¹. According to the Romanian researcher, the large majority adopted the strategy of “making peace with the system” while attempting to manipulate it for personal gain. Gail Kligman reinforced this idea by pointing out that the Communist system engendered duplicity, in which the individual has one self which manifests its formal adhesion to the system and another,

³⁵ Bégout (2005), 319.

³⁶ Loyal, Barnes (2001), 507.

³⁷ Butler (1997), 29.

³⁸ Creed (1998).

³⁹ Ivanova (2014), 19.

⁴⁰ Kideckel (2006), 18.

⁴¹ Nicolau (2004), 17.

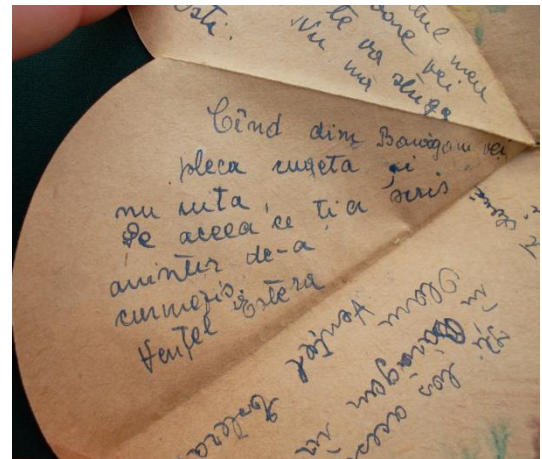
“real” self, strictly for private life and very close people⁴².

The Case Study of Bărăgan Deportation: Nuances of Interpretation of the Daily Life

The above mentioned statements can also be applied to the everyday life of Bărăgan deportees. However, some nuances need to be introduced due to their very specific situation. First of all, when we speak about everyday life in Bărăgan we should notice that time, which is one of the most important category of everyday life, became problematic. Researchers dealing with daily life stated that the familiarity of the space and the causality of events would be endangered without the constance brought by time⁴³. Or the deportees’ time in Bărăgan was, at least at the beginning, out of the ordinary, people felt like “suspended citizens”, out of time and space. The temporal rhythm of their everyday chores, customs, habits, worries and joys was suspended by the communist authorities. This suspension of habitual rhythms created chaos and fear and disturbance of the vital forces which explains the numerous cases of suicide which took place during deportation. A woman, deportee from Fundata, remembers that the repressive practice of daily call of people disturbed deeply some of her fellow villagers: “And they had to see you, you had to come out for them to see you... That’s how they did this roll call, in the morning and in the evening, so you wouldn’t have time to run away. There were German families who

couldn’t take it. At the edge of the village they sometimes found a German man or woman with their veins cut open, they couldn’t take it...”⁴⁴.

Another category which defines the boundaries of familiar, of daily life, is the otherness, something or someone who is foreign to what is well-known. A foreign world is the contrary of the everyday life, as the time, space, events are different even if they display logic and cohesion. They disturb the coherence of the familiarity and question the self⁴⁵. Eventually, the interaction with an unfamiliar world and/or the foreigner became a question mark for the self.



A memorial items from the deportation village. A girl wrote to her friend, Siloia Mudrei: ‘when you will leave Baragan. Think and do not forget the person who wrote you this croscrossing memo’. Courtesy of Siloia (Mudrei) Moldoveanu.

During their transportation to the south-east, the deportees were forced to interact with people from other villages and regions, people with different origins, language, habits, and customs. Once arrived in Bărăgan they have to deal with the locals who were informed by the authorities that the deportees were

⁴² Kligman (2000).

⁴³ Bégout (2005), 364.

⁴⁴ Donțu (2016), 210.

⁴⁵ Bégout (2005), 332.

“enemies of the people”, criminals to be avoided.

At first, the deportees were called Koreans, as the war in Korea animated the actuality of the communist world. When the locals realized that the foreigners could speak Romanian and were rather nice people, relationships changed. The unfamiliar became familiar while entering the realm of normalcy.

Territoriality (understood as a specific, well known territory), another category of the everyday realm, became an issue for the deportees as well. In the Bărăgan plain, everything was different comparing with the Banat and Oltenia region. Weather was hotter in summer and colder in winter, the plain was flat and there was no big river near-by. Danube was the only familiar element but it was forbidden to go there. During communism, Danube became a real frontier, a dangerous one which could bring death or imprisonment⁴⁶. The memories about deportation emphasizes the importance of the space for the newcomers: *“The heat in Bărăgan was incredible; they were not used to it, particularly since the climate around Timișoara was different. Rather Mediterranean”*⁴⁷, remembers a woman born in deportation.

Eventually, time, the key element, which transforms the unfamiliar into familiar, which domesticates the foreigner and appropriates the space turned the life in Bărăgan into a daily life. After a while, it was perceived as such by the deportees themselves. The various aspects of their daily routine were still under the influence of their special situation but work,

education, family life and leisure acquired their specificity modeled by the Bărăgan rhythms.

The subsequent information about these categories of daily life came from the memories of a few deportees my colleague and I, we interviewed during a research project called, *The Memorial of the Deportation*⁴⁸. They were published in the book entitled, *Deportați în Bărăgan: Amintiri din Siberia românească* (Deportees of Bărăgan: Memories from the Romanian Siberia)⁴⁹.

Work

Work was one of the reason for Bărăgan deportation. The communist authorities needed qualified work-force in order to transform the Bărăgan plain into an agricultural hub, which eventually they did. Most of the deportees were farmers possessing know-how and a work-ethic which lacked in the poor area of south-eastern part of Romania. Deportees also brought along seeds and tools which were eventually adopted by the locals as well.

“It was in Fundata village that the first tomato and sweet pepper seedlings were planted. Those in the neighbouring villages said it couldn’t be done in Bărăgan, but the deportees, forced by their need, grew seedlings out of seeds. They supported themselves with the food from their own gardens, because they had nothing

⁴⁶ Many people tried to escape Romania crossing the river but many of them were arrested, shot dead or died from exhausting.

⁴⁷ Bocșa (2016), 171.

⁴⁸ In 2011, I have started (with Valeriu Antonovici) an inquiry as regards former deportees of Bărăgan. We made 14 interviews filmed and recorded on tape. One of the outcomes of this research was a documentary entitled *“Baragan Stories. Memories from the Romanian Siberia”*.

⁴⁹ Dobre, Antonovici (2016).

else"⁵⁰, remembers one woman who was born during deportation in the mentioned village.

Work was also a means of survival not only for adults, but also for children. All the deportees remember their daily chores imposed by the authorities or assumed by themselves in order to help their family or each other to survive. One deportee recounts: *"Realizing they couldn't support all of us – there were a few hundred families there – they put us to work. A Miliție agent went from house to house, while a few soldiers guarded the village, because we weren't allowed to leave it, and they sent us to work, both adults and older children. There were many IASs⁵¹ in the area and they would take us there in the morning, give us a can of tea and a slice of dark bread, then they would give us implements. Even we children were given hoes to till the maize field. The rows were very long and they forced us to get to the end at the same time as the grown-ups. We couldn't keep up, so they gave up and had us do other things"*⁵².



Children at work. Courtesy of Silvoia (Mudrei)

Moldoveanu.

Another deportee also remembers that: *"Everyone had to go to work. So it wasn't*

*just the residence there that was forced, working was forced upon you, too. We were taken to work, but we weren't paid. Since I turned eleven until after I graduated from university, I worked as an unskilled labourer"*⁵³.

People worked in the local state farms, but also to build their houses, and the administrative buildings of their villages. Constructing the school was the first chore inflicted upon children, the socialist education came second. One deportee realizes only now that building the school was not part of the curricula: *"I was a child and I thought that, by building my own school, I'm doing something extraordinary. Now, in hindsight, I realise I was being humiliated, I was simply being trampled on. It was in that school I finished seventh grade, with deportee teachers"*⁵⁴.

Work was hard and proved to be dangerous for some fragile people as one deportee told us: *"They also put the women to work. My mother was a bit fragile and she couldn't get used to that working pace. She didn't even manage to fulfil her quota. My father often had to pay because she couldn't meet her quota. She would faint... Since they saw she wasn't well, they let her stay home; they stopped putting her to work"*⁵⁵.

Skiping work could bring more persecutions to the deportees as one of them remembered: *"We did voluntary labour for the IAS, unloading trains. We had no food; we weren't allowed to go anywhere but to IAS... If you went anywhere else and they caught you, they took you to prison or another village"*⁵⁶.

Work was another means of controlling people's life. They assigned

⁵⁰ Donțu (2016), 209.

⁵¹ State owned farms.

⁵² Burlacu (2016), 188-189.

⁵³ Galațchi (2016), 183.

⁵⁴ Gaidamut (2016), 164.

⁵⁵ Bocșa (2016), 172.

⁵⁶ Galan (2016), 218-219.

people to work in some places and nobody could refuse it without dire consequences. One deportee remembered that: *"I had to work in the kitchens, I didn't have a choice, they could do what they wanted with us, if you were ill and you snuck under your bed to hid so they wouldn't take you to work they would still find you and take you, ill or not ill"*⁵⁷.

Although done under the strict surveillance of the communist authorities, working was a means of subverting the power relations. The deportees were able to communicate with locals and between themselves and thus to create parallel social groups. Furthermore, they were educated people and they have knowledge and abilities which lacked in the region or among the communists themselves which brought them more freedom and eventually a better life.

Education

Education was another means of subverting power relations or at least a subtle way to negotiate them. In the villages, teachers were deportees themselves, therefore they tried to help pupils to overcome the political and social constraints. However, they could not totally escape ideology as school was used to disseminate the communist ideas. The school curricula was imbued with communist mantras, while the role models were children who fought for the soviet and communist ideals. In the '50s, the heroes promoted by the propaganda through textbooks were Zoia Kosmodemianskaia⁵⁸

and the Young Guard⁵⁹. However, the effect on pupils who belong to persecuted families was contrary to the communist expectations as one former political detainee testified: "At school, our ears were filled with the fight of the Soviet partisans against the Nazis. No one thought that there is a flip side of the medal and a risk of transfer. They were assassinating us with the famous Zoia Kosmodemianskaia. Brave, fanatical, invincible girl. A kind of Feminine Hero of World War II. Books, films, plays, spoke of her unparalleled courage. And here is the transfer: I wanted to be like Zoia, but against communism. During the interrogation, when they asked me who taught us how to organize ourselves, I said: 'Zoia, I want to be like Zoia!'"⁶⁰.

A former deportee, who learnt about these heroic figures when she was a young girl, stated that these communist role models actually played an important role in shaping her personality: *"I've read The Young Guard and the idea of people fighting for ideals stirred certain feelings in me. It made you want to be the same. To be a true human being, to be useful, to be strong"*⁶¹.

enlisted in October 1941, participating in some sabotage activities but was caught by the Nazis. She was beaten and tortured to make confessions about partisan activities but heroically resisted. She was killed by the Nazis and posthumously made into a Soviet national heroine.

⁵⁹ *Tânăra gardă* (The Young Guard) is a novel written by Alexander Fadeev in 1945 which introduces the fight against the nazis of a group of young Kosmosol members. A movie inspired by the book was released in 1948 by Serghei Gerasimov.

⁶⁰ Orlea (1991), 10.

⁶¹ Malofei (2016), 246.

⁵⁷ Dron (2016), 258.

⁵⁸ Zoia Kosmodemianskaia (1923-1941) was a member of the partisan movement in the USSR directed against the German occupation. She



Pupils in Olaru school. Courtesy of Silvia (Mudrei) Moldoveanu.

However, the most important role in shaping the personality of the deported children was played by their family, neighbours and teachers: *“I had the chance of meeting extraordinary people, a man and a woman who told me, ‘Stay in school, don’t give up!’.* So I went to highschool in Călărași – I didn’t manage to qualify for the regular programme, I signed up directly for evening classes. I respect my teachers back then immensely, immensely. They didn’t treat us with hostility, they made no discrimination, they treated us humanely, and they were even tolerant with us, as much as possible. It was in ’53 when I started highschool, after seven years of school and two years spent working for my bread on construction sites... After highschool, I had another two-year gap before getting into university, because they kept rejecting my file for political reasons”⁶².

⁶² Gaidamut (2016), 165.

The deportees valued the education and encouraged their children to do well in school. Furthermore, due to their specific situation, they believed that a good education can help their children overpass the burden of the DO. One of the deportee remembered that, *“Children used to learn. And they really learned! We studied as hard as we could, my mother and father used to tell us: ‘Get to it, study, that’s your salvation: studying!’ Everyone loved to learn, no one ever repeated the year, and everyone got passing grades. I don’t know how we managed, no one gave us notebooks or handbooks, and we worked during summer, as I said, to buy them”*⁶³.

The conditions were very difficult, they did not have a proper school or textbooks or libraries etc. However, they were hard working children and have good teachers, dedicated to their profession who invested their energy in helping pupils to overcome the shortages: *“In autumn we went to school. Everyone learned in the same classroom. We had very good, very well prepared teachers, from among the deportees themselves. People who, with great dedication, took up the teaching duties – and we were taught very well indeed. Why am I saying that? Because later, when the village was scattered away and only a few of us were left, we had to go to school in Grădișteța and the teachers there were very pleased with our level – us, who came from Satul Nou, as Iezeru was called back then”*⁶⁴, told us one woman who became later a teacher herself.

Due to this desire to learn and the dedication of the teachers, most of the children succeeded to get higher education. One woman from Fundata told us: *“What I want to say is that, despite what happened, a lot*

⁶³ Malofei (2016), 245.

⁶⁴ Burlacu (2016), 192.

of people from Fundata attended higher education. In the period between the '60s and the '80s, our village had as many university students as the whole Ialomița County. I can't remember any girl or boy in my generation going to technical school, everyone studied hard. We studied for two reasons: to not end up doing manual labour and to live a better life. We had exceptional teachers, too. My brother's primary school teacher was Mr. Trandafir, who became a university professor at the Technology Faculty in Craiova. All our teachers were people of great worth"⁶⁵.

Studying hard, having good grades and passing exams were means of opposition to a system, which aimed at destroying their social life and career. Many of pupils, especially those who were teenagers at the time of the deportation, could not pass exams or were expelled from high schools and universities. A deportee, who eventually became an engineer, remembers that: *"In 1954, I passed an exam and I was admitted to the Unirea highschool in Focșani. After a month and a half, I was expelled because of my record. For the first time I understood that our forced residence meant we were not free. Eventually, I finished highschool in Bucharest at I. L. Caragiale, thanks to some relations. Then I sat the university entrance exam, I passed it and in 1964, at 23, on the very day I turned 23, I celebrated my graduation from faculty"⁶⁶.*

Hindering people to have a good education was another way of persecuting them. One deportee from Banat told us that: *"I managed to finish fourth, fifth and sixth grade. For the seventh grade I stopped going to school, we couldn't afford it. With great difficulty, after 1955, I finished my studies at*

Școala Generală and went to a farming school. I was determined to go to highschool, to an animal husbandry school, so I could get specialised in that. But that wasn't possible, so they transferred me to a class of farming mechanics, so I became a tractor driver. I'm saying this without any embarrassment or shame, that's how things were. I was a tractor driver until 1991. Then I went to technical school and became a foreman..."⁶⁷.

Family Life

Work and education helped families to overcome the burden of deportation. The hope also played an important role. At the very beginning, it was the hope of being delivered by the Americans. Afterwards, the hope that, at least the children can have a better life through education and professional careers.



Malofei family at Fundata. Courtesy of Monica (Malofei) Marin.

"My parents resisted because they set all their hopes on me, because they hoped I would make it and live a better life. You see, that's how they saw things, they considered that their dreams would be fulfilled through the success of their child, because their life was full of nothing but trouble and hardship. Indeed, I managed to

⁶⁵ Donțu (2016), 212.

⁶⁶ Galațchi (2016), 184.

⁶⁷ Dunaienco (2016), 204.

*finish faculty and lived better than them, I always had a job*⁶⁸, told us one woman.

Another woman also remembers that her family hope lied in her and in fulfilling her dreams: *“My parents had a hard time in Bărăgan, but they lived through all the trouble. Their hope was me; I was the one they were fighting for. It wasn’t easy, of course. The Bărăgan wind blew all winter long, and when the blizzard came it was a horrible life. Now people make plans for buying firewood and coal early in autumn... My parents made the fire with thistles and maize roots. I remember my grandmother in the spring of ’52, before dying, clearing the snow away to pull out some roots from the edge of the village, which she gathered up in an apron so we could make a fire at home*⁶⁹.

Parents and family did everything they could to provide for their children, to help them with their education, to create a nice environment for them and to bring them some joy at least for holidays and special days. One deportee kept sweet memories about her parents and their efforts to offer her and her sister presents in some special occasions: *“My father, with his talent and patience, managed, with my mother’s help, to make sure that, for the holidays, me and my sister always had something ‘new’, even if it was made of cheap or old materials, most often restored. My mother often borrowed money to buy what we needed, and my father, with needle and thread, managed to pay off the debts. Thus, often we wore shoes that were one size too large, so we could fit into them for longer, and my sister usually wore the clothes and shoes that I had grown out of. My father didn’t make much money, he was often paid in produce, but he was*

*appreciated for the skill, politeness and kindness that defined his character*⁷⁰.



Life in Baragan. Courtesy of Ana Buga.

However, during deportation, the most important preoccupation of parents was to provide food for their children. Mothers proved to be very skilfull and full of resources when it came to feeding their children. A deportee remembers even today how imaginative was her mother in preparing tasty food for them: *“Bessarabian women are very strong, very good at household chores. A Bessarabian woman can cook with almost nothing and still make tasty food. My parents had come from Banat with maize meal, flour, jars of meat stored in lard, some supplies. The hard times started when the supplies ran out and they had neither work nor any money to buy anything. That’s when the particularly hard times were. Then, with the coming of spring, they started to plant things in their gardens and to work. Let me tell you what our comfort food was: When I was six or seven, my mother used to cook very nice-looking, plentiful meals. She would prepare rooster aspic, sarmale, maize and cheese pudding... ”*⁷¹.

⁶⁸ Burlacu (2016), 194.

⁶⁹ Mingea (2016), 222.

⁷⁰ Mudrei (2016), 276.

⁷¹ Donțu (2016), 211.



Girls in Olaru. Courtesy of Courtesy of Sil via (Mudrei) Moldoveanu.

In order to provide food, they had to cheat the system. Not only adults contributed to this but also children. One deportee, a eight years old girl at that time, remembers that: *“The village was heavily guarded, we weren’t allowed to leave it. There was also a sentry post... A wooden frame, or I think it was wooden... and on it there was always an armed soldier guarding the village and preventing us from leaving it. But we still went to the neighbouring village, Cacomleanca as it was called back then, or Grădiștea as they call it now, to buy what we could. How did we get there, though? My mother would wrap some rags around my knees and elbows and I would crawl on them until I was out of the soldier’s field of vision, then there was a thicket of young trees that I would cross. Then we would get up on our feet and go to the next village to get this or that. A small crate of halva – marmalade and halva came in crates made of small, thin boards. Once I carried one home on my shoulder and hurt myself, it weighed several kilos, far too much for a child. Still, it helped, because in the winter of 1954, when there was that strong blizzard, which covered our low houses in snow, we had that halva in the house. For years I*

refused to eat any more halva... to this day I can’t stand the sight of it, after eating nothing but halva in those times, to survive”⁷².

Another woman recounts how her father took the risk of being caught and sentenced to jail in order to provide them with food: *“One night, during deportation, my father snuck out to the fair in Slobozia, and early in the morning he came back with two hens. One of them was blind in one eye. My mother kept them under the bed”⁷³.*

Struggling to keep up with the family tradition, customs and habits was other means to overcome the social constraints, to avoid the domination and to subvert the power relations. Solidarity between deportees played a role in maintaining traditions and even in inventing new ones; renewed family bonds (due to the hard times they experienced) transformed hard experiences into special memories to be valued and passed on. However, celebrating religious holidays meant, at least, in the beginning, taking some major risks, which could have brought more persecutions onto the families.

Leisure

Although, deportees had to work hard in order to build their house, to have food and keep their children in school, they also experienced pleasant moments like parties, celebrations, and football games. Religious holidays were celebrated dearly, in the beginning with fear and in hiding, but after a while openly and assumed. Balls,

⁷² Burlacu (2016), 189.

⁷³ Donțu (2016), 211.

tea parties and reading meetings were also organized.

"In the spring of 1955, my father, who was a cantor and a primary school teacher, asked permission to celebrate Easter and he was allowed to do so in the center of the village, at the Cultural Hall. I still remember that Easter night. Almost all the villagers came, people were crying and praying: 'God, save us from this disaster that fell upon us!' Their prayers must have worked – in the autumn of 1955 we were released"⁷⁴, told us one deportee from Iezeru.

Christmas was a special moment for children when they could sing carols while families got together and paid a visit to friends and neighbours: *"It was a happy event, at that time. We made ourselves a whip and a friction drum. I was a child and I loved to take part in things like that. People gave us money, they gave us apples and bagels and walnuts. We were well-organised: 'You're in charge of the money...', 'Hey, how much did they give you at the last house? Write it down in the notebook'. At the end, we calculated and divided it all between each other. Oh well, children!"⁷⁵, remembers one of the deportees we interviewed in 2011.*

Another deportee told us about the fake Christmas tree: *"We even made a 'Christmas tree'. The tree was improvised from cotton stalks wrapped in green crêpe paper. The ornaments were walnuts, sugar cubes and candy wrapped in pieces of tinfoil which had somehow found its way into our luggage, glazed paper chains, stubs of old candles etc."⁷⁶.*

A woman from Iezeru recounts that both Christmas and Easter were important and her family struggled to keep the

tradition although the conditions were difficult: *"For Christmas we had no tree and we didn't prepare any feast, but we broke off some black locust branches and put all sorts of pieces of cut-out paper in them. We hung them up and imagined that Santa had come to us too. It seems unbelievable, but that's how it was!... religious holidays gave us a renewed sense of faith and we always knew when Easter would fall that year. My mother used to buy hens from women who came from the neighbouring village and I can remember how she dyed the eggs with beetroot and green leaves, with spinach, with whatever she could find. Yes, my mother dyed Easter eggs. That I know"⁷⁷.*

Children also enjoyed the school festivities organized together with their teachers, as one woman testified: *"We had remarkable teachers, both in primary and in secondary school, deportees like us, many of whom had been highschool teachers. They taught us with skill, pleasure, dedication and a lot of love. They tried hard to also organise festivities, so we wouldn't be robbed of the joys of childhood. With help and competent guidance from them we managed to even stage plays. One of them was 'Sânziana și Pepelea' by Vasile Alecsandri. I was given the role of the emperor, Papură Vodă, with which I wasn't very happy. As it happened in many such situations, with the help of my father I managed to have a unique suit, adequate for the part. This encouraged me, so I started to see the role in a different light and enjoyed playing it. The play was a success"⁷⁸.*

⁷⁴ Galațchi (2016), 182.

⁷⁵ Gaidamut (2016), 166.

⁷⁶ Mudrei (2016), 274-275.

⁷⁷ Burlacu (2016), 197.

⁷⁸ Mudrei (2016), 274.



A play performed in the deportation. Courtesy of Silvia (Mudrei) Moldoveanu.

Young people also had fun by organizing balls and tea parties. A man who was 19 years old when he was deported remembered that: *“We, the young people, made our own fun in Pelicanu village. There were beautiful girls, we organized balls. People came from the near-by villages to our fiestas. There were some boys in the village who could play the accordion, while another guy, Soleanu, played the saxophone. We organized amazing balls. There weren’t a lot of weddings, though. No one dared to, we were lacking the basics. We didn’t have a church. When the restriction was lifted, we used to go to the Radu Negru village or to Călărași for Easter mass”*⁷⁹.

A woman, who used to be a teacher in the village where her parents were deported, emphasized their desire to enjoy life: *“Believe me, even in that situation, young people still had fun. They held balls at the farm. We went there and young people came from neighbouring villages too, they were farm employees. We, those from the new village, were considered the wittiest, the handsomest, the cleanest, the smartest and even... the richest”*⁸⁰.

Parties and celebrations were made possible by the solidarity generated by their complicated situation and sustained through good relations and friendly

assistance. One deportee testified that: *“...people got along well in our village, in Fundata, I’m telling you, they got along well. They were very united. Since there were many young people, they held parties for Christmas, for Easter, they gathered at a house; they ate and drank whatever they had managed to save up”*⁸¹.



Football game in Dâlga, 1953. Courtesy of Epifan Galan.

On the other hand, the authorities tried to control their leisure time while promoting their ideology through propaganda movies. Using drive-in movies, they tried to highlight the achievements of the socialist countries. Attending these screenings became a pleasant custom for children, as one woman deportee told us: *“I have pleasant memories, too. For instance: when the cinema caravan used to come. Once every two months, or every month, they would bring a film – in our village they only ever brought ‘The White-Haired Girl’. I’ll never forget that Chinese film! We children used to leave all the work aside, whether we were weeding or doing other field chores – ... – and we went to the playing field. There were two goalposts people had improvised so we could play, and that’s where we watched the film. We sat on the ground. Often we dozed off, but we were so happy that the caravan came and we could see a*

⁷⁹ Lupu (2016), 229-230.

⁸⁰ Gogu (2016), 237.

⁸¹ Malofei (2016), 247.

film, always the same. Then there was a second one... something about the CAPs [Agricultural Production Cooperatives] and how they were formed, a film we didn't like..."⁸².

At the beginning, the deportees could not listen to radio or have access to newspapers. One deportee remembered that, "in the new villages we were isolated, separated from the world. Our radios had been confiscated and we never got them back, though we had been promised they would be returned to us. I don't remember ever seeing newspapers or magazines there. From time to time, the cinema caravan stopped in Olaru. I remember the film 'Brigada lui Ionuț', which impressed me at that age"⁸³.

Having parties and celebrations were means of appropriation of space and time, but also a privileged way to domesticate the foreigner, to create bonds and to renew relationships. This endeavour helped them (both deportees and locals) to create parallel groups, which avoided the official paradigm which divided them in two different, antagonistic categories, "enemies of the people" and "good comrades".

Conclusions

The case study of the Bărăgan deportation highlights the presence of agency even in difficult moments and situation and confirms the statement of Michel de Certeau that, "total colonization of daily life by the system"⁸⁴ is practically impossible. Furthermore, even if the communist regime changed the parameters of deportees' life, they found the resources to overcome the hardship inflicted on them

and to transform their experience in something meaningful, worth to be passed on to new generations. In this specific case, the everyday life became not only a locus of resistance, of revolt, a frontier in front of the state intrusion, but also an exemplum. The deportees used this suspended time to create a new realm of daily routine in which space and foreigners were domesticated while new customs, practices, and values were apprehended. Furthermore, this very special type of everyday life became a historical experience which fashioned Romania during communism and it was acknowledged as an important part of the repression after the fall of this regime.

The Bărăgan deportation exemplified the functioning of the very structures of daily life. It was a sort of a laboratory in which a new time, space and people were created. And it was a successful endeavour, but not as planned by the communists. Actually, the outcomes went in opposite direction. The deportees' life in Bărăgan was acknowledged as unfair, but meaningful by everyone involved (including local people and communist authorities), and publicly recognized after the fall of communism.

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⁸² Burlacu (2016), 196.

⁸³ Mudrei (2016), 275.

⁸⁴ De Certeau (1997), 137-138.

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Maria Mateoniu-Micu

La vie quotidienne avant et après 1989 entre résistance et adaptation: l'exemple de la Vallée du Jiu (Roumanie)

Abstract

Cet article analyse les rapports entre la domination politique de l'État roumain, pendant le socialisme et le post-socialisme, et les stratégies et tactiques de résistance et d'adaptation des gens ordinaires (common people) aux politiques étatiques. Cette relation dynamique sera observée à partir des réalités de la vallée du Jiu, l'une des régions les plus touchées par le projet de l'État, axé d'abord sur l'industrialisation accélérée et, ensuite, sur la désindustrialisation, également, accélérée, avec des répercussions majeures sur les relations sociales. En corroborant les entretiens et les récits de vie avec des articles de presse de l'époque, nous entendons comprendre le contrôle de la production et de la population par l'État, l'appropriation et l'aménagement du territoire, le licenciement de la main-d'œuvre lors de la transition du communisme au capitalisme, tout comme les répercussions de ces mesures étatiques sur la vie quotidienne des gens et la résilience de ces derniers à l'ordre politique.

Keywords: Socialisme, Post-communisme, Résistance, Adaptation, Aménagement du territoire, Transition

Introduction

La vallée du Jiu est un exemple révélateur de ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'exercice d'un pouvoir fort dans la perspective d'un développement économique accéléré qui réduit la vie ordinaire à une vision purement utilitariste. Elle l'est également pour observer la capacité créative de gens ordinaires à résister et détourner les projets de l'État à leur profit.

Cette région est une dépression située dans le sud-est de la Roumanie d'une superficie de 260 km² et à une altitude de 610-620 m. Elle ressemble à un immense chaudron, entouré par les montagnes Retezat, Șurean, Parâng et

Vâlcan, qui font partie du massif des Carpates méridionales. Le développement de la région, basé sur l'exploitation intensive du charbon, débute dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle et s'accélère avec l'instauration du communisme. Les mineurs sont, pour la plupart, amenés de l'Empire austro-hongrois jusqu'en 1918 et après cette date, quand la région a été incluse dans l'État roumain, des régions défavorisées de la Roumanie, principalement de l'est du pays.

La vallée du Jiu augmente sa capacité de production surtout pendant la deuxième étape de la révolution industrielle lorsque le charbon deviendra, après la production d'or, la deuxième source de développement capitaliste dans

le monde⁸⁵. L'ensemble du système technique des pays industrialisés dépendra du charbon qui était la principale source d'énergie primaire.

L'expansion de l'exploitation minière transformera radicalement le paysage local, tant par les exploitations proprement dites que par les plans d'urbanisme adaptés à une population croissante. Les établissements ruraux tels que Petroșani, Lupeni, Vulcan, Petrița, Uricani, Aninoasa, etc. sont transformés en colonies minières, acquérant plus tard le statut de villes, au fur et à mesure du développement de leurs capacités économiques.

Avec l'expansion de l'exploitation minière, ce sont les paysans des environs des villes qui ont le plus souffert. Jusqu'à la découverte du charbon dans la région, la vallée du Jiu était habitée exclusivement par des éleveurs d'animaux. Les *momârlani*, du nom que leur donnent les nouveaux venus, se définissent comme une ancienne population primaire, enracinée dans la culture préromaine des Daces libres. Pour cette population d'agropasteurs, l'exploitation du charbon sera un danger permanent pour leur propre patrimoine, hérité de leurs ancêtres et pour leur identité culturelle⁸⁶. Sous l'empire des Habsbourg, les paysans libres de la vallée du Jiu sont grevés d'impôts, précisément pour les contraindre à céder leurs terres sous le poids des dettes⁸⁷. Cette relation tendue des locaux avec les autorités se poursuit encore plus tard, y compris pendant le socialisme, lorsque l'État les forcera à céder, assez souvent, leurs propriétés pour faire place à

l'exploitation du charbon et à l'extension urbaine⁸⁸.

Les habitations des colonies minières sont construites selon des plans d'urbanisme, avec un profil minier très bien défini, dotées de services publics, sociaux et culturels favorisant la croissance rapide de la population⁸⁹. Comme les autres régions industrialisées, dans la vallée du Jiu se développent, dès le XIXe siècle, des plans d'urbanisme et des regroupements de population autour d'entreprises minières. Ainsi, les premières colonies sont composées de populations amenées de l'Empire (Tchèques, Polonais, Bosniaques, Roumains de Transylvanie). À Petrița, la ville qui possède la plus ancienne mine de la vallée du Jiu, les colonies étaient ethniquement et socialement compactes. Dans la colonie « Bosnie » vivaient les Slaves du Sud, spécialement les Serbes et les Bosniaques, dans le « Ferro » les Italiens, dans le « Pouchkine » les Russes et les Lipovans. La colonie « Cocișvaro » était habitée par des Hongrois et était située sur une colline, en hauteur. La colonie « Cocișboc » (dénominateur qui vient de « cocie » — charrette) était habitée par des éleveurs de chevaux et des charretiers, qui servaient à la fois à l'extraction du charbon, à assurer le transport de marchandises et à fournir divers services d'entretien et d'assainissement des colonies.

L'une des stratégies abordées par les entreprises minières pour le contrôle du travail était l'établissement d'une relation paternaliste avec les nouveaux arrivants⁹⁰. Afin d'attirer la main-d'œuvre dans un secteur d'activité à haut degré de

⁸⁵ Caron (1997), 72.

⁸⁶ Stanca (1996), 31 ; Pascu (2017), 30-32 ; Mateoniu (2022), 219-221.

⁸⁷ Stanca (1996), 31-56; Pascu (2017), 32.

⁸⁸ Mateoniu (2022), 220-221.

⁸⁹ Baron (1998), 43.

⁹⁰ Glonț, Grecu (2016), 226.

dangerosité, les sociétés minières offrent aux mineurs et à leurs familles un logement gratuit, le paiement de l'énergie et des charges, des primes salariales, des prix réduits sur certains vêtements et produits alimentaires fournis par magasins spéciaux créés pour les besoins des employés, etc.

Cette relation paternaliste se manifeste implicitement comme une relation de domination, de dépendance au pouvoir, les avantages dont jouissaient les mineurs pouvaient à tout moment leur être retirés en fonction de l'accomplissement ou non des tâches de travail demandées. En effet, les maisons pouvaient être habitées gratuitement seulement par les mineurs actifs dans le champ du travail et par leurs familles ou par les anciens mineurs victimes d'accidents de travail graves. Si les mineurs avaient des accidents en dehors des heures de travail souterrain et devenaient inaptes au travail, ils perdaient le bénéfice du logement gratuit. Parallèlement, l'aspect et le confort des habitations varient selon les postes occupés par les locataires au sein des entreprises. Les maisons des fonctionnaires étaient visiblement plus grandes, plus spacieuses et plus confortables que les maisons des simples mineurs, qui étaient beaucoup plus modestes⁹¹. Si les maisons des hauts fonctionnaires comportaient jusqu'à 8, 9 pièces, cuisine et salle de bains, les maisons des simples mineurs étaient généralement composées d'une seule pièce et d'une cuisine, les toilettes étant dans la cour⁹².

La relation paternaliste des compagnies minières avec les mineurs, qui était implicitement une relation de dépendance et de domination, se

perpétuera après 1918 lorsque la région est incluse dans l'État roumain, mais aussi après 1945 lorsque le pouvoir est pris par les communistes. Les avantages offerts visaient à fixer la main-d'œuvre sur le territoire et à la diriger dans le sens souhaité par les sociétés minières et les agents de l'État. La relation de domination et de contrôle deviendra aussi évidente que possible, surtout en période de ralentissement économique comme cela s'est produit lors de la grande crise de 1929-1933. La baisse du niveau de vie et la pénibilité des conditions de travail conduiront à la grève des mineurs de Lupeni en 1929, qui sera réprimée dans le sang par les autorités et qui restera dans la mémoire locale comme un sommet de répression du mouvement ouvrier local.

Après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, en Roumanie, comme dans les autres pays d'Europe de l'Est, le processus de nationalisation des moyens de production a été définitoire pour la devenir du pays. Devenues propriété de l'État, les mines de charbon et la sidérurgie seront les principaux moteurs du développement industriel. Le bassin houiller de la vallée de Jiu sera au sommet de cette stratégie de développement. En 1989, avant l'effondrement du communisme, la Roumanie était le 12^e pays producteur de charbon au monde avec une production de 2650 kg par habitant⁹³. Le bassin minier de la vallée du Jiu et le bassin de lignite de l'Olténie (région voisine, située au sud de la vallée du Jiu) détenaient 80 % des réserves nationales de charbon. Le nombre d'employés augmente également proportionnellement au taux de croissance de la production, la région étant

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 319.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 226-228.

⁹³ Fodor (2005), 312.

massivement peuplée, surtout depuis les années 70. Selon la Direction régionale des statistiques, entre 1948 et 1989, la population de la vallée a augmenté de 320 %, atteignant les 116 000 habitants⁹⁴.

Par la propagande, mais aussi par des incitations matérielles, l'État tente d'homogénéiser la population de la vallée du Jiu. Dès la première décennie du régime communiste, les mineurs sont représentés en héros dans la compétition socialiste, comme un corps d'élite, une sorte d'aristocratie ouvrière. Ils jouissaient d'autant de récompenses matérielles pour le travail « héroïque » de « donner au pays de plus en plus de charbon », ainsi que des ovations et des récompenses symboliques.

Les mineurs tenteront de conserver ce statut après 1989, mais sans succès, devenant finalement les victimes de l'État. Les conflits sociaux qui surgiront atteindront des niveaux sans précédent, culminant avec les venues répétées de mineurs à Bucarest. Lors du premier dépassement (minieriada), en juin 1990, les mineurs répondent à l'appel de Ion Iliescu, le nouveau président après 1989, pour défendre les institutions étatiques « émanant » de la Révolution de décembre 1989. Le motif des autres minieriade était la peur de perdre leur emploi, ainsi que les conditions de pauvreté endémique, qui ont émergé à la suite de la fermeture de la plupart des mines et des licenciements⁹⁵. Car après 1989, la vallée du Jiu entre dans le domaine des politiques de désindustrialisation dictées principalement par le manque de rentabilité de l'exploitation du charbon. D'une région où l'État a beaucoup investi dans les

ressources économiques et de propagande, la vallée du Jiu se transforme rapidement en une zone défavorisée. Les mines sont fermées unes après les autres. Jusqu'à fin 1997, sont licenciées plus de la moitié des mineurs, sans bénéficier de conditions réelles de reconversion professionnelle. Après l'adhésion de la Roumanie à l'Union européenne en 2007, le secteur minier de la vallée du Jiu continuera de décliner, par rapport aux politiques européennes de protection de l'environnement et de transition vers une économie durable et moins polluante. Le plan de restructuration du secteur minier en 2012 prévoyait une réduction drastique des coûts de production et une diminution progressive de la production de charbon jusqu'à fin 2018. Par la suite, la plupart des mines cessent leurs activités. Seules quatre sont restées actives jusqu'à aujourd'hui (Vulcan, Lupeni, Livezeni, Lonea), mais avec un personnel très réduit⁹⁶.

Dans ce contexte, nous nous demandons comment les gens ordinaires ont-ils réagi à tous ces changements, du capitalisme au socialisme et du socialisme à nouveau au capitalisme ? Comment les politiques d'augmentation de la production, d'aménagement du territoire, de contrôle de la population, par des mesures concrètes, mais aussi par la propagande, sont-elles évoluées, et quelles ont été les conséquences de ces politiques sur la vie des gens ? Quels ont été les mécanismes de construction d'une identité collective des mineurs en tant que principaux représentants de la classe ouvrière ? Dans quelle mesure la population intériorise-t-elle l'image du mineur comme « héros de la compétition socialiste » ?

⁹⁴ Glonț, Grecu (2016), 233.

⁹⁵ Rus (2007).

⁹⁶ Burlacu et al. (2019), 11.

Comment s'est construit et a évolué l'environnement de travail dans les entreprises minières, mais aussi l'espace de vie en passant de la vie dans les colonies de travail à la vie de quartier ? Comment les gens ont résisté aux politiques étatiques et au changement sociopolitique et quelles ont été leur stratégies et tactiques de résistance et d'adaptation par rapport à ces politiques?

Pour répondre, au moins en partie, à ces questions, nous analyserons les entretiens et les récits de vie que nous avons recueillis au cours de plusieurs campagnes de terrain, depuis 2013 jusqu'à aujourd'hui, et nous les corroborerons avec des informations tirées de la presse. Nous partirons du postulat que les biographies sont révélatrices de l'histoire de la vie quotidienne, dans la mesure où elles renvoient aux contextes sociaux et culturels plus larges⁹⁷. Chaque parcours de vie individuel contient indiscutablement à la fois des références à des expériences et des sentiments singuliers, mais aussi à tout un tissu de relations sociales et politiques. Sans doute, cette approche de la reconstruction des rapports de force, avant et après 1989, ne pourrait pas couvrir tous les aspects de la vie quotidienne, étant profondément affectée par la nature subjective de la mémoire. En d'autres termes, toute prétention à fournir une image complète et objective de la vie quotidienne s'efface devant ce caractère subjectif de la mémoire, les souvenirs étant en permanence conditionnés par le contexte présent, mais aussi par les projections de chaque narrateur.

⁹⁷ Cerutti (2008), 147-168.

Cadre théorique et méthodologique

Notre propre analyse est guidée par les réflexions de certains théoriciens et praticiens de la vie quotidienne tels que Michel Foucault⁹⁸, Michel de Certeau⁹⁹, Pierre Bourdieu¹⁰⁰ et John C. Scott¹⁰¹. Nous nous demandons ainsi, en permanence, dans quelle mesure la vie quotidienne des gens ordinaires se manifeste comme une arène de reproduction des rapports de force ou, au contraire, est le champ de l'invention, de la création et de la résistance aux formes de pouvoir.

Pour y parvenir, nous partirons du postulat que les rapports de force ne sont ni permanents ni unidirectionnels. La résistance évolue dans le temps, s'adapte aux évolutions du pouvoir, tout comme le pouvoir réagit différemment dans le temps aux formes de résistance. La résistance au quotidien est toujours intersectionnelle, hétérogène et contingente, relative à plusieurs formes de pouvoir¹⁰². En d'autres termes, il ne s'agit pas d'une forme d'action universelle, mais de diverses formes de résistance selon le contexte et la situation. L'accommodation peut être une forme de reproduction du pouvoir, mais aussi à un moment donné une forme camouflée de résistance au pouvoir. C'est pourquoi la dimension temporelle, l'observation dans le temps des relations de domination est essentielle pour aller au-delà des apparences et de comprendre l'intrication dynamique de ces relations.

⁹⁸ Foucault (1975).

⁹⁹ De Certeau (1990).

¹⁰⁰ Bourdieu (1972).

¹⁰¹ Scott (1990).

¹⁰² Vinthagen, Johansson (2013).

Les rapports des gens ordinaires au pouvoir sont extrêmement subversifs, ce que l'on constate en permanence dans le cas des régimes communistes, analysés dans d'innombrables études qui abordent les diverses réalités sous l'angle du facteur social et culturel¹⁰³. Sheila Fitzpatrick, par exemple, étudie la vie quotidienne dans des conditions exceptionnelles, la vie ordinaire dans des conditions inhabituelles, dominées par la terreur et l'insécurité¹⁰⁴. La vie quotidienne n'est pas perçue comme s'opposant à tout prix à la sphère publique et officielle. Les dichotomies public/privé, banal/exceptionnel, officiel/officiel, l'exercice du pouvoir/la résistance sont abandonnées au profit de la continuité, l'auteur suivant plutôt les répercussions des politiques étatiques sur les citoyens et moins leurs stratégies de survie face à celles-ci. Car face à l'État, les gens ordinaires ne sont pas en mesure d'organiser une opposition civique. D'où le sentiment que quelqu'un d'autre a vécu leur propre vie¹⁰⁵. La vie quotidienne, domestique et souterraine, devient un lieu ouvert aux interventions idéologiques, qui affectent pleinement l'environnement domestique. Avec l'avènement des « appartements collectifs », le domicile ne peut plus assurer la fonction de refuge face au pouvoir. Tout aussi illusoire est la duplication de la personne entre un soi « vrai » et l'autre « faux ». Homo sovieticus apparaît ainsi comme une véritable incarnation, observable dans les pratiques

quotidiennes et dans l'appropriation des nouvelles identités tracées par le régime¹⁰⁶.

L'État socialiste est celui qui monopolise non seulement la production de biens, mais aussi le système de distribution et de services. Mais la société n'est ni amorphe ni automatiquement opposée à l'État¹⁰⁷. Cependant, devenant de plus en plus monolithique et paternaliste, c'est l'État qui décide où vont les ressources, quelles sont les privilégiées et lesquelles sont les rationalisées¹⁰⁸. Par son mode de fonctionnement même, l'État sera celui qui favorisera l'émergence des relations informelles et de l'économie secondaire¹⁰⁹. En d'autres termes, la société dans les régimes socialistes est dans un rapport permanent avec le pouvoir, les individus comme les groupes compacts essayant constamment de s'adapter, de résister, de survivre et même d'accéder au système. C'est exactement ce que nous essaierons de montrer dans les pages suivantes. Des aspects de la vie quotidienne sont constamment décrits et analysés en relation avec les politiques de croissance continue de la production, du rapprochement du territoire régional pour un développement industriel intensif et une urbanisation accélérée, de contrôle de la population perçue comme force du travail et masse politique.

¹⁰³ Par exemple : Boym (1994) ; Penn, Massino (2009); Johnston (2013), 401-415 ; Todorova, Dimou, Troebst (2014) ; Kaneva (2006), 1-15 ; Folls (2011) ; Mateoniu, Gheorghiu (2012), 7-18 ; Giustino, Plum, Vari (2013) ; Olteanu (2019) ; Dobre (2020).

¹⁰⁴ Fitzpatrick (2000).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, 138.

¹⁰⁶ Choi Chatterje et al. (2014).

¹⁰⁷ Christian (2002) ; Lindenberger (2003) ; Rowell (2005 a, b) ; Kott (2011).

¹⁰⁸ Kornai (1992) ; Kideckel, (2006 [1993], 2002, 114-132, 2010); Verdery (1996, 1998, 1999, 2003) ; Kligman (2000); Althabe, Mungiu-Pippidi (2002) ; Nicolae (2004).

¹⁰⁹ Humphrey (1998) ; Lampland (1995) ; Berdahl (1999) ; Chelcea, Lățea (2004); Chelcea, Mateescu (2005) ; Câmpeanu, (1988, 1994).

Sous l'impératif d'augmentation de la production ou la « chasse au charbon »

À la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les mineurs de la Vallée du Jiu sont mobilisés pour soutenir l'augmentation intensive de la production de charbon. L'exploitation des ressources du sous-sol occupe une place prépondérante dans la politique de l'État socialiste, comme en témoigne le fait que le premier gouvernement contrôlé par le Parti communiste a un ministère des Mines et du Pétrole¹¹⁰. Quelque temps auparavant, Gheorghe Gherghiu-Dej, futur premier secrétaire du parti communiste, alors ministre des Communications du gouvernement Sănătescu (4 novembre-5 décembre 1944), sera venu « parmi les ouvriers de la vallée du Jiu » pour remédier à la baisse de la production de charbon¹¹¹. Comme il ressort du discours du ministre prononcé lors de la réunion du 24 novembre au « Casino ouvrier » de Petroșani, l'augmentation de la production de charbon est une nécessité urgente sans laquelle le transport ferroviaire risque d'être complètement interrompu, compte tenu de la diminution drastique de la production d'énergie¹¹². La vallée du Jiu s'impose ainsi comme une zone stratégique pour le développement économique de tout le pays, le charbon étant la principale ressource énergétique mondiale. Son rôle déterminant s'inscrit dans le contexte d'une concurrence féroce entre pays socialistes et pays capitalistes.

¹¹⁰ Pașcu (2016), 94.

¹¹¹ Boboc (2012), 411.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, 410-415.

La première période d'après-guerre est dominée par la présence effective des Russes dans la vie économique du pays à travers la création d'entreprises roumano-soviétiques appelées SOVROM. Grâce à ces entreprises, les Soviétiques contrôlaient effectivement toutes les sphères économiques, de l'agriculture, de l'industrie, des transports et des banques. Les SOVROM ont fonctionné de 1945 à 1953. Ils étaient formellement considérés comme des organismes de collaboration et d'aide, mais étaient en réalité des formes d'exploitation directe de l'économie roumaine par l'empire soviétique. Durant cette période, les richesses les plus importantes du pays prendront le chemin de la Russie en raison de la dette de guerre que la Roumanie a dû payer aux Soviétiques (Baron, 2006 : 53). Dans le cadre de SOVROMCARBUNE, créée en 1949, les Soviétiques possédaient 50 % du capital.

Pour les habitants de la vallée du Jiu, comme pour tout le pays, cette période est marquée par une pénurie de produits de base. La nourriture, mais aussi certains produits vestimentaires, sont donnés sur la présentation de la carte d'employé et livrés par les magasins spécialisés des compagnies minières. Voici comment Elena Mălineț, ancienne mécanicienne à la mine, se souvient de son enfance passée dans un village situé auprès de la mine de Livezeni :

« C'était très difficile pour nous à cause du manque de l'argent, je me souviens que papa avait un salaire de quatre cents lei, mais qui n'était pas suffisant. [...] on avait droit seulement à un quart de pain par jour chacun, et c'était un pain noir. Mais seulement les employés et leurs familles avaient ce droit, le reste n'en profitait pas, les gens se sont débrouillé

comme ils pouvaient. Les paysans d'ici avaient du maïs, ils faisaient de la polenta. [...] »

Cependant, l'État tente de compenser le faible niveau de vie par la propagande à travers laquelle il donne l'illusion aux gens d'une vie future meilleure et plus prospère. L'une des tâches importante des militants politiques était le « travail d'éclaircissement ». Pour mieux comprendre, voici quelques extraits d'une autocritique faite par le secrétaire du Comité syndical, lors d'une réunion syndicale organisée en février 1949. Selon le secrétaire « le peu d'importance accordée au travail d'éclaircissement mené auprès des nouveaux arrivants de la vallée du Jiu » a conduit à leur départ vers leurs lieux d'origine. Un autre aspect relevé par lui était le fait que « trop peu d'importance a été accordée à la stimulation des compétitions socialistes. Il n'y a jamais eu de délégués qui s'adressent aux ouvriers afin de les former et leur donner des exemples efficaces de travail, leur expliquer quel est le rôle de la compétition en travail. Il n'y avait pas de lien étroit entre les dirigeants et la grande masse des salariés »¹¹³.

Le syndicat, en fin de compte, est une organisation de masse, se confondant avec la lignée du parti-État. L'impératif du moment était d'augmenter la production par la stimulation propagandiste des travailleurs. Le travail d'éclaircissement sera mené par des agents de pouvoir recrutés parmi la main-d'œuvre locale, l'activisme partisan et syndical s'entremêlant, au moins dans les premières phases du régime, avec un travail bénévole au service de la construction d'objectifs

stratégiques régionaux auxquels tous les salariés contribuent. Cornelia Anton se souvient de son papa qui « était un militant. [...] C'était des moments difficiles, même pour nous, les petits. C'était le moment quand on construisait le tunnel [il s'agit des tunnels creusés dans les montagnes pour aménager le chemin de fer entre Bumbesti et Livezeni]. Je me souviens, j'avais 5 ou 6 ans. Nous les enfants allions avec nos parents, ils ne nous laissaient pas seuls à la maison... Tout était volontaire. Ce n'était pas payé alors, c'était bénévole. »

Dans les discours officiels, le travail, en général, et le travail souterrain, en particulier, deviendront une forme de sacrifice pour la nation. Parmi les mineurs se distingueront les « stakhanovistes » qui se remarquent par leur production record. Ils recevaient des éloges en public, des médailles et étaient récompensés par des primes salariales. Dès le début, un habitus de « concurrence socialiste » sera créé dans lequel les brigades de mineurs rivaliseront pour fournir des quantités de plus en plus importantes de charbon.

À l'occasion de l'organisation de la « Conférence départementale pour l'unification de la jeunesse ouvrière », toute la ville de Petroșani se transforme en une immense scène d'accueil enthousiaste des participants. « À l'aube, toujours l'avance du matin, rapporte le rédacteur anonyme du journal Zori Noi, les délégués des jeunes de la province ont été accueillis avec enthousiasme à la gare par les jeunes de la localité et par les membres de la Commission de l'Unification départementale. « Et puis d'ici, avec des fanfares et des drapeaux, [ils ont marché] à travers la ville qui participe aussi à la fête des jeunes. Depuis le soir, la ville s'était habillé de drapeaux rouges et tricolores, et

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, 410-415.

de slogans qui soulignaient l'importance de l'événement. Dans les vitrines, on avait mis des fleurs et des portraits des grands maîtres du prolétariat et des dirigeants de la classe ouvrière de notre pays. Aux alentours d'une allée, il y avait des panneaux qui dirigeaient les participants vers le Casino ouvrier, où devaient se dérouler les travaux de la Conférence »¹¹⁴. Le « Casino ouvrier » était également orné de drapeaux, de branches de sapin, de slogans, de portraits de Lénine, de Staline et de membres du Bureau du Comité central du Parti. Les ampoules seront remplacées par des lampes de mine « qui émettaient une lumière jaune pâle »¹¹⁵. La conférence débutera « par une salve d'applaudissements », et « après la présentation du rapport d'activité de la Commission départementale de l'Unification, un groupe de mineurs sont entré dans la salle, puis sur scène, vêtu d'habits de travail, le visage et les mains noircis avec de la poussière de charbon : c'était l'équipe d'étudiants de l'Institut du charbon de Petroșani qui, avec leur professeur, ont travaillé de nuit dans la mine de Petrila. Dans un abattage où les mineurs n'arrivaient pas à accomplir la norme, en raison de difficultés, la production étaient toujours 30 % en dessous de la norme, ils [c'est-à-dire les étudiants] ont réussi à dépasser la norme de 30 %. Avec cette réalisation et grâce à un travail acharné, ils sont venus saluer la Conférence »¹¹⁶.

Cette apparition des mineurs sur scène, affichant leurs performances en production, à la sortie du travail, ne semble

pas avoir été singulière. Les mineurs montaient constamment sur scène, en tenue de travail, pour saluer les délégués participant aux diverses conférences ouvrières et déclarer publiquement que les objectifs de production avaient été dépassés¹¹⁷. La mise en scène de leurs performances du travail rassemble à une déposition d'offrandes sur l'autel de la patrie socialiste.

Les records de production sont également mis en scène dans des émissions de radio et, plus tard, de télévision. Les émissions étaient écoutées collectivement, précisément pour renforcer le sentiment d'appartenance des mineurs à la classe ouvrière et leur attachement à l'État. L'une de ces émissions a été diffusée par Radio România Libera, le 18 septembre 1949, et est écoutée ensemble par les mineurs, dans la salle de conférence du « Casino ouvrier » de Petroșani. La même émission est écoutée aussi par les mineurs de Lupeni, mais par mégaphones, sur la place publique¹¹⁸.

Discipline et propagande

L'ambiance dans la vallée du Jiu est assez militaire, donnant aux mineurs l'impression d'appartenir à une catégorie spéciale d'ouvriers. Lors de certaines réunions, « l'Hymne des mineurs » est toujours chantée et accompagnée, pendant les années 1950, par l'Internationale communiste¹¹⁹. Les mineurs sont hiérarchisés selon leur qualification et leur ancienneté dans le champ du travail. Leur salaire est fixe, les différences étaient liées à leur ancienneté, au degré de qualification et

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 495.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 496.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 523.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 510-511.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 452, 469.

de l'efficacité dans la production. Dans la mine, le respect de la hiérarchie et la solidarité s'imposent comme une nécessité, comme nous l'a raconté Gabi Nearady, ancien ingénieur, responsable du secteur d'intervention d'urgence, à la mine de Petrița : « Dans la mine, on ne peut qu'être solidaire, car la vie des uns dépend des autres. [...] En surface [les mineurs] se disputaient encore, mais là-bas jamais ».

Les primes, ainsi que les avantages dont bénéficiaient les mineurs ne compensent pas du tout le risque qu'ils assumaient au quotidien. Voici ce que Elena Mălineț, ancienne mécanicienne minière, nous a raconté concernant le travail au souterrain : « *J'ai travaillé à Livezeni, seulement en surface, mais j'étais curieuse de voir comment c'est au souterrain. Et, je peux vous dire que je ne souhaite ni au serpent de vivre là-bas. Il faisait tellement chaud qu'ils [les mineurs] devaient travailler, les pauvres, seulement en culotte parce qu'il faisait 50 degrés environ. [...]* »

Les mineurs mangeaient dans les entrailles de la Terre avec les rats ensemble et la même nourriture qui ne manquait pas de « pain aux lardons ». Elle noircissait à cause du charbon. « Les mineurs pendaient la nourriture au plafond grillagé, ajoute Gabi Nearady, mais les rats escaladaient souvent le grillage. Finalement, ils partageaient la nourriture avec eux. Quand il y avait des jours de congé, les rats se mangeaient entre eux. » Les rats étaient, après tout, les amis des mineurs, c'était bien quand c'était des rats et très mauvais quand ils ne l'étaient pas, l'absence de rats était un signe de danger, des fuites de méthane.

Vie citadine et temps libre des mineurs. De la discipline au divertissement et à la bonne humeur

Compte tenu des conditions du danger, le travail dans la mine demande une grande discipline. L'atmosphère souterraine dans le sous-sol affecte également la vie urbaine en général. Car les sirènes (dude) annonçaient à intervalles égaux l'entrée et la sortie de la garde. Le programme de travail commençait à 6 heures du matin, mais les sirènes retentissaient bien avant le début du programme. La vie de la ville battait au rythme des travaux souterrains, en fonction de l'entrée et de la sortie des mineurs de la mine.

Pendant longtemps encore, les maisons seront chauffées au charbon. À l'exception de la ville de Petroșani, qui est passée au chauffage central dans les années 1980, toutes les autres villes seront chauffées, jusqu'en 1989, avec les centrales de chauffage alimentées au charbon. La pollution était au plus haut, d'autant plus que le transport des personnes et du charbon se fera longtemps encore par le chemin de fer, avec des locomotives également alimentées au charbon. Il y avait tellement de pollution que « tu marchais dans le centre et tu étais tout noir », se souvient Liviu Țambrea, l'un des anciens ouvriers à la Société minière de pièces de rechange et de maintenance — ISEMEX). À Petrița, en 1988, nous a précisé Cristina Șandor, « il y avait encore beaucoup de blocs qui étaient chauffés au charbon. Ce sont ces centrales au charbon qui nous ont rendus malheureux. Au milieu de chaque

quartier se trouvait une centrale au charbon qui fournissait de la chaleur. Mais ils étaient terribles, car ils dégageaient de la fumée. Une fois, je suis sorti avec mon enfant juste au coin du bloc et nous avons revenu parce que mon enfant ne pouvait pas respirer. »

Si initialement les sociétés minières patronnaient les activités publiques urbaines, progressivement les attributions administratives, telles que celles d'assainissement, d'entretien et d'embellissement des zones urbaines, seront reprises par les autorités locales. Cependant, les mines continueront à soutenir financièrement certaines activités publiques, comme l'entretien des écoles ou, après 1989, des églises.

L'État socialiste aura tendance à s'emparer de toutes les sphères de la vie, essayant de contrôler non seulement les relations de travail, la répartition des ressources nécessaires à la vie dans la région, mais aussi le temps libre des gens. C'est l'État qui versait des salaires et des primes, distribuait des logements, de l'énergie, de la nourriture et des vêtements, tout en construisant un certain cadre de divertissement et de loisirs. La discipline et la propagande des années 50, seront progressivement remplacées, surtout après 1965 (dans la deuxième étape du régime) par l'atmosphère de spectacle et de divertissement.

Jusqu'en 1989, les mineurs disposaient d'un revenu assez élevé par rapport à d'autres catégories de travailleurs, ce qui leur permettait de participer à diverses activités récréatives et de loisirs. Le syndicat organisait des voyages et des vacances collectives. Des spectacles ont également été organisés avec la participation de centaines de personnes. Au

restaurant Minerul, situé dans un jardin d'été, les gens chantaient et dansaient tout le temps. Le restaurant n'était jamais vide. Dans les années 80, avec 25 lei¹²⁰ on pouvait acheter « une bouteille de rhum, une bière ou deux, un steak aussi long que le couvercle et il y en restait encore pour un paquet de cigarettes », nous a précisé Liviu Țambla. Les samedis après-midi et les dimanches, chaque brigade minière recevait des futs de bière, de la part de la compagnie, avec laquelle ils se rendaient dans un chalet, à l'herbe verte. « [Les mineurs] ne sortaient qu'avec leur famille. Mais, si le record avait été battu dans la production de charbon, dans le hall de sortie, les mineurs étaient attendus avec de la bière, avant d'aller aux douches se laver ». Afin de maintenir une production élevée, les mineurs recevaient des prix en espèces, mais ils apparaissaient également avec une photo sur le panneau d'honneur. Par l'intermédiaire du syndicat, les mineurs bénéficiaient des soi-disant bons en échange desquels ils recevaient des billets gratuits pour se rendre à la Mer noire ou dans les stations thermales, pendant 7-10 jours, où ils allaient en famille. À l'occasion des fêtes officielles [le « 23 Août » qui était la fête nationale ou la « Fête des Mineurs »] tout le monde sortent dans la nature dans divers lieux qui deviendront consacrés, destinés à des moments de récréation et de fête, tels que « Fleur Prairie », près de Petrila. La fanfare chantait dans les rues pour finalement s'arrêter dans le parc où elle continuait à se produire pendant toute la journée. En général, les mineurs se

¹²⁰ À la fin des années '80s, le salaire d'un mineur variait entre 2700 lei et 3700 lei par mois. À ce salaire s'ajoutait les autres bonus en fonction des performances dans la production.

fréquentaient, passant leur temps libre ensemble. « Ils venaient l'un vers l'autre, se souvient Gabi Nearady, ils jouaient aux cartes. Mon père jouait aux cartes avec ses frères de travail [ortaci]. Maintenant, chacun est dans sa cage. »

Les mineurs étaient encouragés à participer à des activités organisées de loisirs, de divertissement et de culture. Violeta Mojoatcă, entrepreneur dans les domaines du commerce et du tourisme, se souvient que « les restaurants Cina et Minerul avaient chacun du piano. Il y avait des restaurants prétentieux dans la Vallée et les mineurs se respectaient vraiment, ils emmenaient leurs femmes au restaurant. [...] »

Entre 1985 et 1990, pendant 5 ans, ajoute Ion Holobuț, j'ai été directeur du Club des Syndicats Miniers de Lupeni. À cette époque c'était ce concours, le « Chanson de la Roumanie », et divers groupes artistiques se préparaient au niveau du Club. Parmi eux, il y avait deux sections de théâtre, une en roumain et l'autre en hongrois. [...] Et c'étaient des amateurs, ce n'étaient pas des artistes professionnels, mais ils ont obtenu de beaux résultats, ils ont voyagé avec des spectacles. À cette époque il n'y avait pas trop d'émissions de télévision, pas trop de radio et, dans ce cas, toutes sortes de spectacles étaient organisés. Sur la scène du Palais Lupeni, quand j'étais directeur, des groupes artistiques sont venus, il y avait des spectacles de musique folklorique, la chorale Madrigal... Ils étaient presque tous les grands artistes de Roumanie.

Les spectacles qui attiraient vraiment les mineurs, provenant dans leur majorité du milieu rural, étaient du folklore. « Nous marchions d'ici, de Câmpul lui Neag au Palais de la Culture, se souvient Violeta Mojoatcă. Tout le monde allait au spectacle, comment pas. Il y avait

deux spectacles par jour avec une salle pleine de 300 à 400 places. Tous les spectacles à Lupeni étaient toujours avec toutes les places occupées. »

La grève des mineurs de 1977 et ses conséquences sur la vie quotidienne

En 1977, les mineurs de la mine de Lupeni ont protesté par une grève contre les mauvaises conditions de travail, la baisse des revenus et la croissance irréaliste des plans de production. La grève aura des conséquences majeures pour l'ensemble de la région. La détermination des mineurs à ne pas céder aux menaces obligera Nicolae Ceaușescu à venir en personne dans la vallée du Jiu et à promettre aux grévistes que leurs revendications seront acceptées. Mais, après la reprise de l'activité, les leaders des grévistes seront arrêtés puis déportés, afin d'empêcher toute autre riposte collective. Après la grève de 1977, les autorités imposeront un contrôle strict de la région, le personnel minier étant « purgé » des éléments hostiles au régime. « Le contrôle était total, nous a raconté Ionel Dănescu, ancien électricien. On patrouillait dans les rues avec des « gardes patriotiques ». « L'implication de la sécurité dans le contrôle de la région, considère le prêtre Martin Attila, a dépassé ce qui s'est passé en URSS, transformant la vallée du Jiu en enfer ».

Les mineurs éliminés de la main-d'œuvre seront remplacés, momentanément, juste après l'arête de la grève, par les soldats. L'implication de l'armée dans l'exploitation du charbon, qui semblait être un garant de la discipline dans le travail, va au contraire être un fiasco. Les jeunes soldats ne tiendront pas

trop compte des dangers du travail dans la mine, causant par négligence de nombreux accidents de travail qui entraîneront la mort de certains d'entre eux. Ceci explique que le travail avec les militaires sera abandonné, les recrues étant remplacées par des ouvriers « détachés » de toutes les entreprises du pays. L'armée, moins disciplinée qu'on ne le pensait auparavant, sera remplacée, nous a dit Cristina Șandor, par des « bataillons dits disciplinaires, constitués de personnes en difficulté [d'insertion dans le champ du travail] amenées à se faire discipliner dans la vallée du Jiu » Habituellement, on détachait des travailleurs inaptes aux exigences d'un travail discipliné et qualifié, ce dont la direction des entreprises voulait se débarrasser. Les actions de détachement de personnel se déroulent dans un contexte où toute forme de « parasitisme » [terme établi à l'époque] était interdite par la loi. Cela veut dire que le régime a interdit toute tentative de refuser le travail dans l'économie socialiste, « disciplinant » ceux qui s'opposaient à cette forme d'intégration obligatoire.

La majorité du personnel minier d'après 1977 provenait des zones rurales, étant dépourvues de toute qualification dans les activités industrielles et encore moins dans la mine. C'était un personnel qui sera finalement vaguement conscient d'appartenir à la classe ouvrière¹²¹.

Des actions de détachement de personnel seront organisées par vagues successives, portant le dénominateur du nombre de personnes amenées : « Action 3000 », « 7000 », « 9000 », « 13000 ».

Nous avons d'abord 5 000 soldats dans les mines de la Vallée, nous a raconté

Imola Martonossy, ancienne directrice de la Préparation. Savez-vous combien d'explosions il y a eu, combien de morts ? Qu'à l'explosion de Livezeni, quand les 52 soldats sont morts, on a trouvé des allumettes et des cigarettes dans leurs poches. Qu'ils n'étaient pas conscients du danger. Ils ont dit : « Je viens travailler, c'est obligatoire, mais qui me voit fumer ? » Et quand il y avait ces événements avec des soldats morts, les autorités ont dit : « Ça suffit, on n'amène plus de soldats ! » Et puis est venue l'action 7000. Et puis est venue l'action 9000. Qu'est-ce que c'était ? De toute la Roumanie, de chaque unité de travail, 1, 2, 7 personnes devaient être envoyées, déplacées vers la vallée de Jiu. Eh bien dites-moi ? Qui ont été envoyés ici de toutes les usines de Roumanie? 7000 personnes non qualifiées et indisciplinées.

« C'était la période où des gens de tout le pays étaient amenés, se souvient aussi Gabi Nearady. Des gens ont-ils été amenés de force de toutes parts du pays, et les dirigeants d'entreprise ont partagé tous les indisciplinés, parce qu'il était tout à fait normal de vouloir se débarrasser de tout ce qui ne leur convenaient. »

L'appropriation territoriale et contrôle du logement

La tendance à l'exploitation sans limites du territoire au nom d'un développement industriel accéléré, qui se manifestera dès le XIXe siècle, atteint son sommet pendant le socialisme, dans le contexte d'une concurrence féroce entre l'Est et l'Ouest. Le taux de croissance de la production se reflétera également dans le taux de croissance de la population. Le paysage zonal sera radicalement modifié

¹²¹ Kideckel (2010) ; Grecu (2014).

par l'expansion et la modernisation industrielles.

L'aire urbaine sera agrandie pour accueillir des travailleurs détachés, mais compte tenu des conditions de sécurité, une partie des nouveaux bâtiments seront construits à l'emplacement des anciens. Toute une série de bâtiments dans les quartiers des anciennes colonies minières est démolie pour faire place aux blocs préfabriqués, nécessaires à la réception de populations. On sera construits des blocs pour les non-membres de la famille, dans lesquels 2 ou 3 personnes vivaient dans une seule pièce, et qui disposaient de toilettes partagées dans le couloir. Mais on a construit aussi des blocs pour les familles, avec des appartements individuels. En général, les nouveaux arrivants passaient d'abord par l'étape du « vivre ensemble », puis, ils recevaient des appartements individuels avec le mariage et la naissance des enfants. Le nombre de personnes qui venaient travailler dans la mine va augmenter constamment, la demande d'appartements étant extrêmement élevée, les mineurs recourant à toutes sortes d'astuces pour recevoir plus rapidement des logements. Cornelia Anton se souvient que son mari « était l'administrateur de la mine. Pendant de nombreuses années, il s'occupait de la répartition des maisons pour les travailleurs. C'était quand les autorités ont amené les gens de Moldavie et il y avait beaucoup de jeunes qui avaient besoin de maisons. Et ces nouveaux arrivés amenaient les enfants et les mettaient sur le bureau [de mon mari] et il les amenait ensuite chez moi. Je suis désolé d'avoir omis d'en adopter au moins deux. C'étaient les enfants de ceux qui se vengeaient de ne pas avoir reçu toute de suite des maisons. Finalement, ils ont tous reçu des maisons. [...] Pour ceux qui n'avaient pas de famille, on a

réservé des blocs spéciaux qui ont été faits spécialement pour eux. »

La croissance accélérée de la production de charbon parallèlement à l'expansion de l'habitat urbain se fera au prix de la destruction du patrimoine local. Par exemple, la colonie Lopstain dans la ville de Lupeni, qui a été bâtie à l'origine pour les propriétaires de mines et les hauts fonctionnaires, sera complètement rasée pour faire place aux nouveaux blocs d'appartements. Dans certains cas, l'exploitation du charbon s'étendra jusqu'à la zone de sécurité, provoquant des glissements de terrain et mettant de la sorte en danger les habitants de ces zones, alors contraints de déménager de leurs habitations.

« La zone en dessous de nous s'appelle le pilier de sécurité, nous a expliqué Imola Martonossy. Et quand les premières mines ont été creusées et les premières maisons-colonies bâties, une zone a été délimitée dans laquelle personne n'était autorisé à exploiter. [...] C'était exactement sous la colonie de 80 maisons qui était la première colonie faite à Lupeni. [...] Et sous les maisons était la sécurité pilier qui contenait du charbon propre. Lorsque Ceaușescu a eu besoin de plus de charbon, la mine Lupeni Pilier a été ouverte. Et il a commencé à exploiter toute cette partie, mais pour pouvoir le faire, il a démolit toute la colonie. Ainsi, la première moitié de Lupeni est disparu. »

Cependant, en développant les opérations minières, ce sont les paysans aux abords des villes qui ont le plus souffert. Ils vivront en permanence avec la peur de perdre leur propriété, une peur qui ne semble pas avoir disparu aujourd'hui encore, comme nous avons observé tout en écoutant Elena Mălineț : *Qu'est-ce que les autorités ont pensé ? C'était pour faire des*

expérimentations pour trouver du charbon... Et Ceausescu a dit : « La vallée doit être sacrifiée pour le charbon. » Puis ils ont ruiné les maisons des gens. [...] Là où ils ont donné du charbon, ils [les autorités] ont dit : « Prenez simplement vos affaires et dégagez. [...] » Savez-vous ce que Ceausescu a dit après son arrivée dans la Vallée ? Que s'il y a du charbon sur un mètre carré, tout doit être détruit. Elena Ceausescu se fichait de la façon dont les gens se déplacent et de ce qu'ils font. Eh bien, c'est pourquoi ils sont tous partis dans les montagnes, sur les collines. Si on regarde, on voit où sont les maisons, au sommet des montagnes, les gens y ont fui. Mais les entreprises y trouveront aussi du charbon là-bas, et les a forcés à quitter même ces endroits. [...] C'est pour ça que ces villageois ont fait leur maison en bois, parce qu'ils étaient conscients du danger. Bon, il n'y avait pas d'autres matériaux, mais ils étaient aussi conscients que si la situation se gâte, tu peux prendre tes affaires vite et bouger. [...] Ceausescu a dit : « S'il y a du charbon, nous vous fabriquerons des blocs. » Mais bon, les villageois n'aiment pas le bloc. Deux familles sont allées et sont entrées dans le bloc et ont dit : « Ok, je reste ici, oui, mais ma vache, qu'est-ce qu'elle fait ? » Et les gens se sont enfuis et ont créé d'autres foyers, d'autres écuries au sommet des montagnes. [...]

Cet extrait d'entretien est très pertinent tant pour illustrer l'interventionnisme agressif de l'État dans la vie des gens que pour observer la réaction de ces derniers face à l'agression. Les habitants assumeront une vie précaire dans des cadres traditionnels, plutôt que de vivre selon les règles imposées par l'État. En plus de construire des maisons en bois, les momârlani auront également recours à l'enterrement des morts dans leurs propres jardins, une coutume ancestrale aux valeurs identitaires et culturelles fortes. Cette façon d'enterrer les ancêtres dans leurs propres

jardins et vergers était une garantie supplémentaire de pouvoir défendre leurs propriétés par la présence même des ossements des ancêtres sur la propriété possédée. Mais ce lien sacré avec les précurseurs sera définitivement ignoré par les chercheurs d'« or noir ». Le cas le plus dramatique de mépris de la propriété individuelle et d'accaparement abusif de territoire par l'État, dans le but d'étendre l'exploitation minière, reste celui de Câmpul lui Neag, entièrement détruit, à la fin des années 80. Les événements nous ont été largement racontés par Violeta Mojoatcă, une des victimes de la tragédie qui s'est passée :

« À Câmpul lui Neag, sous le régime communiste, une expropriation abusive a eu lieu. Bien sûr, les habitants s'y sont opposés, comme ils le savaient, comme tout paysan. Ils sont sortis avec des fourches, des haches, des faux. Mais ils [les services de répression] venaient pendant la nuit et les arrêtaient, les emmenaient à la milice, les battaient bien, leur disaient « faites attention à ce que votre enfant ne soit pas chassé de l'école. » [...] Et ils les a démolit abusivement leurs maisons. Une dame que je connais m'a dit : « Je cuisinais de la nourriture, je cuisinais du chou sur le feu pour nourrir mes enfants. » Elle avait 5 enfants. « Et tout à coup j'ai entendu un bruit dans la maison et quand je suis sorti dans la cour, les soldats étaient sur mon toit. » Cette démolition s'est faite avec l'armée et les prisonniers qui ont été amenés en très grand nombre. [...] Et puis les soldats n'ont pas annoncé au peuple avant de détruire quoi que ce soit. Ils ont emmenés les gens du village à Uricani, dans un bloc sans portes, sans fenêtres, sans cheminées. Ils avaient des poêles et ils ont enlevé les cheminées par les fenêtres. Au début, ils ont mis du plastique pour boucher la fenêtre parce qu'ils n'avaient pas de verre. Et dans ce village c'était comme ça,

une horreur. Les chiens [laissés sur place] aboyaient après les gens qui étaient partis. Les autres animaux ont été emmenés dans les manoirs, où les gens avaient encore des huttes, par navette. Mais les chiens ont été abandonnés. Et ils aboyaient dans le village alors qu'il n'y avait plus personne. Et tout le monde pleurait. [...] il y avait un grand désespoir.

La famille de Violeta se voit attribuer un appartement dans la ville minière voisine d'Uricani, mais où elle ne vivra même pas temporairement. L'appartement de la ville servira de lieu de stockage pour les objets récupérés de la maison détruite. Les enfants vivront chez des parents, et les plus âgés se retireront pour vivre dans la hutte qu'ils avaient dans les montagnes, sur des terres encore possédées. Sans confort, sans électricité, cet abri précaire n'était habité auparavant que pendant l'été, lorsque qu'on gardait les animaux qui paissaient au sommet des montagnes.

Ils ont démoli trois maisons de nos grands-parents, raconte Violeta. C'était juste trois mois avant la mort de Ceausescu. Un autre de mes frères était mort avant cela, [avant] la démolition. Mon père voulait se suicider. Et c'était un paysan de ce genre, fort, très fort, très costaud et optimiste. Mais [il a perdu] tout le travail de sa vie et celui de ses parents et de ses enfants... Avec ces expropriations, mes parents n'ont pas voulu aller au bloc. Et ils avaient une maison, ici, quelque part, à Buda. À environ cinq kilomètres d'ici, et ils s'y sont installés, dans des conditions inadaptées, avec un chien, un porcelet. Avec des moutons, des vaches, des chevaux, ils s'y sont déplacés. Bien qu'ils avaient un appartement attribué au bloc. Nous lui avons mis des portes et des fenêtres et sommes allés là-bas, mais mes parents n'ont pas dormi une nuit dans cet appartement. Mon père a catégoriquement refusé. Mais nous avons quand même un endroit pour ranger les choses.

Tactiques de résistance au contrôle, à la domination et à la propagande

La réponse des paysans à l'agression de l'État sera le repli dans des cadres de vie et de mémoire ancestrale. Cela ne signifiera pas toujours seulement une opposition pure et simple, mais aussi diverses tactiques d'infiltration dans le système, l'utilisation de diverses opportunités créées par l'État. Mais même ces nouvelles opportunités, acceptées surtout par les plus jeunes, auront pour but, la plupart du temps, la perpétuation de l'identité héritée, le lien avec la terre et avec les ancêtres. Les compagnies minières essaieront d'éliminer progressivement les momârlani et de les absorber dans la grande masse des travailleurs miniers. Surtout après la Première Guerre mondiale, les momârlani acceptent de travailler également dans le secteur minier, mais ils chercheront à occuper principalement les postes d'auxiliaires, de surface, où le travail est moins bien payé, mais plus facile, leur permettant de garder une partie de leur énergie pour être en mesure de maintenir leurs propres ménages ruraux. Travailler dans la mine deviendra de plus en plus tentant pour eux en raison des revenus sûrs et plus élevés que ceux tirés de l'agriculture. Cependant, accepter des postes moins exigeants, mais moins rémunérés, va représenter le compromis que les paysans font avec l'État, le prix payé pour continuer à vivre dans leurs anciens cadres de vie. Il s'agit d'une tactique astucieuse pour résister à la violence de l'État et renverser le projet communiste à son profit.

La même relation sera entretenue par les paysans locaux et avec les nouveaux

venus face auxquels ils resteront longtemps hostiles, associant leur installation dans la région au risque imminent de perdre leur propre foyer. Mais, bien que méfiants à l'égard des citadins, qui à leur tour les percevront comme rétrogrades et arriérés, les momârlani entretiendront avec eux des relations d'échange, livrant, le plus souvent directement à domicile, des produits obtenus dans leur propre foyer : lait, fromage, viande... C'est exactement ce que Petru Grunță, momarlan et ancien minier, nous a très bien résumés. Voici un extrait de son entretien : « Les momârlani apportaient aussi un agneau et une jambe de veau à leurs patrons pour ne pas les mettre à rude épreuve. Ils avaient beaucoup de travail à faire à la maison. Quand ils revenaient de la mine, ils devaient venir reposés pour qu'à la maison ils puissent creuser, tondre etc. »

Les produits naturels des ménages paysans étaient d'autant plus précieux que, pendant les années 1980, la Roumanie faisait face à une grave pénurie alimentaire, qui se fera sentir aussi dans la vallée du Jiu. La population des villes minières souffrira de l'absence de denrées alimentaires de base dans le commerce. Mais les villageois ne seront pas non plus exempts de coercition, d'autant plus que, dans l'économie fermée, basée principalement sur la production domestique, les villages devaient fournir de la nourriture aux villes.

Néanmoins, si les villages trouvent un terrain de repli dans les traditions et dans la vie recluse dans l'espace privé des ménages paysans, la situation sera plus délicat dans le cas des villes, qui subissent les conséquences d'un contrôle plus drastique et où l'espace privé était littéralement très réduit. Le contrôle effectif des activités publiques se double d'une

propagande qui ne cessera jamais pendant tout le régime communiste. La production augmentera régulièrement dans le temps grâce à la modernisation des méthodes d'exploitation. Les anciennes méthodes présentaient l'avantage d'exploiter tout le charbon, étant aussi plus sûre pour les travailleurs, mais le désavantage de consommer trop de matières. Par comparaison, les nouvelles méthodes conduisaient à une exploitation rapide du charbon et à l'augmentation de la production, mais au prix de la multiplication des accidents du travail. À la suite du forage, beaucoup de charbon reste sur place, ce qui s'enflamme et provoque des incendies. La quantité de méthane libérée est aussi beaucoup plus élevée dans le cas des nouvelles méthodes d'extraction.

Une réaction des mineurs à l'exigence d'accomplir le plan dans des conditions de travail qui se détériorent constamment a été de travailler « dans l'inimitié », ce qui s'avère finalement être une forme autodestructrice. Voici ce que Petru Grunță nous a dévoilé : « Le problème était que les gens n'étaient pas intéressés, ils l'ont seulement fait dans l'inimitié, pour que ça ne marche pas. Et puis, c'est eux qui ont payé cher pour tous ce qui ne marchait pas. »

Travailler « dans l'inimitié » s'avère être la forme ultime, silencieuse et désespérée de réaction ouvrière face à l'État qui ne leur fournit pas des conditions de travail minimales pour gagner leur vie. En réalité, les plans arrivaient être réalisés seulement sur le papier. Comme le niveau de production imposé était de plus en plus élevé, la direction des unités commencera à recourir à la falsification des chiffres, comme seule solution pour réaliser les plans. Une autre méthode pour « tromper »

les planificateurs était d'accepter du charbon de moins bonne qualité [avec une plus grande quantité de cendres]. Mais pour être acceptés dans les rapports officiels, il fallait mentionner des conditions spécifiques qui ont influencé la production : conditions climatiques comme la pluie qui ont produit des glissements de terrain, le « lavage » de charbon, les dommages infligés aux wagons et les pertes liées au transport de charbon sur le tapis où il est mélangé à des résidus, etc. Comme nous a dit Imola Martonossy, « toute la vallée du Jiu était payée en fonction de la réalisation du plan. Mais le plan de production était clairement irréalisable. Et puis toutes sortes d'astuces ont été utilisées pour agrandir un peu le plan. Sinon, tout le monde était pénalisé, avec un salaire réduit, pour ne pas avoir exécuté le plan. »

L'exploitation minière se dégradera progressivement, avec l'introduction de technologies axées exclusivement sur l'augmentation de la production. Cependant, les plans de production seront de plus en plus importants et... impossibles à réaliser. Ainsi, leur contrefaçon et la livraison de charbon de qualité inférieure ont été utilisées, comme nous a précisé aussi Gabi Nearady : « On mentait, tout le monde savait que le plan avait été fait à partir d'un stylo. Si vous aviez l'indice 1, vous recevriez votre salaire, si l'indice était plus élevé, vous recevriez une prime de plus. Le charbon est imbibé de matériel stérile, la préparation doit établir la qualité de charbon qui va aux centrales électriques. Récemment [après 1989] la qualité n'a pas été prise en compte, et le charbon a été donné avec beaucoup de matériel stérile. Les centrales thermiques l'ont rejeté et celle de Mintia a commencé à acheter à l'étranger. »

Il en va de même dans d'autres secteurs de production, qui sont censés aller au-delà des plans de production tout en réduisant les coûts. La concurrence socialiste des dépassements de plan inclura non seulement le secteur minier, mais aussi les autres secteurs d'activité. Les coiffeurs et les coiffeuses, les réparateurs de montres et de radio travaillaient également sur la base d'un plan. La culture n'a pas non plus été exemptée de cette volonté de démultiplication. En janvier 1949, le journal local *Zori noi* rapporte la prestation de trois camarades qui bouclent les scénographies, pour trois pièces, en trois jours au lieu de 11. Comment exactement ? « Imposant un nouveau rythme de leur travail, les trois camarades ont enfoncé 560 clous en 5 minutes, réduisant le temps d'exécution d'un panneau à 3 heures et obtenant également une réduction des rebuts de clous »¹²².

La propagande des augmentations de production restera constante jusqu'à la chute du régime, l'homme étant perçu comme un simple outil de travail, subordonné aux idéaux socialistes. Voici une histoire racontée par Imola Martonossy qu'elle a directement vécue : *J'ai eu une situation une fois. Imaginez que j'étais le chef d'un département chez « Viscoza », à l'âge de 23 ans. C'était une section pleine de gaz nocif où la concentration autorisée dépassée de 10 fois la norme et où il y avait un danger d'explosion à tout moment. Il est arrivé une fois qu'une flamme allume les bassins dans ma section. Elle brûlait sur ces lavabos. [...] C'était dangereux, c'était terrible. J'ai reçu une section de 200 personnes et sont resté finalement une cinquantaine de personnes dont plusieurs femmes. Ils travaillaient en quatre gardes. Et la*

¹²² Boboc (2012), 489.

ventilation était faible. La ventilation était faite pour 20 machines et la direction a doublé la capacité, elle en a fait 40. [...] pour augmenter la capacité de production. Mais cela signifiait qu'il fallait tout changer à la volée, une fois, et deuxièmement, le mal augmentait, il doublait. Donc la section était très nocive, cela était la vérité. Si je restais là 12 heures, mes yeux étaient comme ça, gonflés, rouges, injectés. [...] Et ça m'arrive un jour que je suis arrivé au travail le matin de trouver environ 10 garçons dans mon bureau et tous comme ça, à leurs yeux. [...] Je dis : « Qu'est-ce que ne va pas ?

- Mademoiselle, l'ingénieur en chef de l'énergétique est venu, et il a bouilli de colère et il nous a arrêté le ventilateur de 6h à 10h.

- Malheur à moi, dis-je. Comment désactiver les ventilateurs dans la section ?

- Eh bien, nous ne savons pas. »

Et vous vous rendez compte qu'ils étaient malheureux. Je suis montée, j'ai pris les anciens ouvriers, il y avait 15 contremaîtres dans la section qui travaillaient depuis le démarrage de l'usine, en 27 l'usine a démarré et cela s'est passé en 68. Et je leur dis : « Appelle le soudeur... je veux verrouiller la salle des ventilateurs. » [...] En deux minutes ils ont fait une serrure, ils l'ont soudé. J'en ai envoyé un pour acheter un cadenas, j'ai mis le cadenas sur la salle des ventilateurs. Et c'est tout ! Je savais que j'avais raison. Je n'avais pas peur du tout. Mais j'ai pris la clé, je l'ai remise au maître et je lui ai dit : « Tu jures que quiconque vient, même du Comité central de Bucarest, tu ne lui donneras pas la clé, tu dis qu'elle est chez moi, à Petroșani. » Je leur ai laissé le soin de dire que s'il arrivait quelque chose, que ça pouvait normalement être un incendie ou un court-circuit... Et je suis rentrée et le lendemain j'y vais, le matin, et je vois les garçons qui rigolaient [...] Ils m'ont dit que le directeur et l'ingénieur chef sont venus, ils ont couru à gauche et à droite et ne savaient pas

quoi faire. Et ils ont commencé à crier aux maîtres et à tout le monde, mais ils ont dit : « La clé est à Petroșani, à Miss. » Et ils ont arrêté finalement autre chose. Et quand je suis allé au rapport, vous vous rendez compte : « Quoi, comment as-tu pu te le permettre ?

- Camarade directeur, voici quel est le problème, regardez ici la loi sur la protection du travail, je vous ai apporté une copie pour vous montrer. Voici un paragraphe : Le chef d'entreprise est tenu d'assurer les conditions de sécurité des travailleurs. Ne pas le faire entraînera une peine d'emprisonnement de 3 mois à 5 ans. Le chef du travail, c'est moi, pas vous, pas l'ingénieur en chef, pas l'ingénieur de l'énergie, pas le chef mécanicien. C'est le chef du département. Écrit cela clairement dans la loi. Je suis le chef, j'irai en justice s'il arrive quelque chose à mes ouvriers. Tant que je serai aux commandes, la ventilation ne sera pas éteinte. » Il n'avait plus rien à dire. Puis ils m'ont amené environ trois fois répondre à toutes sortes de questions. Au bout de trois heures environ, la secrétaire vient vers moi en me disant « Mademoiselle, on vous appelle encore, rendez-vous d'urgence au siège du parti. » [...] Je vais au siège du parti. Je les vois encore. Il y avait les nôtres, de l'usine, le directeur, le chef mécanicien, le chef énergéticien, de l'autre côté, étaient le responsable de l'UTC, la secrétaire, le secrétaire du Parti et celui du Syndicat. [...] Quand je les ai vus, j'ai dit : « Si vous m'avez appelé pour me demander de renoncer au cadenas et de vous permettre d'éteindre les ventilateurs, vous êtes venu en vain. Je ne fais pas ça ! » [...] Et l'un d'eux dit : « Ce matin, quand nous sommes allés au siège du parti, au bureau du parti du district, nous avons rencontré Iancu qui nous attendait à la porte [il était un contremaître de mon usine] et encore quatre ouvriers de votre section. Et ils sont venus vers nous pour nous appeler à l'usine, pour vous aider et vous protéger de la direction

de la fabrique parce que vous vous souciez de leur santé et parce que vous aurez des problèmes parce que vous avez fait ce que vous avez fait. » Comme ces gens m'aimaient ! Vous vous rendez compte ? Je n'ai pas exagéré, ce sont juste des choses qui se sont passées. Quand je me suis rendu compte, j'ai commencé à pleurer, c'est comme ça qu'une pierre s'est enlevée de mon cœur. Que c'est enfin quelqu'un qui comprend, c'étaient mes ouvriers.

L'histoire d'Imola met en évidence le fait qu'en plus de la politisation des syndicats, de l'activisme partisan niant les réalités objectives et les besoins pressants du peuple, il y avait encore dans les années 60 une solidarité des travailleurs face aux dangers qui rôdaient partout, et entre eux et leurs dirigeants qui défendaient leurs intérêts. Les travailleurs réagissent comme un face au danger. Ce corps de travailleurs réagit aux situations abusives, en s'appuyant sur les valeurs propagées même par le régime, à savoir l'ancienneté et le sérieux dans le travail, le droit à des conditions de travail sécurisées. Mais la plupart du temps, la résistance aux abus est silencieuse et discrète, camouflée de la manière la plus inattendue.

L'une des formes les plus intéressantes d'opposition à la domination était sans aucun doute l'humour et le ridicule du système politique. La vallée du Jiu a été, en ce sens, un territoire fertile pour la manifestation d'un humour subversif, que l'on retrouve sans doute dans le reste du pays, mais aussi de son propre humour, manifesté par la mise en scène de tout sorte de situations comiques jouées par des locaux en cher et os¹²³. Pourquoi ce besoin des manifestations humoristiques ? C'est Ionel Dănescu celui

qui nous a expliqué : « [Parce que] c'était les moments où ils devaient faire quelque chose juste pour s'amuser. [...] C'est pourquoi je ne raconte pas tous ces histoires à tout le monde parce que j'ai peur que les gens de l'extérieur ne pensent pas que nous sommes tous comme ça, dans la vallée du Jiu, un peu fou. [...] Mais c'était un courant alors, de se tenir. C'était pendant les années 70, 80, 90, comme ça. Maintenant c'est de la Crise. [...] Les gens n'en ont plus envie. »

La vie quotidienne pendant la transition du socialisme au postcommunisme

Après 1989, le cadre de vie relativement stable, mais sous contrôle et tutelle de l'État, sera complètement éradiqué et remplacé par l'instabilité produite par le passage du communisme au capitalisme et de l'industrialisation à la société de consommation. L'État, par le biais de ses agents, principalement des représentants désignés des sociétés minières, qui se révéleront être de simples exécutants des décisions prises au niveau central, utilisera diverses stratégies de pression et de persuasion pour forcer les mineurs à quitter leur emploi. La décision de réduire le secteur minier, jugé beaucoup trop polluant et coûteux, sera mise en œuvre, malgré les protestations répétées des mineurs. L'un après l'autre, la grande majorité des mines seront fermées à partir de 1997, date des premiers et plus importants licenciements. La rumeur selon laquelle les mines fermeront rapidement, quelle que soit l'opposition des salariés, se répandra rapidement collectivement. Elle déroutera complètement les mineurs et

¹²³ Mateoni (2020), 77-89.

poussant beaucoup d'entre eux à accepter de quitter volontairement leur emploi en échange de subsides de l'État. « Tu ne savais même pas quoi faire, se souvient Gabi Nearady, il y avait la rumeur qui disait que les mines fermeraient de toute façon et qu'ensuite tu partirais sans prendre plus d'argent. Quand ils parlaient, ceux qui prenaient de l'argent disaient des autres qu'ils étaient des imbéciles, quand ils revenaient [après avoir consommé leur argent] les autres disaient d'eux qu'ils étaient des imbéciles. [...] Il y avait alors des appartements qui se vendaient sur une caisse de bière. [...] Dans mon entourage, je ne connais personne qui aurait investi cet argent. »

Les mineurs sont pris au piège, entre accepter le risque de licenciements ou le risque de perdre à la fois leur emploi et leur « chance » de prospérer. Influencés par les publicités télévisées diffusant l'image de la prospérité de l'économie de consommation, de nombreux mineurs décideront de signer pour le licenciement sans consulter au préalable leur famille. D'autres accepteront d'être licenciés, mais sous la pression de la famille, ils reconsidéreront la décision, mais ce sera inutile, car ils ne seront plus autorisés à se retirer des listes de signataires. Ils finiront par perdre leur emploi, vivant avec le sentiment aigu d'avoir été dupés par l'État.

Parmi les mineurs se distingueront ceux qui résisteront à la tentation, continuant à aller travailler. Ce sont les mineurs qui adopteront la tactique de l'attente et de la résistance tacite, décidant de continuer à entrer dans le souterrain jusqu'à ce qu'ils voient « le gros cadenas sur la porte de la mine », comme Grigore Merăoiu nous a dit. Cependant les risques de rester étaient au moins aussi élevés que

les risques de partir. La technique de tâtonnement sera appliquée non seulement par les mineurs restants, mais aussi par l'État, qui adoptera la stratégie d'une transition à petits pas de l'économie planifiée à l'économie de marché, renonçant complètement à toute possibilité de remise en état des mines. Le manque de technologie performante, l'utilisation d'équipements anciens et obsolètes, entraîneront une série d'accidents du travail. Et après chaque accident avec son lot de victimes, il y avait toujours le problème du manque de rentabilité des mines et de leur fermeture imminente.

Après les licenciements, les mineurs iront chercher du travail, soit dans leur ville natale, soit à l'étranger. Les transformations sociales et les dynamiques démographiques à travers les migrations massives auront un impact sur la vie quotidienne dans les quartiers urbains. Dans les années 1990, presque tous les appartements appartenant à l'État ont été rachetés par des locataires à des prix très bas. Comme dans le reste du pays, dans la vallée du Jiu, le transfert de la propriété résidentielle de l'État au secteur privé a été rapide. Cela explique en partie le fait que lors des licenciements de 1997, il y ait eu aussi des situations où les locataires vendaient leurs appartements sur une caisse de bière. Devenus propriétaires du jour au lendemain, les locataires auront plus tard de gros soucis d'entretien de leur bien. Les mineurs cessent de représenter un corps commun. Ils sont divisés entre ceux qui décident de quitter le lieu de travail et la zone et ceux qui resteront. Les stratégies collectives commencent à être remplacées par des stratégies individuelles.

Les problèmes sociaux qui surgiront empêcheront les propriétaires d'appartements de s'organiser en

association. Les querelles sociales, la suspicion et la méfiance à l'égard des autorités, mais aussi des autres contribueront à ce rejet, comme nous a expliqué Gabi Nearady : « Nous sommes quatre sur un pallier, mais deux sont partis à l'étranger. Alors mon voisin et moi, nous sommes montés sur le toit et nous l'avons réparé. Nous n'avons pas d'association de propriétaires. Lorsque nous sommes devenus propriétaires, l'association de locataires que nous avions avait cessé d'exister, mais nous n'avons pas eu l'opportunité de devenir une association de propriétaires. Il y avait beaucoup de gens qui étaient contre l'idée de créer une association. »

Après la longue période où l'État contrôle non seulement la sphère publique, mais s'infiltrer aussi dans la sphère privée, la méfiance à l'égard des autorités va s'aggraver à partir des années 90, dans un contexte de conflits à répétition. Une expression de suspicion généralisée se remarque chez la plupart de ceux qui restent dans la vallée de Jiu. Ils tendent à se réfugier dans l'espace privé. Paradoxalement, malgré les problèmes de logement dont nous venons de parler, l'espace privé va s'étendre de plus en plus au détriment de l'espace public. En fait, les problèmes de logement sont principalement liés à des parties communes tels que les toits, les escaliers, les façades des bâtiments, et moins à l'espace individuel et privé.

L'espace privé tente d'accaparer l'espace public et une expression de cela est l'apparition de nombreux garages entre les blocs. Les emplacements où sont construits les garages sont des concessions de la mairie. D'abord facile, et progressivement de plus en plus difficile, les concessions

deviennent même une source de corruption et de concurrence déloyale. Posséder un garage, c'est gagner en prestige auprès des voisins, donc à leur yeux le prix n'est jamais trop élevé pour l'acquérir. C'est ainsi que la mairie affiche souvent l'annonce après que la place ait été déjà attribuée, et certains ont deux garages et d'autres aucun.

Les garages servent non seulement à loger la voiture, mais aussi à entreposer des biens qui ne trouvent plus de place dans l'appartement. Ils servent aussi à effectuer certaines activités de bricolage et de réparation, pour passer du temps libre avec des amis et des voisins. À Petrila, mais aussi dans les autres villes de cette vallée, les garages acquièrent la fonction de deuxième maison, beaucoup plus ouverte à la socialisation et au temps libre. Si autrefois les familles sortaient à l'herbe verte, en pleine nature, maintenant les réunions, si nombreuses soient-elles, ont lieu dans le garage.

Grigore Merăoiu n'a pas de voiture et n'a pas de permis de conduire, mais en 1994 il a fait construire un garage sur le bail de la mairie pour 50 ans : « J'ai une véritable maison dans mon garage, nous explique l'ancien mineur, j'ai aussi un atelier et des toilettes et une cuisine et des carreaux de sol et quatre plafonniers. J'y ai aussi fait de la menuiserie, puis j'ai installé un poêle en tôle où je cuisine. On y fait aussi des barbecues avec mes voisins. »

De la mine au garage. C'est de cette manière que le chemin parcouru par la plupart des anciens mineurs se présente. La vie au garage devient, après la retraite, la quintessence de l'enracinement dans le lieu, le repos après un dur labeur à la mine et bien des déceptions. Après des travaux risqués dans la mine, souvent suivis

d'emplois intérimaires à l'étranger, retrouver des amis dans le garage reste la dernière joie des locataires. Face aux possibilités réelles ou imaginaires de renaissance régionale sous de nouveaux auspices, les anciens mineurs restent impassibles et profondément méfiants.

Conclusion

La vallée du Jiu traverse toutes les étapes des politiques étatiques de développement intensif basées sur l'industrie du charbon, et la transition de l'économie fossile à l'économie de consommation et, par la suite, à l'économie durable. L'industrialisation va radicalement changer le paysage local, la vie des habitants de la région. Pendant le régime communiste, l'extraction du charbon, ainsi que l'aménagement du territoire, le logement et l'urbanisation seront contrôlés directement par l'État. La protection que l'État accordera aux mineurs sera finalement une forme de contrôle du travail dans la mine et de l'espace public, avec des tendances évidentes de pénétration dans la sphère privée. Les mines, mais aussi les autres plates-formes industrielles, les immeubles d'habitation devaient démontrer la capacité de l'État roumain à créer un nouveau type de société nettement supérieur à celui de l'Occident. Et pour qu'une telle manifestation réussisse, les citoyens de l'État devaient se consacrer à corps perdu au travail, à l'effort incessant d'édification de la société socialiste. La vie quotidienne des travailleurs sera constamment subordonnée à la nécessité d'augmenter la production. Et cet impératif sera maintenu après 1989. Cependant, avec le passage du socialisme au capitalisme,

l'État oscillera entre se retirer totalement du paysage local et la réglementation agressive, conformément aux nouvelles formes de gouvernance capitaliste. Face à ces injonctions dans lesquels les individus sont sacrifiés au profit des projets utopiques de l'État, les travailleurs de la vallée du Jiu vont développer diverses tactiques de résistance et de contournement, comprenant la grève, la protestation, le sabotage avec des effets destructeurs pour eux, respect formel des règles, résistance par l'humour ou le refuge dans l'espace privé et dans des cadres traditionnels.

Après 1989, la peur des gens de ne pas trouver de sources de subsistance alternatives sera doublée par le sentiment d'humiliation d'être perçu par l'État comme une simple masse manipulable et d'être trompé dans le cadre des plans de licenciement. Ainsi, la vallée du Jiu reste à ce jour une zone d'habitants encore enfermée dans le piège de sa propre histoire. Un territoire suspendu entre nostalgie du passé, la solidarité d'autrefois et défiance face à l'avenir. Mais au-delà de cette tendance générale, les relations entre les forts et les faibles, entre les agents de l'État et ses citoyens ordinaires, sont parmi les plus complexes, se situant souvent entre résistance et adaptation à la domination de l'État. En d'autres termes, la résistance quotidienne est un mode de manifestation camouflé et fluide, plus étroitement liée au pouvoir que nettement opposé à lui.

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Liviu Mihail Iancu

The Passive Resistance of the Securitate's Informers. A Foucauldian Perspective on the Case of the Archaeologist Nubar Hamparțumian

Abstract

The inefficiency of the Securitate, the secret political police of the Romanian communist regime, has recently emerged as an interesting hypothesis based on files of the people it targeted and testimonies of its informers. This research conducted on the file of the archaeologist Nubar Hamparțumian, a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology of Bucharest between 1956 and 1975, when he emigrated to the United Kingdom, and informer under constraint of the Securitate between 1960 and 1983, aims to bring new insights on this issue. The passive resistance mounted by Hamparțumian mainly through providing inoffensive information on the targeted people and ignoring instructions to develop closer ties with them, while pretending to be loyal and disciplined, falls into the Foucauldian category of micro crimes of activity and time against the disciplinary institution, which was the Securitate. Whereas this kind of resistance, coupled with the poor planning and excessive bureaucracy of the Securitate, certainly made the secret police inefficient, it did not turn it into an ineffective institution, too.

Keywords: Agent, Informer, Archaeology, Communism, Nubar Hamparțumian, Securitate files

Introduction

“Where there is power, there is always resistance too”¹²⁴. Similarly to the laws of physics that govern nature, some basic principles seem to govern human society, but contrarily to the former, the latter cannot be described through simple mathematical equations: the number of variables is just too great for human computing power. Therefore, we can learn more about the general principles governing society only by analysing them in action in concrete historical examples.

In this article, I aim to better understand how and with what degree of success individuals were able to mount

resistance to the panoptic disciplinary power specific to the 20th century totalitarian regimes by studying the particular relationship between the political police of the Romanian communist regime, known as the Securitate, an institution whose avowed role was “to defend the democratic conquests and to ensure the security of the Romanian People’s Republic against the plotting of internal and external enemies”¹²⁵, and its informers. This topic deserves an in-depth scrutiny as the hypothesis of a high level of inefficiency of the Securitate, determined by several factors among whom the

¹²⁴ Gutting, Oksala (2020).

¹²⁵ Decree nr. 221 of 30 August 1948, issued by the Presidency of the Great National Assembly of R.P.R., in Deletant (1995), 18.

resistance of its informers was crucial, has already been advanced based on assessments drawn by some informers from their own experience¹²⁶.

The main questions I ask are the following:

a) is there an actual resistance of the informers contributing to the perceived inefficiency of the Securitate? how does it work? what are the main tactics employed by the informers to oppose the power which the political police exercised over them?

b) is the perception of the inefficiency of the political police valid or the functioning of the system which appears to observers as inefficient still attains its most intimate goals?

To explore this topic I use the case study of the political police file of Nubar Hamparțumian, a Romanian archaeologist of Armenian ethnicity, member of the Institute of Archaeology of Bucharest, recruited as an informer in 1960, under the code name 'Valeriu Bratu'. The investigation follows the example set by the anthropologist Katherine Verdery in her analysis of the Securitate based on the files preserved by the National Council for the Study of the Securitate's Archive (CNSAS). The theoretical apparatus that I use is inspired by Michel Foucault's work on the modern disciplinary systems. I envisage the Securitate as a disciplinary system – like madhouses, prisons, factories, schools, the army, and above all, the police – with two main specific traits: it resembled in the greatest measure the utopian Panopticon of Bentham, examined by Foucault in his

¹²⁶ Verdery (2014), 40-42, 80-81.

*Surveiller et punir*¹²⁷ and it was more intimately connected with the exercise of power over population than any other known disciplinary institution, being a key factor of the 'art de gouverner' of the Romanian communist regime¹²⁸.

The research is mainly focused on the informer activity conducted by Nubar Hamparțumian in Romania, between 1960 and 1975. It is mostly based on the annual analysis reports (*caracterizări; note de analiză*) written by his handlers, junior officers from the 3rd Directorate 'Domestic Intelligence' and the Municipal Inspectorate of Bucharest. Hamparțumian's reports on the individuals targeted by the political police could have added valuable insights, but they are not available as the working procedures of the Securitate required them to be added to the files of the persons under surveillance. Nonetheless, their content and their informative value can be partially assessed from the annual analysis reports. The activity conducted by Hamparțumian as an informer of the *Centrul de Informații Externe/Departamentul de Informații Externe (CIE/DIE)*¹²⁹ between 1976 and 1983, after his emigration to the United Kingdom, receives less attention in this study, but it is still taken into account when relevant.

¹²⁷ Foucault (1975), 201-206; Foucault (2004), 68.

¹²⁸ For the concept of governmentality and for the police as the repressive part of art of government, see Foucault (2004), 111-112, 361-362.

¹²⁹ Foreign Intelligence Center/Foreign Intelligence Department

Short biography of Nubar Hamparțumian

Although I intended to use multiple sources (official documents, interviews with fellow archaeologists and relatives, etc.), his file created by the Securitate is by far the most important as it contains a multitude of data and perspectives, recorded in distinct types of documents: e.g. three autobiographical notes, written at different times of his life; assessments of his character and behaviour made by his handlers; transcripts of his intercepted phone calls from March-April 1971 and operative surveillance reports from May 1976 providing interesting details on his daily and intimate life etc. Thus, the file will get a new and unexpected use, far from the original intention of its creators, as highlighted by Verdery¹³⁰.

Based on these files, I outline here some of the most important events in Hamparțumian's life, with a special focus on him as an individual subjected to the multiple exertions of power of the Romanian communist regime.

He was born in 1927 in Buzău, being the son of Apet Hamparțumian and Florica Kirkorian, two Armenian immigrants from Kemah, Anatolia, who had left their homes in their youth or childhood because of Turkish aggressions, a few years before the terrible massacres of 1915¹³¹. His father ran the shop "La

Brazilia" ("At Brasil") in the main city square, selling coffee and sweets, like many other Armenian shopkeepers from Romania in the interwar period, and his mother was a housewife¹³². He had a sister, Vartanuș Sylvia, known simply as Silvia, born in 1922. He attended the classes of the "Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu" High School, the best in Buzău, where he apparently faced discrimination because of his ethnic origin and consequently focused only on studying and helping his father¹³³. The Hamparțumians left for Bucharest after their shop and house were burnt down in August 1944 in the German-Soviet fighting¹³⁴.

Apet Hamparțumian opened a new coffee shop and Nubar graduated from the "Mihai Viteazul" High School in 1946 and the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest in 1951. As he passed the state exam the fourth out of 86 candidates and made a good impression in his first season of excavations at the ancient Greek city of Histria, in 1951 Hamparțumian was appointed assistant and shortly after director at the Regional Museum of Constanța. He lived in a room in the

¹³² Târcolea (1976), f. 16.

¹³³ Hamparțumian (1952b), f. 20; Târcolea (1976), f. 16. The alleged discrimination that Hamparțumian mentions in his autobiographical note might be an addition suggested by the Securitate officers, as individuals belonging to ethnic minorities were deemed to be more trustful as informers and Party members. For the insertions made by officers in the informers' reports, see Verdery (2014), 172-175.

¹³⁴ Hamparțumian (1952b), f. 20 blames exclusively the Germans for looting and setting fire to the shop during their retreat, but Hamparțumian (1960b), f. 16 shows that the fire started accidentally during the heavy fighting between the Soviets and the Germans on 27 and 28 August 1944, which led to the destruction of the nearby City Hall.

¹³⁰ Verdery (2014), 72.

¹³¹ Hamparțumian (1952b), f. 20. The great massacres of Kemah took place in June 1915 and involved both the local population of the kaza of Kemah and convoys from other regions of north-eastern Anatolia. See Kévorkian (2011), 311.

museum and focused almost exclusively on studying and on organizing the permanent exhibition, while financially supporting his family, as his father had closed the shop because of his advanced age¹³⁵. On 13 April 1952, he accepted the request of the Regional Directorate of the Securitate to allow its officers to use the library of the museum as a safe house for meetings with various informers¹³⁶.

On 2 June 1953, Hamparțumian was arrested for his membership in a student legionary organisation in 1948-1949 – his activity consisted in keeping contact with two other students, reading legionary books and sending money and food for the families of the imprisoned legionaries¹³⁷ – and sentenced to three years in jail, but he was released on 6 October 1955¹³⁸. After working as a seller for a cooperative in Chitila, in September 1956 Hamparțumian was appointed research assistant at the newly founded Institute of Archaeology of Bucharest¹³⁹. There he started his specialization in late Roman and Byzantine archaeology and numismatics¹⁴⁰. In February 1960, in the larger context of the Noica-Pillat trial envisaged as a means to neutralize any hypothetical reformist resistance from the Romanian intellectual elites¹⁴¹, Hamparțumian was arrested again, as the political police discovered that after his first two comrades had been arrested in

January 1949, he had resumed his legionary activity by organising secret meetings with a few other fellow students at the Faculty of History where they discussed their ideological views¹⁴². Hamparțumian was deluded into believing that he would be jailed once more (although it was not possible to be convicted for the same reason)¹⁴³ and signed a secret collaboration oath on 27 February 1960, committing to reveal any new legionary or antidemocratic threats that he might have gotten been made aware of¹⁴⁴. Hamparțumian's motivation was his will not to lose the job that allowed him to support his elderly parents and to quit the profession that he enjoyed¹⁴⁵.

In the 1960s, Nubar Hamparțumian conducted a rich scientific activity. He carried out research mostly at Histria, but also at other minor sites from southern Romania, and published a large number of articles and studies, culminating with his contribution to the numismatic monograph of Histria¹⁴⁶. His academic ascension was once more interrupted in November 1969 as he was sentenced to six months in prison for embezzling funds that he managed at the archaeological site of Histria¹⁴⁷. All his colleagues knew – and his file at the Securitate provides confirmation – that he merely had to cover expenses made in 1965 by Emil Condurachi, member of the Romanian Academy, director of the Institute of Archaeology, head of the excavations at Histria and Hamparțumian's

¹³⁵ Hamparțumian (1952b), f. 20-21.

¹³⁶ Hamparțumian (1952a), f. 12.

¹³⁷ Faibiș, Hamparțumian (1953), f. 64, where Hamparțumian's aid is described as "a contribution of 40 lei paid twice and two jars of jam (șerbet)"; Feraru, Hamparțumian (1960), f. 55.

¹³⁸ Preda (1956), f. 2.

¹³⁹ Hamparțumian (1960b), 21-22.

¹⁴⁰ His first academic article that I am aware of is Nubar (1958).

¹⁴¹ Tănase (2013).

¹⁴² Feraru, Hamparțumian (1960), f. 57-58.

¹⁴³ Sterescu (1960), f. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Hamparțumian (1960a), f. 15.

¹⁴⁵ Sterescu (1960), f. 13-14.

¹⁴⁶ Preda, Nubar (1973).

¹⁴⁷ Hamparțumian (1977), f. 52.

former professor and academic patron¹⁴⁸, through illegal means suggested by Condurachi himself¹⁴⁹. The investigation was dropped at an early stage in the case of Condurachi due to his connections with the high echelons of the Communist Party¹⁵⁰, but Nubar Hamparțumian could not avoid penalty: whereas his handler and his immediate commander proposed an institutional intervention on his behalf, the senior commander in charge curtly refused and asked him to work for the political police in prison, too¹⁵¹, which he apparently did¹⁵².

Hamparțumian was released on probation after three months of prison and in October 1970 was hired anew at the Institute of Archaeology, resuming as well his work on the archaeological site of Histria¹⁵³. There he met the British artist Anthea Priscilla Alley in 1972, whom he married in January 1975 and followed her to London on 27 August 1975¹⁵⁴. He was granted permission both for his marriage and his emigration, after he had reported much in advance on his intentions and expressed his willingness to continue

collaborating from abroad¹⁵⁵. His handler reports that the Foreign Intelligence Department was not interested in him and Hamparțumian was removed from the network of informers of the Municipal Inspectorate of Bucharest¹⁵⁶.

In the United Kingdom, after a difficult start involving washing dishes at a bank canteen and assisting in setting up art exhibitions in London¹⁵⁷, Hamparțumian restored and improved his academic career. He started in 1976 by translating Romanian archaeological monographs for the British Archaeological Reports series, becoming a member of the Royal Numismatic Society and of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and getting a position of lecturer at Croydon College of Art and Technology¹⁵⁸. In 1977 he also got a part-time job as assistant at the British Museum and started Ph.D. studies at King's College, under the supervision of Averil Cameron¹⁵⁹. In 1978, he left Croydon College for a new job as curator of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham and in April 1980 was elected member of the British National Committee of the International Association of Byzantine Studies¹⁶⁰. He resumed the publication of archaeological and numismatic studies, his most important work being the monograph on the representations of the cult of the

¹⁴⁸ According to Vâlceanu (2021), Emil Condurachi supported Nubar Hamparțumian at his first trial and during his first imprisonment. In Hamparțumian (1952), f. 21 and Hamparțumian (1960), f. 19, 22. Emil Condurachi is the first mentioned in the list of persons who could give recommendations.

¹⁴⁹ Vâlceanu (2021); 'Marinescu' (1977), f. 102; 'Andrei' (1978), f. 109; Ion et alii (1969b), f. 64-65; I.G.M. Dir. Economică (1968), f. 66-67.

¹⁵⁰ Ion et alii (1969b), f. 65; I.G.M. Dir. Economică (1968), f. 67.

¹⁵¹ Ion et alii (1969a), f. 62-63; Ion et alii (1969b), f. 64-65.

¹⁵² Ion (1974), f. 3.

¹⁵³ Hamparțumian (1977a), f. 52.

¹⁵⁴ Hamparțumian (1977a), f. 52.

¹⁵⁵ Ion (1973), f. 29; Ion (1974), f. 1-5.

¹⁵⁶ Ion (1975), f. 5.

¹⁵⁷ Hamparțumian (1976b), f. 142; Hamparțumian, Minoiu (1976), f. 36-37.

¹⁵⁸ Hamparțumian, Minoiu (1976), f. 36-37; Hamparțumian (1976b), f. 142; Hamparțumian (1976c), f. 152-153.

¹⁵⁹ Hamparțumian (1977c), f. 173-174; Hamparțumian (1978), f. 179-180.

¹⁶⁰ Hamparțumian (1979d), f. 122-123; Hamparțumian (1980), f. 213-214.

Thracian Rider in Moesia Inferior and Dacia, which he completed before emigration, but was able to publish only in 1979¹⁶¹. In the same year, Hamparțumian divorced his first wife and married Jane Isaac, archivist-in-charge at the Lichfield Joint Record Office and secretary of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, with whom he later had two daughters, Amy and Sylvia¹⁶². In August 1980 he received the British citizenship, but he retained the Romanian citizenship as well¹⁶³.

During these years of blooming academic activity and rapid integration in British society, Hamparțumian resumed his work for the Securitate. On 31 May 1976, during his first trip back to Romania, Hamparțumian signed a new collaboration oath¹⁶⁴ with the Foreign Intelligence Department unit dealing with the Romanian emigration, which had intensively studied him for a few months before his renewed recruitment¹⁶⁵. He received the code name 'Hadrian'. 'Hadrian's' tasks were much different than 'Valeriu Bratu's'; although he was instructed to monitor any threats coming from Romanian emigrants, his main

objectives were consolidating his professional position, publishing books and articles on the ancient history of Romania and enabling the academic collaboration between British and Romanian scholars and institutions¹⁶⁶. He was categorized as an agent of assistance or of influence, not an informer¹⁶⁷. Hamparțumian was thought to collaborate because of his patriotic sentiments, but in stark contrast to the Securitate in Bucharest, DIE rewarded him several times with money and presents¹⁶⁸. He occasionally sent coded letters from Britain containing brief information on his general activity and reported extensively only once or twice a year when he visited his relatives in Bucharest and had several meetings with his handlers. His last detailed report and planning documents preserved in his file are dated 12 May 1980¹⁶⁹. They are followed by the decision of the 4th Section of the Foreign Intelligence Center (U.M. 0225), dealing with the Romanian emigration, to end collaboration with him, dated 27 October 1983¹⁷⁰. It is not clear what brought this decision. Its stated reasons – 'Hadrian's' handler, colonel 'Tiseanu', worked for

¹⁶¹ Hamparțumian (1979a).

¹⁶² Hamparțumian (1979b); Hamparțumian (1979d), f. 124-125; Hamparțumian (1980), f. 215; Fowles, Randall (1993).

¹⁶³ Hamparțumian (1979d), f. 122; Hamparțumian (1980), f. 215.

¹⁶⁴ Hamparțumian (1976a).

¹⁶⁵ The decision to start the study was triggered by an operative letter dating from September 1975 (not preserved), as attested by Spiridon (1976), f. 17, followed by information requests sent in January 1976 to the Information and Documentation Centre of the Securitate and the County Inspectorate of Buzău, as shown by Spătaru (1976), Târcolea (1976) and the list of documents appended to the file ACNSAS, SIE funds, 0035658.

¹⁶⁶ Hamparțumian (1976a); Hamparțumian, Minoiu (1976), f. 38; Minoiu (1977a); Minoiu (1978), f. 187-188; Hamparțumian (1979c); 'Tiseanu' (1980), f. 218. See below p. 13-14.

¹⁶⁷ Minoiu, Spiridon (1978a); Minoiu, Spiridon (1978b); Damian, Teodoru (1978). Gruia (1980) refers to Hamparțumian with the term 'informer', possibly only because this was an all-encompassing category.

¹⁶⁸ I think that Minoiu (1977b), f. 149; Minoiu (n.d.) and 'Tiseanu' (1979) show that Hamparțumian was paid only until 1977, while being handled by colonel Minoiu, thereafter receiving only occasional gifts during his collaboration with colonel 'Tiseanu'.

¹⁶⁹ Hamparțumian (1980).

¹⁷⁰ Marcu (1983).

another unit¹⁷¹ and 'Hadrian's' identity was known to "the traitor 'Vintilă'", i.e. the general Ion Mihai Pacepa, deputy chief of the Romanian foreign intelligence service, who defected to the United States in July 1978 – are not compelling. The secure academic position held by Hamparțumian in Britain, his disappointment with the meagre support given by the Romanian institutions and scholars to his scientific endeavours that promoted Romania¹⁷² and the death of his mother in Bucharest on 21 August 1982 could have also determined him to part ways with the Securitate. Due to lack of documentation, it is not clear if Nubar Hamparțumian stopped collaborating with the Romanian Foreign Intelligence Center by his own intent, because of the inner problems of the agency or a combination of both.

Hamparțumian continued working at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts until his retirement in 1999. He still visited Romania from time to time with his family¹⁷³ and kept and even consolidated ties with some former colleagues from the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest, after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. He died in

¹⁷¹ The argument is awkward. According to Banu, Țăranu (2016), 250-251, starting from 1978, the 4th Section of CIE had the military unit number 0225. 'Tiseanu' (1979) and another document cited in Cummings (2011), 90-91 show that colonel 'Tiseanu' was working in this unit both in October 1979 and in January 1981. The unit had seven subdivisions. Is it possible that 'Hadrian' continued working with 'Tiseanu' for other subdivision of U.M. 0225 or even for other section of CIE? But where are the corresponding documents then? Consequently, I highly doubt it, but I admit that the circumstances of the end of Hamparțumian's collaboration with the Securitate are not totally clear to me.

¹⁷² Hamparțumian (1977b), f. 177.

¹⁷³ Which apparently raised anew the interest of the secret police in 1988, see Cîrlan (1988).

2013, while writing his memories of the archaeological site of Histria¹⁷⁴.

The passive resistance of 'Valeriu Bratu' and the inefficiency of Securitate (1960-1975)

Whoever delves into the difficult study of Nubar Hamparțumian's file, with its large diversity of documents arranged in a hard to grasp order¹⁷⁵, is struck at first by the seeming inappropriateness of the tasks assigned to him. He was instructed to collect information on his former legionary colleagues, on the larger group of students sympathizing with the legionary movement who were imprisoned with him in 1953-1955 and on some colleagues from work, former members of the legionary movement who had been imprisoned, too, before being hired at the Institute of Archaeology, such as Vladimir Dumitrescu and later, Vasile Boroneanț, Constantin Ionescu-Cârligel and Radu Ciuceanu. Despite a promising start¹⁷⁶, already at the end of 1961 his first handling officer, captain Petre Ghețu reported what should have been evident from the beginning: the informer is "well-prepared culturally and has the necessary qualities for the intelligence work; however, he does not have enough possibilities to collect information"¹⁷⁷. With a few exceptions, Hamparțumian had lost since 1955 the connections with his legionary fellows, most of whom he met for the first time in prison and who had other professions which sometimes forced them to move out

¹⁷⁴ Hamparțumian (2014).

¹⁷⁵ Verdery (2014), 52-54.

¹⁷⁶ Ghețu (1961a), f. 41; Ghețu (1961b), f. 47.

¹⁷⁷ Ghețu (1962), f. 40.

of Bucharest¹⁷⁸. In addition, his academic interests rarely brought him in close contact with fellow archaeologists who had former legionary activity. As observed by Ghețu, Hamparțumian did not fulfil the basic condition for recruitment as a human intelligence source: access to valuable information¹⁷⁹.

Consequently, the informer himself had either to commit great efforts to perform his tasks or to find ways to circumvent them. Given his forced recruitment, it is not surprising that Nubar Hamparțumian chose the second option and developed in time a large toolbox of methods allowing him to do little useful work for the Securitate and at the same time to leave the impression that he is doing his best.

Like many other informers, he apparently did not report any deeds that he expected to harm the persons under the surveillance of the political police¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁸ Feraru, Hamparțumian (1960), f. 59-61; cf. Ghețu (1961a), f. 41: "The agent provided his first information on the elements alongside whom he conducted [legionary] activity and was convicted, but it should be noted that he has not met them for a long time"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32: "he is not very good friend with any of them, as he knows them only from living together in prison in the same cell for 2-3 months a few years ago"; "he seeks to explain his weak efficiency by the fact he does not have actual possibilities to get information from these elements"; Ion (1967), f. 31: "he does not have strong ties with them, as he met them in prison".

¹⁷⁹ Suvorov (1984), 140; Dehlinger (2020), 13.

¹⁸⁰ Vărzaru (1963), f. 38: "from studying the informative material, it results that none of these mentioned above would have had hostile manifestations in the presence of the agent"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1965), f. 33: "in the informative material he does not recount elements displaying the position, the attitude from our point of view of that who is indicated"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32: "the informative material is not always of operative

Secondly, he did not follow the frequently repeated instructions to strengthen his ties with the targeted people and mostly relied on occasional meetings with them¹⁸¹. In addition, he advanced a full range of justifications for his lack of efficiency: the lack of time because of work duties¹⁸², the fear of errors and of breaching secrecy¹⁸³ and the lack of proper access to information

interest, so that we were not able to get knowledge through this agent about the evolution of the attitude of these elements"; Ion (1972), f. 30: "some of his reports contain minor problems"; Ion (1973), f. 29: "his reports generally referred to the daily habits, work and family of the elements whom he contacted, he hardly tackled political issues". Cf. Ion (1975), f. 3. See more on this method of passive resistance in Verdery (2014), 182-183.

¹⁸¹ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32: "the material concerning those mentioned above does not have continuity, the meetings were fortuitous. ... he provides reports only when he accidentally meets these elements"; "from the reports he provided it results that he is doing his job at random"; Ion (1967), f. 31: "[the material] does not have continuity, the meetings were fortuitous. The agent did not manage to enter their permanent entourage"; Ion (1972), f. 30: "a negative aspect is that the informer did not succeed in entering the entourage of those mentioned above, usually contenting himself with fortuitous meetings with them".

¹⁸² Ion (1972), f. 30: "sometimes he does not fulfil the tasks assigned to him stating as reason the lack of time because of his job"; Ion (1973), f. 29: "he states as reason the lack of time because of his job".

¹⁸³ Ghețu (1961a), f. 41: "The agent showed fear which he explained through the caution he pays to preserve the secrecy of his collaboration"; Ghețu (1962), f. 40: "We succeeded in determining the agent to overcome his fear and his lack of courage [sic!]; Ion (1973), f. 29: "It resulted from discussing with him that he operates like this and is very careful how the respective elements react because he is afraid that they might conclude he is an informer". Cf. Ion (1975), f. 3.

caused by different circumstances¹⁸⁴. Hamparțumian's profession which required him to leave Bucharest for at least several months a year and to work mostly at the remote site of Histria played a significant role too in his attempts to evade the handlers' orders¹⁸⁵. Last, but not least, he tried to divert attention from the people targeted by the Securitate by providing information on foreign tourists who he met as guide at Histria and in Bucharest:¹⁸⁶ such reports were less reprehensible morally, were less likely to determine new burdensome tasks and were still counted as

¹⁸⁴ Ghețu (1961a), f. 41: "because [Vladimir Dumitrescu] is old, he was not able to reach any result"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32: "he seeks to explain his weak efficiency by the fact he does not have actual possibilities to get information from these elements".

¹⁸⁵ Vărzaru (1963), f. 39: "there are some periods of emptiness [sic!] because during the months of summer he works at Istria. Thus, this summer he provided only one report ... Because the agent came only once in Bucharest, the connection was interrupted this summer"; Faur (1963), f. 37: "A challenge for working with this agent is that the connection with him is almost inexistent for 5-6 months in the summer because during this time he is in the country for different archaeological activities, alongside other works"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1963), f. 34: "In the period May - 11 November 1963, the agent was seconded to Istria, so his efficiency was minimal"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1965), f. 33: "the agent was seconded in the country for almost 5 months this summer, so that during this time the connection with him was interrupted"; Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32: "In 1965 he was seconded to Istria for 4 months, in this time the connection with him was interrupted"; Ion (1972), f. 30: "In July and August, he left to the seaside, in Histria, for archaeological excavations, so that I was not able to meet him during this time". Cf. Ion (1975), f. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Vărzaru (1963), f. 39: foreign tourists visiting the museum in Histria; Ion (1969), f. 62: an Austrian citizen who visited the National Museum of Antiquities and was interested in buying Romanian handmade traditional objects.

intelligence work. Creating the appearance of a disciplined and willing collaborator was of great importance for avoiding conducting a proper and meaningful surveillance activity on his friends and acquaintances without incurring any penalty for himself. Hamparțumian strengthened this appearance through punctuality, correctness, avowed loyalty, qualities repeatedly mentioned in his handlers' analytic reports, e.g. "there are no other assessments that can be made with regard to the agent than those made in his first characterization: smart, well-prepared culturally, endowed with discernment and initiative, correct and disciplined, loyal to our organs, punctual at meetings"¹⁸⁷.

The real state of things could not have escaped to the officers though, whose frustration in front of Hamparțumian's disinterest is manifested throughout the analytic reports. Captain Petre Ghețu, who handled Hamparțumian between February 1960 and January 1962, repeatedly remarked his lack of initiative¹⁸⁸. The next junior officers in charge, lieutenant Gheorghe Vărzaru (from 11 May 1962 to 03 March 1967; promoted in 1965 or 1966 to senior lieutenant) and lieutenant Dumitru Ion (from 03 March 1967 to 17 May 1975; promoted in 1969 or 1970 to senior lieutenant and in 1974 or 1975 to captain)¹⁸⁹,

¹⁸⁷ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1963), f. 35.

¹⁸⁸ Ghețu (1961a), f. 41: "very insistently directed towards these elements, he finally succeeded in finding them"; Ghețu (1962), f. 40: "he has sense of observation, but he does not have initiative to the same extent. He only follows the received instructions and does not undertake anything more"; cf. Ion (1975), f. 3.

¹⁸⁹ There are no assessments from senior lieutenant Traian Iarcinschi, who was Hamparțumian's handler from January to 11 May 1962, cf. Ghețu (1962), f. 40 and Vărzaru (1963), f. 38.

observed that their informer persisted in displaying “a certain idleness”¹⁹⁰ and “lack of willingness”¹⁹¹ in fulfilling his tasks. However, they still tried to draw an overall positive picture of him, pointing to his seriousness, politeness and professional achievements. This outcome was a direct consequence of the growing pressure exerted on them from the higher echelons of the Securitate and even the Communist Party to constantly expand their network of informers¹⁹². Quantity prevailed over quality. In addition, the personal contacts between informer and handler¹⁹³ might also have contributed to the junior officers’ overall leniency: instead convincing or forcing Hamparțumian to better do his job, it seems that some of his arguments for his lack of efficiency, carefully gilded with academic prestige, persuaded them¹⁹⁴.

Much more critical were the senior officers in their resolutions, where they come close to the conclusion that Hamparțumian was exploiting the leniency of the case officers and deliberately undermined their efforts. In April 1965, Petre Ghețu, Hamparțumian’s former handler, promoted to the rank of major and to a higher hierarchical function, bluntly remarks in one of his resolutions that “although the agent is described as being serious, disciplined and attached to our organs, he is not efficient in the operative work”¹⁹⁵. Consequently, in April 1966, even major lieutenant Gheorghe Vărzaru,

Hamparțumian’s handler at the time, admitted that the informer could have acted misleadingly: “he showed less interest than in the previous periods, without overtly displaying it”¹⁹⁶. The annual analysis report of 1972 shows that he was verified because “he was suspected of dishonesty, but without remarkable results”¹⁹⁷.

The junior officers were rebuked for this situation. Captain Ioan Faur, the immediate commander of Hamparțumian’s handler, shows in 1963 in a special analytical report which doubles the normal report written by the handler himself, that “to this [bad] situation contributes as well the deficiency of the officer who did not continuously and permanently [sic!] direct him”, while the decisive resolution in the same special report contains the order to “admonish lt. Vărzaru for his defective manner of working; he should take all the measures indicated by the head of office [cpt. Faur] to address the situation”¹⁹⁸. In 1966, Vărzaru even included a statement of self-criticism in his annual analytic report on ‘Valeriu Bratu’: “I have not always found either the most appropriate means in my briefings at the meetings so that the agent might improve and make permanent his relations with the aforementioned elements”¹⁹⁹.

The pressure exerted on the junior officers led them to take different steps to boost the agent’s performance. The most significant measure, specifically requested by the higher commanders, and put into practice by the junior officers was that of increasing the frequency of meetings with

¹⁹⁰ Ion (1972), f. 30; Ion (1973), f. 29.

¹⁹¹ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32.

¹⁹² Verdery (2014), 162-163, 168-169, 193-194.

¹⁹³ Verdery (2014), 195-196.

¹⁹⁴ Ion (1973), f. 29: “he states as reason the lack of time because of his job, as he is a passionate researcher in his domain”.

¹⁹⁵ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1965), f. 33.

¹⁹⁶ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32.

¹⁹⁷ Ion (1972), f. 30.

¹⁹⁸ Faur (1963), f. 37.

¹⁹⁹ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32.

Hamparțumian and of repeating and deepening his training. For example, the recently promoted major Petre Ghețu advises in 1963: “at the next meetings, discuss again about his connections and see how his basis for activity might be enlarged. Hold more frequent meetings when he is in Bucharest”²⁰⁰. In 1972, senior lieutenant Ion highlights that “it should be insisted more on fulfilling his tasks, which is why I met him even twice or thrice a month”²⁰¹. An almost desperate attempt to increase Hamparțumian’s efficiency, given the general requirement of compartmentalization of the Securitate’s work, was carried out in 1972, when the Municipal Inspectorate of Bucharest informed their colleagues at the County Inspectorate of Constanța about the identity of their agent and suggested that they can use him during his secondment at Histria²⁰². As there are no other documents on this matter in Hamparțumian’s file, it appears that this attempt failed, too.

The political police never paid Hamparțumian between 1960 and 1975²⁰³. There are only three recorded cases when the Securitate was in the position to reward him for his intelligence activity: in June 1961, when the officers unsuccessfully tried to obtain a permanent position for him in the Institute of Archaeology²⁰⁴; in January 1969, when major general Emanoil Rusu, the head of the Municipal Inspectorate of

Bucharest, did not accept the proposal of his subordinates to request stopping the criminal prosecution for embezzlement²⁰⁵; between 1973 and 1975, when Hamparțumian openly requested the Securitate’s support for obtaining the approval of the State Council to marry Anthea Priscilla Alley and follow her in the United Kingdom and expressed his willingness to collect intelligence from abroad²⁰⁶ – while there is no proof of any external intervention of the Securitate, its favourable endorsement possibly weighed heavily with the State Council²⁰⁷. It is likely that Hamparțumian asked for help in the two other cases as well, but there is no clear evidence for this²⁰⁸. The political police was certainly not bent on assisting its informers who hoped to get some benefits, despite passively resisting to instructions and orders. Although junior officers could have been more prone to leniency, the institutional mechanisms of the Securitate ruthlessly worked towards denying major concessions to people who did not seem loyal and efficient enough. Major general Rusu’s definitive resolution regarding Hamparțumian’s criminal investigation, written with large letters in red pencil on the back of the informer’s most recent report, used by his handlers to ask again their commander to help their agent is illustrative: “May the police organs do their duty. He did not do too much as an

²⁰⁰ Vărzaru, Ghețu (1963), f. 35. Cf. the resolution on Ion (1972), f. 30: “it is necessary to take measures to enlarge his field of activity... Discuss each case [of former legionaries] with the informer.”

²⁰¹ Ion (1972), f. 30.

²⁰² Burac (1972), f. 10.

²⁰³ I.M.B. Sec. (n.d.); Ghețu (1961a); Ghețu (1962); Vărzaru (1963); Vărzaru, Ghețu (1965); Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966); Ion (1967).

²⁰⁴ Ghețu (1963); Vărzaru (1963).

²⁰⁵ Ion et alii (1969a); Ion et alii (1969b).

²⁰⁶ Ion (1973), f. 29; Ion (1974), f. 4.

²⁰⁷ Ion (1975), f. 5.

²⁰⁸ The repeated calls of his handler and his immediate commander to the head of the Municipal Inspectorate of Bucharest to allow Hamparțumian to avoid trial might hint that the informer asked their help, which they granted to him, especially as the last call was written on an apparently promising report of the informer.

informer either (see the analysis reports). Why he was unfair? May he face the consequences! If the things had not come out, would he have reported on this? I think that you did not verify and educate him thoroughly. If he wants to work, may he work in prison, but better than he did outside"²⁰⁹.

The passive resistance of 'Hadrian' and the inefficiency of the Foreign Intelligence Department/Center (1976-1983)

The tasks assigned to Nubar Hamparțumian after he emigrated to the United Kingdom differed greatly from the earlier ones, as he was categorized as an assistance or influence agent. The Foreign Intelligence Department placed in the forefront academic objectives and only at the end appended some tasks relating to the Romanian emigrants. For example, his first task plan (Plan de sarcini) from February 1977 comprised the following objectives: "I. The consolidation of his personal and professional situation, in order to develop his possibilities and to intensify his activities of influence, propaganda and collecting intelligence" (getting a permanent job at Croydon College; starting his Ph.D. by making use of his relation with Averil Cameron; becoming a member of the Royal Historical Society; studying the opportunity of becoming a permanent collaborator of the British Museum; acquiring British citizenship; creating connections with historians from the United Kingdom and other Western countries); "II. The

intensification of the publishing activity favourable to our country" (continuing his activity for the British Archaeological Reports; writing articles on the "birth, continuity and unity of the Romanian people" – one on Sucidava, another one on the Late Roman enclosure wall at Histria and a third one on Romanian's independence; organizing conferences or symposia celebrating the centenary of the independence of Romania; organizing an exhibition at the British Museum displaying Romanian documents; creating the opportunities for other Romanian historians to hold lectures in the United Kingdom etc.); "III. Other operative activities" (contacting significant Romanian emigrants from Western countries, such as Mircea Eliade, Pamfil Șeicaru and Ion Rațiu; determining Trevor Hope from Oxford to write more books on the history of Romania; identifying and encouraging British researchers and students to study and visit Romania; preparing trips in Romania for interested British researchers and students; fighting the Hungarian irredentism and its influence over British scholars; obtaining British scholarships and professional opportunities for Romanian scholars and students)²¹⁰. Most of the academic tasks were suggested by Hamparțumian himself in the report he submitted during his visit to Romania in December 1976 (his first visit after his recruitment by DIE in May 1976)²¹¹ and his handler only clothed them in the ideological and technical idiom of the Communist Party and the Securitate in the

²⁰⁹ Ion et alii (1969a), f. 62.

²¹⁰ Minoiu (1977a). Hamparțumian, Minoiu (1976), f. 38.

²¹¹ Hamparțumian (1976c).

task plan. This was a recurring pattern²¹². Other task plans and similar documents set some additional objectives closer to those assigned to Hamparțumian before emigration: for example, the plan of February 1978 required him to develop relations with exiled legionaries in order to get knowledge of their intentions and to persuade them to act in the best interests of Romania²¹³.

The comprehensive reports submitted by Hamparțumian when he visited Romania show that he systematically avoided the politically imbued tasks and emphasized instead his academic achievements, which he would have sought anyway²¹⁴. The themes of historical propaganda that he was supposed to spread did not mar his own scientific publications, although in his reports he misleadingly emphasized their propagandistic utility²¹⁵. In fact, it seems

that Hamparțumian subtly managed to trick the Securitate into considering him a loyal and efficient agent of influence and to turn his relationship with it into his own advantage. Besides occasional payments and gifts, he also received support, often at his request, in the form of Romanian history books and interventions with academic institutions for granting him more manuscripts to be translated and published in the United Kingdom²¹⁶. It was thus natural for him to sever his connections with the Securitate when his ties with Romania weakened after the death of his mother, his situation in Britain become securely established and the support of the political police started to falter²¹⁷.

Resistance against a disciplinary institution: reasons and effects

To better understand the functioning of the Securitate, Katherine Verdery employed several theoretical lenses and consecutively regarded it as a bureaucracy which “made up people” in the sense employed by Ian Hackling, as a secret society, as a surveillance system that produced knowledge and consequently

²¹² E.g. compare Hamparțumian (1978), f. 181-182 with Minoiu (1978), f. 187-188; Hamparțumian (1980), f. 214-215 with ‘Tiseanu’ (1980), f. 218. See also Hamparțumian (1979c).

²¹³ Minoiu (1978), f. 188.

²¹⁴ Hamparțumian (1976c); Hamparțumian (1977c); Hamparțumian (1978); Hamparțumian (1979d); Hamparțumian (1980). I found evidence of only one note targeting a person, the Armenian businessman Agop Kirmizian, born in Romania and immigrated to France, in Minoiu (1977b), f. 148. There is also a very brief report, Hamparțumian (1977b), dealing with how Romania was reflected in the British media in the second half of 1976: two out of four paragraphs show that Hamparțumian did not find any press articles or TV shows denigrating Romania or advertising Hungarian revisionist positions over Transylvania, whereas the other two inform that there was some focus on the Soviet military capabilities and that protest was expressed against the visit of the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia in the United Kingdom.

²¹⁵ E.g. A conference presentation of 1979 published as Hamparțumian (1981), an article

objectively maintaining that the Barbarian treasures of Pietroasa, Apahida and Concești display certain specific traits of the Late Roman art, is described in one of the reports submitted to the Securitate, Hamparțumian (1979e), f. 197-198, as an activity whereby he „demonstrated the continuity of the Romanian people on the territory of Romania during the Barbarian invasions”.

²¹⁶ Hamparțumian, Minoiu (1976), f. 36-37; Hamparțumian (1976c), f. 156-157, 159, 160; Hamparțumian (1977b), f. 175, 177; Hamparțumian (1979e), f. 195-196, 198-199.

²¹⁷ Hamparțumian (1979e), f. 198-199.

reshaped the social networks in the Romanian society, not least by adding the parasitic patron-client relations between officers and informers²¹⁸. From my point of view, one useful step further in this approach is to envisage the Securitate as a Foucauldian disciplinary system, which by constantly disciplining its informers performed its essential task of panoptical surveillance in the Romanian communist disciplinary society²¹⁹. Metaphorically, the Securitate was the central observation tower from where the communist leadership should have been able to observe, without being seen, if the huge surrounding circle of Romanian citizens were indeed on their way to becoming the 'communist new men and women'.

To perform this role, the Securitate itself was structured as a perfect panopticon, with its informers being totally isolated one from another and exposed to hypothetically unlimited surveillance. Turning informers into "docile bodies" was carried out by a pyramidal structure²²⁰ through the mechanisms and techniques of disciplinary systems. The frequent secret meetings between officers and informers enabled the Securitate to separate the latter from the rest of society and assert control over their bodies²²¹. The safe house is nothing else than an avatar of the cell. At the same time, the Securitate repeatedly exposed the informers to an in-depth process of instruction and training²²² (who should they keep under surveillance? what

information should they seek? how should they collect information? how should they maintain secrecy? how should they keep contact with the secret police? how should they generally behave in society?), all the more so for those who did not deliver the expected results²²³. In addition, the Securitate turned its informers into objects of detailed scrutiny, collecting data on them from a wide array of sources, ranging from the agents' own testimonies to operative surveillance and eavesdropping, and then analysing the information more or less scientifically with the final objectives of finding ways to improve their performance and of securing their loyalty²²⁴. It is by no means surprising that in the 1960s, the annual analysis reports were called 'characterisations' (caracterizări).

By envisaging the Securitate as a disciplinary institution, it is easier to understand the nature and the effects of Nubar Hamparțumian's passive resistance, enabled by the system's own weaknesses, particularly in 1960-1975. As I have shown above, quite rapidly after his recruitment, Hamparțumian adopted the strategy of pretending that he was disciplined, while actually taking advantage of every circumstance not to follow orders and finding innovative explanations for his failures. The lack of initiative, purposeness and courage imputed to him by the officers, which resulted in information of meagre value collected during fortuitous meetings, should be categorized in Foucauldian terms as an instance of *micropénalité de l'activité*. In the last few years spent in Romania, he even interrupted the fulfilment of some tasks, under the pretext of too much work

²¹⁸ Verdery (2014), 29-30.

²¹⁹ The creation of the police as a prerequisite of the emergence of the disciplinary society is explored in Foucault (1975), 214-217.

²²⁰ Foucault (1975), 173-179.

²²¹ Foucault (1975), 143-151.

²²² Foucault (1975), 159-164.

²²³ Foucault (1975), 181.

²²⁴ Foucault (1975), 191-194.

at his job, thus entering also the field of the *micropénalité du temps*, but never crossing the border to the micro crimes of behaviour, speech or body²²⁵.

Why did he choose to act like this? First of all, Hamparțumian's lack of access to valuable information resulting from not being deeply embedded in the social ties that were of interest to the Securitate²²⁶ set objective limits to his efficiency. In other words, because he was not suited to be an informer, he could not have been either efficient, or completely disciplined. It was a big failure of the political police that despite grasping this truth²²⁷, it did not stop collaborating with him. In addition, the direct contact with the Securitate and its malfunctioning gradually dispelled both the trust in its rationality²²⁸ and the terror deriving from the sentiment of being all the time under surveillance²²⁹. As already shown by Verdery, these were conspicuous reasons for some informers even to

²²⁵ Foucault (1975), 180-181.

²²⁶ Apparently, Hamparțumian was not deeply embedded in any other social ties, as he was frequently described by securiști themselves as reserved and taciturn. For the embeddedness in social ties as an essential condition for recruitment, see Verdery (2014), 176.

²²⁷ Ghețu (1962), f. 40.

²²⁸ In an act of frustration in front of this apparent lack of reasonability, Hamparțumian sought "to explain his weak efficiency by the fact he does not have actual possibilities to get information from these elements", which only led to suspicions nurtured by his handler regarding his loyalty, as shown in Vărzaru, Ghețu (1966), f. 32. The importance of the appearance of disciplinary institutions as rational social enterprises is assessed in O'Neill (1986).

²²⁹ As demonstrated by the fact that Hamparțumian did not report on the embezzlement that he was compelled to carry out by Emil Condurachi and accordingly enraged major general Rusu, cf. Ion et alii (1969), f. 62.

unilaterally (and apparently with no repercussions) severe ties with the Securitate²³⁰. The constant lack of verifications²³¹ and the inefficiency of the punishments inflicted for his small crimes of activity and time – consisting only in more meetings and more training, in typical disciplinary fashion – certainly contributed to his persistence in passively resisting the officers. Moreover, archaeology, which required him to leave Bucharest for the isolated site of Histria and to lose contact with his handlers for several months effectively broke down the cycle of disciplinary operations: meetings, instructions, checks etc. Far from the traumatic meetings with the officers of Securitate²³², Hamparțumian was able to strengthen his attitude of resistance.

In the end, I consider that the fundamental factor that stood behind Hamparțumian's decision and ability to mount passive resistance was the growing amount of knowledge on the Securitate and its shortcomings. The Foucauldian couple *pouvoir – savoir* acts also the other way around: as knowledge of those subjected to domination is a fundamental prerequisite for those exerting power, knowledge of those exerting power enables those subjected to it to establish efficient tactics of resistance. In the case of Hamparțumian – as presumably in the cases of many other Romanian informers – these consisted in pretending to be a disciplined informer although he systematically avoided seeking and providing the required information, contributing only as much as he thought to be morally irreprehensible and enough to

²³⁰ Verdery (2014), 80-81.

²³¹ Ghețu (1961a); Ghețu (1962); Vărzaru, Ghețu (1965).

²³² Verdery (2014), 175.

not suffer repercussions. Moreover, it seems that Hamparțumian tried and even managed to partially turn this situation to his own advantage, seeking profit from the patron-client relationships established between the officers and him²³³. It is no surprise then that having this knowledge and probably weighing as well the spectre of repercussions on his mother and sister who remained in Romania, he chose to collaborate with the Foreign Intelligence Department, too. Most of his tasks were in tune with his own personal objectives of becoming an established classical scholar in Britain and through accomplishing them he was able to avoid others which involved providing data on Romanian targeted emigrants. Disciplinary control was even weaker than before, as he met his handlers only few times a year in Bucharest. Moreover, the profits from maintaining the relationship with the Securitate far surpassed those from the pre-emigration period and indeed could have represented an important incentive for the decision to resume and continue collaboration.

Thus, it seems that at least in the case of Nubar Hamparțumian, the Securitate failed both as a disciplinary institution, because it was not able to turn him into a true 'docile body', and as a key mechanism of the Romanian communist disciplinary society, because he never provided a sufficient amount of the kind of information expected from him – sensitive political statements and actions of the people targeted by the political police. The sense of economic inefficiency is even stronger when the amount of wasted human and material resources is taken into account: dozens and dozens of hours spent

by officers in meeting with Hamparțumian, writing reports, sending requests and answers to other units, keeping him under physical surveillance, eavesdropping on him etc.²³⁴ In a way, this conclusion is correct and part of the explanation is that the Securitate undisputedly malfunctioned as a disciplinary institution because of poor planning, excessive bureaucracy, incompetent, overloaded or overcompliant officers. Passive resistance like that displayed by Nubar Hamparțumian would have certainly been more difficult to mount if the political police had been better managed, more rationally organized and open to a greater extent to scientific methods of collecting and processing information, as it often assumed it was²³⁵.

On the other hand, well-entrenched institutions and organizations might be just as well content with a general attitude of loyalty of their workers than with sheer productivity, as shown by O'Neill with regard to corporations²³⁶. In addition, Foucault emphasizes that the police as the essential mechanism of panoptism in disciplinary societies is concerned with knowing everything, not only the actual threats to the state power: "c'est la poussière des événements, des actions, des conduites, des opinions"²³⁷. Even disappointing information as that provided by an apparently compliant, but incapable Hamparțumian might in fact be useful for those in control of the central tower of panoptical surveillance of a disciplinary society, allowing them to 'make up people' through thorough study and merciless

²³³ See above. Verdery (2014), 190-193.

²³⁴ Verdery (2014), 40-42.

²³⁵ Verdery (2014), 161-162.

²³⁶ O'Neill (1986), 56.

²³⁷ Foucault (1975), 215.

categorization²³⁸ and to instil that unbearable feeling of being permanently under surveillance, which hunts older Romanians even at present²³⁹. After all, the communist regime in Romania, with its huge density of informers²⁴⁰, either mounting a passive resistance, or not, fell the last in Eastern Europe: consequently, we may ponder if such a system which preferred quantity over quality was not more effective from a disciplinary point of view, albeit clearly inefficient.

In the new disturbing era of mass technical surveillance, ubiquitous social media and emerging social credit systems, the case of Nubar Hamparțumian is somehow reassuring, as it shows that good knowledge of disciplinary systems enables the resistance against them. At the same time, it raises the issue if passive resistance consisting in dissimulating the breaches of discipline under formal signs of total compliance is enough for successfully opposing the modern Panopticon²⁴¹.

²³⁸ Verdery (2014), 63-66.

²³⁹ Verdery (2018), 165. The researcher admits that this feeling haunted her for more than four months after only one year spent in Romania. After more than three decades after the fall of communism, my mother, who was only 28 years old in 1989, still lowers her voice and even refuses to discuss on the phone political matters.

²⁴⁰ Deletant (1995), xiv; Verdery (2014), 207-208.

²⁴¹ This research has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No. 734645, "Knowledge Exchange and Academic Cultures in the Humanities. Europe and the Black Sea Region". I express thanks for their kind support in collecting data for this article to Sylvia Hamparțumian, daughter of Nubar Hamparțumian, and to Dumitru Vâlceanu and Iuliana Barnea, former colleagues and friends of Nubar Hamparțumian from the Institute of Archaeology of Bucharest.

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Iuliana Dumitru

Escaping the Everyday Life: Artists' Holidays at 2 Mai and Vama Veche in the Communist Era

Abstract

During communism, the villages of Vama Veche and 2 Mai became a mythological place for the cultural and artistic bohemian. Artists and intellectuals came there during the summer in order to work and relax in a space where the authorities chose to stay away (at least in a visible way). This indulged „freedom” transformed the area in a safe space for their daily interaction and activities, beyond borders and limitations. After the fall of communism, this area became a kind of „lieu de mémoire” revisited mostly in the imagination while invested with the aura of sacredness.

Keywords: Holidays, Bohemian, Communism, Daily Life, Seaside, Border, Real vs. Imaginary Space

Introduction

Daily life in the area of 2 Mai and Vama Veche villages varies throughout the year, the identity of this space changing during the summer. A "holiday identity" thus emerges characterized by interaction between locals and tourists, who live together in some sort of intimacy while stepping out of their daily routine. This holiday identity underlines the fact that the two communities intertwine, the symbiosis between them becoming an object of study for researchers such as: Miruna Maria Tîrcă²⁴², Vintilă Mihăilescu²⁴³, Miroslav

Taşcu-Stavre²⁴⁴, Liviu Vasile²⁴⁵, Ruxandra Petrinică²⁴⁶, etc.

This study is based on my doctoral research and aims at finding social patterns of regularity in everyday life of a certain social group, namely the community of tourists who vacationed during communism in the mentioned area and whom I called artistic/cultural bohemian. It deals mainly with perceptions of bohemian way of existence, and their attachment to the 2 Mai-Vama Veche space. The special labeling of this community of tourists allows me to characterize them in antithesis to mass tourists, who prefer other areas of the Romanian coast.

The main purpose of this article is to describe how bohemians escape from everyday life into an imaginary and

²⁴² Tîrcă (2004).

²⁴³ Mihăilescu (2005).

²⁴⁴ Taşcu-Stavre (2016).

²⁴⁵ Vasile (2011).

²⁴⁶ Petrinică (2017).

symbolic space when they choose to spend the holidays at 2 Mai and Vama Veche. The analysis is based on memoirs published by Anamaria Smighelschi²⁴⁷, Cristian Pepino²⁴⁸, Aurora Liiceanu²⁴⁹, Puși Dinulescu²⁵⁰, Dinu Ghika²⁵¹, Nina Cassian²⁵², and a few oral history interviews. Since the memoirs, although they narrate events from the period before 1989, are published after the Revolution, their stories about Vama Veche and 2 Mai are focused on freedom, in all its forms. The freedom felt and described in these spaces is an important element of the representations of the area around which was built the mythology of these very places. The courtyards and houses of the hosts represented in the socialist period an oasis of freedom and acceptance of the way of life of the vacationers while a kind of camaraderie installed between them and the locals.

Alternative Tourism

The tourism practiced in 2 Mai-Vama Veche differed from mass tourism because the area was not an artificially created environment, but one created over time through the contribution of the hosts, hosts who received their tourists as relatives, while the guests came not to consume, but to contribute to the creation of a space where they felt free during the socialist period and even afterwards. Vintilă Mihăilescu described this type of tourism as "vacation ... lived as

a alternative manifestation, as a way of life, be it even for a limited period of time. Moreover, there is a whole series of ways of spending free time, known as alternative tourism, which can often be innovative and experimental, i.e. unusual"²⁵³.

In Vintilă Mihăilescu's opinion, one of the characteristics of alternative tourism is the new, which can be either a new space or the way you relate to that space, experiencing new ways to spend your time dedicated to vacation. 2 Mai and Vama Veche were an "unusual" place that did not respect the canons imposed by official tourism practice and thus led to a completely different experience. Most of the time, this choice was made on the basis of belonging to a certain association (in the sense of a human network) which connected people who have various common interests, common activities or even a common workplace as was the case with Babeș Bolyai University and the Cluj Camp in Vama Veche or those joining one of the existing vocational structures such as the Union of Writers, the Union of Visual Artists, the Order of Architects, etc.

In 'Research on modes of existence. An anthropology of the Moderns', Bruno Latour refers to social networks as a series of associations that are valid when and if they are well constructed²⁵⁴. The summer universe of the 2 Mai-Vama Veche space was founded and developed with the help of the artistic bohemian network precisely through the prism of this series of associations between community members. The space grew because of people who announced/notified their network about

²⁴⁷ Smighelschi (2013, 2016, 2019).

²⁴⁸ Pepino (2015, 2016).

²⁴⁹ Liiceanu (2016).

²⁵⁰ Dinulescu (2001).

²⁵¹ Ghika (2017).

²⁵² Cassian (2004).

²⁵³ Mihăilescu (2005), 56.

²⁵⁴ Latour (2016), 43.

this space, that is, people with whom they had things and ideas in common.

These places were also safe spaces for political discussion²⁵⁵, for creation and creativity²⁵⁶. Furthermore, under the influence of the artists, the houses and yards of the hosts become real stages, where complex scenographies were prepared for artistic manifestations, and some of the locals become spectators and participants. For these reasons, all the special requirements of the tourists regarding the rooms were accepted, and their wish for the place to remain unchanged or, on the contrary, to change according to certain requests, was respected²⁵⁷.

The Artists during the so-called „liberalization” of the communist system

Between 1965 and 1974 there was a period of so-called "cultural liberalization"

²⁵⁵ There were places where criticism of the system was allowed, as Alexandru Munteanu told me: "We talked politics, Ceaușescu was cursed out loud and nobody said anything."

²⁵⁶ Artistic events that took place at the hosts' homes: an Andrei Cadere exhibition, literary circles and poetry evenings, readings of books that were to be published. Silvia Radu: "we have some wonderful memories with Nicolae Breban, he came on May 2nd and I was with Tana Maitec, with Ovidiu and Gorduz, and Breban invited us on May 2nd to read from his works. It was absolutely fantastic, I had some evenings there with Breban. We were the first readers, he wrote and said: Come tomorrow and I will read to you again".

²⁵⁷ For example, my aunt Marioara kept the swing in the yard unchanged, as well as the fountain, even if it is no longer functional, but this was the special request of the old tourists to keep these objects, even if the whole yard was modified.

of the socialist system in Romania: cultural and social life improved, police controls were reduced and political pressure decreased, some economic prosperity was felt in all areas, both at the macro level as well as the micro level. The artistic area is not neglected either, and a large part of the intellectuals receive 'spacious apartments', holidays in 'creative houses', trips abroad, advantageous publishing contracts, and 'enter the new phase of their relationship with power and society'²⁵⁸.

Magda Cârnelci classifies the artists from the liberalization period according to the way they related to the political scale in: activists (political), neutrals, and opponents. The neutrals (also called false conformists) were those who managed to find a balance between "official" art and "private" art and who were part of the alternative culture. "In other words, they profess a double artistic language to the extent of a double aesthetic and social morality, designed to promote an autonomous art of quality within the coercive system in power. This also explains the phenomenon of double culture, so typical for communist societies, represented by the binomial official culture - alternative culture"²⁵⁹. Perhaps the belonging of these artists to an alternative culture makes them also prefer the practice of alternative tourism, where, without expressing it directly, they choose/prefer something other than what the system offered at the time in terms of seaside holidays.

However, this apparent 'freedom' has its price. Magda Cârnelci, in her seminal work, *Fine Arts in Romania: 1945-1989*, points out that this is also the nascent

²⁵⁸ Cârnelci (2013), 63.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 91.

period of the nationalist tendencies of the Romanian Communist Party which encouraged the cultural world to move towards the so-called "myth of rediscovery". On the basis of this territorial and historical vision, artists and intellectuals begin to build new ideals by resuming ties with "the tradition of interwar Romanian culture and thus regaining a "historical legitimacy" - because the nation and nationalism were the main ideological values created by the Romanian intelligentsia, liberal or populist, before the communist regime"²⁶⁰. In other words, the national interest was the bait with which some of the artists/people of culture were attracted to "make peace" with the leadership. However, this reconciliation ends up being felt as a limiting choice after the "tolerant" period.

Some of the artists who frequent the 2 Mai-Vama Veche space managed to place themselves in the neutral zone (the so-called false conformists), who "have the courage of a more or less "bohemian" existence"²⁶¹ while succeeding to accumulate a certain fame during this period. They participate in exhibitions/biennials abroad, creative camps or have personal exhibitions where they can also exhibit works without committed political content. Silvia Radu, Vasile Gorduz, Sultana Maitec, Ovidiu Maitec, George Apostu, Simona Runcan, Vladimir Şetran, Lucia Maftai are all summer participants of our research area.

The initial group who came at Vama Veche was composed of the artist Vladimir Şetran together with his wife, ceramist Ioana Şetran, who will also "attract" to this place the graphic artist Anamaria

Smigelschi, Ioana's sister. The sculptors Silvia Radu and Vasile Gorduz come together with the sculptor Ovidiu Maitec and the graphic artist Sultana Maitec, with whom they share many memorable moments. In 1970, the painters Ion Pacea and Ion Musculeanu joined the group, painting during that period several seascapes located at Vama Veche and 2 Mai. Constantin Pacea, son of Ion Pacea, remembers in the interview done together how he used to carve stones with Vasile Gorduz. At the end of the 1970s, Ion Pacea and his family gave up their vacations at Vama Veche and headed to the Creation House of the Union of Visual Artists in Constanța, restaured in 1977.

The graphic artist Simona Runcan, after her divorce from the sculptor George Apostu in 1981, continued to come to Vama Veche where she created the Laws of Balance series. With the exception of the Şetran family, Ovidiu Maitec and George Apostu, the rest of the listed artists work at Vama Veche or have works that represent this space. The sculptor Maria Cocea (Pusi) also spends her vacations there with Aurora Liiceanu, who recounts their adventures in the book *Madlena*, without mentioning whether or not Pusi worked at the seaside. Not missing from this place, from the mid-1960s until the 1990s, was also the artist and art historian François Pamfil, who is often mentioned in stories from/about the Vama Veche as a character who spent all his summers there. However, Silvia Radu, Vasile Gorduz and Anamaria Smigelschi remain the most representative artists for the Vama Veche village as can be inferred from the interviews carried out as part of my research, but also from memoirs or short prose published by Cristian Pepino, Anamaria Smigelschi or Paul Miron.

²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 70.

²⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 92.

Although many artists came to Vama Veche and 2 Mai, it was not a easy thing to do. They needed some specific permit to show to the Customs as the border with Bulgaria was near-by. Artists managed to get these permits with help from the Union of Plastic Artists, as is the case of Silvia Radu and Anamaria Smilgeschi, who recall how they obtained the permit: "... for us it was easy to obtain, ..., because we said: we go to do documentation at Vama Veche, ..., and then we went to the boss at the border and he gave us an apostille and we could stay at Vama Veche as long as we wanted"²⁶².

Everyday "decoration of life" by the sea

The 2 Mai-Vama Veche space lives under the influence of the sea and implicitly the beach. Many profitable activities have been built around these natural resources: tourism, fishing, shipyard, even a military base. Furthermore, the sea became essential from another perspective as well, being the fundamental element of identification for a certain group of people, the cultural bohemians.

The villages of 2 Mai and Vama Veche become emblematic spaces for this community because they manage to transform the natural elements – the sea and the beach – into metaphors for freedom. Thus, freedom, and later the myth of freedom, become synonymous with this area. The superimposition of this symbolism, especially in the period before

²⁶² Interview with Silvia Radu, January 2015.

1989, over the natural environment made these two localities offer a suitable setting for summer vacations, but with something extra. The choice of these places by the cultural bohemians was a declaration of independence, it was their way of taking a stand against the system. Even if nothing revolutionary happened at 2 Mai-Vama Veche, the refusal of comfort, "luxury" or an easy life was, in a way, a symbolic manifesto.

The physical, geographical elements, the sea, the village and the road are important for the perception of the area. If we look at a map of the village of Vama Veche we can see that the village is cut in the middle by a traffic artery, the houses being placed on either side of this road²⁶³. Until 1990, the side facing the sea was less populated than the opposite side, and the 3 houses, Matrioana's, Sultana's and Bugiulescu's, had a direct view of the sea. This changed shortly after the Revolution, because the land next to them and those in front of them were sold, and later on houses, terraces and villas were built there. In 2 Mai, the houses on the road, those on the sea side, had direct access to the beach only by crossing the host's garden. Many of those staying at 2 Mai preferred to stay at certain hosts precisely for this reason, they reached the beach very quickly. After the Revolution, many of these hosts sold the land, and villas, hotels and even campsites were built here.

²⁶³ According to the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (5.04.2002), the European road E87 is part of the European road network. It is a North-South road that starts in Odessa (Ukraine), passes through Romania (Constanța) and Bulgaria (Varna and Burgas) and ends in Antalya (Turkey).

In literary accounts of this space, the line between reality and the imaginary becomes thin and fluid, and we cannot know how much of what we read is factual account or just personal imagination of the authors. Where does reality end and the imaginary begin? The boundary between the two registers is permeable, accepting a mutual interaction of two ends of the same wire. Certainly, everyone who wrote about 2 Mai-Vama Veche added a drop of subjectivity/imaginary on top of what was already there. And all these drops ended up forming a non-negligible expanse of water, where, without wanting to, we sometimes get lost in constructions that are (no longer) related to reality. I am aware of the fact that what these people experienced is something very real and that their experience is accessible to us only through these stories, through words, through literary constructions.

An example of the transgression between reality and imagination can be found in Aurora Liiceanu's volume *Madlena*. She attributes to the presence of the sea the power to transform the everyday into something extraordinary, which becomes the "decoration of life": "At Stoiana it was good, we were close to the sea, hidden by the village and the road. Close to nature, far from the world. The sea was the decoration of life"²⁶⁴. Furthermore, the author recalls and tells the story about black magic practices performed by the two neighbors and competitors from Vama veche, Stoiana and Matriona. In presenting these practices, the author added another type of symbolism to the place, namely the exit from reality while entering a space with supernatural features. These practices

were "attested" in the local countryside, as my grandmother, who believed in such things, explained to me. The author of the book also chooses to believe because in this way she projects a mythical aura to the place, situates it in an area at the beginning of the world, reminding us of the fight between good and evil, giving it a certain sacredness. Through this artifice, she transcends the boundaries of the real and brings the reader into the fantastic zone, where the paradigm shift adds magical qualities to the place.

In my opinion, Aurora Liiceanu fictionalizes her vacations in Vama Veche because her daily life was not easy to lead, as she herself testifies in her memoirs: she was divorced at a time when this was seen very poorly by society, she was raising her son alone, she had been fired from academia and worked as an unskilled worker in the Suveica factory due to the persecution brought by her participation to the Transcendental Meditation Group meetings. Thus, these vacations where she could get out of her oppressive everyday life and enter another reality, where she could choose what to believe and what not, represented in a way a break from reality and a transposition in a space and time full of charm(s), magic, non-judgmental people, acceptance and relaxation.

Two other artists, Silvia Radu and Anamaria Smigelschi also "played" with the boundaries of this particular space. Silvia Radu succeeds through her cliff-themed works to frame the Vama Veche in an infinite rhythm ("cliff on the left, cliff on the right"), which makes the place no longer have boundaries, although it can be easily measured: 5 kilometers between 2 Mai and Vama Veche, which means an hour's walk or ten minutes by car. In each picture, these

²⁶⁴ Liiceanu (2016), 60.

cliffs have a different color, a color that seems to be linked to the artist's state of mind, which represents an emotional geography of space. On the other hand, Anamaria Smigelschi looks at the beach in Vama Veche from the ground level, that is, what you see when you lie on your belly in the sun: sand, shells, snails, algae, small pieces of wood, debris brought by the sea. The artist also delimits her work space, that is, the place where she sunbathes, fences her sheet, keeps her place. When the borders "open" for "mass tourism", i.e. after 1990, when going to Vama Veche no longer requires interventions or special permits, the artist chooses to fence off a piece of beach and uses the very way the authorities do this thing, creating a sign that reads: "Concessioned 480 m.p. extravilan, reviran (beach), annex at 628 m.p. inner city, Aut. 30.05.1938, keep clean, Honor DIRECTION²⁶⁵", that is, she imposes herself the boundaries she needs to feel safe and to draw.

2 Mai and Vama Veche managed to become during the socialist period places where you felt safe, in front of the "foreigner", i.e. in front of the one who was not like you, safe places against the "program", such as the one imposed by the hotels/authorities (accommodation time, strict meal schedule), against all kinds of limitations related to swimming, bathing suits: "I used to hang out next to Pipidonti, either in the room with them, or in a former chicken coop, just to I can taste the sea in freedom, not chased away by lifeguards"²⁶⁶. "We stay there with peasants, at that time there was only a village pub and in any

case, there was nudism, unfettered and en masse"²⁶⁷.

The border is an essential element in mythological structures, as Mircea Eliade noticed²⁶⁸, and it played an important place in the mythology of the Vama Veche. Not infrequently being at 2 Mai-Vama Veche meant crossing an imaginary border, crossing from an everyday space in a special, privileged one. The proximity to the real border and the obstacles imposed by document control led to the creation of an imaginary border for the community formed in 2 Mai-Vama Veche, a border that protected them from intruders while crossing it was associated with leaving the environment in which they lived on a daily basis. Thus, the ticket from the Union of Plastic Artists, which Silvia Radu and Anamaria Smigelschi are talking about, had the role of allowing withdrawal from an ideologically regulated register and access to a space intended for vacation, with no imposed rules. They thus got to experience a temporary suspension that contrasted with living in the city, they could define and shape it according to their own wishes, in other words, nothing was imposed, while work, when it was done, was done for pleasure.

The hosts also became part of this realm out of everyday life, the bohemian stories turning them into famous characters. Thus, to some extent, the identity of the hosts ends up being constructed from the perspective of the narratives made by the tourists. This identity becomes problematic when tourists are bothered by the fact that the hosts no longer "respect" their created

²⁶⁵ Smigelschi (2013), 183.

²⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 176.

²⁶⁷ Dinulescu (2009), 37.

²⁶⁸ Eliade (2008), 24.

image, that of "good decent people"²⁶⁹, "who put everything on the table"²⁷⁰. This approach can be most strongly noticed in the tourists' narratives after 1989, when the changes were made, together with the architectural transformation of the space. Thus, the narrators state that: "people's mentality has also changed"²⁷¹, "they have transformed, they have become entrepreneurs", "they have become rich and changed everything"²⁷². However, the situation is double-edged, the hosts in turn reproaching the tourists for various shortcomings, especially the fact that their demands for accommodation have increased a lot.

In addition to the skill in the kitchen or the hospitality they show, another characteristic by which the hosts become characters in the stories told/written by tourists is the ethnic diversity characterizing this space through the presence of the Lipovans, Tatars or Gagauz. The element of ethnic diversity makes the space interesting from the point of view of identity narratives, of the way in which these people coexist or not together, their presence offering exoticism to the space and cosmopolitan features to the stories. For those who came here before the Revolution and had the chance to interact with a small part of the allogeneic element of Dobrogea, this could lead to the emergence and consolidation of the feeling that a border crossing was taking place, that you were no longer on the territory of

Romania. This element of diversity reinforces the sense of fascination for the host community: "how many times I heard a few secretly speaking in Turkish"²⁷³, "Mariana spoke to Babica in Russian, she loved Babica"²⁷⁴.

The feeling of fascination is mutual, because, as Romanita Constantinescu wrote: "some hosts end up falling prey to the seduction of another world, of the guests (which must have also happened in Balcic, where the local Bulgarians, as well as the Turks, turn into ardent admirers of the artists on vacation), trying, more courageously or more timidly, to penetrate their world"²⁷⁵.

The emotional geography of everyday space during the vacation time

The bohemians had the power to transform the real geography of space into a symbolic one, and this becomes easily recognizable in their stories, because these common points mean the same thing to the whole community, because they know the language of the place and know how to read the elements so that they have the same meaning for all. A concrete example is the small stream in Vama Veche, which came from the field and flowed into the sea, and whose symbolic role was to divide the beach between "nudists" and "clothiers"²⁷⁶. The stream is mentioned by Anamaria Smigelschi "The wide bay, with rough and golden sand, guarded at the ends and in

²⁶⁹ Interview, Viorel Simionescu, January 2015.

²⁷⁰ Interview, Tudor Chirilă, February 2019.

²⁷¹ Interview, Viorel Simionescu, January 2015.

²⁷² Interview, Anamaria Smigelschi, August 2017.

²⁷³ Pepino (2015), 150.

²⁷⁴ Oancea-Buciu family interview, Viorica Oancea, November 2014.

²⁷⁵ Constantinescu (2009), 161.

²⁷⁶ They were called in Romanian „textilisti” as they wear sunbath costumes.

the center by three casemates bleached by salt, was cut in two by a stream coming from the irrigation at sea, nicknamed Destination or Misipipi. He separated the clothiers, who were sunbathing in groups, from the rare nudists, at great distances²⁷⁷.

Cristian Pepino in *Cartea de la Vama Veche* also mentioned the stream whose purpose was the same, to set a limit between two ways of staying at the beach: "In the first year it was good at the beach, there were not many people from Cluj, they remained grouped in one part of the beach, beyond a stream formed by the water that drained from the field, from the irrigation, a stream called by everyone the Mississippi, nudism was possible²⁷⁸. Professor Traian Rotariu, from Cluj, also remembers the creek and its role in separating the two camps: "So it wasn't, we were actually on the beach and it was those from 2 Mai who came for nudism. So there is a stream there that goes to the sea and towards 2 Mai, that part, beyond the stream, towards 2 Mai, there was nudism. And ours also came from 2 Mai, they crossed the stream and that was the most special thing, so to speak, at that time, because you realize that at that time it was not customary to do nudism, but it was not tied none of us, so... All that was spectacular at that time was the nudism that took place across the stream, but there was nothing else²⁷⁹.

In the memory of those who sunbath in Vama Veche, the stream had no geographical function, in the sense that it was of no importance where it came from, whether it was natural or not, it was only important for its symbolic function as a

border, a border between two ways of being on the beach. His symbolism is all the more powerful as it relates to personal experiences, some of the narrators were on one side of the stream or the other, they had different ways of seeing the way you tan. For today's tourists, dividing the space by a symbolic border no longer has the meaning it had for those from the communist period, first of all because nudism is no longer something of reference in Vama Veche and then because the beach is already divided into sectors by The Administration of Romanian Waters, and those who rent these sectors allow or not the practice of nudism²⁸⁰.

If the holidays were relaxed and without a precise schedule, as Aurora Liiceanu wrote, the period during which you went on holiday at 2 Mai -Vama Veche was under the sign of precision. Vacations here were rarely left to chance, because their fulfillment depended on the warm season, but especially on the characteristics of this season as weather and temperature were important when they chose to spend their summer at sea. Because the number of rooms owned by the hosts was not large, but also because certain hosts were considered "star hosts"²⁸¹, appointments were made ahead of time and they were well established. A few days of inclement weather were not a problem for those who vacationed there because the vacation time stretched from ten days to a month, for the bohemians there was no concept of a weekend/short period at sea. Summer

²⁸⁰ Plaja de Carte was until recently the only area that allowed the practice of nudism on the concessioned piece of beach.

²⁸¹ According to Miruna Tîrcă, star hosts had better conditions, better positioning, cooked, etc.

²⁷⁷ Smigelschi (2013), 179.

²⁷⁸ Pepino (2015), 112.

²⁷⁹ Interview Traian Rotariu, Cluj, November 2014.

vacations, whether some of them turned them into lucrative periods, had their special time, were well established and organized with the host, marked in the calendars of both parties.

The holiday time had its own rhythm, the days were almost the same, and with the help of this rhythm the immersion in the sacred time of the holiday happens. Among the recurring activities were: going to the beach, reading, writing, dining in the host's yard, evening walks or parties, swimming, meeting the same people, all these activities become a necessity for the vacation to be considered "suitable". Obviously these are holiday activities that can take place anywhere, anyone who goes to the sea will spend time on the beach somewhere, time at the host/hotel, etc., but there these activities become ritualistic by the simple fact that they took place in the same way, in the same place, mostly at the same time, mostly with the same people, at the same host, etc. In other words, the bohemian felt the need to mark certain activities/rituals in order for the holidays to approach the primordial experience, of that first holiday which created expectations.

Aurora Liiceanu, in the chapter entitled "There are other rules in another world", told the story of how she felt the approach of summer vacation: "Daily life in Bucharest flowed with little freedoms and rules imposed by those times. But, over the winter, from somewhere not too far away, I felt that summer was coming, with other freedoms, other rules, a different way of living. We were entering another world"²⁸². This world had its own rhythm, a rhythm that was no longer the same as that of the

city: "From the beginning, I remember, we used to go to the beach not as if we were measuring time, but to do something and, of course, to take the children to sun and in the bath. If it happened, rarely, to rain, we didn't complain that we lost a day at the beach. It was nice anyway. [...] We didn't go at a fixed time, like "let's hurry, because we're losing the beach hours", but when it was time to leave"²⁸³.

Final Remarks

The 2 Mai and Vama Veche holidays represented for the Bohemian community a way to distance themselves from the totalitarian state, the state itself enabling this distance. The state shaped their identity because they were artists who had completed the courses of an educational institution that belonged to the state, exhibited in spaces and galleries that belonged to the state, many lived in houses provided by the state, owned studios provided by the state, etc. The central construction of this vacation space is in antithesis to the socialist regime, its existence would not have been possible without the pressure exerted by the state, this place would not have made sense without their need to distance themselves from the pressure exerted by the state institutions. At 2 Mai and Vama Veche, the hosts were not in the service of the state like hotel workers, but worked for them. The artists, living with those locals, in the house of people who also lived there the rest of the year, perceived this as a departure from the dominant structures. A temporal place was being created, a place

²⁸² Liiceanu (2016), 54.

²⁸³ *Ibidem*, 64.

where they bracketed their "normal" lives and adopted a new daily life. Through their daily actions, the artists present in this space built their holiday identity, of the artist who does not leave his role as an artist even during his free time. They paint, sculpt, write, bring their daily existence to vacation.

In my opinion, the preference for this area was most likely an adaptation to the socialist reality, by escaping from the regular daily life and retreating from the urban environment to a place devoid of social rules and activities imposed by the regime. The most important vector of freedom for those who came to 2 Mai and Vama Veche during the socialist period remains the practice of nudism, being an area where naked exposure to the sun was allowed and accepted by the authorities. In her essay, "From the Party to the Beach Party: Nudism and Artistic Expression in the People's Republic of Romania", researcher Irina Costache argues that on the beaches of 2 Mai and Vama Veche the practice of nudism acquired an aesthetic dimension like a form of artistic expression and alternative lifestyle²⁸⁴.

The area was seen as a refuge from everyday reality (a safe-space) for a small community, but also as a space where those present allowed themselves to be drawn to creation, not only to spending holidays. One can see also a form of refusal of what the term "mainstream/popular" represents in those days, and that the option to practice tourism at 2 Mai and Vama Veche was a way of denying the options offered by the system. This cultural bohemia produced and promoted (and still does) the myth of Vama Veche as a place of freedom,

where you are free to be whoever you want to be. This was possible due to the fact that the cultural bohemia refusing the socialist reality, full of rules and constraints, tried to build a new space, a new world more permissive where there were no imposed rules, and where everything was special and full of meaning.

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²⁸⁴ Costache (2015).

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Antoine Heemeryck

Construction et légitimation des hiérarchies dans des organisations transnationales est-européennes (Pologne, Roumanie)

Résumé :

Cet article prend pour objet la légitimation des constructions hiérarchiques dans deux entreprises des pays d'Europe de l'est. La première est une multinationale en Pologne, la seconde une ONG de démocratisation en Roumanie. Le travail en Pologne et la démocratisation en Roumanie sont les secteurs qui ont été les plus exposés au changement dans la période postcommuniste dans ces deux pays. Pour comprendre le sens que donnent les acteurs à leurs relations sociales dans ces champs sociaux, trois dimensions doivent être rapportés aux enjeux actuels : le rapport au passé communiste, l'articulation à l'Occident et à l'État qui se conjuguent dans les imaginaires collectifs.

Mots-clefs : Entreprise, Pologne, Roumanie, ONG, Légitimation hiérarchique, Etat, Communisme, Occident

Introduction

Cet article propose une analyse comparée des rapports hiérarchiques dans deux organisations de deux pays de l'est de l'Europe dans le contexte spécifique de la préparation à l'intégration dans l'Union européenne. Pour ce faire, je m'appuie sur deux enquêtes de terrain : la première, menée en 2001 dans une entreprise polonaise ; la seconde, réalisée entre 2003 et 2005, dans une importante ONG de démocratisation de Roumanie. De manière générale, le fonctionnement micropolitique de ces organisations repose sur une articulation entre deux univers symboliques : d'un côté, la relation à l'Occident ; de l'autre, le rapport au passé communiste. C'est sur ces deux dimensions entretissées que s'échafaudent et sont

légitimés les rapports de domination dans ces espaces sociaux. À cela, il faut ajouter la figure de l'État, liée aux deux dimensions évoquées. Ces trois séries d'éléments correspondent à des enjeux sociopolitiques globaux spécifiques à ces deux sociétés. Ils se conjuguent de façon particulière dans ces deux organisations dotées d'une autonomie relative, à l'architecture sociale singulière, mais comparable. La perspective adoptée entend donc montrer comment les relations hiérarchiques incluent la modification de rapports de force au niveau international, entraînée par la fin de guerre froide, et l'usage instrumental du passé récent. De ce point de vue, l'histoire n'est pas inerte, mais une matière qui donne forme au tissu intersubjectifs de ces sociétés.

Précisons d'emblée, afin d'éviter toute confusion, qu'il ne s'agit pas de

déplorer une quelconque forme de passéisme ou d'allégeance aveugle à l'Ouest. Il ne s'agit pas non plus de prolonger un débat sans fin sur l'héritage communiste et les continuités historiques (path dependency), mais bien plutôt de faire apparaître la manière dont les acteurs utilisent ces deux ensembles comme une matière pour donner sens à leur position dans ces organisations, à leur revendication, et fonder ou contester leur inscription dans les rapports sociopolitiques de la société globale.

La comparaison entreprise ici entre la Pologne et la Roumanie aux périodes mentionnées est pertinente dans la mesure où ces deux recherches de terrain ont été menées quelques années avant l'adhésion de ces sociétés à l'Union européenne : soit en 2004 pour la Pologne et en 2007 pour la Roumanie. Leur situation interne était alors marquée par de fortes tensions sociales, politiques et économiques, et un processus intense de transformations institutionnelles. Ces périodes de fortes transformations, à l'instar des crises²⁸⁵, sont particulièrement propices à l'étude des dynamiques sociopolitiques des sociétés, car elles sont touchées d'une façon ou d'une autre à tous les niveaux.

Plus généralement, parce que ces deux sociétés suivent des trajectoires postcommunistes différentes, elles représentent quasiment deux idéaux-types représentatifs des pays de l'Est – le premier positif, le second négatif. En dépit d'une critique du conservatisme et de l'autoritarisme sur le plan politique, la Pologne est encore considérée comme un élève discipliné des institutions internationales sur le plan économique. À

l'inverse, la Roumanie est incessamment dénigrée pour des problèmes corruption et de dysfonctionnement de l'État de droits. L'identité des acteurs, dans les deux cas, est considérablement affectée par ces assignations identitaires exogènes qui sont relayés par une rhétorique politique et médiatique sur un plan interne. Les organisations abordées ne font pas exception à cette règle.

Ajoutons que la sphère du travail en Pologne tout comme celle de la société civile en Roumanie sont parmi celles qui ont été les plus exposées aux changements survenus depuis plus de deux décennies. Elles sont étroitement liées aux modalités spécifiques de sortie du communisme. En Pologne, la fin de l'ancien régime se réalise par un consensus entre différents acteurs de l'État-parti et de la société civile (nommé la « Table ronde »). Très tôt, elle se traduit par l'adoption d'une « thérapie de choc ». Cette politique conduit à une précarisation du droit du travail et la fermeture ou, dans le meilleur des cas, la privatisation d'un nombre important d'anciennes industries avec des licenciements massifs à la clef²⁸⁶. Rappelons également que le mouvement Solidarność est né sur les chantiers de Gdansk et que les luttes les plus importantes entre l'État-parti et les mouvements sociaux ont pris place dans le domaine du travail²⁸⁷.

En revanche, en Roumanie, le changement de régime met en scène un putsch mené par les « seconds couteaux » du parti communiste sur fond d'insurrection générale. Les mouvements de contestation qui s'ensuivent sont réprimés avec violence et la coalition au

²⁸⁵ Selon Balandier (1971).

²⁸⁶ Trappmann (2013, 2011).

²⁸⁷ Bafoil (1997).

pouvoir opte pour une « transition graduelle » à l'économie de marché²⁸⁸. En conséquence, l'intervention des institutions internationales s'inscrit dans le cadre de « la promotion de la démocratie » et de « la construction de la société civile »²⁸⁹. Plus encore, les premières années qui suivent la chute de Nicolae Ceausescu représentent sans doute la première tentative d'une série de « révolutions » ratées qui s'étendront de l'Ukraine à l'Ouzbékistan, en passant par la Biélorussie, des années plus tard.

Si, en Roumanie, pendant les deux dernières décennies communistes, la sphère du travail est également émaillée par plusieurs insurrections, l'autoritarisme d'un régime politique de plus en plus replié sur lui-même n'a pas permis la coagulation d'un mouvement en mesure de le faire vaciller. On peut néanmoins citer les révoltes des mineurs de la vallée du Jiu en 1977²⁹⁰, en 1981 celles de Lorda, Lupoia et Heuraști²⁹¹ et celle des ouvriers des usines de Brașov en 1987²⁹². De même, il ne s'agit pas de nier l'existence d'importants programmes de développement²⁹³ et de démocratisation en Pologne²⁹⁴. Cependant, ce ne sont pas les secteurs qui ont été les plus exposés aux changements dans les deux sociétés respectives.

Le champ du travail et celui de la construction de la société civile représentent donc des entrées

particulièrement intéressantes pour appréhender la question de la transformation des rapports sociaux, des hiérarchies et des principes de légitimation hiérarchique. Dans ces deux organisations, le communisme, l'épilogue de la guerre froide et le postcommunisme, comme partie intégrante d'un imaginaire collectif mêlant parcours de vie, subjectivité, croyances et représentations du monde²⁹⁵, sont réinvestis dans les rapports sociaux et donnent sens aux relations et rapports entre acteurs.

Une dernière remarque s'impose quant à la comparaison menée dans cet article. Si les différences entre une firme transnationale de type capitaliste et une Organisation non gouvernementale peuvent paraître a priori fondamentales, dans la pratique les similitudes sont nombreuses. En effet, les grandes ONG se présentent aujourd'hui comme des entreprises dans leur mode de fonctionnement et d'organisation. Cela dit, parmi les différences notables avec l'organisation de type capitaliste, on peut noter que les ONG n'ont pas pour objectif premier de générer des profits financiers – même si elles se doivent d'être économiquement autonomes – mais plutôt moraux, symboliques et politiques. D'où l'appellation non-profit. D'autres différences existent, notamment le fait que les membres d'une ONG ne sont pas forcément salariés, ce qui suggère une logique d'investissement personnel plus autonome. De plus, les rapports entre les différentes catégories d'acteurs – notamment entre salariés et non-salariés – sont bien moins rigides que dans le cas d'une entreprise de droit privé. Dans ce cas,

²⁸⁸ Durandin (2000).

²⁸⁹ Carothers (1996), Heemeryck (2010).

²⁹⁰ Pour un panorama exhaustif sur les évolutions des mineurs de la vallée du Jiu, voir Kideckel (2008).

²⁹¹ Soare (2002).

²⁹² Oprea, Olaru (2002).

²⁹³ Wedel (1992).

²⁹⁴ Voir par exemple les travaux de Dorotea Dakowska sur les fondations de partis politiques allemandes, Dakowska (2014).

²⁹⁵ Castoriadis (1975).

les salariés sont dépendants économiquement et soumis à une chaîne d'autorité. Cependant, cette hétérogénéité des deux terrains n'est pas insurmontable au point de rendre impossible la comparaison. Ces précisions étant formulées, tournons d'abord vers l'entreprise de Pologne. Dans la deuxième partie de l'article, nous aborderons l'ONG roumaine.

Une entreprise sous l'emprise de l'Ouest

L'entreprise de production en Pologne²⁹⁶ (EPP) est implantée en haute Silésie, une région dévastée par la désindustrialisation opérée depuis 1989. À l'origine (1995), elle était à Cracovie. Cette mutation correspond à une recherche de compression des charges fiscales et de celles liées à la location. Ce n'est que depuis 1997 qu'elle est installée non loin de la ville d'Olkusz, dans un ancien Kolkhoze. L'EPP appartient à un citoyen belge qui a su investir sur ce marché émergent. Celui-ci a externalisé la production d'équipements de transport en Pologne, qu'il vend ensuite sur le marché du Benelux et dans de moindres quantités en France. Le propriétaire fait rarement acte de présence dans l'entreprise, même s'il reste en contact soutenu avec la direction. Cette fonction est déléguée à un manager belge, Jan, né en 1971. Celui-ci s'entretient essentiellement avec le « bureau », composé de trois personnes – Maciej, Patricia, Agnieszka – et les chefs d'équipe de l'atelier. L'effectif est complété par deux groupes d'ouvriers de trente

personnes, chacun dirigé par un chef d'équipe, un « Brigadier » pour utiliser une expression usitée dans plusieurs pays postcommunistes et postsoviétiques. C'est dans ce lieu que l'enquête de terrain, d'une durée de trois semaines, a été menée, période au cours de laquelle quinze entretiens formels ont été réalisés. À cela, il faut ajouter les nombreuses conversations informelles qui forment la trame de la recherche²⁹⁷.

Cette entreprise et ses employés sont objectivement dépendants de l'Ouest. D'une part, le paiement des salaires est le fait d'un propriétaire européen ; d'autre part, la quasi-totalité de la production (plus de 90 %) est destinée au marché du Benelux. En ce qui concerne les trois membres du bureau, leur position dans la hiérarchie de l'entreprise se construit dans une tentative d'appropriation de ce lien de dépendance avec des singularités propres à chacun d'entre eux. Pour comprendre les principes de légitimation utilisés par les acteurs, il est important de les inscrire dans leur position objective, cet enjeu étant le principal moteur des rapports sociaux. La proximité de l'étranger se double d'une mise à distance des échelons inférieurs de l'entreprise qui prend la forme d'une assignation au communisme considéré comme un système archaïque.

Maciej occupe le poste de directeur de production. Il est le plus proche du propriétaire. Il est sans doute l'employé avec le plus de responsabilités dans la

²⁹⁶ À l'exception des figures publiques, les noms cités dans cet article sont fictifs.

²⁹⁷ Nous n'avons pas ici la place pour développer le point de vue théorique adopté qui considère que l'entretien ne peut avoir de pertinence que dans la mesure où il s'inscrit dans la temporalité et la configuration d'une enquête et d'une situation générale. Autrement dit, l'entretien ne peut être un matériel que dans un cadre défini.

direction de l'entreprise. Âgé de 29 ans au moment de l'enquête, il maîtrise parfaitement l'anglais, ce qui facilite les relations avec les entreprises de l'ouest. L'étendue des responsabilités de Maciej, bien supérieure à sa fonction officielle, s'explique également par l'absentéisme de Jan dont il assure la plupart du temps les fonctions officiellement. Il est notamment en charge de la coordination et de la vérification de la production. Sur le mode de l'ironie, il évoque l'implication rigoureuse du manager dans son travail. Par-là, Maciej tente de s'approprier la position de son supérieur direct pour devenir le seul intermédiaire entre l'EPP, son propriétaire et le segment du marché occidental de référence de l'entreprise. Maciej a des relations de travail soutenues avec les Brigadiers. En dehors de cela, il entretient des rapports hiérarchiques stricts avec les ouvriers. Il assure qu'il n'est pas aisé de travailler avec eux à cause de leur « mentalité communiste », héritée de l'ancien régime. Il souligne leur incapacité à réaliser plusieurs tâches simples et assène, magnanime, qu'ils n'étaient pas préparés à la « transition ».

Maciej tente de créer un espace symbolique entre les occidentaux et les autochtones qui lui est propre : d'un côté les « compétents » comme lui, de l'autre les « communistes » qu'il faut diriger avec une main de fer. Dans ces propos sont convoquées l'histoire du communisme et du postcommunisme. Après la sortie de l'ancien régime, la Pologne a été assignée aux économies en transition, expression reposant implicitement sur un biais occidentalocentré, téléologique et évolutionniste. L'infériorité polonaise est explicite dans cette modélisation des relations internationales. La supériorité des

normes économiques et de travail du capitalisme mise en avant par Maciej est le fondement d'une position d'autorité dans l'entreprise. La proximité de l'Occident ferait de cet homme un employé plus compétent et par conséquent en mesure de diriger l'EPP. À l'inverse, il tente de maintenir une distance maximale avec les ouvriers qu'il déconsidère en les associant au communisme qui est présenté comme un système défaillant, favorisant l'indolence. Il utilise à son avantage, mais en la renversant, la fiction qui était au centre de la rhétorique de l'État-parti, à savoir : l'unification entre les structures politiques et le prolétariat ouvrier.

Ceci étant, la famille de Maciej était parfaitement intégrée sous le communisme. Son père, par exemple, a réalisé la totalité de sa carrière d'ouvrier puis de chef d'équipe dans l'usine Lénine de Nowa Hutta (Cracovie). Les revendications statutaires du directeur de production et l'usage qu'il fait du passé se heurtent à des contradictions historiques objectives, car tous ou presque dans l'usine ont été éduqués sous le communisme.

Née en 1965, Agnieszka est la secrétaire de direction de l'entreprise. Elle partage le même espace de travail que Maciej et Patricia. Elle n'est pas mariée, n'a pas d'enfants et vit à Cracovie avec sa mère depuis le décès de son père. Elle n'est pas en mesure de construire un statut valorisé sur la base de sa vie privée. Il en va de même dans l'usine où sa fonction d'exécutante ne lui procure que très peu de gratifications. Elle occupe le poste le plus bas de la direction. Sa relation avec le manager est contradictoire. D'une part, elle perçoit ce jeune homme au physique impressionnant comme une autorité qu'il faut craindre ; d'autre part, elle ne cesse de

revendiquer une forme de proximité. Agnieszka ne maîtrise pas l'anglais contrairement à Marciej et Patricia. Et les connaissances de Jan en Polonais sont rudimentaires tandis que le propriétaire de l'entreprise ne parle aucunement la langue de Mikołaj Rej. Agnieszka est donc objectivement exclue de toute relation de proximité avec la direction belge. D'ailleurs, les discussions entre elle et Jan se limitent souvent à un simple échange de politesses. Ses revendications participent donc d'un rapprochement imaginaire de l'Ouest, incarné dans l'entreprise en la personne de Jan. Dans sa description des relations de travail, elle efface totalement le rôle de Maciej. Pourtant, elle demeure entièrement sous ses ordres.

En revanche, Agnieszka formule un ensemble de griefs au sujet ouvriers. Elle souligne leur peu de courtoisie voire leur absence de savoir-vivre. Ces derniers seraient les héritiers du communisme et ne comprendraient pas l'enjeu que représente le travail dans une entreprise « moderne ». Ses propos – un véritable flot d'accusations – peuvent être considérés comme une traduction subjective de l'impossibilité d'asseoir une forme d'autorité sur cette catégorie d'acteurs, ce qui la distingue clairement la direction de l'entreprise. Cette femme a d'ailleurs tenté de s'introduire dans le réfectoire des ouvriers avec l'intention d'imposer l'anthropologue aux ouvriers. Peu enclins à écouter la secrétaire de direction, ces derniers n'abandonnèrent leur ton sarcastique que lorsqu'elle quitta la pièce.

Ces deux membres de la direction, chacun à une extrémité, permettent de comprendre comment la revendication d'un statut basé sur la « compétence » se construit dans un rapprochement de

l'étranger européen et par une mise à distance des franges inférieures de l'entreprise, considérées comme les représentants du communisme. C'est dans cette configuration que peut se comprendre l'usage du passé.

Pour les ouvriers, le sort de la Pologne postcommuniste et en particulier l'instabilité du secteur économique et des normes de travail est principalement le fait d'une trahison, celle du syndicat Solidarność. Rappelons en effet que c'est un gouvernement dirigé par Tadeusz Mazowiecki, figures proéminentes du mouvement Solidarité, qui a appliqué la « thérapie de choc » (qui est l'équivalent des Plans d'ajustement structurel pratiqués par le Fonds monétaire international en Afrique et en Amérique latine au cours des années 1980 et des politiques austéritaires en Union européenne après la crise financière de 2008). Cette politique a eu des conséquences vitales pour les classes ouvrières et la grande industrie polonaise. Du moins, c'est ainsi que les ouvriers conçoivent l'histoire. La Pologne vivait alors une période de crise profonde marquée par un épisode de forte inflation. Pour exprimer leur dépit, les plus anciens répètent ces phrases qui ont acquis le statut d'expression populaire dans les pays l'est : « Avant, on avait de l'argent, mais il n'y avait rien dans les magasins. Aujourd'hui les magasins sont pleins, mais on n'a pas d'argent. » Les revendications des ouvriers sont très nombreuses. C'est pourquoi ils n'ont de cesse d'interroger l'enquêteur sur le coût de la vie en France, le niveau des salaires, le prix des loyers, etc.

S'il existait un syndicat dans l'EPP lorsqu'elle était sise à Cracovie, le propriétaire a profité du transfert de l'usine à Olkuzs pour le supprimer. Il n'existe

donc plus de médiation entre la direction étrangère de l'entreprise et les ouvriers. Or ce n'est qu'à elle que les ouvriers voudraient s'adresser. Face à la lucidité des ouvriers, on comprend mieux la frustration des employés du bureau qui ne sont pas considérés comme les dépositaires d'une forme d'autorité, mais plutôt comme les exécutants du propriétaire de l'EPP. Les ouvriers souhaitent constituer un syndicat local, car ils craignent la versatilité des grands syndicats. Mais ces projets ne vont pas sans prendre en compte la situation dans laquelle ils se trouvent. À l'EPP, les salaires arrivent en temps et en heure, et les conditions de travail sont stables. Parmi les employés nombreux sont ceux qui ont connu la galère des entreprises qui ferment soudainement, les salaires impayés, le chômage, bref la grande précarité de l'emploi dans une société où le chômage est l'objet d'une forte stigmatisation²⁹⁸. Ces années de « transition » forment une expérience individuelle qui pèsent d'un grand poids sur leur rapport à leur emploi dans l'EPP. Ils se savent ou plutôt se pensent à l'abri des aléas qui caractérisent le monde du travail, situation que d'aucuns décrivent comme « funeste ». Nul ne voudrait mettre en péril ces conditions de travail, même si celles-ci obligent pour certains d'entre eux à faire des allers et retours quotidiennement entre Cracovie et Olkusz, ce qui réduit le temps qu'ils peuvent passer dans leur famille ou dans leurs réseaux de socialisation et augmente le coût du travail pour eux.

À un niveau général, pour les acteurs, nonobstant leur position dans la hiérarchie de l'entreprise, c'est l'État qui est

responsable de cette situation. L'État est identifié à un groupe d'individus malintentionnés. « Ils ne font rien », « Tout ce qu'ils font c'est pour eux » (Agnieska). Les ouvriers, quant à eux, visent plus particulièrement le syndicat Solidarité. Globalement, c'est à un procès des élites dirigeantes que se livrent les employés de l'EPP. Sur le plan des représentations, cette disjonction entre l'État comme structure publique autonome et les élites politiques et économiques (qui privatisent l'État à leurs fins) permet de penser la distinction entre l'État tel qu'il est et l'État idéal qu'ils appellent de leurs vœux, ce qui alimente in fine un « désir d'État »²⁹⁹.

Dans cette configuration, pratique et idéologie se rejoignent : le capitalisme comme norme (im)portée par des acteurs occidentaux montre sa supériorité sur le communisme et les pays en transition par sa capacité à fournir des emplois stables. C'est pourquoi les employés de l'entreprise font parfois preuve d'une surprenante empathie vis-à-vis du propriétaire. La légitimité de la domination étrangère a pour symétrique inverse l'illégitimité de l'État. Qu'il s'agisse de la période communiste ou post-1989, les élites et l'État, aux yeux de ces acteurs, se montrent en un mot comme en mille incapables de stabiliser l'emploi ou pis ne le veulent pas. Cette incapacité liée aux décisions prises après la chute du communisme forme un passif, une dette politique dont les élites politiques ne peuvent s'affranchir.

Cette interprétation mêlant plusieurs plans – diachronique, synchronique ; local, national, global – permet d'esquisser un certain nombre d'hypothèses sur le fonctionnement des hiérarchies dans les

²⁹⁸ Matuchniak-Krasuka (1999), Matuchniak-Krasuka, Bafoil (1999).

²⁹⁹ Hibou (2011).

pays postcommunistes. Pour donner une portée plus générale à cette concaténation, tournons-nous vers l'une des plus importantes ONG de Roumanie.

Une ONG entre norme démocratique et altérité communiste

L'Association Implémentation de la Démocratie (AID) a été constituée en 1990 suite à l'intervention du National Democratic Institute, émanation du parti politique étasunien éponyme³⁰⁰. Elle s'appuie sur un réseau de trente associations sur le territoire roumain, a formé de nombreux militants dans l'espace postcommuniste et postsoviétique à la surveillance d'élections par le biais du réseau ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations³⁰¹) qui fut au centre de toutes les « révolutions » qui se sont produites de l'Ukraine au Kirghizstan au début des années 2000³⁰². Une investigation a été menée au centre de cette ONG pendant plus de 16 mois en 2003-2005.

Fondée pour assurer la surveillance des processus électoraux, les programmes de l'AID sont imprégnés d'une vision constitutionnaliste et procédurale du changement politique. Cette particularité

³⁰⁰ Fondé en 1983, le NDI avec l'International Republican Institute forme l'un des piliers de la politique étrangère des USA. L'institution intervient entre autres dans de très nombreux pays postcommunistes et postsoviétiques.

³⁰¹ Voir le site en ligne <http://www.enemo.eu/>.

³⁰² Révolution des roses en Géorgie en 2003, Révolution orange en Ukraine en 2004, Révolution des Tulipes au Kirghizstan en 2005, etc.

des modes d'action est un signe d'intériorisation du rapport asymétrique entre l'organisation et les bailleurs occidentaux dont elle est totalement dépendante financièrement. Ces derniers sont les représentants symboliques de normes idéales – démocratie, société civile, État de droits, transparence... Il s'agit de normes abstraites, nécessairement a minima, condition nécessaire de leur projection à une échelle globale³⁰³.

L'allocentrisme occidental marque profondément cette organisation tant du point de vue de ces rapports internes que de celui de son idéologie institutionnelle. Cette allégeance s'inscrit dans l'histoire longue qu'illustrent les luttes « culturelles » entre élites opposant « occidentalistes » et « autochtonistes ». Elle rejoint la problématique d'une identité écartelée entre l'Est et l'Ouest, dilemme essentiel pour cet État-nation qui a toujours été soumis à la politique des empires avoisinants³⁰⁴. Elle est également renforcée par l'histoire de l'ONG qui s'est trouvée, au début des années 1990, rapidement confinée à une relation avec les institutions étasuniennes sans pouvoir construire de liens solides avec une part significative de la population. Ces institutions de démocratisation étaient alors leurs seules alliées dans un contexte politique délicat. Cette reconnaissance était donc essentielle d'un point de vue symbolique (ce qui inclut une dimension subjective et parfois une histoire très personnelle), mais également pour garantir leur sécurité qui, dans les années suivant la chute des Ceausescu, n'était guère assurée face à un État encore

³⁰³ Hours (2012).

³⁰⁴ Durandin (1995).

empreint des pratiques autoritaires de l'ancien régime.

Pour faciliter l'exposé, on fera la distinction entre trois catégories d'acteurs : le président, les managers et les volontaires. Si l'on exclut le service comptabilité et gestion, les managers sont au nombre de quatre : trois femmes et un homme, tous âgés de moins de trente-cinq ans. Ils sont salariés de l'association et sont en charge d'assurer le bon déroulement des programmes de l'organisation, des relations avec le parlement et avec le réseau des associations. Au centre de Bucarest, les volontaires sont de loin les plus nombreux – jusqu'à une trentaine – et ne sont pas rémunérés. Tout au plus ils peuvent bénéficier de modestes indemnités. Ceci explique le turn-over impressionnant dans leur rang. Les volontaires sont tous étudiants à l'Université. Certains réalisent dans l'association un stage professionnalisant obligatoire dans le cadre de leurs études en droit, en sociologie ou en sciences politiques et administratives.

Exception faite du président, les cadres dirigeants de cette ONG sont dans une situation ingrate. Ils ressentent un manque de reconnaissance vis-à-vis de leur investissement dans l'organisation, dans le cadre de leur travail comme dans celui de leurs réseaux de socialisation hors ONG. Seule la consécration par une agence ou une institution de l'ouest est valorisante. Plusieurs trophées et prix, fièrement affichés dans l'organisation, matérialisent le caractère extérieur de la reconnaissance du statut de militant de la démocratie. À la différence de l'entreprise polonaise précédemment évoquée, les « étrangers » sont physiquement absents de l'organisation et rares sont ceux qui les ont

rencontrés, exception faite des cérémonies et échanges de messages électroniques.

Dans cette configuration, le président de l'organisation correspond parfaitement aux attentes de rôle sur plusieurs plans. Professeur de sciences politiques apprécié et scrupuleux, évoluant au sein d'institutions publiques profondément corrompues et népotistes, commentateur célèbre de la vie politique roumaine, il a participé à plusieurs reprises à des programmes dans des universités et institutions prestigieuses à Paris ou encore à Washington. Née en 1965, cette figure positive de la société civile permet aux membres de l'ONG de résorber la distance imaginaire maintenue entre la Roumanie et l'Occident. La consécration personnelle est une reconnaissance qui rejailit sur toute l'organisation dans un contexte où la marginalisation de la Roumanie par rapport à l'Europe est vivement ressentie dans l'ensemble de la société.

Le président de l'AID se singularise également par son comportement de neutralité vis-à-vis des partis politiques. Dans le monde des ONG, le parti-pris, la collaboration ouverte ou la cooptation par les partis politiques sont des pratiques consommées alors que, dans la population, tout lien avec l'État est globalement considéré comme une forme de corruption. Les frontières entre sphères politiques et celle de la société civile sont effectivement perméables. Le président de l'ONG, pour sa part, a développé une stratégie de maintien de distance vis-à-vis des partis politiques sans pour autant refuser la collaboration au niveau local par l'intermédiaire de l'organisation. Enfin, il sait se montrer proche de tous les membres de l'AID, y compris les volontaires qui sont bien souvent ses étudiants. Ceci le

distingue très largement des managers et lui procure une aura remarquable.

Pour les membres de l'ONG, l'ennemi de la démocratisation est représenté par les partis politiques et plus particulièrement ceux de « gauche ». « Ce sont des communistes ! » s'entend-on répéter dans l'organisation. Pour eux, les partis politiques de cette mouvance seraient responsables de la situation économique et sociale dans laquelle est plongée la Roumanie, ressentie comme une crise perpétuelle et représentée sous la forme d'un système caractérisé par une corruption généralisée. Il s'agit en même temps d'une perception plus générale. Lors des grandes mobilisations, les partis de gauche sont affublés du sobriquet de « peste rouge ». À l'autre extrémité du spectre social, la population se voit également assignée au communisme. Pour les membres de l'AID, les citoyens seraient dans leur majorité guidés par une mentalité veule ou récalcitrante – selon les cas –, héritée du communisme.

La vision du monde instrumentale promue dans l'ONG, et en particulier celles liées à la démocratisation et à la construction de la société civile, s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un procès a posteriori des événements survenus après la sortie du communisme. Cette période à laquelle les citoyens ont voté en masse à deux reprises (1990-1992) pour la coalition de cadres communistes qui a pris le pouvoir par un coup d'État en 1989. Coalition qui a violemment réprimé les manifestants de la place de l'Université qui contestaient leur prise de pouvoir³⁰⁵ et opté pour une

transition graduelle à l'économie de marché. Dans l'esprit des militants, le Parti social-démocrate est le principal héritier de cette coalition et l'ennemi providentiel des ONG les plus puissantes de Roumanie.

Cet usage du passé par les membres de l'organisation correspond également à la manière dont s'inscrit l'ONG dans les rapports sociopolitiques de la société roumaine. En effet, celle-ci n'est pas en mesure de revendiquer une légitimité populaire par le vote et reste, dans cette optique, subordonnée à la sphère politique. Elle représente une frange limitée de la société dans ses aspirations individuelles et collectives. Pourtant elle est censée représenter peu ou prou la société. Or ces projets n'ayant pas l'impact souhaité, le sentiment partagé par ces militants est celui d'une incompréhension de la part de la population. Pour donner un sens positif à cette position contradictoire, dans une situation où la légitimité représentative de l'organisation est, du point de vue de ses membres, constamment mise à mal, les militants de l'ONG soustraient son statut d'acteur politique à la population.

Si la population est l'objet d'une représentation assez floue, les partis politiques et l'État sont symbolisés par des figures et institutions publiques. Les expériences malheureuses avec les administrations publiques se sont suffisamment accumulées pour former une représentation négative. Elles relaient les pratiques répandues de clientélisme, de népotisme, d'autoritarisme, de corruption dans les institutions publiques que les mass-médias exploitent systématiquement.

Dans l'association, les volontaires se plaignent du comportement des managers regrettant leur manque de communication, l'exclusion des sphères de décision et in

³⁰⁵ Les 14 et 15 juin 1990, la répression menée par les mineurs de la Vallée du Jiu organisée par le pouvoir fit 7 morts et 277 blessés.

fine de maintien ostentatoire d'une distance hiérarchique contraire à la « démocratie interne » affichée par l'ONG. Cette discrédance entre le fonctionnement des rapports hiérarchiques à l'affichage bienveillant et son mode fonctionnement réel attise les tensions entre volontaires et managers. Toutefois, l'un d'eux, Rodica, âgée de 26 ans au moment de l'investigation, réussit à faire l'unanimité – pour le pire – à l'AID.

Du fait de ses fonctions, cette jeune femme est la plus proche de l'État. Elle est en charge des relations avec le parlement et les institutions publiques. Elle est accusée de pratiques clientélistes et d'exploiter les volontaires. Avec un autoritarisme surprenant, déviant par rapport aux normes sociales pratiquées dans l'organisation, elle intime parfois des ordres aux volontaires sur le mode de l'oukase. Ces pratiques pourraient être hypothétiquement tolérées si ses maladresses n'avaient pas de répercussions sur l'image de l'association, dans les relations entre ONG et avec les bailleurs de fonds. Parce que la professionnalisation est un enjeu central pour ces organisations, aucun signe d'amateurisme ne doit transparaître. Or, plusieurs erreurs ont été commises. Conscients des agissements de leur collègue, les membres de l'ONG entretiennent avec elle des relations d'évitement. Ils interprètent le comportement de Rodica dans le cadre de sa proximité avec les structures politiques de l'État. La contingence entre sa fonction – objectivement « proche » du parlement et donc des politiciens – et sa conduite est perçue comme une adéquation. Rodica se comporterait de la même manière que les politiciens. Elle est associée à ce champ de représentations négatives, partie intégrante

avec la population « d'un champ d'adversité » (selon l'expression de Foucault).

Si le président de l'AID représente une figure positive de l'autorité, Rodica en est le visage symétriquement inverse. Le premier est l'alter ego des étrangers occidentaux tandis que la seconde symbolise un État et une élite autochtones corrompus et immoraux. Cette immoralité est corrélée dans les propos des acteurs au communisme. Ces deux visages représentent deux formes conjuguées dans ce champ social d'une représentation du monde reposant sur le binôme communisme/démocratie.

Conclusion

La comparaison entre les deux entreprises abordées permet de tirer des conclusions plus générales sur les constructions hiérarchiques dans les pays postcommunistes est-européens. Il s'agit d'un procès historique qui met en accusation les élites et de l'État, jugés responsables de la situation dans laquelle les acteurs sont plongés. Cette représentation de l'État s'articule à celle du pouvoir étranger, représenté par un Occident imaginé, par la supériorité des normes de travail, morales et politiques qu'il représente. Dans cette acception, l'exhumation du passé va de pair avec l'aspiration à vivre dans une société mieux développée. C'est seulement parce que ces enjeux s'inscrivent dans les préoccupations très concrètes des acteurs qu'ils ont, pour eux, un sens : à l'EPP, il s'agit d'obtenir ou de conserver un salaire et des conditions de travail stables ; à l'AID, c'est l'obtention d'une identité professionnelle et

personnelle positive qui préoccupe les acteurs.

Cet usage du passé n'est pas spécifique à ces champs sociaux. Il s'appuie sur des enjeux plus larges qui touchent ces sociétés dans leur ensemble. L'anticommunisme est une arme politique de premier choix qui a l'avantage de polariser les questions politiques sur le passé. Son retour cyclique sur la scène politique s'observe dans de nombreux pays postcommunistes de la Pologne jusqu'au Cambodge, les périodes électorales étant effectivement le théâtre d'accusations croisées d'appartenance au communisme entre politiciens.

Ce niveau sociétal doit lui-même être rapporté à une échelle globale. La fin de la guerre froide a radicalement modifié les rapports de domination géopolitique. Dans cette conception, la démocratie de marché et le capitalisme représentent un modèle indépassable et un opérateur de hiérarchisation entre États-nations. Par conséquent, le passé de ces entités politiques postcommunistes devient un stigmat. Les acteurs, plutôt que de rester prisonniers de cette assignation, s'approprient cette situation pour donner sens à leur existence et transposer le stigmat sur un tiers acteur. Le passé, articulé au binôme étranger/autochtone, devient donc une matrice qui permet de donner sens à la construction des rapports hiérarchiques.

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Anna Chudzińska

In the Shadow of the Heroes. Women's Hardships of the Everyday Life During WWI in the Light of Memoirs

Abstract

Has the First World War accelerated the emancipation of women? Are wars beneficial for women or do they reinforce women's traditional, culturally accepted roles? Do women have their position in the heroic patriotic discourse? There is no clear answer to these questions. After all, the First World War, on the one hand, accelerated the process of women's emancipation, but on the other hand, slowed it down or even blocked it. This article deals with several memoirs written by women about everyday life during the WWI emphasizing both the emancipation (through liberties brought by the war effort to organize hospitals etc.) and the relegation to old duties as caring for the family and wounded soldiers, working for the homeland.

Keywords: Women, World War I, Memoirs, Everyday Life, Diary, Gender order

The authors of the syntheses devoted to the First World War for a long time paid attention to political and military issues, while the everyday life of the civilian population, understood according to Maria Bogucka as the entire material culture, family life, work, and the world of individual and group concepts, was described to a lesser extent³⁰⁶. The personal accounts of the participants of the Great War brought a major contribution to the research on this aspect of the war. The descriptions of wartime experiences and the daily concerns of their authors become an important source for the study of everyday life. This also applies to women's diaries and memoirs, which were focused not only on everyday worries, but also provided an accurate analysis of the

political and military situation. Often, from accounts, memoirs and diaries emerge the courage and sometimes the bravery of the people who struggled with life in the occupied territories. I will cite only a few examples of the accounts of the "heroines" of the First World War, "heroines", who, as Marie Perrot writes, disturbed the traditional gender order³⁰⁷.

Annie Ernaux, an important French writer, a Nobel laureate, in her book entitled, "The Years", writes: "By comparisons they related to the previous war, the Great one, from the fourteenth year, unlike the last one, we won that one in blood and glory, it was a war of men, about which the women gathered around the table listened with respect. And they talked about Chemin des Dames and

³⁰⁶ Bogucka (1996), 252.

³⁰⁷ Perrot (2012), 12.

Verdun, about the gassed people, about the ringing of bells on November 11, 1918. They mentioned the names of villages to which not a single boy had returned from the front. (...) They would compete in heroism and misfortune³⁰⁸.

The First World War occurs at different times in the lives of women in Poland, which was often associated with a change of front line and a different three-partition political reality. The authors of the studied diaries and memoirs, Ludwika Ostrowska from Maluszyn³⁰⁹, Janina Puttkamer Żółtowska³¹⁰, Maria Dąbrowska³¹¹, Zofia Nałkowska³¹², Maria Łubieńska Górską³¹³ and Maria Lubomirska³¹⁴ differed in age, political and religious beliefs, origin and education. However, their stories have in common the experience of war, similar attitudes towards the outbreak of the war, and the hardships of everyday life, their involvement in public life, but also their emotional states characterized by anxiety, fear, sadness, joy.

In the accounts and recollections, heated political discussions aroused by the war involving the partitioning powers in hostile political and military alliances come to the fore. It is also a hope for Poles to regain independence or at least autonomy. The women's issue (political and electoral rights) was subdue to regaining independence. On the pages of their diaries, Polish women carefully followed the course of hostilities in Poland. After the Germans

entered Warsaw and the area of both occupations (German and Russian) had been established, the problems of everyday life began to play an increasingly important role. The difficulties related to the supply of electricity, fuel, food and medicines became acute. Interesting reports on everyday life as well as political life can be found in the diary of Princess Maria Lubomirska, born Branicka (1873-1934), published in 1997, who at the outbreak of World War I was a 41-year-old woman, a supporter of the monarchy and a staunch Catholic. Maria had three children and kept a diary with them in mind.

The autobiographical analysis of the source aims to show the extent to which the outbreak and course of the Great War had an impact on the everyday life of Maria Lubomirska, who lived in Warsaw, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland subjected to Russian rule, and from August 1915 acting as the administrative center of the occupation of the German General Government. All this time Maria was in the war zone and in the center of political affairs. From 1893, Maria was the wife of Prince Zdzisław Lubomirski, one of the most important figures in the political life of the capital. During World War I, he was the president of the Warsaw Charity Society, and from 1914 an activist in the National Committee of the city of Warsaw. In August 1915, the government in the capital handed him over to the departing Russians, and the victorious Germans appointed him president of Warsaw, and become a member of the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland in October 1917³¹⁵.

³¹⁵ *Pamiętnik księżnej Marii Zdzisławowej Lubomirskiej 1914-1918* (1973), p. 66-68.

³⁰⁸ Ernaux (2022), 20.

³⁰⁹ Ostrowska, Kita, Zawilski (2014).

³¹⁰ Puttkamerow Żółtowska.

³¹¹ Dąbrowska (1998).

³¹² Nałkowska (1980/1997).

³¹³ Górską (1988), 13-32.

³¹⁴ Pajewski, Pajewska (2002).

Due to her husband's background and position, Maria Lubomirska was also involved in political and social matters. Although the figures of "great women" often cast shadows in which the "ordinary" women disappeared, her "Memoir" accurately reflects the then Warsaw reality. She commented on events she attended or heard about. The tension related to the outbreak of the war was reflected in the pages of her diary. Maria wrote on July 28 and 29, 1914: "Europe's fate is at stake! (...) Contradictory news crosses, women are being scared mercilessly - banks no longer pay out. The hair on my head is piling up in front of the unknown! The nights are fatal, the darkness becomes a ghost. But Zdziś still doubts the war - he thinks that the monarchs will put a brake on conscience"³¹⁶. Then, on August 3, she writes: "Again, I was overcome by the terror of the situation. We are sitting here [Warsaw] as if trapped in the very area of the war, with young children, with Dusia, so delicate! At times I would like to run away with her; however, I realize that in such a cataclysm we belong to the privileged"³¹⁷.

The first instinct of many women after the outbreak of the war was to take care of the wounded. Lubomirska also visited the wounded every day in the hospital established by her mother Julia Branicka, in the Frascati palace, the Lubomirski residence in Warsaw. She also visited the Red Cross hospital about which she wrote: "The rooms are huge, with about 180 beds. I chose room "C". Mrs. Jurewicz, whom from a colorless,

seemingly worthless being, turned almost into a heroine, because war, or rather human poverty, opened the gates to her female sacrifice, cares for the wounded with devotion that knows no tiredness". She added: "A real mania of looking after the sick has developed among women; virgins in the bud of life succumb to it. I have no doubt that an excess of male element concentrated in hospitals can negatively excite certain young natures. Despite the epidemic, I am fighting with Julia and I do not allow her to perform tasks that may be merciful, but in my opinion offend virginity at its dawn"³¹⁸. It is an example of emancipatory changes taking place precisely in the service in the sanitary facilities. Young women and girls who reported to the sanitary service during the Great War gained independence that they often did not have in this regard. For many girls, especially from the upper classes, being able to move without the assistance of a mother or other relative or even a servant, and have uncontrolled contact with men were new experiences. It is not surprising that the image of a nurse in Poland did not evoke unambiguously positive associations at that time. Many authors of memoirs accused nurses of promiscuity and lack of professionalism and responsibility, and often depicted them as women with poor morale. One of the nurses, Maria Zdziarska-Zaleska, wrote about her friends: "Apart from us, there were also a few other nurses in that reserve, who were noisy and indiscriminate playing with the chauffeurs from sanitary cars"³¹⁹. Helena Jabłońska, born Seifert, also had an unflattering opinion about the nurses. She

³¹⁶ *Pamiętnik księżnej Marii Zdzisławowej Lubomirskiej 1914-1918* (1973), 11.

³¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 13.

³¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 83.

³¹⁹ Zdziarska-Zaleska (1930), 6.

wrote in her diary that there were as many nurses as there were injured, and 10 times as many candidates. "It's a good job, first of all paid, then it gives the right to pack provisions, then - romances with doctors and convalescents"³²⁰.

A painful experience for many women was the loss of relatives on the front as well as the information about the fallen sons and husbands of close friends from the aristocracy and other social classes. Thanks to her wealth, Maria Lubomirska did not experienced any shortages or difficulties and rather observed and described the hard times lived by the others: "Men and women are looking for work for a spoonful of food. Retirees without a government salary are dying of hunger, workers are left without payment from runaway employers"³²¹. On the other hand, they enjoyed another kind of life as she wrote down after a dinner at Zygmunt Wielkopolski: "Nice gathering and a good dinner, only the caviar was rotten in the snacks".

Food supplies, however, worsened with each month of the war and prices soared. Food stamps were introduced, and Lubomirska noticed that "hunger is increasing, and the distribution of food cards diminishes every day. For example, we read yesterday [June 14, 1916] that you are allowed to buy only two eggs a week, ½ kg of meat, ¼ kg of butter. There is almost no soap, pharmacy doses"³²². Food, clothes and shoes became more expensive, and the dysentery epidemic is decimating the population, noted Lubomirska.

³²⁰ Seifertów Jabłońska (2004), 217.

³²¹ *Pamiętnik księżnej Marii Zdzisławowej Lubomirskiej 1914-1918* (1973), 104.

³²² *Ibidem*, 366.

Nonetheless, the life of the aristocracy was in contrast to the extreme poverty of many Warsaw residents. Although aristocrats devoted less space in their war diaries to entertainment, theater performances and concerts, they tried to maintain their old style and way of life.

Two different images of everyday life often emerged from women's accounts as Andrzej Chwalba noticed: "The war years drew two completely different images of everyday life. It is well documented by the photos. One shows people leading, just like before the outbreak, a prosperous life, other people who are poor, lost, dying of hunger and disease, standing in extremely long lines for various goods. Both of these images are real"³²³.

During the war, women were expected to manifest patriotic stance, which was to be manifested by organizing aid for fighting soldiers and engaging in the care of the wounded, as well as to get involved in activities in various types of associations as part of the organized emancipation movement. The analysis of personal documents, memoirs and diaries shows that the First World War highlighted the roles of women played in supporting and helping men - soldiers and defenders of the homeland. It especially emphasized the caring role, as the press reported: "she washed and cooked for the soldier, sewed clothes for him, dressed his wounds, went to fight an epidemic, replaced men in workplaces abandoned by the fallen and mutilated". The women's decision to take care of a mutilated hero was perceived as the fulfillment of a patriotic duty, a proof of woman's dedication to the national cause and continued service to the motherland.

³²³ Chwalba (2014), 543.

As wives and fiancées, women were to wait faithfully for their men to return from the front. They - potential heroes who fought for their homeland and also to ensure the safety of their wives and children - risked their lives. The expectations in this regard were individual and at the same time shared, strongly internalized by the women themselves. Many of them, not only due to the large quantitative disproportions between the genders after the wars, stayed single, thus remaining faithful to the heroes of their homeland.

During the Great War and after its end, it was implied that women - as well as the people from the frontline - did not succumb to the war trauma while the impact of such events on their psyche as war wandering, the loss or death of children and frequent hunger was underestimated. Women organized hospitals, ran kitchens, looked after orphaned children, provided food for the family and took up paid work. The extreme conditions of the war meant that even the organization of everyday life required a great deal of effort, and this effort seems to be absent in the narratives of the roles of women and men during wars. Everyday life is identified with the ordinariness, and thus does not fit in the narratives of "heroism".

Under the influence of the experiences of the First World War, there were changes in the perception of women during armed conflict, but not so much in the areas of their activities where expectations were the same. Over time, women were included in the structures associated with the army, which was the postulate of the women themselves that in the event of another war, women's actions

should not be spontaneous, but organized, as was seen in World War II, and due to the law on universal military duty adopted on April 9, 1918, which provided for voluntary military service for women aged 19-45 during a war. The participation of women in the wars - the Great War, the Polish-Bolshevik war, was met with great resistance. Women were reluctantly awarded with military ranks and decorations, especially the highest ones. The Order of 'Virtutti Militari' for heroism in the Polish-Bolshevik war was awarded to several dozen women - all posthumously. Still, the inclusion of women in the army structure allowed them to control their actions, although they were disregarded as female soldiers fighting with weapons. Women entered the army even earlier, often using men's disguises. Such an example is Wanda Gertz, who enlisted in the service of Józef Piłsudski's legions during World War I in a male disguise³²⁴.

As indicated by diaries and memoirs written by women and men, World War I contributed to the growth of women's independence and weakened social control over them. However, women's war effort to care for and support the family, the organization of food is still underestimated. The problem may also arise from the fact that Polish women in the interwar period, when constructing the memory of their contribution to regaining independence, first of all looked for the elements of the struggle, considering them crucial for defining war heroism. The descriptions show nurses, couriers, sentinels, and intelligence officers fighting with weapons. In the case of women, it is the sacrifice of life that becomes the only pass to the group

³²⁴ Sierakowska (2014), 213-228.

of heroes. Until recently, this was the only definition of heroism related to war. Unfortunately, this negative message was also strengthened by the later accounts of women from World War II - often reduced to auxiliary, ordinary and caring activities.

The image of women presented in the diaries, accounts and memoirs of Polish women from the times of the Great War is an image of a service that is often indispensable, for which they deserve recognition, but perceived as simple, ordinary, modest, virtually imperceptible, and therefore not suitable for praise and glory. This statement is confirmed by the fact that among the diaries, memoirs and war journals we hardly find those written by "ordinary women"- women organizers of life in the occupied territories, serving kitchens and laundries for soldiers, doctors-because providing help was part of their role.

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Cornel Micu

“We made up another collective farm... a third one!” Everyday Life and the Collectivisation of Agriculture

Abstract

The collectivisation of agriculture was the first policy of the Romanian state aiming to radically change the rural area. It affected directly the everyday life of the Romanian villagers by transforming the state from a distant, rather “urban” idea, into a social, political and economic actor directly involved at the local level. Lasting for more than 13 years, the collectivisation was the most noticeable aspect of the communist intervention, taking place alongside with other policies such as the development of party organisations in the villages, the expanding of the local bureaucracy or the nationalisation of the village economy.

As the rural population represented the majority of Romanians and the support for communism was rather scarce in the villages, the party used a cautious strategy of collectivisation, preferring, at least in the initial stages of it, to strengthen its presence in the villages and to avoid forcing the peasants to join the collective farms. Although it did not manage to completely avoid the usage of repression and the clashes with the peasants, the Romanian communist party was successful in preventing widespread protest movements such as the ones in 1953 in Poland and DDR, in 1956 in Hungary or in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. This article try to explain, based on the everyday life in several villages in Romania, the strategies which the party used in order to gradually transform the rural are and to avoid widespread protests from the peasants.

Keywords: Collectivisation, State policies, Rural population, Communism, Strategies of transformation

Theoretical background

From my own teaching experience, the discussions about everyday life are the most interesting topics for humanities students. Unlike the more theoretical approaches toward the past, the everyday life really depicts the alterity of the previous societies in comparison with the present, which really stimulates the interest of the people and transforms the past into... past. This is because the average person doesn't live in a political system *per se* but rather in a connected network of acquaintances and friends, surrounded by

familiar objects and completing routinely daily actions without bothering to analyse them. Therefore, for the overwhelming majority of people concepts such as “nationalism”, “communism” or “democracy” are difficult to differentiate, since they play a relatively modest role in their regular life. In contrast, the everyday life of the past is a topic with which they can relate, since it can easily compare with their daily life.

Nevertheless, the everyday life is not an easy topic to approach from an academic point of view. Firstly, there is the problem of the scarce historical sources, particularly because the everyday is so

routinely and hence deemed as not important enough to be described in writing. To a certain extent this problem can be mitigated in the case of this paper, as I was capable to use interviews which gave me a better insight in the actions regularly undertaken by my respondents. Secondly there is the problem of organising the material since the information on everyday life can be compared with a photographic image: it fixes a moment of time but gives little information about the context and the actual date in which the event took part. Therefore, despite the fact that the “everyday” is interesting because it avoids the more complex theoretical discourses regarding the past, it nevertheless needs a theoretical background in order to arrange the “photos” in a more cohesive way. For the purpose of this paper, I consider the everyday the product of complex social, economic and political relations, which greatly varied in the traditional societies, that could be defined as “a set of functions which connect and join together systems that may appear to be distinct”³²⁵. Consequently, the study of everyday life should take into account both the subjective experience of the social actors involved (represented in the case of this paper by the interviewed persons) and the broader context in which those took part³²⁶. In this regard one should take into account the pragmatism of the everyday actions, meaning that the social actors involved are not completely aware of the broader meaning of their actions³²⁷, despite the fact

that one could analytically interpret them as part of culture or ideology.

An interpretative framework in order to arrange the information regarding the everyday life into a larger, more coherent, picture is needed especially in the case of historical interviews which are, unlike participative observation or field questionnaires, rather fragmentary. The evidence used throughout this article was gathered roughly in the period between 2003 and 2022, through field interviews in the communes (basic administrative districts, containing several villages managed by a mayoralty) Cireșu and Bordei Verde, in the county of Brăila, in the South-Eastern part of Romania. The main topic of the text is the transition from the interwar to communism as expressed in the everyday life and the hypothesis I propose is that, despite the clear cleavages identified by the historians between the interwar and communist period, the changes in everyday life, although tremendous, came gradually, after World War II and the instauration of communism in 1948.

Historical background

The principalities of Wallachia and Moldova were under the control of the Ottoman Empire, but enjoyed some degree of autonomy. They were inhabited mostly by Romanian ethnics of Orthodox religion who, due to their peripheral position of the region, lived, in an overwhelming majority, in the villages. Starting with the beginning of 19th century, the region gradually emancipated from the Ottoman suzerainty: the treaty of Adrianople (1829) officially established the borders of the two

³²⁵ Lefebvre, Levich (1987), 8-9.

³²⁶ Bou (2015), 172.

³²⁷ Heller (1967), 37.

principalities, followed by the union of 1859 which led to the creation of the Old Kingdom, the instauration of a king with German origins in 1866, and eventually by gaining independence in 1878.

The Old Kingdom took part in the First World War against the Central Powers and, due to the collapse of Tzarist Russia, managed to gain territories both from the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina) and Russia (Bessarabia) in 1918. The new state, historically known as Greater Romania, took part in World War II as an ally of Nazi Germany and, after the war, lost the Eastern regions of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. Like the rest of Eastern Europe, Romania became a communist state between 1948 and 1989 and, starting with 2007, a member of the European Union.

The rural structure of the society was a fundamental problem during the existence of the modern Romanian state. From the middle of the 19th century the state proposed ambitious policies in order to change the structure of rural society: agrarian reforms consisting in land distribution in 1864, 1921 and 1945, collectivization of agriculture between 1949 and 1962, de-collectivization after 1991 and finally the reform of the agricultural sector in the context of EU integration during the 2000s. Nevertheless, the social structure is still strongly rural, with as much as 45% of population living in the villages and 30% engaged in agricultural activities, according to the results of the 2011 national census³²⁸.

The area of Brăila was depopulated due to the Russo-Turkish wars at the beginning of 19th century. After its

integration to Wallachia following the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, it was repopulated by migrants coming from other Romanian territories, mostly transhumant shepherds which started to give up their seasonal migration patterns³²⁹. A second wave of migration was represented by settlers from the nearby county of Buzău, who were granted land in Brăila and moved into the region during the '30s. The conflicts between them, literally named "munteni" or mountaineers and the "cojani" already inhabiting the area are frequently mentioned during the interviews by descendants of both groups.

Until World War II the region was by no means a traditional one and the everyday life was changing from generation to generation. The sheep breeding as main occupation was replaced by grain production on large estates during the second half of the 19th century, then the agrarian reform further changed the patterns of production after World War I. Nevertheless, the collectivization of agriculture, following the Second World War and the arrival of the communists to power, contrasted to the anterior changes due to the fact that it brought a new actor into play: the Romanian state.

Rural policy before and after the Second World War

The agrarian reforms of 1864, 1921 and 1945 represented in fact attempts of the Romanian state to transform the rural area according to the modernization programs proposed by the national elites. Nevertheless, they had a low impact on the

³²⁸ Institutul Național de Statistică (2011).

³²⁹ Mihăilescu (1932), 89.

everyday life of the peasants due to the underdevelopment of the local bureaucracy capable to implement them³³⁰. They affected to a larger extent the traditional elites, whose land was expropriated and distributed to the peasants. They didn't really change the social and economic structure of Romanian villages, which remained dominated by households with little land, practicing a subsistence-oriented agriculture. The development of capitalistic farms was, even at the end of interwar period, very limited³³¹.

In contrast, collectivisation was one of the most ambitious policies of the communist regimes, aiming to radically transform the rural area and strengthen the state control over the villages. It was a staple of the communist regimes, implemented initially in the Soviet Union and, after World War II, in the other communist Eastern European countries. Although the communist regimes discontinued collectivisation after the death of Stalin in 1953, most of them, with the notable exception of Poland, resumed the process during the second half of the fifties³³².

In Romania, collectivisation took place between 1949 and 1962, and meant the creation of "collective farms" in the villages, which merged the privately owned lands and transformed them into collective property, managed by the representants of the peasants assembled into communist party organisation. By replacing the private household with the collective farm, it strongly contrasted with

the previous reforms, which transferred land from the larger estates to the peasants.

The whole process was very complex as collectivisation was only the peak of an iceberg consisting in various accompanying policies, such as the creation of party organisations in the villages, development of the local state bureaucracy, urbanization following the industrial development, and the nationalisation of economy. In the case of Romania, there is a general consensus among historians that three different stages are noticeable during collectivisation³³³: between 1949 and roughly 1953, the regime promoted the class struggle in the villages and tried to use the poor peasants as agents of the party policy against the wealthier "chiaburi"; after the death of Stalin in 1953 the regime slowed the pressure on the peasants and focused on the strengthening of the collective sector and the development of local party organisations and state bureaucracy; finally, after 1956 the regime resumed the pressure toward collectivisation, by using the newly developed party administration and local bureaucracy.

An important aspect of collectivisation is represented by the usage of repression in order to convince the peasants to join the collective farms. The official perspective of the communist administration emphasised the voluntarily character of the collective farms membership, as a result of the efficient propaganda campaigns of the party cadre. The historiography agrees that the process was in fact accompanied by at least a certain degree of repression, as generally

³³⁰ Micu (2012), 122-125.

³³¹ Gormsen (1940).

³³² Swain (2014), 501-503.

³³³ Roske (2017), Swain (2014), Şandru (2005).

the peasants were not eager to join the collective farms. Yet some authors chose to emphasise the repressive aspects of collectivisation and the fight of the peasants against it³³⁴, while others consider that both the violence accompanying the process and the peasants' resistance against it were less relevant³³⁵.

Violence, repression and resistance during collectivisation

In approaching the problem of state violence in the context of collectivisation, one should take into account the fact that violence was not invented by the communist regime. Traditionally, it was not perpetrated by the state but rather by various local groups using the state in order to settle disputes among themselves. Such was the case of local supporters of National Liberal and National Peasants' parties, who were competing for power, using a certain degree of violence especially during the local elections. The peak was reached in 1933, when they used pistols during their fights³³⁶. Nevertheless, the political violence was rather closely linked to the conflict between local groups than an instrument used by the state to interfere in the villages.

Furthermore, a certain degree of violence was acceptable as a way of regulating the complex relations between the local groups. There was no culture of revenge and the violence was usually not associated with murder. It appeared in three contexts during the interviews: as

³³⁴ Deletant (1999), Dobrinu, Iordachi (2017).

³³⁵ Barbu (1999), Kligman, Verdery (2011).

³³⁶ Bănică (no year), p. 116.

perpetrated by youngsters in their fights, as a way of regulating conflicts between the adults and as domestic violence, usually directed against the women. In the case of youngsters, a certain degree of "rebellion" was accepted, expressed by fights among themselves and even petty thievery. For example, M.A from Lișcoteanca village, recounted how he stole a scythe from his neighbour and his father had to pay compensation. When asked why did he do it if later in his life was against thievery, he candidly replied: "I was a youngster back then!"³³⁷.

The violence among adults was rarer, but could have serious consequences. In an informal discussion a man remembered how somebody killed a man during the '30s, in a spontaneous conflict on the field. He hit the other person several times and he died. The killer escaped prison by paying somebody else half hectare of land and an important sum of money in order to confess the deed.

Finally, the domestic violence was mostly directed against women, such was the case of a respondent from the village of Batogu, who recollected how she was chased with an axe by her drunk father-in-law. He was known in the village to be violent and dangerous as, during a conflict regarding the land borders, he pulled out a knife and cut the local land owner. According to the interviewed, he escaped the legal punishment by bribing the policemen in the village. Interestingly, the woman considered that existed some advantages in having him as a relative, since he was rich and feared in the village, a circumstance which granted her prestige and protection, as she stated when I

³³⁷ M.A., b. 1927, man, Lișcoteanca village.

expressed compassion for her situation: "Why would you feel compassion for me? We were the forehead of the village!"³³⁸.

The newly installed communist regime interfered in the conflicts between the local groups in order to support the ones which he considered suitable for its political goals. This further complicates the problem of repression, since it is unclear if certain actions are directed against the regime or are a part of the traditional conflicts against the groups that the party was starting to support. According to one informant, his uncle fought with the representatives of the communist party because he was annoyed by the fact that they, being poor, were spending large sums of money to drink in the local tavern. After he beat the local party members, he ran away and hid for several months in the swamps around the city of Brăila. He was never convicted for his actions and after two years of hiding, he moved to Brăila and started working for the local state-controlled fishing enterprise³³⁹.

Often the regime used the traditional conflicts between the "munteni" and the "cojani", supporting the first ones, which were generally poorer. A good example is the story of the "cojan" who, following a conflict around land borders, chased with his horses a "munten" on the field. The event took place during the '40s but, ten years later, the "muntean", now acting as a representative of the communist party, came to him in order to take his horses for the collective farm. He didn't forget, of course, to remember to his "enemy" that the horses he was taken were

the horses with which "you chased me on the field years ago"³⁴⁰.

Nevertheless, unlike the interwar period, it was not possible anymore to escape prison with well placed bribes or finding someone to take the blame. Most probably, as the regime strengthened its grip around the villages, it shifted from supporting local groups toward directly punishing its opposants. Although in the case of the studied area such direct actions were rather rare, they are nevertheless recalled during the interviews. The respondents mentioned some "chiaburi" who were convicted to various prison sentences, although without being able to clearly name them. The monograph of the commune, written by the local history teacher, Ion Bănică, indicates the names of villagers convicted, without entering into details regarding their fate³⁴¹. One case of direct violence was mentioned by someone in Lișcoteanca village, about a man who was beaten by the local party representatives because he was openly talking against collectivisation³⁴². Yet, most representative for the symbolic character of the violence is the story regarding the strategy of political police, namely Securitate, to arrest someone in the middle of the night, drive him for several hours with a black van and, after stopping the vehicle in the middle of the field, telling him that they arrive in Siberia and they would leave him there if he would not sign the request to become a member of the collective farm. Terrified by the perspective of being deported, the detained would sign the "voluntarily" request to be

³³⁸ N.G., b. 1921, woman, Batogu village.

³³⁹ M.C., b. 1955, man, Batogu village.

³⁴⁰ Puia (1995), 65-67.

³⁴¹ Bănică (no year), p. 188.

³⁴² M.M., woman, b. 1927, Lișcoteanca village.

admitted as a member in the collective farm³⁴³.

Collective vs. traditional everyday

When asked, the respondents identified a certain connection between the presence of Soviet troops in Romania at the end of the Second World War and the emergence of the communist party. Nevertheless, the most extensive interview on this topic shows the war as a distant event, that took place far away from the village and didn't mark the area and the veterans. The image of German soldiers seems to have faded from the collective memory, perhaps because they didn't really spend time in the villages. The image of the Soviet soldiers is more articulated, first as prisoners that worked on the larger land exploitations, then as armed soldiers occupying the village and finally as occupants that confiscated animals for the needs of the army. There was no violence associated with the Soviet occupation of the village, although in the autumn of 1944 ex-prisoners used as labour force in the area returned and identified the land owners that had threatened them badly. Some of them were arrested following those testimonials³⁴⁴.

The communist organisations appeared after the war and recruited mostly youngsters who were either poor peasants or "mountaineers". In fact, the communist party supported some groups against others along the lines of the traditional conflicts in the villages. Unlike the interwar period, when the state was

perceived like an outsider not really interfering in the villages, during the communist period some of the peasants actively searched the state support in order to follow their own goals.

The party infiltrated the villages using the conflicts between different local groups in order to slowly expand its power. According to the interviewed at least some of the collective farms were formed at the initiative of local groups. "Not everybody wanted to register at the '8th of May' collective farm. (...) We didn't want to and you know why? They were all bragging and asking what we were doing there, in their farm? And only later they (the collective farms – a.n.) unified"³⁴⁵, remembers R.N., born in 1928, from the village of Lișcoteanca. In fact, during the initial stage of collectivisation, the development of collective farms mirrored the complex relations between different interest groups in the village, or, at a higher level, in a party apparatus that was itself hastily developing at the beginning of the '50s: "And then there came someone from the regional administration, from the party, from... where they used to come and we made up another collective farm, a third one... There were already two collective farms; we were making the third one!"³⁴⁶.

The respondents agreed that the first collective farms were formed with the help of the poor villagers, attracted by the party propaganda and by the fact that, at least during the '50s, being member of the collective farm meant a clear improvement in one's standard of living. As R.N. remembers, "those who had absolutely

³⁴³ C.F., man, b. 1928, Filiu village.

³⁴⁴ G.D., b. 1919, man, Bordei Verde village, „muntean“.

³⁴⁵ R.N., b. 1928, woman, Lișcoteanca village.

³⁴⁶ I.J., b. 1929, man, Bordei Verde village, „muntean“.

nothing joined them (in the collective farms – a.n.). They wrote their names down on the list because the first two years they were given food. So, they put their name there. They used to come with flags, carts, chariots, singing on the road”³⁴⁷. Meanwhile, the ones that did not joined the collective farms in the first wave, were subject to compulsory quotas, meaning that they lived worse than the rest of the village: “Quotas! Compulsory quotas! One had to give today, tomorrow and so on (...) And this is the way things worked. Back then there were milk quotas, cereals quotas, and meat quotas. You had to give a part of everything”³⁴⁸.

By monopolising the political power after 1948, the communist regime developed specific socio-economic structures which functioned initially parallel with the traditional ones. The people joining them were rewarded while the ones persisting in the “old ways” were sanctioned. It was not only about the membership in the collective farms, but also about new jobs, such as tractor driver, in emerging economic sectors controlled by the state after the 1948 nationalization: “I went to school without paying anything. They gave us equipment and food. Yes, equipment, food and accommodation. And when we had practice stages, we also got some money”³⁴⁹. Meanwhile a strong propaganda apparatus was developed in order to remember everyone that it was best to keep with the regime than to stay outside it. The case of the tractor driver

called Boancă Costică who, in 1947, was advertised for breaking official work norm in the local public gazette³⁵⁰ is representative for this strategy.

The narrative changed for the period following the end of collectivisation. As after the inclusion of most of the peasants into collective farms there was no need for further propaganda, the regime started gradually to extract resources from the agricultural sector in order to invest them into the development of industrial one³⁵¹. This policy would become noticeable in the villages, with one respondent quoting even a popular saying in this regard: “Our grain is beautiful, but its ears point toward the state silo”³⁵². The worst were the ‘80s, when the combination between the state policy emphasising the development of the industrial sector and the economic crisis affecting all communist states greatly deteriorated the living conditions in the village. In this regard, even the ex-president of the collective farm from Lișcoteanca village admitted that: “We had some good years of production until ‘81-‘82, when the socialist economy still functioned and we had the material supplies. (...) After ‘81-‘82, when the imports of phytopharmaceutical products ceased and most of the fertilizers were exported, we began to suffer and we continued to have good productions but we had no material basis: no fertilizers, no herbicides. (...) There was the political idea to pay our external debts, the peasants were paid with

³⁴⁷ R.N., b. 1928, woman, Lișcoteanca village.

³⁴⁸ G.D., b. 1919, man, Bordei Verde village, „muntean”.

³⁴⁹ M.V., b. 1947, Bordei Verde village, ex tractor driver.

³⁵⁰ National Historical Archives (1952), 266.

³⁵¹ Micu (2012), 214-215.

³⁵² D.Z., b. 1940, man, Bordei Verde village, “muntean”.

fewer products and so the interest in the work done in the collective farm faded”³⁵³.

Nevertheless, collectivisation was not only about the transformation of economic life but also affected the social networks existent at a larger, regional level. They were supported by the mobility specific to the interwar everyday life, noticeable in different aspects of social life. The interviews revealed a mobile population, engaged in extended periods of activity outside the village, in order to till the land, to visit long distance relatives in the case of the “munteni” or to sell the agricultural products in other areas. A respondent mentioned such trips toward Ploiești, a city at the basis of Carpathian Mountains, situated 150 km away from the region. He took parts in some such trips toward the end of the thirties: “We woke up before the sunrise and prepare the horse cart. We travelled in groups of two-three carts, two persons in each cart. The carts were full of sacks of wheat and we packed provisions for several days. We also brought a long handle hatchet, for the case in which somebody would try to stop the horses by the mouth and rob us. The long handle hatchet was for hitting them without getting down from the cart”³⁵⁴. According to him the whole trip lasted around five to six days, and they would spend the night on the road sleeping under the stars. In Ploiești, they would sell the wheat in the morning and move back home in the same day. The same references appear about trips toward the city of Brăila, around 50 km. away: they would depart before the sunrise, arrive in the city at noon

³⁵³ C.M., b. 1948, man, Lișcoteanca village, ex-president of the collective farm.

³⁵⁴ C.M., b. 1923, man, Batogu village, b. 1923.

and depart several hours later, in the afternoon.

Both the long and short distance mobility was dependent by the possession of horses which are often mentioned during the interviews. C.M. from Batogu remembers his mare, called “Carpați” because it was running as fast as the truck with the same name used during the ‘50s³⁵⁵. An average household owned two horses and two oxen, with the last being used mostly for ploughing. Nevertheless, during the interviews oxen are seldom mentioned, with the horse being the most mentioned domestic animals. The horses were used to power several types of transportation means: the cart, which was the most common, the buggy, which was much rarer, as some kind of sport vehicle pulled by one horse or even, mentioned once or twice, the “docar”, some kind of coach used mostly for ceremonies such as wedding or balls.

As the collectivisation meant the donation of agricultural inventory (including horses) toward the collective farms, the capacity for mobility and developing regional social relations greatly diminished for the villagers in the area. Initially the mobility continued in other ways, provided by the regime. It took the form of cheap national excursions organised by the collective farms in order to mark the holidays celebrating the accomplishment of the regime: “Yes, the Collective Farm used to organise holidays... the 23rd of August, for example. They celebrated these days. (...) The celebration was at their expense. They offered a bottle of beer or something else, but they almost made you attend them. But there were many youngsters back then, and they were

³⁵⁵ Idem.

all going!”³⁵⁶. Other respondents mentioned the providing of collective farm’s trucks in order to sell the water melons grown on the individually worked plots³⁵⁷. There was also the possibility of moving to the urban centres and work in the newly developed industrial plants.

Nevertheless, on long term the regime greatly limited the mobility of the peasants. Although it was not explicitly forbidden, the ownership of horses was strongly discouraged, as N.D. from Bordei Verde village remembered: “I had bought a horse and because of that I was summoned to the prosecutor’s office, during Ceaușescu’s rule; they accused me of theft. Some police colonels came, announced by the mayor... they called me once, they called me twice (...) I went to see the commander. The commander told me: ‘The horse must disappear within 30 days! If you keep it you will have to transport five tons of manure with it every day!’, so I sold it!”³⁵⁸. Furthermore, as the economic growth slowed there was not enough money to invest in the agricultural sector which remained largely dependent on manual labour. During the ‘80s it was forbidden for the member of the collective farms to change their occupation without the approval of their superiors, under the sanction of prison. The same respondent from above tried to falsify the needed approval, but it was caught and narrowly escaped prison: “I went to the oil platform because the money was not enough. (...) Now I have a criminal record because I couldn’t get the papers to change my job.

³⁵⁶ S.C., b. 1956, woman, Constantin Gabrielescu village.

³⁵⁷ S.M., b. 1924 woman, Batogu village.

³⁵⁸ N.D., b. 1948, man, Bordei Verde village, „muntean“.

The platform needed men but the people at the collective farm didn’t let us go. I needed a notification from them that they dispense with my working services. They should have written and given us the notification but they wouldn’t do that. In the end, I found the stamp, I sealed and signed the paper with it, but they eventually got us. I got hired on the 2nd of February in 1980 and in June 1980, I was brought before the court in Făurei (a nearby town – a.n.). I was close to being sentenced to jail!”³⁵⁹.

Conclusions

Unlike the interwar state, the communist one attempted to radically transform the Romanian rural area through specific policies among which collectivisation of agriculture was the most important. Yet, in order to limit, as much as possible, the eventual local resistance, it preferred an indirect approach. Rather than to use direct violence against the opposants to collectivisation, it initially interfered in the conflict among the local groups and supported the ones deemed the most useful for its policies. At least in the case of the studied area, the repressive apparatus was used only sporadically, sometimes symbolical, in order to rather discourage the eventual opposants than to force the peasants into the collective farms.

Instead of directly attacking the traditional social and economic structures, the regime competed with them, by constructing alternative ones, centred around the collective farms. It won the competition by using its political monopoly in order to support the members of the

³⁵⁹ Idem.

collective sector and to penalise the ones reluctant to join. As the interviews show, for a brief interval of several years, it was in fact more advantageous to be a member of the collective farm than to be an independent peasant subject to high taxes in the form of product quotas.

Initially the collective farms took over some traditional aspects of everyday life in the studied area, such as the replicating the traditional mobility as a way of developing social relations. Nevertheless, they ceased to do this sometime after the end of collectivisation. In fact, it seems that the most tremendous changes in regard to everyday life took place after the end of collectivisation, during the last two decades of the communist period, an interval unfortunately less researched by the historians.

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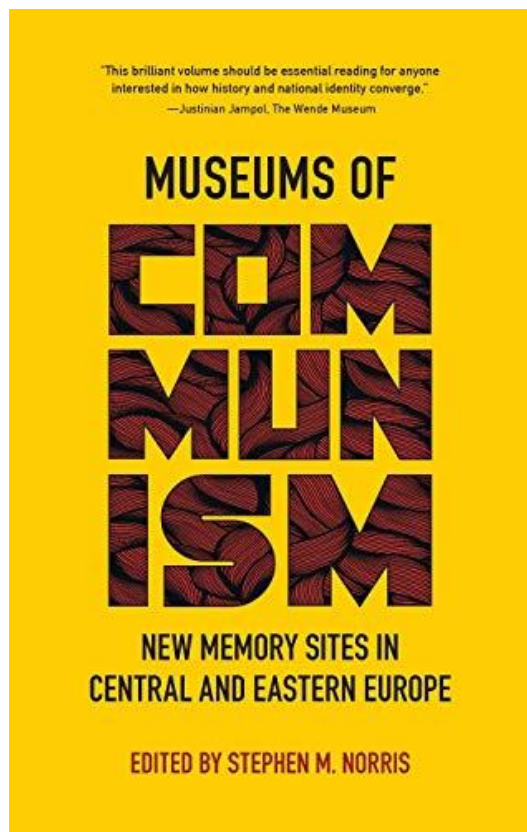
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Review

by

Claudia-Florentina Dobre

***Museums of Communism. New Memory Sites in Central and Eastern Europe.* Edited by Stephen M. Norris. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020, 434 p.**



The book edited by the Russian history professor at Miami University, Stephen M. Norris, takes the reader into a journey through museums dedicated to the communist period in several countries of the former Soviet Union, and Central Europe. The volume is conceived as a museum itself displaying a few exhibitions focussed on 'Genocide, Occupation, and Terror', on 'National Tragedies', on 'Everyday Life', on 'Russian Memory', and on 'Rotating Exhibits'.

In the *Introduction*, the editor points out that the post-communist newly created museums dedicated to the communist

period mirrored the soviet era museums through "their didactic interpretations and efforts to mold memories" (p. 7). However, their interpretations are radical from the communist ones as the new museums "overturn the dominant narratives" in order to tell the story of the communist past from a different perspective. They "mostly turn to the memories, stories, and viewpoints that were whispered or talked about quietly over kitchen tables throughout the former communist world" (p. 7).

The volume introduces 14 museums from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Eastern Germany (standing for the former German Democratic Republic-GDR). Each museum is analyzed by recognized scholars of the problematics of the postcommunist memory.

The first part of the volume, entitled 'Hall of Genocide, Occupation, and Terror', deals with the new narratives meant to commemorate the "past sufferings and losses under communism" (p. 19), which are displayed in several museums in Lithuania, Hungary, Ukraine, Latvia, and Kazakhstan. The mentioned museums narrate the communist past from a victimhood perspective and aim at creating or reinforcing a national identity which transforms the Lithuanians, the Hungarians, the Ukrainians, Latvians and Kazaks into victims of the Russian occupation and

terror. They focused on the dominant national group, ignoring the minorities which experiences atrocities, as well. They display “a sort of unofficial competition over which group suffered the most”(p. 19).

The first chapter of the first part entitled, ‘Sovereign Pain. Liberation and Suffering in the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights in Lithuania’ stages the narrative of the new Lithuanian independent state about the nazi and communist ‘occupations’, both being depicted as ‘genocides’. The author of the chapter points out that, “the double genocide approach instituted in the museum have a legal basis. According to the Lithuanian Criminal Code Article 99, genocide refers not only to national, ethnic, racial, and religious groups... but also to social and political groups” (p. 26). The museum organized in the former headquarters of the Gestapo and NKVD/KGB in Vilnius displays items related to the Holocaust, the deportations to the Gulag, the anticommunist armed resistance, and the 1980s dissidence. The story narrated by the museum emphasizes the drama of the Lithuanian people who were persecuted by the Soviets with only few rooms dedicated to the Jewish and Roma sufferings.

The House of Terror Museum in Budapest dwells on the same narrative. In his chapter, Mate Zombory argues that the museum represents “an institutional attempt of historical revisionism... aiming to internationally demonstrate the Europeaness of Hungary and at the same time to present communism both as an additional historical trauma ‘an eastern experience’ beside the Holocaust” (p. 47-48). Furthermore, met with criticism from historians and leftist intellectuals, The

House of Terror Museum “performs a political allegory of national suffering by communism” (p. 60).

The Lonsky prison where is located the National Memorial-Museum to the Victims of Occupying Regimes in Lviv performs the same allegory meant to tell a story about Ukraine as a victim while “serves as a site for memory laundering” (p. 87). Stephen M. Norris, the author of the chapter, ‘Inside L’viv’s Lonsky Prison. Capturing Ukrainian memory after Communism’, defines “memory laundering” as an interpretation of the past based on “some truths and some falsehoods” (p. 87). Although the museum mentioned Holocaust and the destiny of the Jews during the nazi occupation, the institution main concerns are the Ukrainians and their persecutions, both during the nazi and soviet occupation. The display of the items tells the story of a building seen as a “site where occupational powers punished, tortured, and killed Ukrainians who wanted independence” (p. 88).

In ‘Remembering the Gulag in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan’, the author, Steven A. Barnes, underlines the same narrative, focused on the victimhood of the Kazakhstani nation during the Soviet rule. The chapter deals with the Museum of Memory of the Victims of Repression in the Dolinka Settlement or the Karlag Museum, opened in May 2011, and with the Museum Memorial complex of victims of political repression and Totalitarianism, a former camp for “wives of traitors to the motherland” (p. 110). Both museums are situated in some remote places where the camps were organized by the Soviets. Their location is symbolic for the relation to the communist past of the Kazak nation. The museums

“allow the Kazakhstani state to take the steps that it ‘should’, acknowledging the history of the Soviet repression and memorializing the victims, without actually allowing that past to impinge too heavily upon the triumphal narrative of the independent Kazakhstan that dominates public spaces in the new capital city” (p. 128).

Memorializing the victims of the Soviet repression is the main goal of the museum Cheka House/Stūra Māja according to the author of the chapter five entitled, ‘Riga’s Cheka House. From a Soviet Place of Terror to a Latvian Site of Rememberance?’. The museum emphasizes the victims memory while telling the story of the Soviet Latvia from their perspective. Located in the former headquarters of the Cheka/NKVD/KGB in Riga, the museum is serving two functions, to educate and to commemorate. “The pedagogical function of the museum, however, is frequently overshadowed by the commemorative aspect of the exhibition” (p. 150).

The second part of the volume, ‘Hall of National Tragedies’, deals with The Warsaw Uprising Museum and the National Museum ‘Holodomor Victims Memorial’ opened in Kiev. Both museums commemorate the victims of the Stalinist terror and seek to restore the truth which was hidden during the communist era. They are “sites of glorification and victimization” (p. 159) meant to stir emotions and to assert the right of independence of the two ‘martyr nations’. They are build around memories and items of those who experienced these atrocities. Their goal is to glorify the two nations and to suggest that both countries are stronger because they remember the “horrors once inflicted upon them” (p. 159).

The bravery of the Polish nation is celebrated in the Warsaw Uprising Museum analyzed by Stephen M. Norris in the chapter six of the book entitled, ‘Sensing the Uprising. The Warsaw Uprising Museum and the Emotions of the Past’. “Opened on the sixtieth anniversary” of the Uprising, the museum not only remembers the past, but also aims at fostering memories about this event for visitors. It plays an important role in promoting (while being at the same time fashioned by it) the “master narrative of modern Polish nationhood, one centered on heroic resistance in Warsaw to oppressive systems” (p. 166).

The tragedy of the Ukrainians is addressed by The National Museum ‘Holodomor Victims Memorial’, which depicts the famine of 1932-1933 as a genocide. In chapter seven, ‘Enforcing National Memory, Remembering Famine’s Victims’, Daria Mattingly analyses the organization of the museum and the display of the items in order to emphasize the main goal of the institution, which is to legitimize the “genocidal narrative as part of the nation-building process, one that identifies the aggressor and victim... along ethnic lines” (p. 199). The aggressor is represented by the Russians while the victim is the Ukrainian nation. However, this simplistic explanation hinders a better understanding of the mechanisms which made possible the Great Famine. The local perpetrators were Ukrainians and their involvement in this mass crime should be acknowledged in order to “prevent similar crimes in the future” (p. 204). Furthermore, “a narrative about genocide does not have to be reductive, ethnocentric, or omissive” (p. 204).

The third part of the volume, entitled 'Hall of Everyday Life' focusses on two museums dedicated to the lived experiences of communism: The Czech Museum of Communism and DDR (GDR) Museum in Berlin. Sites of communicative memory, they fuelled nostalgia among ordinary people who felt excluded by the dominant paradigm of victimization. The two cases studies are paradigmatic for this type of nostalgia, the Czechs, and the Germans who lived in the former GDR claim an acute feeling of loss. This sentiment is very strong especially among the former citizens of GDR as their country disappeared for good while their lived experience is ignored and trashed as garbage.

The Czechs might feel nostalgia for the communist past, but, as the author of the study, 'The Czech Museum of Communism. What National Narrative for the Past?' asserts, they were not allowed to manifest it. Muriel Blaive states that, after the fall of communism in November 1989, the anticommunist paradigm became the mainstream discourse in the postcommunist Czech society leaving no room for any alternative discourse. "This unexpected twist is, in fact, linked to the legitimacy deficit of the dissident movement during the 1989 Velvet Revolution" (p. 224). This paradoxical situation is due to the Czechs' approach to communism, which was welcomed by the majority of the population from the very beginning. After the short interlude of 1968 Prague Spring and the Soviet intervention in the country, which temporarily distanced the people from communism, the 'normalization' period reconciled the majority of the population with the communist party while the dissidents were

few and marginals. Therefore, when they negotiated the fall of communism, they "brandished the anticommunist narrative as the source of a new found political legitimacy" (p. 225). Due to this very nature of the political change, for many years, nostalgia and appreciation for communism were taboo in the public space. The Prague Museum of Communism challenged this approach and the official narrative by introducing to the audience a new perspective on communism, a bottom-up history of the period, focused on normal people and their lives. The museum is a private enterprise and stirred no interest among elites, but fueled a retro movement among ordinary people inspired by the Western approach of commodification and consuming the past. Furthermore, it might be the expression of a new type of Cold War Memory in which the West meets the East in approaching the communist past (p. 233).

A different East-West approach to the communist past is discussed by Stephen M. Norris in his chapter, 'Stasiland or Spreewald Pickles? The Battle over the GDR in Berlin's DDR Museum'. The author argues that after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1990 reunification of Germany, the memory of the GDR became a battleground between the Western Germans, who portray the GDR as a harsh dictatorship fashioned by the notorious STASI, and the East Germans who depict their former country as the realm of their everyday life in which they found joy and sadness, repression as well as goodness. "This basic dichotomy of opinion, ..., might best be understood as a 'people's paradox', to use the phrase employed by Mary Fulbrook" (p. 262). The DDR Museum, opened in central Berlin, reflects the Eastern view on

remembering the GDR, a view which focusses on everyday life in a dictatorship. "It also attempts to conceptualize the GDR's history as a complex, multifaceted one" (p. 263). The museum can be seen as part of "a bigger whole, one that includes the Stasi Museum and the Stasi Prison Museum, but also the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, the Berlin War Memorial, the Museum of Bernauer Strasse, and a host of other plaques, memorials, and memory sites" (p. 263).

The part of the volume entitled, 'Hall of Russian Memory', is dealing with museums meant to establish new narratives about the Soviet past. Two of the museums analyzed in the volume are dedicated to the victims of the Gulag while the third one is part of the retro culture, a site of nostalgia where people can learn about or learn how to play games from the Soviet era. All the museums are problematic in their interpretations as they do not propose new paradigms about the past. However, the State Museum of Gulag History and the Butovskii Shooting Range acknowledge the victims of the Soviet era, while the Museum of the Soviet Arcade Games was created as a place of immersion into the past without any political connotations on display.

The State Museum of GULAG History was opened in 2015 in central Moscow and it is sponsored by the state and run by academics. It illustrates the official paradigm of remembering the Soviet repression and it is a "fascinating case study of memory construction in contemporary Russia" (p. 275). As Jeffrey Hardy points out in his paper, 'Commemorating and Forgetting Soviet Repression: Moscow's State Museum of GULAG History', it represents "a step forward in the memorialization of those

who suffered and died under Soviet rule" (p. 296). However, being a state sponsored enterprise, the museum fails in providing a broader account of the victims of repression as it is focussed on the Stalinist era, in explaining the meaning of the GULAG as well as in mentioning the perpetrators others than Stalin and his Political Bureau. Furthermore, it does not exhibit the repression of the dissidents of the '70s and '80s and totally ignores the religious and ethnic persecutions during the whole Soviet era. Its main narrative is focussed on the political detainees and on their life in the camps.

The Butovskii shooting range, on the other hand, is acknowledged as a memory site focussed mainly on the religious persecutions as it commemorates the priests and other believers killed and buried in that particular mass grave. On the spot, during the Great Terror of 1937-1938, tens of thousand of people were killed and buried. Discovered during Gorbachev's Perestroika and invested with sacredness by the Russian Orthodox Church, which eventually built a church there, Butovskii shooting range was declared a heritage site and deemed to become a memorial complex which might include a museum. Debates and discussions on its form and content animated the civil society, the state and the Orthodox Church for more than a decade without reaching a consensus due to the shift in the memorialization process of the Soviet era operated by Putin administration. The civil society aims at creating a site of a dialogue of national memories emerging out of the diversity of victims (p. 325) while the state and the Church wants to transform the place of "violence and grief into sacred site" (p. 324). As Julie Fedor and Tomas Sniegon points

out in their article, 'The Butovskii Shooting Range, History of an Unfinished Museum', the memory competition around this site "reflects the symbiosis of Church and state, the Church privileged position, and the ongoing slow crushing of secular civil society in Russia" (p. 327).

The chapter dealing with 'The Museum of Soviet Arcade Games. Nostalgia for a Socialist Childhood', by Roman Abramov, emphasizes another perspective on the Soviet past, one which aligns itself with nostalgia and retroculture. The author states that this type of nostalgia has emerged in Russia in the late '90s and early 2000s and it is most common among the young, people who were born at the end of the '80s beginning of the '90s. It can be detected also in the creation of "so-called folk museums on the socialist way of life. Such museums weave together the cultural elements of nostalgia and its commercial motives and provide a form of entertainment" (p. 346). Roman Abramov also noticed that this type of nostalgia can be found in the novels of Haruki Murakami, which explore "the painful inaccessibility of even the recent past, and the trauma caused by rapid changes in surrounding circumstances and technologies" (p. 362). Murakami's perspective might also explain the interest took by the young Russians in the Arcade Machines of the soviet era, which do not symbolize, in Abramov view, a 'lost past' but rather, as in Murakami's novel, "a means of coping with the present and one's place in the current moment, with the recent past employed as a litmus test" (p. 363).

The last part of the volume is dealing with 'Rotating Exhibits', namely with museums which changed their narrative through time depending on the political,

social or cultural context. The case studies analyzed are the Joseph Stalin State Museum in Gori (Georgia), and The Museum of Occupations/The Museum of Freedom (Vabamu) in Tallinn. The first museum "displays ambiguity and room for interpretation rather than truth and certainty about the area of history it seeks to objectively and univocally represent" (p. 378). If the first case study emphasizes the importance of the political context in museum creation and displaying, the second one echoes the changes that occur in the societies over times. The Museum of Occupations in Tallinn was founded as a private museum dealing with the Russian, Nazi and Soviet occupations, opened in 2003. The museum was seen as "a monument or a tombstone for the many people who have not returned" and "a place where those who were repressed by the Soviets can come and reflect on their own fate" (p. 416). Despite the interest among foreign visitors and former persecuted people, according to statistics, this narrative did not appeal to young people who did not experienced the occupations. Therefore, the creators of the museum decided to re-organize the museum in order to attract younger audience. The museum shifted focus from foreign occupations to freedom which is also reflected into the new name of the institution, the Museum of Freedom or Vabamu (a mash-up of vabadus, freedom in Estonian, and muuseum). The new museum was re-opened in 2018, the permanent exhibition "focuses on the

occupations, resistance, recovery, and freedom”³⁶⁰.

The number of case studies presented in the volume and the topics discussed by various authors made the book a valuable contribution both to museum and to memory studies in Central and Eastern Europe. It emphasizes the importance of memory and memorial items in creating new narratives about the past in the region. Furthermore, it outlines the role played by the public and private actors in selecting the memories to be displayed in the public space and to be passed on to new generations. However, this panorama is incomplete as the Bulgarian, Albanian and Romanian museums are left aside, although they could contribute to a better understanding of the memory politics of the region.

If we look at the Romanian case, the Sighet Memorial provides a different perspective on museums dealing with communist past. As I argued elsewhere, “The museum of Sighetul Marmăției surpasses its traditional role, and attempts to become a prestigious memorial enterprise whose mandate is to articulate not only a repressed memory, but to facilitate justice for the victims it represents. Sighet “museumises” the Communist period according to a holistic perspective in its representation of communism as a repressive and illegitimate regime. The history of the entire period is described as a confrontation between Good and Evil where Good eventually triumphed. The museum is the expression of this victory, and consequently it stages the winners’

version of the 44 years of communism in Romania. ... Moreover, it bring honor to the country, drawn from those individuals who suffered there, and makes a plea to society, that it should neither forget such inhumanity nor allow it to be repeated”³⁶¹.

Reference:

Dobre, C.-F. 2014. “Communism at the Museum: Staging Memory at the Sighet Memorial”, in I. Skorzynska, Chr. Lavrence (ed.). *Performing the Past: Post-Communist Poland and Romania*. Poznan: Instytut Historii UAM, p. 27-53.

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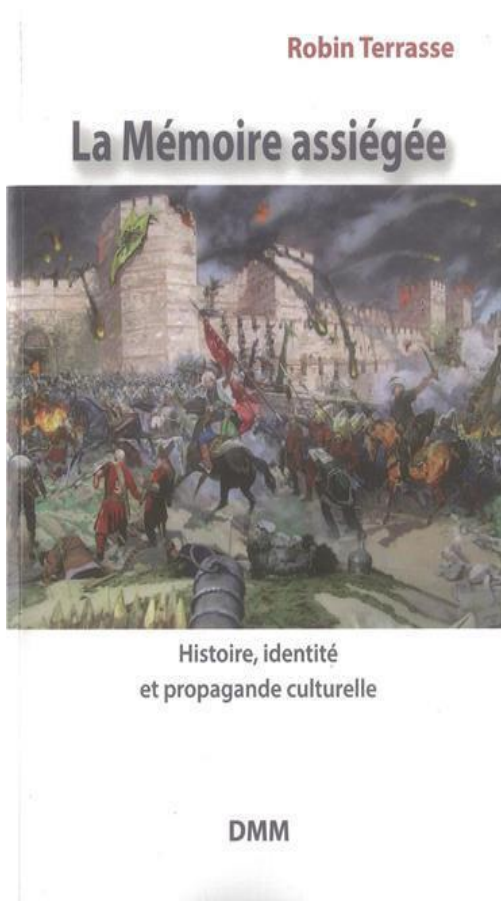
<https://www.vabamu.ee/about-the-museum> (retrieved in September 2020).

³⁶¹ Dobre (2014), 50-51.

Book Presentation

**by
Laura Ene**

Robin Terasse, *La Mémoire assiégée. Histoire, identité et propagande culturelle*, Édition Dominique Martin Morin, Poitiers, DMM, 2017, 420 p.



Robin Terasse wrote this book to ask questions and propose answers in the context of cultural propaganda in France, which promotes miscegenation and immigration as solutions for transforming France, Europe and the world into spaces of tolerance, free of hatred and conflict. The author notices that all this propaganda rests on a truncated and unbalanced collective memory, which forgets some historical processes and

facts, ignores some evidence, in order to obsessively remember others instead.

The volume is divided into two "books": Book One (History Rewritten) and Book Two (Europe Regenerated). Each of these "books" is divided into parts and chapters, followed by an Epilogue. The first book deals with instrumentalization of memory that, in a broad historical perspective, highlights the current history. Thus, the five parts of Book One recall Europe's centuries-old struggle with invaders from Asia: the Persian Empire, the barbarian invasions and the Hun Empire, the Arab-Muslim Empire, the Turko-Mongols.

The first chapter analyzed an episode, which refers to the confrontation between the Persian Empire and the Greeks. The Median wars are seen as a showdown between Europe and Asia, a sort of prelude to future clashes between the two continents. The battles of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis underline the strength of the Greeks, which came from their ethnic homogeneity and attachment to their homeland. The Greeks won, despite their glaring numerical inferiority, and the Persians were defeated, Europe holding its own against the demographic immensity and ethnic diversity of Asia. The author notes that this numerical

inferiority will constantly put the Europeans in situations where they will have to innovate, be creative and dynamic, always looking for technical progress and continuously perfecting their art of war. Europeans will fight to keep their territories threatened by their neighbors, closer or more distant.

The second topic addressed was that of the barbarian invasions, the Hunnic invasion in particular. In fact, the author is interested in two major themes: that of the barbarian invasions seen as the real cause of the collapse of the Roman Empire, but also the theme of the arrival of the Huns, which opened the period of Turco-Mongol invasions in Europe.

The author analyzes the ideology adopted by the Romanian state through the lens of the immigration phenomenon. Roman authorities showed interest in barbarian immigrants for economic, military, and demographic reasons. Not interested in preserving the ethnic homogeneity of the empire's population, the Roman government believed, on the contrary, that the Empire should assimilate these barbarians who admired the Roman world. The success of this integration would have been proof of the prestige of the Roman Empire. As the Roman administration proved unable to quickly assimilate a huge number of barbarians, the state collapsed.

As for the invasion of the Huns, a Turco-Mongol people who invaded Europe in the 4th century and founded an empire under the leadership of Attila, they came to dominate the barbarian world, endangering Romanity, saved in

extremis by the general Aetius, "the last Roman", who defeated Attila in the battle of the Catalaunic Plains, in 451. Thus, the West will crystallize through the appropriation of Romano-Germanic civilization, and not through a Germano-Asiatic civilization, the Franks taking over and carrying on the idea of Romanity in this part of Europe, as a result of another major event such as the Christianization of King Clovis, in 498, a founding act that led to the birth of the Catholic Kingdom of France. The Franks became Romanized, took over the Latin language and the Roman culture, becoming at the same time the depositories of the imperial memory.

The Arab invaders continued the series of confrontations between Europe and Asia. The author makes a true chronicle of the Arab invasions, highlighting the essential difference between Christianity and Islam: Christianity aimed at conversion, while Islam aimed at conquering nations in the name of Allah. The Arabs conquer territories in the East and North Africa, exhausting the two great powers of the time, the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire. In this context of the Arab expansion, the author brings to the attention of the reader a forgotten event, which memory has not retained, namely the Battle of Toulouse in 721, in which the Duke of Aquitaine stopped the Muslim invasion of Galia. The Arabs settled down south of the Pyrenees, and the Muslim occupation of the Iberian Peninsula will last eight centuries. They will also take possession of Sicily, which will become

an Arab colony for three centuries. In this context, Robin Terasse draws attention to a false model of consensus and tolerance, Al-Andalus or Muslim Spain. The facts regarding the two groups that lived in that space - the natives and the Muslims - shows that a happy synthesis between them was not achieved and that, on the contrary, they experienced an economic, political and cultural segregation. The Arabs became the majority in many Iberian cities, they imposed their language, customs, and habits.

Arab civilization and Islam were often idealized, and this functioned as a tool in attacking European civilization. In reality, Arab-Muslim society was racist and slave-holding. Arabic literature offers many examples of a racist culture, and in the 1400 years of Islam's existence, the Arab-Muslims enslaved about 16 million people, 2 million whites and 14 million blacks. Human trafficking across the Atlantic by Europeans lasted only 150 years, that of Muslims lasted over 1200 years. Some Arab states had an economy based on international slavery, with African slaves being sold as far away as India and China. Arab-Muslim human trafficking in Africa caused a minimum of 36.75 million victims, a maximum of 85 million victims between the 7th and 20th centuries. However, the author observes, the genocide caused by Arab-Muslims in Africa is underestimated, while white Europeans were taught to condemn their history and ancestors, considered persecutors and criminals. It seems to have been forgotten that Europeans have also been victims of Muslim human

trafficking. Arab raids in European countries captured and enslaved about 1.25 million Europeans between 1530-1780.

The author also deals with the history of African imperialisms, their practices regarding slavery and their responsibility towards the Atlantic slave trade. The analysis demonstrates that the historical vision of a non-imperialist and always victimized Africa is false. On this false vision rests the identification of Africans with the "victim people" and Europeans with the "executioner people". The author compiles a long list of African states - kingdoms and empires - characterized by the desire for power and conquest, therefore imperialist. In conclusion, Africans resembled Arabs and Europeans in these characteristics, as well as in the use of forced slave labor. The slave trade along the coasts of Africa was only possible with the complicity of African partners, sometimes members of the elites. The author notes that if money has no smell, slavery has no color, so Romans sold Gauls, Franks sold Slavs, Saxons sold Celts, Arabs and Turks sold Africans, etc.

Turco-Mongol invasions exerted pressure on the peoples of Eurasia for two millennia, between the 2nd century B.C. and the 18th, even the 19th century. Central Asia, located quite far from Europe, influenced the destiny of the old continent, so that we can speak of a Eurasian history. Turkish and Arab civilizations met in Central Asia, the Turks converted to Islam and put their military force in its service. One by one,

the Avars, the Bulgarians, the Hungarians, the Khazars, the Mongols (populations of the Turkic civilization group), the Turks rushed over Europe. These invasions were continuous and successive, in the east-west direction and exerted pressure on the Europeans, at the same time contributing to the formation of European nations (Bulgarian, Hungarian). Any of the European conquest can not compare to the longevity of Asiatic empires in Europe. The success of the Mongol invasion of Europe is relevant. The Mongols were able not only to subjugate a population, but even to cause it to become extinct. The examples used as arguments in the volume are particularly convincing: the Mongols occupied the Russian city of Ryazan in six days, executed Prince Yuri, strangled half of the city's population, and burned the other half alive; from 50,000 inhabitants, as many as Kiev had before the invasion, it came to count only 200 homes in 1246. The Tatars retreated to Asia, but left behind a state, the Golden Horde, with which the Russians would fight for centuries. During the battles with the Mongols and the Tatars of the Golden Horde, Russia broke free and expanded, becoming a world power. It was only in the 19th century that Asia ceased to be a danger to Europe.

However, the Turko-Tatar populations caused problems for Russia in the 20th century as well, when they tried to create an independent state, Idel-Ural, heir to the Golden Horde. Robin Terasse demonstrates how, in the context of the Cold War, the US Congress

passed a law in 1959 affirming the support of oppressed nations by the US, and the Idel-Ural state is mentioned in the text of the law. The author's conclusion considers, again, how collective memory works, which has forgotten the centuries-old struggle of the Russians with the Mongol oppressor, instead retaining and justifying Turko-Mongol separatism.

The Turks also tried to conquer Europe, but they did not follow the steppe road, like the Mongols, but the one from the Middle East and Asia Minor. The Seljuk Turks asserted their power in Asia in the 11th century. They proclaimed the Caliphate in Baghdad in 1058, then defeated the Byzantine Empire and seized its territories. Europe's answer came from Pope Urban II, who organized the Crusades against the Turks. The Christians fought the Seljuk Turks for two centuries, delaying their advance into Europe and the conquest of Constantinople. The Turks resumed their way to Europe in the 14th century, the consequences of the Ottoman invasion being significant: massive depopulation, changes in ethnic configurations, the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the siege of Vienna in two rows. The Europeans united against the Ottomans, but the Crusades did not have the expected results. Only, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War put an end to the power of the Ottomans, in 1923 the Republic of Turkey was proclaimed, and in 1924 the caliphate was abolished.

The author also addresses the subject of Tatar-Muslim slavery, the area concerned being that of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The traditional nomadic culture, which considered the sedentary people inferior to the nomads, was the basis of the white traffic carried out by the Turks and Tatars in this space. Already from the 14th century, European subjects were handing over every first-born male in every family to the Muslims. These children were converted to Islam, indoctrinated and sent to fight against their Christian brothers. Muslim raids were also frequent in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and continued for hundreds of years. Again, the estimated figures are compelling: between 1482 and 1760, some 2.5 million Ukrainians, Poles, and Russians were enslaved by the Turks; the number of victims of Muslim trafficking in this region of Europe amounted to 5 million; a single raid could enslave 100,000 Europeans in the 17th century. So the Muslim-sponsored European slave trade was massive, and the consequences were extremely painful.

Europeans fought for centuries against these invasions, then against human trafficking and slavery. European military and diplomatic pressures led to the progressive abolition of slavery in African, Arab, Turkish societies. Slavery practices were deeply rooted in the culture of these states, which is why they persisted for a long time. A comparison between Asia/Africa and Europe is suggestive in this regard. Turkey finally abolished slavery only in 1889, but when

Sultan Abdul Hamid II abdicated in 1908, there were still 370 women and 127 eunuchs in his harem. Mauritania, an African state, abolished slavery in 1960, then in 1981, but in 1994 there were still 90,000 private slaves living there. In France, King Louis X abolished slavery on July 3, 1315.

Robin Terasse underlines how memory besieged by ideology condemns not the millennial "Asianization" of the world, but the criminal "Westernization" of the world, which the white man unleashed in the 16th century. Condemned, in fact, is Europe's struggle for survival and the fact that the old continent succeeded in reversing the millennial movement of Asia's westward advance. The author proposes rediscovering the history of Europe, in order to understand and find out the working mechanisms of this ideology that led to the situation where a European cannot claim his white identity without feeling guilty, without hating himself.

The author reviews the great ideologies of the XIX-XX centuries and analyzes them from the perspective of the ideological mechanism and the idea of sacredness: the ideology of the Illuminism; the ideology of the French Revolution; racism; liberal-Darwinism; socialism; nationalism; fascism; Nazism. To compare different ideological mechanisms, the author uses a scheme that requires answers to the following questions: What is the receptacle of sacredness?; What exactly should regenerate?; What impurity prevents regeneration?; What is the necessary

sacrifice? For example, in the case of socialism, the receptacle of sacredness is Science/Party (in communist socialism); primordial Equality must be regenerated; this regeneration is hindered by the liberal, capitalist, traditional, reactionary forces that oppose the Party; all who oppose the proclaimed truth must be sacrificed.

Robin Terasse dwells on the ideological transformations of the second half of the 20th century, which bring to the fore a new idol, the ideology of miscegenation, according to which the absolute man is invested with the sacredness of miscegenation, having the mission of ensuring the reign of Reason, through miscegenation and immigration. Mixed or multi-ethnic societies are presented as ideal societies, and the loss of white identity and homogeneity in some regions of Europe is presented as an element of progress. Using the same scheme, Robin Terasse identifies the Metis/Other as the receptacle of sacredness. In this case, Europe/World/society must regenerate, free itself from hatred and conflicts. Rejecting immigration prevents this regeneration, and as for the necessary sacrifice, borders, white identity, old patterns (heterosexual and Catholic white man, paternalistic, etc.) should be sacrificed.

In conclusion, the author observes that miscegenation is proposed as a savior and humanistic, totalizing, civilizing project, but it also prefigures itself to be a vector of future conflicts, of tensions caused by resentments and

ethnic tensions, in the context of massive immigration.

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This issue of *MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies*, entitled “Everyday Life in the Black Sea Region: Agency and Social Structures”, was edited by Maria Mateoniu-Micu.

MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies explores the construction of the memorial cultures and the various forms of identity (individual, collective, social, cultural, etc.) that may be discerned in any society. It focuses primarily on European communities, but also looks towards other continents, when comparative approaches seem promising. The Journal explores a range of topics, such as the connections between communicative and cultural memory; myths (as elements of cultural memory); the process of patrimonialization and museification from a “longue durée” perspective. It aims at giving a new impetus to the study of the modern and post-modern social imaginary of Europe, and the Black Sea Region.

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