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**Translating and Analysing
Songs:
Three Songs in the Context of
Communist Romania**



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Translating and Analysing Songs: Three Songs in the Context of Communist Romania

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- about the song, who composed,
wrote and sang it

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Abstract:

Songs were the means used by the Communist Party – the only party in Communist Romania, 1946-1989 – to ‘educate’ the Romanian people. Through them, Romanians were told what they had to appreciate, how grateful they were supposed to be to the regime for the life they were having, how intelligent and how great their President Ceausescu was and how they had to work harder and harder so that they could be even better Communists.

This paper comprises the translation of three songs composed, performed and broadcast in Communist Romania and their analysis from the point of view of communication.

The first song is about the exemplary life of a young woman who later in life turns out to be a good wife, mother, friend and housewife.

The second song was meant to boost Romanians’ supposed eagerness to work harder in order to accomplish the targets set by the five-year plan in a shorter period of time.

The third song praises one of the technical achievements Ceausescu was so fond of – the canal that links the Danube River to the Black Sea. It was constructed with the bare hands of thousands of political prisoners.

In translating the song, I have chosen to translate closest to the original possible meaning and meanwhile to respect to the best of my ability Low’s ‘pentathlon principle’: singability, rhyme, rhythm, naturalness and fidelity to the sense of the source text.

In order to enrich the analysis and to put it in a chronological perspective, I also made up two different sets of questionnaires, one in English and one in Romanian, which were answered by eight Romanian people (in Romanian) and by eight other people of different nationalities (in English). With the help of

these questionnaires, I analysed the retrospective view these eight Romanian people (most of them in their early 60's) have on the songs analysed and the view eight other people, of different nationalities, have on the bare texts, out of any historical context.

Why were these songs composed? Who composed them? Who for? What were they communicating? Are they still communicating? What? To whom? Did they manage to get their message across in those days? Do they still do so? Were they popular or not? Have they been forgotten or not after the Communist regime came to an end in 1989?

These are some of the questions this paper tries to address.

Key words:

- translating songs, communism, ideology

1. Introduction

Singing and songs are among the universal pleasures that all human beings share. They make people happy, sad, euphoric, they accompany them at all times, through all sorts of events. People listen to them in order to enhance or reduce emotions, whatever those emotions may be. What all people have in common is that they listen to songs because they want to. It is a voluntary act. One of the many cruelties of the Romanian communism regime was to destroy this simple pleasure and to turn it into an obligation, a burden to carry – some of them were really catchy, a way to indoctrinate people, a torture ever-present on the radio and the TV channel. A crime which has not been judged yet.

Since the 1989 Revolution, a lot of literature on communism has been produced in Romania. Although there will never be a trial for communists like the Nuremberg one for the Nazis, at least in Romania, witnesses, historians, ex-political prisoners, political scientists, journalists and writers have been giving accounts for and investigating the crimes that were committed in those days and have started to give shape to its records in order to identify the guilty ones - people and ideas. There is a collection called 'Procesul comunismului' (The Trial of Communism') by one of the most important publishing houses in Romania, 'Humanitas', which has already published a number of books, there is a website with the same name, there is an institute named 'Institutul de investigare a crimelor comunismului în România' (The Institute for Investigating the Crimes and Murders of Communism in Romania), the next academic year a new master's course about Communism in Romania starts and the present president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, publicly condemned Communism in 2006. He commissioned a comprehensive study of the communist years to a team of specialists. The result of their investigation was published with the title: *Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România - Raport final* (The Presidential Commission for the analysis of the Communist dictatorship in Romania – Final Report).

The introduction to the book is the speech President Bănescu gave on December 26th 2006 in the Parliament of Romania and was published in the governmental gazette*. These are all ways of healing.

There are two main tones to be found in these publications or websites: bitter or scientific. Political prisoners' experience of work camps or prisons, that of relatives about dead relatives either in prisons, as a result of illegal abortions performed in poor medical conditions or in the 1989 Revolution, lives ruined because people were unable to follow their studies because they came from what the regime considered to be 'bourgeois' families ... they are testimonies which range from death to lesser horrors. There is bound to be bitterness. A more scientific approach is found in investigations and statistics.

By choosing to analyse songs in the context of communist Romania, I intended to consider a lighter approach - if possible - to those very recent atrocities. Some things were so absurd, they actually became funny. Having lived only 14 years under communism, I wasn't affected as much as was an adult by it; I was however old enough to see, understand and remember things.

There are so many crimes to investigate and so many things still to be discovered about what communism did in Romania that nobody has probably considered yet the songs we were being intoxicated with during the very few

* This is the beginning of the speech: 'Ne întrunim azi pentru a închide, cu deplină responsabilitate, un capitol sumbru din trecutul țării noastre. Am citit cu mare atenție Raportul final al Comisiei prezidențiale pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România. *Am găsit în acest document rațiunile pentru care pot condamna regimul comunist.* Pentru cetățenii României, comunismul a fost un regim impus de un grup politic autodesemnat ca deținător al adevărului, *un regim totalitar născut prin violență și încheiat tot prin violență.* A fost un regim de opresiune, care a expropriat poporul roman de cinci decenii de istorie modernă., care a călcat în picioare legea și a obligat cetățenii să trăiască în minciună și frică.' ('We are meeting today in order to close once and forever, and fully aware of the implications, a dark chapter in the history of our country. I have carefully read the Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. I have found in this document the very reasons for which I can condemn the communist regime. For the citizens of Romania, the Communist one was a regime imposed by a political group self-appointed as the one and only holder of truth, a totalitarian regime born through violence and ended in violence. It was an oppressive regime, which expropriated the Romanian people of five decades of modern history, which laughed at the law and made its citizens live in fear and lies.')

hours of TV and radio broadcast there were. Compared to the serious issues mentioned above, these are only little things. Nevertheless, I considered they deserve attention.

These songs - *Țărăncuță, țărăncuță, Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate, Magistrala albastră* - have been haunting me after I got the chance to hear them again. I had forgotten the lyrics, so I listened to them again; I got instantly hooked. It was my childhood revisited but with the eyes of an adult. Translating them here and analysing them in the context of Communist Romania is the purpose of this paper.

Why have I chosen these three songs and not others? As I shall argue later in this paper, these songs are a little handbook to the values of 'the new man', as seen by the Communist regime. All key aspects of life are included in these songs: family and relationships, work and values that glue a community together (love for the country, national pride, feeling of belonging to the community).

In order to shed a different light on the songs I have also included two questionnaires, one in Romanian and one in English, and the answers I obtained to these two questionnaires. They have been answered by eight people each, the Romanian one by eight Romanian adults, with ages between 59 and 68, and the English one, by the same number of people, with ages ranging from 42 to 55, and of different nationalities (one from Venezuela, one from Catalonia, two from the USA, three from the UK and one from the Czech Republic). The purpose of the Romanian questionnaire was to discover the feelings, attitudes and reactions, several adults would have when confronted again, 20 years after the Revolution of 1989, with the same songs they used to hear, listen to or simply be exposed to during the Communist years whereas the purpose of the one I did in English was to record the second group of people's reactions to the songs, namely to the bare text (the translations I made in English), without any context and without giving them any previous information regarding the content of the songs. I wanted to see what the songs communicated to them.

2. Historical context

– The two periods of Communist Romania - 1948-1989

'And the things that were to come are too appalling not to tell ...'

after Jack Kerouac

Communism, this dark period of the history of Romania, started after the Second World War in which Romania had had an ambiguous position: at the beginning, on the German side (the king was a Hohenzollern, a German dynasty) and in the last year of the war, on that of the Allies. On August 23rd 1944, with the Red Army (the 'Liberating Army' as it was baptised during the Communist regime) on its territory, King Michael declared war on Germany and allowed Marshal Antonescu's (supporter of the Germans) arrest. In less than 3 years, in 1947, King Michael was forced to abdicate thus starting the communist period of power in Romania. The name of the country was changed to the 'People's Republic of Romania' (Republica Populară Română) and later on, changed by Ceaușescu, to the 'Socialist Republic of Romania' (Republica Socialistă România). 'Free elections' took place in 1948 and the communist party was declared winner. It would stay that way until 1989, a state very much helped by the complete lack of any alternative. Slowly but surely, all other parties and politicians were to be eliminated from what had been the political life of the country leaving room for a period of single party rule for the next 40 years.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej - 1948-1965

*'Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow'
T.S.Eliot – The Hollow Men*

The first president of the party and of socialist Romania was **Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej** from **1948 to 1965**. At the beginning of his rule he obediently applied the Stalinist model, economically, politically and culturally.

The Stalinist economic model implied nationalisation of all individually owned property. Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej started this process immediately after the 1948 elections. First, he nationalised the factories, the banks and insurance companies. Then the cinemas, the health centres, the pharmacies. And then the houses, the private clinics, the restaurants and the shops. By the end of the 1950`s, everything had been nationalised.

Another key issue was the collectivisation of agriculture. This meant that all individually owned land automatically became state-owned; the peasants became simple labourers. This measure only made the peasants poor and encouraged stealing from the now state-owned land. The 1949-1953 period was extremely hard for Romanian peasants (it has been estimated that some 80,000 peasants were imprisoned or deported during this period). In 1962, with 96% of the land in the hands of state cooperatives, the process of collectivisation was considered completed.

In those years, Romania had yet to suffer the economic plague of Soviet-Romanian joint ventures, the so called SovRoms, through which the Soviet Union had the legal right to take Romanian resources out of the country. There were SovRoms for petrol, banking, transport, wood processing, natural gas,

insurance, coal, the chemical industry, construction materials, iron extraction, oil refining equipment, shipbuilding and the last, but not least, there was the famous SovRomcuart, which officially was exploiting quartz, but in truth, using political prisoners, was exploiting uranium ore. Needless to say, most of the workforce died as a result of radiation. The SovRoms would come to an end in 1956 because of the growing split and the worsening relationships between the Soviet Union and Romania.

Once the regime felt more secure and stronger in its position, it considered the time had come for the industrialisation of the whole country. The purpose was to transform Romania from a mainly agricultural country to an industrial one. Thus, the biggest investments were made in iron works, car manufacturing, chemical, energy and metallurgic industries.

At least on paper, life had improved for Romanians. But not to be forgotten are the suffering and the high price they had to pay for it. Technically, the population was eating better than before, but in fact, for many years, all food products were 'rationed'. In effect, the amounts given were absolutely minimum and, more often than not, in any case, not available.

In order to apply the Stalinist political model - dictatorship of the proletariat, single party rule and construction of 'the new person' and 'the new socialist society' - Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej had to 'cleanse' the country of 'the rotten apples'. Those who died in communist prisons or labour camps were not exclusively bourgeois. They were mainly the previous political and intellectual elite, the so-called Romanian bourgeoisie, but also priests of all denominations, disobedient peasants, students and soldiers. This task was made easy by the founding of the much feared (particularly in the latest years of Ceauşescu's regime) Securitate in 1948. All those disobedient people were either physically exterminated, either worked to death (the construction of the Danube-Black Sea canal is famous for this, we shall talk about it later in this paper) or deported from their homes to uninhabited areas and left without anything (the Bărăgan plain was an ideal place for that as it was a huge unfriendly dry and, at the time, a largely uninhabited area). It was not a particular population segment the

regime was against, it was against anyone who was against or a potential threat to the regime. The title of the first chapter of *The Black Book of Communism*, that about the Soviet Union, could well be applied to the Romanian communist regime too: 'A state against its people.'

The Stalinist cultural model had the same purpose: the construction of 'the new person', a 'Romanian homo sovieticus'. Once all 'rotten apples' were annihilated, it was time to take care of the spiritual and cultural side of the people. Re-writing history was an important point in this enterprise: suddenly, new histories proliferated in which the main element was the closeness Romanians and Russians had always enjoyed and greatly minimising the Latin character of the Romanian language and culture. As part of the same plan, a publishing house ('*Cartea Rusă*' - the Russian book), the Institute of Romanian-Soviet studies, the Romanian-Soviet Museum and the Russian Language Institute were founded. It was also compulsory to learn Russian at school, from the age of 10 until the third year at university, for some 10 years. The Romanian language itself had to suffer a spelling reform in order to bring it closer to her 'sister', the Russian language (all words spelled with â had to be spelled with î as â was of Latin origin and î of Slav origin as it was considered in those days).

But after Stalin's death in 1953, things started to change. The new leader of the Soviets, Khrushchev, would have liked to change all the Stalinist leaders of the satellite republics and to start the process of deStalinisation. He succeeded everywhere except in Romania. Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej could see what was coming and shrewdly annihilated all possible successors to his position, who might have been suitable from the new point of view of Moscow. Thus, in 1955, he first spoke of 'the Romanian way of building socialism'. The two leaders greatly differed on another important issue: *Consiliul de Ajutor Economic Reciproc* (the Council of Mutual Economic Aid - created in 1949 by the Soviet Union as an alternative to the European Community). Khrushchev's view on the role Romania would play in the Council was very different from that of the Romanian leader. The Council would have liked a division of labour between the north and the south, between the industrialised countries (such as the Soviets and Czechoslovakia) and the developing agricultural countries

(such as Romania and Bulgaria). Bulgaria accepted the deal, but this position was totally opposed to that of the Romanian leader whose dreams were of an industrial Romania. This point of friction only worsened the already tense relations between Bucharest and Moscow. Thinking perhaps that Romania would only obey, in 1958 Khrushchev agreed to call the Red Army back from Romanian territories. Without the pressure of a potential menacing force, the Romanian leader broke off almost all engagements Romania had with the Soviet Union.

Ignoring the restrictions on dealings with the Western world demanded by the Soviet Union, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej also encouraged economic relationships with the West, thus increasing the distance between Romania and the Soviet Union. In the early 60's Romania began to be seen by the Western powers as a true political and economic interlocutor compared to the other communist countries which were merely obeying Moscow.

Moreover, a sudden deRussianisation period started in 1963 mainly undoing all the initiatives taken in previous years. So, the Romanian-Soviet Museum and all the other institutions were closed, the streets and cinemas named after Russian heroes - mainly Communist heroes - were changed and even the Romanian spelling went back to its more Latin appearance.

Some of the 'old' intellectuals were also socially 'rehabilitated'. The 'dosar' (dossier with personal details and background information such as family origin, political opinions and contacts) began to lose importance thus allowing a better reintegration of the black-listed people in jobs and positions of more responsibility and intellectual importance.

Compared to the 1950's, the situation was looking up. Romania had more independence from the Soviet Union than any of the other communist countries, it had different opinions on the international scene and contacts with the Western world rather frowned upon by Moscow.

In 1965, rather unexpectedly, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej died. Chosen some time before (in the late 1950's) by Dej himself, a new leader was on his way: Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Nicolae Ceaușescu - 1965-1989

*“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sand stretch far away.”*
Shelley (*Sonnets, Ozymandias*)

There were two rather distinct phases in Ceaușescu's rule; the first one comprised the period between 1965 and 1974, of relative welfare and even timid freedom, and the second one, 1974-1989, of neoStalinism; fear; drastic measures against the population; megalomania and personality cult; repression and lies.



(www.ceausescu.org) This is probably his best-known photograph and the one that was everywhere. All schoolbooks had it on the front page.

Starting from 1965, Nicolae Ceaușescu - a shoemaker's apprentice who came from a poor peasant family - became Gheorghiu Dej's successor to the leadership of both the country and the party. Although this was against the decisions made in 1967 at the 9th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, little by little, Ceaușescu managed to assume both positions. In the second

period of his rule, this achievement was to be of the greatest importance in allowing him to behave as he pleased.

At the beginning of his rule, he continued the same policy started by his predecessor, of relative independence from the Soviet Union, in terms of foreign policy, promoting rather liberal measures in the country. He re-latinised the name of the country, from Romînia to România, liberated a number of political prisoners and allowed restaurants to open, people to own their houses and the role of the 'dosar' to diminish. But his biggest improvements in this period were in terms of culture and education. The Russian language requirement disappeared almost completely and more international languages started to be taught instead, English, French and German. He even allowed high school education in the medium of one of these languages. History was left alone without being further manipulated and the much hated sociology re-appeared in the university syllabus. Writers of true value were promoted instead of only party people.

In the late 1960`s, Romania was visited by de Gaulle and Nixon, the country was exporting most of its products to Western countries and not to the Soviet Union as in the 1950's, and Romania was the only country which had signed the Warsaw pact and which refused to invade disobedient Czechoslovakia in 1968.



(www.ceaurescu.org)

Such measures obviously made Ceaușescu popular nationally and internationally.

But, at the beginning of the 1970's, things began to change dramatically. Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej's dream of transforming Romania into a mainly industrial country was taken further by his successor. Ceaușescu started investing most of the country's money in heavy industry, mainly in the iron and steel; the industry and petrol chemistry completely ignoring Romania's lack of

sufficient resources (see Appendix 1, 2, 3). The ambitious targets set for the five-year plan 1976-1980 couldn't be reached either by industry or agriculture. Most of the raw materials had to be imported. Running the huge plants that had been built in Galați and Călărași was costing the country a fortune, particularly after the petrol crisis of the mid-1970's.

Because the rulers were concentrating mainly on industry and very little on agriculture, the country began to suffer chronic food crises. Peasants were forced to declare all the domestic animals they had and to sell them for the very low prices the cooperatives were willing to pay. Most of them moved to the new 'towns' in order to work in factories. This resulted in a lack of workforce in agriculture (see Appendix 4). The problem was solved by calling on the army, the schools, the universities and other institutions to work the fields. As the Party had put it, the peasants had to be intellectuals and the intellectuals, peasants. Furthermore, in order to gain better control over the population, the Party made it difficult for workers to move from one factory to another or to change towns.

The regime was not only inept in governing the country and to make the right decisions in order to make its citizens happy. It was also cruel. While grocers', butchers', dairy products shops and the so-called 'supermagazine' (the translation would be 'supermarkets', but this word would only give the wrong idea of what they were through the analogy with present European supermarkets) were empty and people were queuing for hours in order to get a taste of meat or oranges, photographs such as the one below were taken and broadcast on TV during the news programme, showing an abundance that Romanians certainly didn't experienced. A joke from those days goes like this:
Question: 'Why are they building shops 5 km away from each other?'
Answer: 'So that the queues won't get mixed.' (www.ceausescu.org)



(www.ceaurescu.org)

How was it possible for a country which had had some sort of reasonable quality of life not many years before to reach this level of poverty? An important part of the explanation lies in the bizarre personality cult Ceaușescu developed little by little. He first started by demoting those in the party who had different ideas from his until, eventually, he eliminated them from political life. Instead, he would promote obedient activists and his family. His wife, three of his brothers and other members of the family would be named ministers and hold important positions in the ministries of defence, agriculture, science and technology, communist youth and others. This lack of trust in outsiders was also reflected in the famous changes of minor but still important positions: 'rotirea de cadre', literally 'swapping of personnel'. These 'swaps', some two, three or even four times a year, starting from the late 1970's until the end of the regime, only had the effect of destabilising the little coherence there was left in managing an, by then, impoverished Romania.

He became the only president of a country to have a sceptre.



(www.ceausescu.org)

Having seen such an image of Ceaușescu's, Salvador Dalí mockingly sent him a telegram of congratulation for being the first president of a republic to have a sceptre. In order to describe Ceausescu's nepotism and his obsession with putting his family members in key positions in the government the term 'dynastic communism' was invented.

He was constantly called 'the genius of the Carpathians', 'the best son of the country' and after the village where he was born - Scornicești – the term 'homo scornicescus' was coined. He was put in line with the important rulers Romania had had. For example, in an official painting – see below, a gift for one of his birthdays, he is shown with Elena, both holding a glass of red wine. In front of them there is a painting representing Stephen the Great - an important ruler Moldavia had in the 15th century. Stephen the Great is also holding a

glass of red wine and his arm is protruding from the picture, just about to clink his glass against Ceaușescu's. Having such extraordinary attributes, there is little wonder he was listened to in all walks of agriculture, industry and culture. Little did it matter the fact he hadn't even finished high school.



(www.ceausescu.org)

Further aberrations went on: 'rational eating' - a yearly diet designed by the Party - was one of them. In 1981, due to chronic lack of food, the government had to re-introduce the food cards (which had been eliminated in 1954). So, bread, milk, sunflower oil, sugar and meat were 'rationed'. Moreover, in order to justify such measures, the population was told they were eating 'too much' and therefore, a rational eating programme was introduced. For instance, for year 1984 - sad coincidence with the novel with the same name - the recommended quantities per person were: 39 kg of meat, 78 kg of milk and dairy products, 66 kg of pulses and vegetables, 27 kg of fruit, 42 kg of potatoes. These amounts were much lower than those recommended 2 years before. The only things that were supposed to go up were soap and detergent consumption from 1 kg in 1980 to 1.9kg of soap and 3.5 kg of detergent in 1983.

Another one was the celebration of Romania's national day, 23rd August, the day when the 'Liberating' Red Army set foot in Romania in 1944. Because

things had to happen according to the five-year plans, by this date, every year, there was always something to be inaugurated. Unrealistic deadlines would create a most hilarious, nonetheless sad, situation: Ceaușescu would pass slowly in an official car through crowds of people (workers, students and whoever's turn it was) greeting him with slogans such as 'The Party, Ceaușescu, Romania', waving the red flag of the Party and other banners made for the occasion. He would wave back to the crowd and look in admiration at the new façades of blocks of flats... The façades, the parts he could see, were the only completed parts of the blocks. The view from behind was certainly very different, as there was a mere skeleton of the building.



(www.ceausescu.org)

The 80's saw more similarly absurd measures. Romanians would have to register typewriters with the police, phone conversations with the western world were limited, western guests had to reported to the police - they would questioned about the type of relationship with the westerner, length of stay, reasons for the visit ...

Education was now mixed with production, an impractical measure for the factories and disastrous for education as other subjects such as social sciences were eliminated from the syllabus. In order to be accepted at university, the future students needed to have a recommendation from UTC

(The Communist Youth Union) and the only way to be allowed to write a doctoral thesis was to have the official approval of a special commission dependent directly on the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Culturally, some shocking things began to take place. Culture, in general, and literature, in particular, became something to be planned, just as with industry. History became the main field in which the president, other members of the Party and of the family discovered they had things to say. Elena Ceaușescu, for instance, took a fancy to chemistry. She 'wrote' many books on the subject and even obtained a more than doubtful PhD in spite of the fact she hadn't even gone to secondary school. *



(www.ceaurescu.org) Here we find her depicted as a scholar.

*Elena's public life was made of manipulated information such as the creation of a false Ph.D., a political career thanks to the fact that she was the wife of Nicolae Ceausescu, and a eulogizing biased press. Elena Ceausescu had a poor education, she barely finished elementary school, but after her husband assumed power in Romania, she obtained a Ph.D. in Chemistry, became the head of ICECHIM, and was rewarded with vast foreign recognition. This would suggest that Elena was a serious scientist. However, after her execution in 1989, a former teacher of hers dared to show her flunky grades. At age 14 Elena dropped out of school after failing everything but needlework, singing, and gymnastics, and then moved with her brother to Bucharest and started working (Behr 67). In the capital she held a variety of unskilled jobs, yet she was not allowed to stay at any of them. At first Elena worked as a hired hand in a shabby laboratory, which some doctors and pharmacists had bought as a small apartment, producing pharmaceutical components such as slimming and headache pills. This was where her interest for chemistry arose. As this only was a temporary job, she soon began to work as a seamstress in a textile factory (Behr 68). In her free time Elena started to attend the meetings of the Young Communists' League, together with her brother, Gheorghe. At these meetings she met her soon-to-be husband Nicolae, an iron-fisted Stalinist. "She didn't seem too keen on the ideology, but enjoyed the company" (Behr 67). While Nicolae Ceausescu was beginning his rise in the PCR hierarchy, Elena worked as a secretary at the Foreign Affairs ministry, but due to her incompetence she was fired (Behr 140). This was her third unqualified job, and the second she was dismissed from, proving her lack of skills and education.

What did Romanians have to say? Some intellectuals and priests protested by writing letters asking for a more democratic rule. They were not many in number, which made it easy for the regime to marginalise and neutralise them. There were workers' protests as well. In August 1977, some 35,000 miners went on strike, but the authorities managed to put an end to it before it had time to spread. All other initiatives, such as creating unions, wouldn't survive either.

Therefore, the other escapes left were suicide and emigration. In 1979, Romania was the country with the highest suicide rate (66.5 out of 100,000 inhabitants), followed by Hungary, East Germany, Finland and Austria (Georgescu, 1992). Massive emigration started in the late 70's. The first people to go were those who had it easier, being of other origins: Germans, Jews, and Greeks. In order to make this a profitable business, the regime imposed a tax on emigration. For example, in 1983, a psychologist was asked for the sum of 23,700 US dollars: 3,700 for high school, 12,000 for university and 8000 for doctorate... This tax was eventually dropped after western governments put pressure on the Romanian dictator. Emigration was still business: West Germany would pay 8,000 Deutschmarks per emigrant (Georgescu, 1992).

In December 1989, at the last meeting Ceaușescu held in Bucharest to condemn the riots in Timișoara, for the very first time in many years, things did not go the way they had been planned. Instead of cheering and applauding obediently as usual, the crowd wouldn't let him talk. What followed put an end to a dictatorship which had led the country to distrust, suspicion and poverty. After a quick and dubiously legal trial, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu were shot on Christmas Day 1989.

It has been said that the Romanian Revolution of 1989 was started from abroad. It may well be the case; it is certainly not a coincidence that all communist regimes in Europe fell at, more or less, the same time. But it is also certain that Romanians could not bear that life anymore. Oscar Wilde puts it beautifully in his masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Ernest*: 'The truth is rarely pure and never simple.'

3. The three songs

Media was one way in which Romanians were intoxicated with the same messages over and over again. In the hands of the Communist Party, the only party there was, with no opposition, it became a powerful tool of the regime. The following is a typical TV programme schedule from the 80's when there were only two hours of broadcasting a day and just one channel:

- 19:53 The Communist National Anthem ('Trei culori')
- 19:57 The *Frontul Democrației și Unității Socialiste* ('Democracy and Socialist Unity Front', FDUS) Anthem ('E scris pe tricolor Unire')
- 19:59:30 Opening (clock)
- 20:00 News ('Teledin')
- 20:20 Special programs dedicated to Ceaușescu (documentary or musical shows)
- 21:00 An episode of a harmless series or a carefully chosen film (with censored kisses or anything that would be too exciting or thought-provoking)
- 21:50 News ('Teledin')
- 21:58 Closing ('Hora Unirii')

(A Romanian song-writer once composed a song with the following chorus: 'Astăzi iar/ La teledin/ Am văzut cașcaval' - 'Today again/ In the news/ I've seen cheese', because, at the time, cheese had become rare and luxurious.)



This was to be broadcast on Monday, 25th December, 1989. The C in the black square meant the programme was to be broadcast in colour, the rest in black and white. (See Appendix 5)

Source: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/TVR>

Later, the daily broadcast was increased to three hours per day during the week, from 19:00 to 22:00. With such choice, a lot of people, mainly those who lived closer to the borders, had aerials for getting signals from other TV channels: the Bulgarian or the Russian ones, far superior in choice and quality.

Given all the restrictions and the lack of money for buying anything else from the outside, the programmes on the Romanian television were bound to be repetitive. This was certainly not worrying the decision-makers of the day, if the message was the same, why change the way it was delivered? Therefore, the frequency with which the same songs or films or cartoons were broadcast, didn't matter.

Among others, three songs were broadcast and constantly repeated: *Țărâncuță, țărâncuță, Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate* and *Magistrala albastră*. The first one - 'Little Peasant, Little Peasant' - doesn't contain any obvious traces of ideology although it has a line convenient to the Party as will be shown later in this paper, the second one - 'A five-year in four and a half plan' - certainly does, urging Romanians to work harder, better and faster and the third one is a song of joy and celebration of a great achievement – the Blue Canal.

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

'Oh, honey ...
Picture me
Upon your knee,
With tea for two
And two for tea ...'
Doris Day – Tea for two

- Translation

<p>Când iese badea la cosit Iese și mândra la prășit Și la horă duminica E tot cu ochii după ea Și când e joc de alunel, Mândruța e tot lângă el.</p> <p>Păi țărăncuță cum e ea E drept că Bade i-ar plăcea Dar când îi caută vorba el Ea fuge și nu vrea de fel Dar într-o zi n-a mai răbdat Și i-a spus Badea supărat: "Țărăncuță, țărăncuță, Cu bujori în obrajori. De ce-mi cauți tu pricină? Vrei să uit că mi-ești vecină, Când îmi ții calea-n grădină Noaptea când e luna-n nor, Tocmai când e luna-n nor ? "Țărăncuță, țărăncuță, Cu fuiorul prins în brâu. Iți merge vestea de sfioasă Că te-ncui și ziua-n casă Dacă ziua ești fricoasă Ce cauți noaptea la pârâu ? Ce cauți noaptea la pârâu ? De data asta, măi fată, Zii bogdaproste c-ai scăpat Dar de te prind eu altădată Să știi că intru în păcat. "Țărăncuță, țărăncuță Cu bujori în obrajori. O să mă aduci în stare Să te prind de cingătoare Ziua în amiaza mare Să-mi dai fraga buzelor, Să-mi dai fraga buzelor."</p>	<p>Just when the farmer goes to mow That's when the Beauty goes to hoe And he can only take a chance, By going to the Sunday dance, And when they try the <i>alunel</i> She's always there to wish him well.</p> <p>A little peasant as she is She'd really love to be his miss, But when he tries to talk to her She runs away and says 'no more' But one day he had had enough And when he spoke came over rough: 'Peasant, peasant, little peasant Rosy cheeks make you so pleasant, Why don't you do me a favour? Just ignore I am your neighbour? When outside I feel your flavour? When the moon is in the clouds Just when it is in the clouds. 'Peasant, peasant, little peasant Jenny in hand you look so pleasant! Rumours are that you are so shy You're locked in, sun up in sky If shy when the sun is high? Why alone by the river? At night and without a shiver? This time, dear, it might have been So give God a nice big grin When next we meet it will have been I may not help it: simply sin. 'Peasant, peasant, little peasant Rosy cheeks make you so pleasant! You will make me lose my mind In the afternoon go blind, Come and hug you from behind Get a kiss I couldn't find, Otherwise I couldn't find.'</p>
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Ea fraga buzelor i-a dat
Și-apoi l-a luat și de bărbat
Și-apoi la nunta au jucat

Cu toți prietenii din sat
Și au mâncat și au băut,
Trei zile nunta a ținut.

Trecut-au ani și ani de-atunci
Și-acolo în satul dintre lunci
Gospodărie ca a lor
Și voie bună ca a lor
Nu mai găsești cât ai căuta
Nu mai găsești la nimenea.

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță,
Te-au nins florile de măr.
Nu mai ești tu tinerică
Dar ești încă frumușică
Și-ți stă bine ca mămică
Cu trei fire albe-n păr,
Cu trei fire albe-n păr.

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță,
Cine e ca tine-n sat?
Ai acum o fată mare
Și de ea ești mândră tare
Că-i din cap până-n picioare
Cum erai tu altădat',
Cum erai tu altădat'.
Păi să-ți trăiască fetița
Și să o vezi la casa ei.
Și să-ți traiască și Bădița
Și să vă văd cu nepoței.

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță,
Cu bujori în obrăjori.
Și ne mai făcuși, surată,
Doi băieți pe lâng-o fată
Ce vor crește mari odată
Mândri de măicuța lor,
Mândri de măicuța lor.

* alunel = lively Romanian dance

And so she kissed and married him
And this was much more than a whim
For then they ate and drank and
danced

And all this paradise enhanced
By presence of beloved friends
Three days they spent without
constraints.

Years went on without a shadow
And in the village from the meadow
A happy household such as theirs
Cheerfulness, love and many peers
Now matter how hard you would look
You wouldn't find for all it took

Peasant, peasant, little peasant
Your grey hair makes you so pleasant
You're no longer as you used to
But still beautiful, oh, how true!
Being mother so well suits you
Three grey hairs upon your head,
Three grey hairs upon your head.

Peasant, peasant, little peasant
Who's like you in all the present?
Now you have a charming daughter
Who does she in truth take after?
Makes you proud she's all to flatter
Just as you were in your youth,
Just as you were in your youth.
May your daughter live long now,
For you to see her home in truth!
May your man live long with you,
I hope to see grandchildren's youth!

Peasant, peasant, little peasant
Rosy cheeks make you so pleasant!
And you also gave birth, lady,
To boys after the girl baby
Who will grow up strong and steady,
Proud and prouder of their mummy,
Proud and prouder of their mummy.

- **About the song, who composed, wrote and sang it**

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță is a song from the 50's. Although sung by others, its most famous singer was Dan Spătaru. The music was composed by Ion Vasilescu (1903-1960), popular Romanian composer; the lyrics were written jointly by Mihai Maximilian, popular monologue and play writer, and Mirea Eugen, another playwright. It was part of the collectivisation campaign together with other songs about the 'new' Romanian country life: *Ilenuța Tractorista* (Helen, the tractor driver), *Marinică zis Codașul* (Georgy, the lazy one), *Drag îmi e bădița cu tractorul* (How I love him with the tractor).

Dan Spătaru was born in Aliman, Constanța in 1939 and died in Bucharest in 2004. He was an extremely popular singer in Romania who became well known during the communist regime years and managed to maintain his popularity well after it had ended, until his death. His drinking problem, his fight to solve it and his openness about it probably increased his popularity, a human touch to a successful career. His most famous song was probably *Drumurile noastre toate* (All of our paths). A collection of two CD-s of songs from the communist period issued by an important Romanian newspaper *Jurnalul Național* was named after his most famous song *Cântecele noastre toate* (All of our songs) and out of the 24 songs on the first disc and 21 songs on the second disc, he has a total of five songs.

The song is about a country love affair with a happy ending; two young peasants meet, they socialise at the Sunday dance, they both like each other, the man takes the first step, they get married, they have a fantastic wedding and marriage, they have three babies, a girl as beautiful as her mother was in her young years and two boys who will certainly grow up to be proud of their mother. The song was really popular in those days and still is. A new jazz-like version has been created for its tune though the lyrics are shorter and the part about how happy their marriage was is omitted. What probably accounts for its popularity is its tune, easy to hum, its rhymes, which make it easier to remember and its content, the story of a happy model family. Apart from this,

Romanians need to recuperate some things from those years and this song is, at least, a harmless one.

- **Analysis**

In Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej's Romania, abortion was made legal in 1956 and then, in Ceaușescu's Romania, it was made illegal again in 1966. Ceaușescu's demographic policy made unhappy generations of adults and ruined the lives of unwanted orphans. After the 1989 Revolution, Romania became sadly notorious for its orphans - ill, underfed, under stimulated, and penned in unheated rooms or outside - to everybody's horror.

So, although the song was not overtly communist and abortion was made legal at, more or less, the same time as the song release, in later years, after 1966, it served the regime well. The little peasant in the song has three babies - almost the recommended number to have, the regime considered four or five babies ideal - and they also are the 'right combination': a girl (whose main attribute is her prettiness, 'just like her mother') and two boys - cannon-fodder slaves to-be for Ceaușescu's heavy industry.

(In the same 50's, although in a completely different context and certainly out of a different motivation, the USA singer Doris Day sang *Tea for Two*: 'We will raise a family// A boy for you and a girl for me' to ensure the correct passing-on of values. (See Appendix 4 for lyrics)

Out of different motivations, reproduction has always been of interest to governments - states or the church, mainly the Catholic one. This has happened by either trying to increase or to limit the numbers of births. In China, from 1979, a couple could only have a baby; in Ceaușescu's Romania, couples were invited to have three or four babies. In Catholic countries such as Ireland, Portugal, Poland..., travelling in order to abort is still common.

From the time that Communism came to power, abortion became an important issue: first, by making it legal, in 1957 - before that, it had been 'tolerated', though not totally legal - the communist regime tried to undermine the previous norms; then, by making abortion illegal in order to increase its number of factory workers. (It is interesting to observe that this point of view on economy coincides with the peasants': having more children helps the familial economy. Both Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu came from peasant backgrounds.) In communist Romania, not being married or not having children were both almost crimes. The State felt 'deprived' of something that it considered as its right.

With the sadly famous decree 770 from 1st October 1966, one of the harshest and repressive pro-birth regimes had started. To start with, people and couples over 25 years of age without children— even if they were sterile – had to pay more tax, a sad reminder of their condition, an example of the regime's cruelty and a contradiction with what the regime called 'socialist equity'. Women who aborted, those who were accomplices in performing an abortion or simply knew about it were severely punished. They were either sent to prison or, for doctors, suspended from their duties.

- **Țărănuța's life and behaviour**

The song is about a woman's life, from her young years to the age of 'three grey hairs upon your head' and insinuations of grandchildren. There is first a narrator who tells the listeners about this country love affair ('Just when the farmer goes to mow// That's when the Beauty goes to hoe...'; 'And so she kissed and married him// And this was much more than a whim...'). The narrator also talks to the listeners: 'A happy household such as theirs// Cheerfulness, love and many peers// Now matter how hard **you** would look// **You** wouldn't find for all it took.' - by generalising this wonderful experience. Then the narrator addresses țărănuța directly ('Peasant, peasant, little peasant// Your grey hair makes you so pleasant...'). And later, the narrator expresses the wish for

further involvement in this happy family life: 'May your man live long with you, // I hope to see grandchildren's youth!'

The second witness we have for țărăncuța's behaviour is her would-be husband. What the listeners now find out about her is that she is pretty, particularly 'jenny in hand'; shows some inconstant behaviour very shrewdly spotted by the man ('Rumours are that you are so shy // You're locked in, sun up in sky // If shy when the sun is high? // Why alone by the river? // At night and without a shiver?') and is a bit of a teaser ('Why don't you do me a favour? // Just ignore I am your neighbour? // When outside I feel your flavour?' - Literally, the Romanian original reads: Why don't you leave me alone? Do you want me to forget you're my neighbour? Why do you stop me in the garden right when the moon is in the clouds?)

In short, this is țărăncuța as described by these two males (apart from the song having been written by a man, its most famous singer is also a man, so in the mind of the listener the narrator would be 'he'):

- she is slightly **indecisive and inconstant in her youth** (although, later in life, there are no traces left of it)
- she is **pretty**, physical quality reinforced several times in the song by both the narrator and her husband. This is also her daughter's main attribute.
- she **works** ('Just when the farmer goes to mow // That's when the Beauty goes to hoe', 'jenny in hand')
- together with her husband, she **ensures felicity** ('A happy household such as theirs // Cheerfulness, love and many peers // No matter how hard you would look // You wouldn't find for all it took')
- she's **fertile** ('And you also gave birth, lady, // To boys after the girl baby')
- she's a **good mother** ('Now you have a charming daughter // Who does she in truth take after? // Makes you proud she's all to flatter...'; '... boys after the girl baby // Who will grow up strong and steady, // Proud and prouder of their mummy...')

So, țărăncuța doesn't have a voice of her own. Although the whole song is about herself and her life, she doesn't utter a single word. She is mainly a **worker, a wife, a housewife and a mother**. Her main qualities are: **physical beauty, fertility** and she's also **hard-working**, both outside and inside her house. Could there be a better image to describe the ideal communist woman?

- **Badea's behaviour**

The first image the listeners have of him is that of a working man ('when the farmer goes to mow'). He is also a sociable man who enjoys the Sunday dance in his village, something he has in common with his wife to-be ('And he can only take a chance, // By going to the Sunday dance, // And when they try the *alune!* // She's always there to wish him well.) When he sees țărăncuța's inconsistencies and contradictions, he knows how to speak his mind ('A little peasant as she is // She'd really love to be his miss, // But when he tries to talk to her // She runs away and says 'no more' // But one day he had had enough // And when he spoke came over rough: 'Peasant, peasant, little peasant // Rosy cheeks make you so pleasant, // Why don't you do me a favour? // Just ignore I am your neighbour? // When outside I feel your flavour? // When the moon is in the clouds // Just when it is in the clouds.'). Since a problem is something that should be solved without delay, he adopts a very manly attitude, faces the situation and decides to speak to țărăncuța in order to make her have a say on a situation that might get out of control ('You will make me lose my mind // In the afternoon go blind, // Come and hug you from behind // Get a kiss I couldn't find, // Otherwise I couldn't find.'). He also proves himself to be a gentleman for, in difficult situations - alone with țărăncuța, in the garden, when the moon is in the clouds - he might have taken advantage of her. So, the next is a warning to țărăncuța, because he is also a virile man ('This time, dear, it might have been // So give God a nice big grin // When next we meet it will have been // I may not help it: simply sin.'). Later in the song, the listeners are also informed about his fertility, together with țărăncuța, they have three babies. Then after being accepted and having a fabulous wedding, and creating a happy household, his image fades away, leaving full protagonism to țărăncuța.

In short, his main traits are:

- he **works** the land
- he's **sociable** - a dancer (so is țărăncuța, but he's the assertive one and the person to take the step)
- he's **determined**
- he's a **gentleman**
- he's **virile and fertile**

No indication about his physical appearance is given which goes well with the still present common place idea that looks are not important in a man, but they are in a woman. This is even reflected in a Romanian saying 'Bărbatul trebuie să fie un pic mai frumos ca dracul' (Men only have to be a bit more beautiful than the devil), which the song shrewdly implies by simply highlighting what *is* important in a man and beauty just *isn't* there. But, with such an underlying view on the male physique, as stated in the above saying, the song only comes to reinforce the same idea: physical beauty is not important in a man, only his other qualities are.

So, he is a **worker**, a **husband** and a **father**. He has important qualities such as **assertiveness**, **determinedness**, **fertility** and **masculinity**. There is not much more left for the Party to wish for in a communist man.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

*'Vesticul se bucură că nu pățește nimic anormal.
Esticul se bucură că e scutit de 'normalitatea' dictaturii.'
(Westerners cherish it when nothing abnormal
happens to them. Eastern-Europeans cherish it
when they are spared the 'normality' of dictatorship.)*

*Andrei Pleșu – About happiness in
The East and the West*

• Translation

O chemare nouă țara o străbate	A new call is sounded: 'do the best you can'
Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate He, he, he, hei și iarăși hei, hei!	A five-year in four and half plan! Come now, come now, come now, come now, now!
Pentru țara'ntreagă bogăție	All the country enjoying greater richness
Pentru toți o cinste și-o mândrie Legământ deschis Pornit din dragoste și vis! I-auzi ia! Hai, hai, hai, hai, hai, Ionică, hai!	All of us relishing pride and goodness Our honest pledge Coming from love, we so allege! Listen all! Come now, come now, Johnny boy, come now!
În această horă, prinde-te măi frate!	This ring dance is for you, join in here then!
Hai, hai, hai, hai, Marioară, hai, Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate!	Come now, come now, Mary love, come now! A five-year in four and half plan!
Din inimă de țară Pornește o solie: Tot ce știu eu mai bine Îți dăruiesc și ție. Căci doar pe toți ne leagă Același dor fierbinte: Să mergem spre mai bine, Să mergem înainte! și tot așa, 'șa, 'șa, 'șa ...	From the country's heart, We know we have a mission: What I know the best I'm giving it with zest. For we are all bound By much the same ideal: To take the country further We want to make this real! And so we go, go, go, go ...
O chemare nouă țara o străbate	A new call is sounded: 'do the best you can'
Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate He, he, hei, voinicii mei, hei!	A five-year in four and half plan! Come now, come now, my heroes, now, now!
Pentru țara'ntreagă bogăție	All the country enjoying greater

Pentru toți o cinste și-o mândrie Legământ deschis Pornit din dragoste și vis I-auzi iar: Hai, hai, hai, hai, Fănică, hai	richness All of us relishing pride and goodness Our honest pledge Coming from love, we so allege! Listen all! Come now, come now, Billy boy, come now!
În această horă, prinde-te măi frate!	This ring dance is for you, join in here then!
Hai, hai, hai, hai, Floricico, hai,	Come now, come now, Maggie love, come now!
Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate!	A five-year in four and half plan!
Și floarea tinereții Nemăsurând elanul A prins îndemnul vieții Scurtând ziua și anul Iar cartea se îmbină Cu strungul și combine Să mergem înainte, Să mergem spre mai bine și tot așa, 'șa, 'șa, 'șa, 'șa	And the best of youth Never measures effort They give it all in truth They are of the best sort. And books and lathe together Work to make it better. They take the country further We are so very eager! And so we go, go, go, go...
O chemare nouă țara o străbate	A new call is sounded: 'do the best you can'
Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate Hei, hei, hei, hei,	A five-year in four and half plan! Come now, come now, come now, come now, now!
Pentru țara'ntreagă bogăție	All the country enjoying greater richness
Pentru toți o cinste și-o mândrie Legământ nescris Pornit din dragoste și vis I-auzi iar: Hai, hai, hai, hai, Marinică, hai	All of us relishing pride and goodness Our honest pledge Coming from love, we so allege! Listen all! Come now, come now, Harry boy, come now!
În această horă, prinde-te măi frate!	This ring dance is for you, join in here then!
Hai, hai, hai, hai, cu toții, hai,	Come now, come now, you all come now!
Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate!	A five-year in four and half plan!
Se-aude? Da! Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate! Ne prindem? Da! Cincinalu'n patru ani și jumătate! Ia, ia și iaca, iac' așa!	You hear me? Yes! The five-year in four and half plan! Are we in? Yes! The five-year in four and half plan! Come, come, do the best you can!

- **About the song, who composed, wrote and sang it**

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță was a neutral harmless song in terms of ideology, which accounts for having been recuperated in post-revolutionary years. This certainly cannot be said about *Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate*. The very title ('A five-year in four and half plan') was irritating. The whole song was an urge to work harder and better which sounded like a bad joke, a cruel thing to say if we are to consider the pathetic state the country was in.

The song was composed by Henry Mălineanu (1920-2000), also composer of love songs, and written by Harry Negrin, also writer of books about songs and singers of a popular genre called *romanță* (literally translated 'romance') both well known for their work before the communist regime. Just like *Țărăncuță, țărăncuță, Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate* belongs to a line of similar songs: *Magistrala albastră* - The Blue Canal (see the next song translated and Appendix 8), a song about the canal that links the Danube to the Black Sea in the construction of which many political prisoners died; *Trenul galben fără cai* - The Yellow train without Horses, about the Bucharest underground, inaugurated in 1979 and *Macarale* - Cranes, a song from the 60's, sung by three innocent-sounding young men about a love note to a bricklayer on a scaffolding. The note reads: 'Spor la lucru și te iubesc' - Work well and I love you, in this order. The cranes are laughing in the morning sun while building new neighbourhoods.

- **Analysis**

The five-year plans were a Russian invention. They were meant to plan production for five-year intervals, mainly in industry. The strategy was to set high goals, most of the times, unrealistic, in order to get the most out of people. Modern people management doesn't consider this attitude productive anymore. In fact, setting goals that are out of reach can only demoralise and frustrate people and have the opposite effect. The first five-year plan was introduced by

Stalin in 1928. His motivation was that Russia was 'fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they will crush us.'



Poster from 1930. Translation reads: *We will turn the five year plan into a four year one.*

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five-Year_Plan_\(USSR\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five-Year_Plan_(USSR))

In Romania, the first five year plan was 1950-1955. By the time this song was composed, in the late 70's or early 80's, Romania had already become a poor country due to Ceaușescu's unrealistic ambitions and disastrous management of resources as noted earlier in this paper. The media was constantly lying about the achievements of the five-year plans. On paper, Romania was richer than before, with achievements even greater than the goals set. In truth, Romanians could afford less and less of everything, the giant plants and factories had steady losses, agriculture was outdated and harvests were picked by the army, the students and secondary school pupils and professional people because the peasants had been moved to towns and employed in the ruinous factories.

This totally absurd situation is beautifully put in a nutshell in 1968 by a Polish engineer. Although it refers to building and it's about Poland, it can certainly be borrowed and extrapolated to Romania and other sectors of activity:

'What happens at my place [of work - a building company] is that the plan says we have to spend so much money in so many months. In the winter, too, when you can do very little building; concrete laid in our winter won't set properly. But the manager can't not fulfil the plan, so he makes the workers work, construct staircases and so on, which we all know will have to be knocked down in the spring, and done again... It all becomes useless.' (Neuburg, 1972)

The communist view on work was that no matter what one does or how one does it, one works for the state and for the welfare of the nation, and one would be paid a salary at the end of the month. This view was applied in Romania as soon as the communists came to power, through nationalisation of all type of property and the collectivisation of the agriculture. Everything belonged to the state and the state, sagely and fairly, would distribute it back to its citizens.

Given the context, the poverty and the repeated food crises that struck Romania in the 80's, it is very hard to believe that a song urging Romanians to work harder and better could awake other feelings than anger for being laughed at. There used to be a saying in those days: 'Noi ne facem că muncim, ei se fac că ne plătesc' - we pretend we're working, they pretend they are paying us. Money was the same no matter what one did, scarce and there was very little to buy or to spend it on anyway*.

'It killed people's interest in their work' is a very good summary for the work situation under the communist regimes.

All the names chosen are very popular in Romania. The first three (Ionică, Marioară and Fănică) can easily be found in both rural and urban contexts, although not necessarily in their diminutive form. The second two (Florico and Fănică) are mainly used in the rural context. They are all diminutives, a way of suggesting intimacy and familiarity with those who had these names. By means of this song, the Party was directly addressing, probably, half of the Romanians.

Its march-like music reinforces the content of the lyrics.

* 'In both Czechoslovakia and Poland surveys among students found that when asked to compare capitalism and socialism, even those who gave socialism its due mentioned as one of its disadvantages that it killed people's interest in their work' (Neuburg, 1972)

Magistrala albastră

*'The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms'
T.S.Eliot – The Hollow Men*

- Translation

Dunăre, de acum
Porți spre mare un nou drum
Porți spre mare mândria
Că ce fac și ce spun
E și drept, e și bun
Când înalț România

Danube, you, from now on
Go towards a new dawn
Travel down to the sea
What we do, what we say
Is so right and gives way
To Romania, all agree

Împlinim câte-un vis
Către veacuri deschis
Vis de aur romantic
Nu las televiziuni
Și aici pe pământ
Am creat dintr-un gând

We make dreams all come true
Through the centuries new
Our dream is romantic.
We leave no TV sets
It's a dream long-time sought:
What our labour has wrought:

Magistrala albastră
Drum de ape și vis
Drum de suflet purtând,
Cântec fără cuvânt
Drum spre mare deschis

Blue canal, blue canal
Way of water and dream
Way of soul that brings out
Wordless song, without doubt,
Open way came on stream

Magistrala albastră
Drum de oameni născut
Ce-ți vorbește, să știi,
De prezent, de trecut
Și de mari ctitorii
Ca un semn că ei sînt
Veșnic pe acest pământ
Și c-au fost și vor fi

Blue canal, blue canal,
Way to sea made by Men
That is talking to you
Of a wonderful plan
And dreams yet to come true
Sign they really exist
They insist and persist
In those deeds which come through

Noi cu pace am semnat
Peste tot ce-am durat
La orice temelie
Fără teamă de greu,
Noi în numele tău,
Construim, Românie !

We have peacefully signed
Everything we've designed
Every single foundation
We don't mind any effort
We believe it's of worth
Romania, sweet inspiration!

Din iubire urcând
Ceruri peste pământ

We build up to the skies
Towering flats, thousands rise
Out of love for Romania

Din iubire de țară
Să ne fie curat
Acest veac minunat
Am gândit și-am creat:

Never had any tilt
Our wills never wilt
We've designed and we've built:

Magistrala albastră
Drum de ape și vis
Drum de suflet purtând,
Cântec fără cuvânt
Drum spre mare deschis

Blue canal, blue canal
Way of water and dream
Way of soul that brings out
Wordless song, without doubt,
Open way came on stream

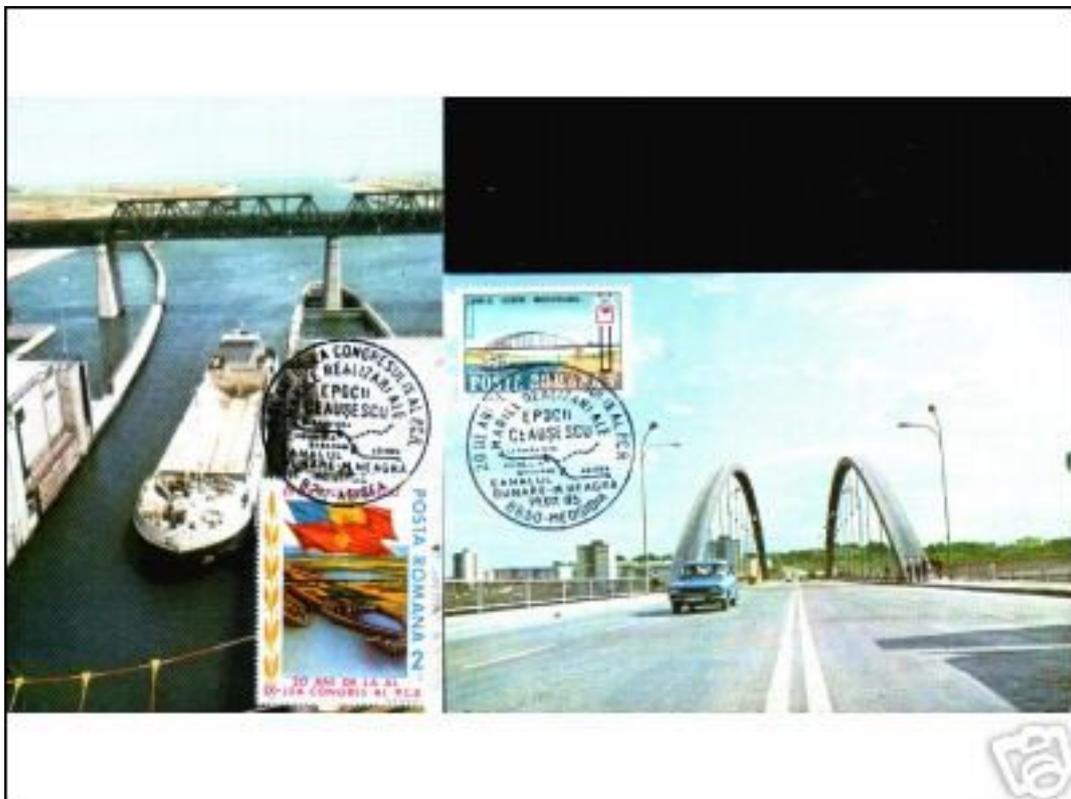


(www.ceaurescu.org)

- **About the song, who composed, wrote and sang it**

The Danube-Black Sea canal, also known as 'Magistrala albastră' – the Blue Highway, is one of the biggest investments made by the Communist regime. It measures some 64 km and it links the Danube to the Black Sea. It has two arms, the southern one that goes from Cernavodă to Poarta Albă and the northern one that goes from Cernavodă to Năvodari (see Appendix 3). It was a project with quite a long history given the fact that the first plans were thought of in 1840-45. However, they were abandoned due to the building of a railway in 1860, a cheap efficient way to transport goods to and from the Black Sea. In 1927, new plans were drafted, but were abandoned again due to the Great Depression.

It was eventually started in 1949, after the Communist party came to power, and immediately became sadly famous as a labour camp for the 'reeducation of hostile elements'. In September 1949, a newspaper was issued 'Canalul Dunăre – Marea Neagră' and in it there was the speech of an important, at the time, Party member, who mentioned that the Canal was to be built 'without the bourgeoisie and against it'. Labourers at the Canal fell into three distinct categories: paid free labourers recruited from all over the country, soldiers who either worked in construction or guarded the prisoners and prisoners, most of them, political prisoners. The number of the latter varied from 19.2% in September 1949 and 20.7% in June 1950 to an impressive 82.5% in November 1952.



(www.ceaurescu.org)

The detainees* worked with shovels and axes, under terrible conditions.

*A sinister joke from those days went like this:

'Two prisoners working on the Canal, talking to each other:

-How long are you here for?

-Fifteen years.

-What did you do?

-Me? Nothing.

-You must be joking, everyone knows that one only gets ten years for doing nothing.'

They were supposed to dig and carry in wheelbarrows three cubic metres of earth a day, load and unload wagons of seven cubic metres a day or build barracks and railways. They were over-worked, starving (those who survived and wrote their memories of the period confess having eaten cats, dogs, grass, plants, frogs and whatever they considered edible) and suffering from accidents or tuberculosis. Little wonder, the canal was also known as the Death Canal. It is difficult to know exactly how many people lost their lives working at the canal. Figures oscillate between 10,000 and over 200,000 deaths over a period of 4 years. During these four years, the canal only advanced 3 kilometres and an estimated number of 19.000 political prisoners, 20.000 labourers and 18.000 soldiers worked on it. Due to poor and old technology the unsuccessful works stopped in 1953. The whole blame for the failure was put on a group of so-called conspirators who were accused of sabotage, espionage and fraud and were punished accordingly. Some of them were executed and others faced life imprisonment and torture in order to 'confess' whatever the regime wanted them to be guilty of.

In June 1973, after a visit to the Belgian harbour of Antwerp, Ceaușescu decided to continue the works on the canal. They lasted for another 11 years, and eventually, the southern arm was inaugurated in 1984, while the northern one took three more years. Between 1984 and 1989, the canal was only used by Romanian ships. Since 1989, the canal has also been used by international traffic. Some 2 billion US dollars were spent on the project. It has been calculated that the whole sum of money invested in the canal will be recuperated in more than 600 years and not in the 50 years Ceaușescu boasted ...

The song that has been analysed here was composed for the official inauguration of the canal. It was composed by Vasile Vasilache and written by Storin Aurel. It was sung by two Romanian singers, popular both before and after the revolution - Dan Spătaru (mentioned above while talking about *Țărăncuță, Țărăncuță*) and Mirabela Dauer. She is a prolific Romanian singer, with some 25 albums, whose career spans from the 1980's to the present.

- **Analysis**

The song starts in a rather animistic way, with the singers addressing the Danube River directly. The personified river is informed of 'a new dawn', a new way that would take its waters straight to the Black Sea. In the second stanza, there intervenes the human element 'we'. Presumably, by 'we', 'Romanians' are meant. So, what do we, Romanians, have to do? Romanians have 'romantic dreams' which they make come true. These dreams are not concerned with vulgar little things such as TV sets, but with more important grander things such as building a canal that would link the Danube River to the Black Sea. Moreover, this project has been accomplished 'dintr-un gând' (literally 'of one thought', unanimously) which shows the unity Romanians have when working for their country. This accomplishment is not unique; it is representative of a series of other great present and past deeds, which ennoble Romanians. All these great projects have been carried on 'peacefully' and without fearing any hardships and difficulties. 'Out of love for Romania', 'we' also built 'towering flats' but, again, unanimously, the outstanding thing that we created is the Blue Canal.

It may well be that the choice of TV sets as opposed to the canal was not arbitrary. In those years, broadcast hours and the variety of programmes kept being reduced and people were trying hard to get aerials that would allow them to watch the TV programmes of neighbouring countries. Television sets were mostly black and white and, in order to purchase a colour TV, Romanians had to be on a list waiting for their turns, something that would take several years. That is why it is difficult to believe that the choice of TV sets to be compared with the canal was innocent.

There is a beautiful Romanian legend, Meșterul Manole (The Master Builder, Manole), which talks about the construction of an important monastery in Romania, Mănăstirea Argeșului, in the 16th century. The legend goes that the Black Prince (Neagoe Basarab, ruler of Wallachia at the beginning of the 16th century), asked Manole, a master builder, to build a

monastery like none that had been built before. Manole and his nine masons tried very hard to build this monastery, but whatever they did during the day would tumble down during the night. Manole had a dream in which God told him to immure alive the first wife or sister who would come the next day to bring food for any of them. The next day he could see his own wife, Ana, coming to bring him food, so she was the one who was sacrificed. By immuring Ana alive, they managed to finish the monastery, but when they were all on the roof, the Black Prince decided to leave them there to die, because he wanted to avoid them building a similarly beautiful monastery elsewhere. They made themselves wings from shingles and tried to fly, but they all died in the end. Where Manole fell, a spring gushed forth. Even now this spot is known as 'Manole's well'.

It is the idea of human sacrifice reinforced, and that a human life taken would give life to a building. It is said that all the people who died at the Canal were buried in the tons of cubic metres of earth removed and in the tons of cement that was needed for the building of the canal. By the same token, if we are to consider the legend, this canal, built with so many lives and probably, literally, on top of so many bodies, should be a very enduring construction.

So, what are the main features all Romanians share and what is the song reinforcing? **Patriotic love**, we all feel, and this is what makes us feel united in our deeds and dreams: we all build and construct our beloved country, Romania. **National unity** is essential in the achievement of our goals, which are not little and mean (TV sets), but grandiose and fantastic (a canal). **Calm, determination** and **pacifism** are other key features ('We have peacefully signed', 'we don't mind effort', 'we don't fear any difficulties'). As a logical consequence of all these characteristics, we can only be proud of ourselves. **National pride** is something else that glues people's wishes together.

After such an impressive way of trumpeting the triumphs of a whole people, it is hard to believe that Romanians were still reluctant to believe in the regime, as they were.

Indeed, compared with the building of a canal, TV sets are a mean achievement, but at least TV sets are not responsible of thousands of deaths.

4. The three songs' analyses – a different perspective

In both questionnaires, the Romanian and the English one, I tried to ask very open questions that would give the answerers space to express whatever they felt they had to say.

The Romanian questionnaire

This short questionnaire was answered by eight Romanians who were in their late 30's / early or late 40's when the communist regime came to an end. It is aimed at revealing what these songs meant to them, if anything, the reaction they had when exposed to the songs and whether they could listen to them again and with what feelings. I have first translated the questionnaire into English and then reproduced the answers the interviewees gave to the questions asked. Afterwards, I have analysed these answers and made a series of reflections on them.

Chestionar

(Questionnaire)

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

(Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?)

- **Țărăncuță, țărăncuță**
(Little peasant, little peasant)
- **Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate**
(A five-year in four-and-a-half plan)
- **Magistrala albastră**
(The Blue Canal)

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

(What reaction did they provoke in you?)

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați : le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul sau radioul ...?

(When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?)

4. Le-ati putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

(Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?)

5. Alte comentarii

(Other comments)

Vârsta (Age):

Profesia (Profession):

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!

(Thank you for your participation!)

Maria Bebis

Interviewee 1 (male, jurist, 62) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărănuță, țărănuță

Excellent. I used to like it very much. I can still sing it!

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Stupid. I know it. I can't hum it.

Magistrala albastră

Musical prostitution. I know it. I can hum it.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Different. They compensated each other.

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Țărănuță, țărănuță

I would turn up the volume.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I used to ignore it.

Magistrala albastră

It had a good tune. I listened to it. I never switched the TV off. I was waiting for the news that Ceausescu was dead.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

With pleasure.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I didn't hear it. I was stupidity self-protected.

Magistrala albastră

With indifference.

Other comments:

Communism put to music is like your mother-in-law on top of a hearse. It provokes wonderful recollections.

(In answer to my thanks for their participation in the questionnaire, this interviewee thanked me for 'the provocation'.)

Interviewee 2 (male, dentist, 68) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Yes

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No. No.

Magistrala albastră

Yes. Yes

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Musical satisfaction

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No reaction

Magistrala albastră

No reaction

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

I would listen to it and hum it.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I would ignore it.

Magistrala albastră

I would ignore it.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

With the same feelings.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

-

Magistrala albastră

-

Other comments:

With the only exception of the first song, which belonged to Romanian pop music, the other two were interpreted on political demand following a programme of political indoctrination.

Interviewee 3 (female, professor, 61) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Yes.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No. No.

Magistrala albastră

No. No.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Pleasant

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

(No answer)

Magistrala albastră

(No answer)

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

I listened to it.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I didn't listen to it.

Magistrala albastră

I didn't listen to it.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes, with no feeling.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No

Magistrala albastră

No

Other comments:

Communist songs belonged and belong to a register which cannot be called 'musical'.

Interviewee 4 (female, professor, 61) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No. No. No.

Magistrala albastră

Yes. No.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Pleasant.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

(No answer)

Magistrala albastră

(No answer)

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

I can hum it.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Switch off the TV or the radio.

Magistrala albastră

Switch off the TV or the radio.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Without any feelings.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No

Magistrala albastră

No

Other comments:

Pop songs with political hints were ridiculous. I felt they were humiliating for the interpreters.

Interviewee 5 (male, 'serious' researcher – for the Romanian Academy, 60) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Yes. Not until the end.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

No

Magistrala albastră

Vaguely

What reaction did they provoke in you?

It depends. The first song – pleasant, the rest ... 'scattered'. (sic)

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Well, it depended on the tune! I have never listened to them really carefully, to none of them. I didn't use to switch off the TV, I used to just ignore them, when the situation presented itself.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Oh, yes, certainly! But from other reasons, to refresh my memory (in English, in original) or out of a curse or nostalgia.

Other comments:

Interviewee 6 (female, professor, 59) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. Yes.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Yes. No.

Magistrala albastră

Yes. No.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Different. The first was quite agreeable. The other two [I would listen to them], with a feeling of grotesque.

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

The melody of the first one was catchy, the other two are catastrophic, both tune and lyrics.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

No.

Other comments:

I think they cannot be put in the same category. The last two songs could only disgust one (music and text). The first one was more 'perverse', due to its human/humane suggestions.

Interviewee 7 (male, engineer, 65) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Yes. No.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Yes. No.

Magistrala albastră

Yes. No.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Pleasant.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Disgust.

Magistrala albastră

Disgust.

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

I listened to it one or twice, but then I got bored with it and I have never dreamt of humming it.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I never paid any attention to it. If I was alone either I would pay no attention to them or I would switch the TV off.

Magistrala albastră

Same as with the second song.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

I could listen to the first song again, with indifference. I wouldn't like to listen to the other two and if I heard them accidentally, they would provoke the same feeling of disgust they used to.

Other comments:

Except the first song which doesn't have any political hints, the other two were written on command and everybody, me included, used to perceive them as communist propaganda.

Interviewee 8 (female, economist, 61) – see Appendix 5

Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

I remember it, I can hum it and even sing parts of it. It seems that this song existed before the communist regime, but the text was modified by communists.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

I remember it, but I've never known neither its tune, nor the lyrics. It's never been successful.

Magistrala albastră

Same comment as before. The purely communist messages were never liked even though they were everywhere.

What reaction did they provoke in you?

Excepting the first song, the other two have never interested me and I have never known them by heart.

When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...?

I didn't listen to them if they were on the radio. I only used to watch films on TV, the rest of the programmes were not interesting.

Could you listen to them again? With what kind of reaction?

Maybe the first song. The others just didn't exist for me. As they were not awaking any feelings in me, I never remembered them. There were a lot of other people like me, although I was a member of the Communist Party.

Other comments:

Except the first song, the other two were songs that worshipped the great deeds of the regime. I have lived through them, but they do not haunt my dreams.

So, what do these replies appear to indicate us?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

To the first question - What reaction did they provoke in you? Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them? - all the interviewees answered that they can remember the first song. The vast majority, with the only exception of interviewee 7, can still hum it or sing it, although not all the way through.

To the second question – What reaction did they provoke in you? – the interviewees' reactions varied, but they were generally positive. So, the first interviewee answers that the reaction he had to the songs was 'different. They compensated each other'. I understand it was the songs about the peasant compared with the others, as, in question 1, he admits this first song was 'excellent'. The other answers convey the same positive reaction: 'musical satisfaction' (interviewee 2), 'pleasant' (interviewee 3, 4, 5 and 7), 'agreeable' (interviewee 6), whereas interviewee 8 clearly separates the peasant song from the others ('Except the first song, the others didn't interest me'), which could be interpreted 'I found the song interesting'.

To the third question – When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...? – most answers favoured the song, with small variations: ‘I would turn up the volume’ (interviewee 1), ‘I would listen to it and hum it’ (interviewee 2), ‘I listened to it’ (interviewee 3), ‘I would hum it’ (interviewee 4), ‘the melody was quite catchy’ (interviewee 6), ‘I listened to it once or twice, but then I got bored’ (interviewee 7); whereas interviewee 5 admits that ‘it depended on the tune’ but that he ‘never listened to them really carefully, to any of them’ and interviewee 8 confesses that she ‘didn’t listen to them if they were on the radio’ and that she ‘only used to watch films on TV’.

To the fourth question – Could you listen to them again? With what kind of feelings? – the answers varied between interest and indifference. So, interviewee 1 would listen to it ‘with pleasure’, interviewee 2, ‘with the same feelings’ (positive) and interviewee 5 enthusiastically admits that ‘oh, yes, certainly’ he could listen to it again. Interviewees 3, 4 and 7 could listen to it, but ‘with no feeling’ or ‘with indifference’, whereas interviewee 6 could not listen to it again and interviewee 8 admits she could perhaps listen to it again.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

To the first question – Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them? – answers differ greatly. Interviewees 2, 6, 7 and 8 remember the song, but can’t either hum it or sing it. There are no comments about the song except for interviewee 1 who qualifies it as ‘stupid’ and interviewee 8 who adds that ‘it’s never been successful’. The others – interviewees 2, 3, 4, 5 – say they can’t remember the song, let alone hum it or sing it.

To the second question – What reaction did they provoke in you? – the answers are in agreement with those to the first question. Therefore, interviewee 1 says ‘they [the songs] compensated each other’ – which probably means that for a nice song (the one about the peasant which he qualified as

'excellent') there were two 'stupid' songs, as a counterpart. Interviewee 2 had 'no reaction' to this song – which is a bit of a contradiction since he admitted he couldn't remember the song. Interviewees 3 and 4 give no answer – which is totally logical since they say they can't remember the song. Interviewee 5 says his impressions about it are 'scattered' – which I can only interpret as 'all over the place', 'contradictory' or 'provokes a mixture of feelings'. Interviewee 6 admits 'a feeling of grotesque', interviewee 7, 'disgust', and interviewee 8, lack of reaction 'the other two songs [apart from the one about the peasant] have never interested me and I've never known them by heart'.

To the third question – When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio ...? – the answers are very interesting. So, interviewee 1 and 2 'used to ignore it', interviewee 3 said she 'didn't listen to it', interviewee 4 would 'switch off the TV or the radio', interviewee 5 said he 'didn't use to switch off the TV, just ignored them, when the situation presented itself', interviewee 6 said the song was 'catastrophic, both tune and lyrics', interviewee 7 'would pay no attention to them or switch off the TV' and interviewee 8 said 'I wouldn't listen to them if they were on the radio. I only used to watch films on TV.' We should bear in mind that interviewees 2, 3, 4, 5 said they couldn't remember the song, but they can remember their reaction to it.

To the fourth question – Could you listen to it again? With what kind of feelings? – the answers are, again, surprising. Interviewee 1 doesn't really answer this question, but seems to still be answering the previous question since he said 'I didn't hear it. I was stupidity self-protected.' Interviewee 2 doesn't answer the question. Interviewees 3, 4 and 6 couldn't listen to it again. Interviewee 5 would listen to it 'out of different reasons: to refresh my memory, or out of a curse or nostalgia', interviewee 7 with 'the same feeling of disgust' and interviewee 8 reinforces her previous idea 'they didn't exist for me'. Again, we should bear in mind that interviewees 3 and 4, who said they couldn't remember the song, admitted that they wouldn't listen to it again.

Magistrala albastră

A lot of the answers about this song totally coincide with the answers given about the previous song, therefore I will not repeat them. I shall only point out the answers that are different.

To the first question – Do you remember these songs? Could you still hum/sing them? – the answers were: interviewee 1 qualifies it as ‘musical prostitution’, but admits that ‘I know it. I can hum it.’ Interviewees 2, 4, 6 and 7 can remember it, but can’t either hum or sing it. Interviewee 3 can’t do either thing, whereas interviewee 5 can remember it ‘vaguely’ and interviewee 8 remembers it but makes the ‘same comment as before’ – about the Cincinal – and adds that ‘the purely communist messages were never liked even though they were everywhere’.

To the second question – What reaction did they provoke in you? – all the interviewees give exactly the same answers as to the previous song.

To the third question – When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do: listen to them carefully, hum along, switch off the TV or the radio? – interviewee 1 admits that ‘it had a good tune. I listened to it.’ and sarcastically comments ‘I never switched the TV off. I was awaiting the news that Ceausescu was dead.’ Interviewee 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8’s opinions about this song all coincide with the opinion they had about the previous song.

To the fourth question – Could you listen to them again? With what kind of feelings? – interviewee 1 admits he could, but ‘with indifference’, interviewees 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 give the same answers as to the questions about the previous song.

Other comments

With the only exception of interviewee 5, all the others had more things to add in answer to the questionnaire. They mainly coincided in that the three songs fell into different categories, the first one versus the other two (interviewees 2, 6, 7 and 8). So, interviewee 1 makes the rough comment that 'communism put on music is like your mother-in-law on top of a hearse. It provokes wonderful recollections.' (which, apart from being a sample of Romanian humour, also reveals a common place idea in Romanian unwritten folklore – the bad relationship between son/daughter-in-law and mother-in-law). Interviewee 2 reinforces the difference between the first song ('belonged to Romanian pop music') and the other two ('were interpreted on political demand following a programme of political indoctrination'). Interviewee 3 is even sharper 'Communist songs belonged and belong to a register which cannot be called musical'. Interviewee 4 says that 'pop songs with political hints were ridiculous. I felt they were humiliating the interpreters', the only one who mentions the interpreters of this style of songs and obviously pities them for having to sing these songs. There were indeed few enthusiastic artists who would eagerly collaborate with the regime and those were known by everybody. It was common knowledge that the others, if they wanted to have a musical career, would have to sing, at least every now and then, songs that the Party would ask them to. This is why interviewee 4 feels for these artists who were forced into singing party songs.

Again, interviewee 6 reinforces the difference there was between the songs: 'I think they cannot be put in the same category [all three songs]. The last two songs could only disgust one – music and text. The first one was more 'perverse' due to its human/humane suggestions.' Interviewee 7 too separates the songs into categories: 'Except the first song which doesn't have any political hints, the other two were written on command and everybody, me included, used to perceive them as communist propaganda.' Interviewee 8 supports the same idea that 'except the first song, the other two were songs that worshipped the great deeds of the regime. I have lived through them, but they do not haunt

my dreams' – which is another fine sample of Romanian humour, very similar to the typical British understatement.

Questionnaire interpretation

There are two clear conclusions we can reach after having analysed these questionnaires.

One is: the first song, about the exemplary life of a young peasant, the little bildungsroman of this every-day heroine, worker, mother, wife and friend, seems to be agreeable to each and every of the 8 interviewees. They genuinely liked it, most of them could even hum it and/or sing it and they would listen to it again. Most of the interviewees clearly separated it from the other two by considering it fell into a completely different category from the other two songs they were being interviewed about.

The other conclusion is: most interviewees clearly agreed to put the last two songs, about the five year plan and the canal between the Danube and the Black Sea, into the same category of communist indoctrination. Although some of them denied remembering them when asked a direct question (Do you remember them?), their answers to consequent indirect questions such as: What reaction did they provoke in you? When you heard them on TV or radio, what would you do ...?) gave them away. They remembered the songs, but they would not admit it, probably because they *want* to forget them.

Let us now take a closer look at these conclusions.

For the first song, the interviewees used words such as 'excellent' and 'agreeable'. The reactions the song provoked were 'pleasant'. They listened to it 'with pleasure' and 'with satisfaction'.

Why would that be? Perhaps because the song is about something 'innocent', that none of the interviewees received as clearly 'communist'.

Perhaps because they themselves had exactly the same idea of what a family should be like and the song only reinforces it; the interviewees identified themselves with the ideals expressed in the song and therefore felt part of a bigger scenario. Needless to say, in those days this was 'the family', the standard family. The others, gay and mono-parental, were not only unheard of, but also punished (gay people were sent to prison in communist Romania) and mono-parental families were definitely not the norm.

So, we can say that what the song expresses is absolutely universal and wanted by everybody: a simple love affair which ends up in a happy marriage with children. Similar songs can be found worldwide, as mentioned above 'Tea for two' of the American Doris Day or 'Desmond and Molly Jones' of The Beatles (see Appendix 5).

However, interviewee 6 makes a very interesting comment on the first song. She says 'The first one [song] was more 'perverse', due to its human/humane suggestions.' She is the only one who goes beyond the obvious story in the song and spots a different meaning, which she qualifies as 'perverse'. Her explanation for qualifying it as such is in 'the human/humane suggestions' it conveys. This could perhaps be interpreted as a way of admitting there was another meaning – the Party telling Romanians how the perfect family should appear? Suggesting the perfect number and combination of children to have? What a real communist man and a real communist woman should be like? The values they should have? The vital principles to guide them through life? – and that this other meaning was 'perverse' as it was much more efficient than the ridiculously blatant message of the other two songs.

For the other two songs, apart from being put in the same category, the words used to describe them were: 'stupid' and 'musical prostitution'. Interviewees would either ignore them or switch the TV off when they were broadcast. They would provoke 'disgust'. Only interviewee 1 admits that the song about the Blue Canal 'had a good tune' and that he would listen to it. But then, because these songs were inseparable from the regime, he says he

'never switched the TV off. He was waiting for the news that Ceausescu was dead.'

Interviewee 5 also makes an amazing comment when he says that he could listen to the songs again in order 'to refresh my memory (in English, in original) or out of a curse or nostalgia.' Listening to a song 'out of a curse' sounds indeed like the famous Chinese torture of the drop; this interviewee seems to talk about being doomed to listen to these songs. 'Out of nostalgia' again seems to reveal something extraordinary; it appears here that the interviewee talks about being subject to some form of Stockholm syndrome due to which his nostalgia for the days when these songs were broadcast would make him listen to the songs again.

It is a sad fate for a song to provoke these reactions in listeners. These two songs, about the canal and the five-year plan, were 'ignored', 'not listened to', 'not paid attention to' and even 'not heard' – which switches from voluntary/not voluntary listening to the level of physical perception/non-perception: the target listener decides not to hear it. Interviewee 1, who 'didn't hear' the song about the five-year plan, jokes and says he was 'stupidity auto-protected'.

Interviewee 3 even refuses to categorise the songs. She says they don't belong to the musical register, which leaves communist songs in no man's land, out of the only place where they could belong. What is a song that is not recognised as part of music? Categories are ways of ordering the world. Interviewee 3 refuses to give a place to these songs, they do not enter in her order and hierarchy of the world, therefore these songs are doomed to non-existence. They simply don't exist.

In conclusion, according to the answers these eight Romanians gave to the questions about these last two songs that the regime intended as a tool of indoctrination and manipulation, created in fact, hate.

The English questionnaire

Without any previous information about what they were going to read, participants were asked to read the songs translated and to answer the following questions (the order of the songs was *Țărăncuță, țărăncuță, Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate, Magistrala albastră*):

What do you think of this song?

Where would you place this song and when?

Why?

Anything else you'd like to add?

Interviewee 1 (female, teacher, 44, the UK) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

The story doesn't interest me.

Where would you place this song and when?

In a rural setting. Beginning of the 20th century, or earlier.

Why?

Because of its traditional lyrics.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

Interesting from a historical point of view.

Where would you place this song and when?

In communist times, definitely!

Why?

Talks of 'country's mission', 'pride and goodness' and especially the beginning 'and the best of youth'.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

I don't understand the message very well: 'we leave no TV sets' etc.??

Where would you place this song and when?

It's patriotic, I don't know if it's from communist times or later.

Why?

'We build up to the skies ... out of love for Romania'.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Interviewee 2 (female, teacher, 42, Venezuela) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

It looks like a peasant, traditional folk song. The values it portrays are somehow chauvinistic and outdated.

Where would you place this song and when?

Any rural European area. Although it may be an old song, it may still be popular nowadays.

Why?

Because of its contents.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It's a political song (or at least it looks like one).

Where would you place this song and when?

Communist Eastern block before 1989.

Why?

It pledges for people to stick together and support a government plan and portrays values of common/communal richness.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

It looks like a national anthem.

Where would you place this song and when?

Romania; it may still be a national anthem and it may have 'survived' through the communist period.

Why?

It includes landmarks and some appeals to national pride.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Interviewee 3 (female, 53, English teacher, the USA) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

It's a peasant song. I can imagine it being sung around campfires and large family gatherings in traditional rural areas. It doesn't offend me. It's quaint.

Where would you place it and when?

It could be anywhere with traditional agrarian societies.

Why?

The society is settled not nomadic, they live in a community, not isolated. Life doesn't change from generation from generation, traditions are valued.

Anything you'd like to add?

Not in an English speaking country. It may be a wedding song.

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It reminds me of the simplistic (sic) Hollywood patriotic motif; the revolutionary posters, propaganda.

Where would you place it and when?

I can't tell whether there is irony in the five-year plan in four and a half. If not, it is propagandistic. If so, it is a protest song.

Why?

It is overly sincere, overly dogmatic. It's kind of insulting, but if the society is naïve, it may be a persuasive tool.

Anything you'd like to add?

Not in an English speaking country.

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

I don't really understand it. I don't see the connection between the inspiration that the river has provided and the signing of a plan – I guess to rebuild the country. Its message doesn't work for me.

Where would you place it and when?

Romania, maybe after the fall of the dictatorship.

Why?

'Towering flats' seems like something recent.

Anything you'd like to add?

Interviewee 4 (male, 52, University English instructor, the USA) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

Bucolic. A description of a simple, natural and romanticized version of a very harsh reality.

Where would you place it and when?

England, perhaps Germany, in the late 17th century to mid-18th century.

Why?

The images and vocabulary.

Anything you'd like to add?

Seems too 'idealized' and silly.

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It exalts the basic ideals of traditional communism (collective vs individual).

Where would you place it and when?

Soviet Union (the 20's) or China (the 50's)

Why?

The call to the country's youth to build a stronger country for a better tomorrow.

Anything you'd like to add?

Very political song.

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

Similar to song 2, but more 'social' and peaceful.

Where would you place it and when?

Romania, post-Ceausescu (beginning of the 21st century)

Why?

The country's name's used. It is as if the country has survived a turbulent time and is now reflecting on its existence.

Anything you'd like to add?

With some differences, it is similar to the 'bucolic' and peaceful images of song 1.

Interviewee 5 (female, 5..., accountant, the Czech Republic) – see Appendix 6

Song 1: Malá selka - Little peasant little peasant

What do you think about this song?

The rhymes are very similar to J.V.Sladek's (a Czech poet and translator), the content is inoffensive.

Where would you place it and when?

The sixties to the eighties, Czechoslovakia.

Why?

It sounds like children rhymes from a primary school reading book.

Song 2 and song 3: Pětiletý plán - Five years plan in four and a half A Modrý kanál - Blue Canal

What do you think about this song?

They sound very "pioneering" (in terms of building, constructing, labouring), as a whole they are quite monstrous (hideous) songs.

Where would you place it and when?

They strongly remind me of Czechoslovakian socialist poetry, that's to say post-war years but any socialist block country is possible ...

Why?

Mostly words like "kombajn", five year plan, love for one's country, canal, pride, honour and so on - simply the overall impression - is a deadly combination.

Interviewee 6 (female, 40, Head of Studies/ English teacher, Catalonia) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

It seems to be a traditional British (English? Scottish?) or Irish song.

Where would you place this song and when?

From 16th to 19th century (or even beginning of the 20th)?

Why?

Talks about peasants and farmers and cows and dances... and seems to be written in 'contemporary' English.

Anything you'd like to add?

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It is more modern than the previous one. Talks about effort, work, (country) ideals.

Where would you place this song and when?

Modern Britain or US or Australia... (any English speaking country)... from the period of the industrial revolution until today.

Why?

It talks about 'being productive' or highly efficient, richness in relation to the whole country, etc.

Anything you'd like to add?

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

It feels it has been written by a Romanian or by someone who knows Romania and its people very well.

Where would you place this song and when?

Romania (European Union), 2008.

Why?

Signing (treaties?), 'dreams yet to come true' (what some Romanians expect from joining the EU?).

Anything you'd like to add?

Interviewee 7 (male, language teacher, 54, the UK) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

From the lyrics, it appears to be a folk song.

Where would you place it and when?

I assume it's Romanian (translated into English), pre-industrial revolution (18th – 19th century).

Why?

Rural, typical courting-marriage-children sequence of events.

Anything you'd like to add?

Difficult to draw firm conclusions from a translation. I'd like to hear the original (with music) to give a better opinion.

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It has a chorus/refrain. It could be a march. Patriotic.

Where would you place it and when?

Again, Romania, presumably – after the Second World War, late 40's, early 50's.

Why?

Clear communist/soviet references, 'five-year plan', 'heroes', 'mission', same ideal'.

Anything you'd like to add?

The link between the first song is the 'ring dance' (alunel) – but now the context is not bride and groom alone, in marriage. Now the ring dance is like a demonstration of patriotism – like the sardana, perhaps.

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

Another, more openly, patriotic song – but it looks more like a ballad.

Where would you place it and when?

Romania – explicit. Maybe in the 70's.

Why?

Mention of TV sets, skyscrapers, canals.

Anything you'd like to add?

Interviewee 8 (male, teacher of English, 55, the UK) – see Appendix 6

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

I think it's quaint, reflecting life and attitudes in a small rural community.

Where would you place it and when?

I'd say this was a traditional folk song, but it's difficult to say when exactly.

Why?

It shows how simple folk's lives could be fulfilled by realising ambitions like getting married and raising a family.

Anything you'd like to add?

It makes you feel nostalgic about lost, innocent times.

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It seems like a state-induced patriotic song to get the country moving.

Where would you place it and when?

During/at the beginning of Ceausescu's regime?

Why?

It talks about his five-year plan. It also sounds as if it comes from a totalitarian 'the country needs you' regime.

Anything you'd like to add?

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

It breathes hope and optimism, and nationalism.

Where would you place it and when?

I'm not sure if it's post-Ceausescu, it could be.

Why?

It seems to talk of a new optimism and future for the country, in the wake of Ceausescu's assassination.

Anything you'd like to add?

I'm not sure about when the song is set. Alternatively, it could be a kind of answer to the previous song.

So, what does this questionnaire tell us?

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

To the first question – What do you think of this song? – the interviewees' answers were more or less homogenous, a trait they have in common with the answers given by the Romanian interviewees. So, interviewees 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 labelled the song as 'traditional', 'folk song', 'peasant song', 'bucolic' and 'quaint'. Interviewee 1 confessed the song 'didn't interest her' and interviewee 5, the Czech one, said its content was 'inoffensive' – which is a very interesting remark and may make one ask the question 'why should a song be offensive?'. I find the explanation in the fact that this interviewee is Czech and therefore immediately spotted/felt what the songs were about and qualified the content of this one as 'inoffensive' as opposed to songs she knows of – maybe the following two?! - and *are* offensive.

To the second question – Where would you place this song and when? – answers were quite different from each other, regarding both parts of the question, *where* and *when* they would place the song. Although some

interviewees agreed it was in a 'rural setting' (interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 7), others talked of *where* as in *which geographical area*. So, interviewee 2 (from Venezuela) placed it 'in any rural European area', interviewee 3 (from the USA) said it could be 'anywhere with traditional agrarian societies', interviewee 4 (the USA) placed it in 'England, perhaps Germany', interviewee 5 (the Czech Republic), in Czechoslovakia, interviewee 6 (Catalonia), said it was a 'traditional British or Irish song', interviewee 7 (the UK) assumes it is Romanian and interviewee 8 (the UK) doesn't mention it! As to *when* they would place the song, interviewee 1 thought it was from the 'beginning of the 20th century or earlier', interviewee 2 considered that 'although it may be an old song, it may still be popular nowadays', interviewee 3 doesn't make any reference to the time, interviewee 4 situates it as far back as late 17th – mid 18th century, interviewee 5, between the 60's and the 80's, interviewee 6, 'from the 16th to the 19th century, or even beginning of the 20th', interviewee 7 situates before the industrial revolution ('pre-industrial revolution, perhaps 18th-19th century'), whereas interviewee 8 finds it 'difficult to say when exactly'.

In order to answer the third question – Why? – all interviewees based their guesses on the text. So, interviewee 1 answers 'because of the traditional lyrics', interviewee 2, 'because of its contents', interviewee 4, 'the images and vocabulary', interviewee 5, because it sounds 'like children rhymes from a primary school reading book', interviewee 6, because it talks about peasants and farmers and cows...', interviewee 7, from the 'typical courting-marriage-children sequence' and interviewee 8, because 'it shows how simple folk's lives could be fulfilled by realizing ambitions like getting married and raising a family'. It is simply amazing to see how the same text is placed by these interviewees over a period of time which spans from the 16th century to the 80's of the 20th century.

Other comments

Only some interviewees had extra comments. So, interviewee 3 comments that 'it may be a wedding song' and that it is 'not in an English speaking country', interviewee 4 appreciates that it 'seems too idealized and

silly’, interviewee 7 considers that ‘it is difficult to draw conclusions from a translation’ and that he ‘would like to hear the original with music to give a better opinion’ – which he did, but didn’t change any of his opinions in the end – and interviewee 8 confesses that ‘it makes you feel nostalgic about lost innocent times’.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

To the first question – What do you think of the song? – answers were pretty diverse, but somehow homogenous since more or less everybody spotted the essence of the song: political, march, state-induced patriotic song ... So, interviewee 1 finds it ‘interesting from a historical point of view’, interviewee 2 thinks ‘it’s a political song (or at least, it looks like one!)’, interviewee 3 is reminded ‘of the simplistic Hollywood patriotic motif, the revolutionary posters-propaganda’, interviewee 4 thinks that ‘it exhalts basic ideals of traditional Communism (collective versus individual)’, interviewee 5 considers it ‘sounds very pioneering – in terms of building, constructing, labouring’ and that as a whole, it is ‘quite hideous/monstrous’, interviewee 6 thinks ‘it is more modern than the previous one. Talks about effort, work, country ideals’, interviewee 7 remarks ‘it has a chorus/refrain. It could be a march’ and interviewee 8 thinks ‘it seems like a state-induced patriotic song to get the country moving.’

To the second question – Where would you place this song and when? – interviewee 1 has no doubts and says ‘in communist times, definitely’, interviewee 2 says in the ‘communist eastern block before 1989’, interviewee 3 admits she ‘can’t tell whether there is irony in ‘the five-year plan in four-and-a-half. If not, it is propagandistic. If so, it’s a protest song.’, interviewee 4 thinks it’s from ‘the Soviet Union (1920’s) or China’s (1950’s)’, interviewee 5 (the Czech one) admits ‘it reminds me of Czechoslovakian socialist poetry, that’s to say, post-war years ... but any socialist block country is possible ...’, interviewee 6 thinks the song could be from ‘Modern Britain or the US or Australia ... (any English speaking country) ... from the period of the industrial

revolution until today', interviewee 7 guesses that it's 'again Romania, presumably, after the Second World War – late 40's or 50's?' and interviewee 8 also guesses that it's 'during/at the beginning of the Ceausescu regime?'

To the third question – Why? – interviewee 1 finds the reason for her answer in the 'Talk of 'country's mission', 'pride and goodness', and especially the 'And the best of youth ...', interviewee 2 because 'it pledges for people to stick together and support a government plan and portrays values of common/communal richness', interviewee 3 because 'it's overly sincere, overly dogmatic. It's kind of insulting, but if the society is naïve, it may be a persuasive tool', interviewee 4 finds reasons in 'the call to the country's youth to build a stronger country for a better tomorrow', interviewee 5 gave her answer because of 'words like 'five-year plan', 'love for one's country', 'pride', 'honour' and so on – simply the overall impression – is a deadly combination', interviewee 6 because 'it talks about being productive or highly efficient, richness in relation to the whole country etc.', interviewee 6 thinks it has 'clear communist/soviet references, 'five-year plan', 'heroes', 'mission', 'same ideal' and interviewee 8 because 'it talks about his (Ceaușescu's) five-year plan. It also sounds as if it comes from a totalitarian your-country-needs-you regime.'

Other comments

Only few interviewees had extra things to add to their answers. Interviewee 3 remarked again, similar to the first song, that the song is 'not from an English speaking country', interviewee 4 thinks it's a 'very political song', interviewee 7 spots 'the link with the first song is the 'ring dance' – alunel – but now the context is not the bride and groom alone, in marriage. Now, the ring dance is like a demonstration of patriotism – like the sardana, perhaps.' This is a very interesting comment, since, indeed, the two songs have a ring dance in common, although 'alunel' is a variety of 'horă'. Because 'horă' was a very popular dance in villages and a common way of entertainment, the regime was clever enough to try and appropriate this dance in order to show off an intimacy with its citizens it didn't have.

Magistrala albastră

To the first question – What do you think of this song? – answers were generally in two lines of thought. Some of the interviewees were puzzled by it and others put it in the same category with the second song. Thus, interviewee 1 admits that she ‘doesn’t understand it very well: ‘we leave no TV sets?’ she wonders, interviewee 2 thinks that ‘it looks like a national anthem’, interviewee 3 again says she ‘doesn’t really understand it. I don’t see the connection between the inspiration that the river has provided and the signing of a plan – I guess to rebuild the country. Its message doesn’t work for me’ and interviewee 4 thinks this song is ‘similar to song 2, but more ‘social’ and peaceful’. Interviewee 5 answers the same things to both song 2 and 3. Interviewee 6 says ‘it feels it has been written by a Romanian or by someone who knows Romania and its people very well’, interviewee 7 identifies it as ‘another ‘more openly’ patriotic song – but it looks more like a ballad’ whereas interviewee 8 thinks that the song ‘breathes hope and optimism, and nationalism’.

To the second question – Where would you place this song and when? – interviewee 1 identifies it as ‘patriotic. I don’t know if it’s from communist times or later’, interviewee 2 answers ‘Romania, it may be its national anthem and it may have ‘survived’ through the communist period’, interviewee 3 thinks it is ‘Romania, maybe after the fall of the dictatorship’, interviewee 4 thinks it is ‘Romania, post-Ceausescu, beginning of the 21st century’, interviewee 6 thinks it is from ‘Romania (European Union), 2008’, interviewee 7, “Romania’ – explicit! – Maybe in the 70’s’ and interviewee 8 ‘is not sure if this is post-Ceasescu, it could be’.

As to the third question – Why? – interviewee 1 finds reasons for her answer in the lines ‘We build up to the skies ... out of love for Romania’, interviewee 2 because ‘it includes landmarks and some appeals to national pride’, interviewee 3 because of the ‘towering flats’ that make her think it is probably ‘something recent’, interviewee 4 observes that ‘the country’s name is

used. It is as if the country has survived a turbulent time and is now reflecting on its existence', interviewee 6 finds the reasons in the mention made in the song of 'signing (treaties?), 'dreams yet to come true' (what some Romanians expect from joining the EU?)', interviewee 7 because of 'mention of TV sets, skyscrapers, canals' and interviewee 8 because 'it seems to talk of new optimism and future of the country, in the wake of Ceausescu's assassination'.

Other comments

Again, similar to the other two songs, there are very few extra-comments to this song. Thus, interviewee 4 thinks that 'with some differences, it is similar to the 'bucolic' and peaceful images of song 1' and interviewee 8 comments that he is 'not sure about when the song is set. Alternatively it could be a kind of answer to the previous song'.

Questionnaire interpretation

Țărăncuță, țărăncuță

Most interviewees agreed that this was a peasant traditional folk song, one interviewee called it 'bucolic' and other two used the word 'quaint' to describe it. One British interviewee confessed that 'it doesn't interest me' – the values transparent in the song? The type of family? The story? – and another one, an American, that 'it doesn't offend me', which again, might make one wonder about why a song should be offensive. A similar remark was also made by the Czech interviewee who said its 'content was inoffensive'. This comment is easier to understand coming from a Czech who lived through the communist regime, but it was a bit unclear coming from an American who, presumably, has had no experience of dictatorship. But, in a later conversation, this interviewee clarified what she meant by 'the song doesn't offend me.' As the feminist she considers herself to be, she didn't feel offended by the values expressed in the song, although they are very traditional. This happened because she identified

the song as 'not contemporary', but she would have felt offended if the song had been contemporary.

In the same line of thought, another interviewee, the Venezuelan one, considered 'the values it [the song] portrays somehow chauvinistic and outdated', probably as a reaction to the traditional male and female roles defined in the song. She is also one of the youngest to answer the questionnaire (42).

The amazing aspect of the answers to this question is the time and the geographical span over which interviewees place this song. According to them, the song could be placed anywhere between the 16th and late 20th century and it may belong to a variety of places, from England, Ireland, Australia ('any English speaking country' – interviewee 6) to Germany, from Romania to Czechoslovakia, from 'any rural European area' (interviewee 2) to 'not in an English speaking country' (interviewee 3). This is clear indication that the subject of the song, 'the courting-marriage-children sequence', as interviewee 7 puts it, could be almost universally recognized, although it has been labelled as 'chauvinistic and outdated' and 'quaint'. The closest to guessing correctly both the place and the period of time in which the song was composed/sung was the Czech interviewee. This comes to confirm that 'the flair' the song has is easily recognisable by someone who has had the similar experience of dictatorship and of songs used by the regime as a tool in order to indoctrinate people.

Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate

Most interviewees identified this song as being 'patriotic', 'political', and 'communist'. One thought that 'it could be a march' and another one correctly spotted 'exaltation of the basic ideals of traditional Communism (collective versus individual)'. Interviewee 6 limited herself to saying 'it is more modern than the previous one [the song about the peasant].' Interviewee 3 is reminded 'of the simplistic Hollywood patriotic motif, the revolutionary posters propaganda', which make one think it is a bit of 'what was first, the hen or the egg?' dilemma type. The Czech interviewee (5) sees the songs (she spoke of

song 2 and 3 together) as 'very pioneering' and is, again, the closest to the feelings a Romanian would have about these songs when she says 'as a whole, they are quite hideous/monstrous'. She is the only interviewee that obviously 'feels' the songs, noticing exactly what is going on beyond the obvious message and plot line of the songs and therefore qualifies them with such harsh words as 'hideous' and 'monstrous'.

All the interviewees identified fairly accurately the time and ideologic area - 'communist times, definitely!' exclaims interviewee 1, with different variations: Soviet Union (20's) or China (50's), Communist Eastern block before 1989, post-war Czechoslovakia, Romania in the 40's, 50's or Ceausescu's regime ... The only major discrepancy is shown by interviewee 6, the Catalan one, by placing the song in 'any English speaking country' and 'from the period of the industrial revolution until today', which makes perfect sense because this interviewee is the youngest and coming from a country which was still suffering the closure and the sequels to Franco's dictatorship.

Interviewee 3 makes particularly interesting comments when she wonders whether there is irony in the song or the song is 'serious'. If the song is ironic, then it's a protest song; if it's 'serious', then it's propagandistic – she concludes. Does it communicate a song the message of which cannot be clearly identified?

She then again makes a sharp point when she finds the song 'kind of insulting, but if the society is naïve, it may be a persuasive tool', a comment that spots the very essence of the song: it being 'a tool' in the hands of the regime and it being 'insulting'. As to the naivety of the society, it is, of course, a valid comment, since a song cannot be a persuasive tool if the society is not naïve. But, the songs in this paper are being analysed because they were broadcast on TV and radio over and over again as a way of indoctrinating people – we have already seen the effects they had on the eight Romanians who answered the questionnaire (not listening to them, not hearing them, ignoring them, switching off the TV...). In this case, it becomes pointless if the society was or

not naïve or whole-heartedly followed the urges expressed in these songs. It is much more important to take into account that the society was *afraid*.

Magistrala albastră

This song also seems to puzzle some of the interviewees, 1 and 3, who admit overtly they don't understand its message because of mentioning TV sets and the strange connection between 'the inspiration that the river has provided and the signing of a plan'. Otherwise the word 'patriotic' is used to describe it. It is also associated with the second song. Interviewee 2 speculates it may be 'a national anthem' due to references to 'landmarks and appeals to national pride.'

Although, generally, there is agreement about the meaning of the song, there are however, some comments that drew my attention. Interviewee 2 considers that it may be the Romanian anthem and 'it may have 'survived' through the communist period'. This remark can only mean two things: firstly, she places the song in the years before the Communists came to power and secondly, seems to see some sort of incongruence or even dissidence between the song and the regime. I take this as proof of the song failing to communicate.

Another striking comment is the one made by interviewee 6 who places the song in 2008! The reasons she gives are the words 'signing' – 'treaties?', she wonders – and 'dreams yet to come true' – 'what some Romanians expect from the joining the EU?', she wonders again.

What probably accounts for the puzzling and confusing characteristics of these songs and them being placed at all sorts of times and places is the fact that they have been written on command and, apart from dealing with a given topic, their writers probably tried to make them rhyme without really caring too much about how logical they were or what they communicated. Empty words not unlike the blocks of flats that would show off a façade, but nothing behind that façade.

5. The translation

Translating these three songs into English was no easy task. *Țărăncuță*, *tărăncuță* is all rhymed and has some very local cultural elements (*alunei*) and *Cincinal* has some whimsical rhymes, untranslatable words ('hai, hai, hai... 'șă, 'șă, 'șă... ia, ia și iaca, iac-așa') and contains diminutive names. *Magistrala albastră* presents all the difficulties of a translation with restrictions, plus some lines which don't always make perfect sense.

Rationale of the approach

Translating songs is bound to have a wider range of purposes compared to other types of translation. They might be translated for fellow listeners with no knowledge of the language of the song – which means that performance of the song should also be taken into account – or for purposes that would not need a singable version, in which case, a loyal prose translation would suffice without further need to adapt the translation to the music.

So, more than translating just the meaning of the two songs, I took into consideration the fact that they are songs, which is: 'meant to be sung'. Although it is very unlikely they would ever be sung in English, I thought this approach would bring the reader closer to the original. The sarcasm of the second song would not be fully understood without actually matching the words to the tune. I have chosen to be the closest possible to the original meaning and to respect the best I could Low's 'pentathlon principle': singability, rhyme, rhythm, naturalness and fidelity to the sense of the source text.

For example, in the first song, I kept the original Romanian word *alunei* rather than translate it, with an explanatory note at the end of the song.

The second song contains a several names, three male and two female ones. Some of them do have an English equivalent, but they would have been inappropriate for the context. (For example, translating Fănică with Stephen or

Steven, although these are the real equivalents) I preferred to think of British names in the context of rural life. I thought of British names because I have also used British English in my work and it is a culture closer – geographically and not only - to the Romanian one than any other culture of an English speaking country (I could not have chosen South-African, Australian or American contexts, for instance). In order to make sure the names were adequate for the purpose, I have consulted several native English speakers.

Difficulties/lost in translation

Romanian is a Latin language, English, an Anglo-Saxon one, Romanian is a phonetic language, English isn't. Romanian has a lot of vowels (seven vowels: a, â, ă, e, i, î, o, u - the â and î stand for the same sound) and wherever there is a vowel, there is a syllable. For example: ță-răn-cu-ță, ba-de, zi-le, co-sit, du-mi-ni-ca, a-lu-nel. Because English is not a phonetic language, the English translation of the songs looks actually longer than the Romanian original.

In *Țărăncuță, țărăncuță*, the main difficulty was the rhyming while struggling to keep the meaning unaltered. Other difficulties were related to some specific words. Here is a list of them with their original and translated dictionary definition as well as the translation and the reason for which I translated them as such:

- alunel = numele unui dans popular
(alunel = name of a Romanian dance)

I chose to leave the Romanian original and explain the word at the end. I considered it untranslatable and, as I had already used the word 'dance', I thought it was inappropriate to repeat it.

- bade = 1. Termen politicos de adresare către un om matur sau mai vârstnic (la țară). 2. Termen mângâietor folosit de femeile de la țară pentru bărbatul iubit.

(bade = 1. Polite way of addressing an adult or an old man (in the country).
2. Pleasant word used by women in the country for the loved man.)

I chose to translate it - at the beginning of the song - as 'farmer' which included his occupation and helped to set the context. There are later mentions of him which materialised as 'his' or 'man'.

- bogdaproste = cuvânt de mulțumire adresat celui care dă ceva de pomană (according to *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*)

(bogdaproste = a way of saying 'thank you' to someone who gives alms)

bogdaproste = mulțumesc, să fie primit. Sl. Bogŭ da prostiŭ 'Dumnezeu să-i ierte (pe morții tăi)'. Este formula păstrată tradițional de cerșetori, care se folosește numai pentru a muțumi când se primește ceva de pomană. (according to *Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române*)

bogdaproste = thank you, let it be had. From Slave Bogŭ da prostiŭ: 'May God forgive your dead'. It is a formula traditionally used by beggars when they receive alms.

As, etymologically, God is involved in this word, I decided to translate the original: 'De data asta, măi fată// Zii bogdaproste c-ai scăpat' with 'This time, dear, it might have been// So give God a nice big grin.' As in other Christian cultures and languages, in Romanian, the word 'God' has become void of religious meaning and is used in many expressions regardless to the religious beliefs of the speaker. Even in communist days, using such expressions was not unnatural or forbidden. Even less in a word such as *bogdaproste* where one would need etymological knowledge to associate it with God.

- horă = dans popular românesc cu ritm domol, în care jucătorii se prind de mână, formând un cerc închis

(horă = peaceful Romanian dance, in which the dancers hold hands, forming a close circle)

I translated this word with 'Sunday dance' as these dances used to take place on Sundays and because there is mention of Sunday in the original (duminica)

Some expressions were not completely lost, but transformed in the translation. For example, the expression 'a da fraga buzelor' which means 'to kiss', but is metaphoric as, literally, this means 'to give your lips' wild strawberry to someone' using the colour association between lips and strawberries. The interjection 'păi' meaning 'well' or 'why' shows familiarity with the interlocutor which was lost in the translation as 'may your daughter live long now' is more formal and it may have a religious overtone ('May God have mercy...', 'May God bestow on Us His Grace...') which is far from being the case here.

Cincinal had other difficulties such as 'translating' the interjections, finding English equivalents for the Romanian names and rhyming the odd lines. Below is a list of these difficulties and the solutions found.

- așa = în felul acesta, astfel

(așa = this way, so)

In the line 'și tot așa, 'șa, 'șa, 'șa...' although the word repeated is 'șa' short for 'așa' I preferred to repeat 'go', to give it the urge of the original.

- cincinal = a five-year plan

This word was not difficult in itself; it has an easy translation. But this Romanian word is translated with four words in English which was problematic for the scan; I had to 'squeeze' more information in the English translation.

- hai = cuvânt care exprimă un îndemn la o acțiune comună cu interlocutorul

hai = word which expresses to call to do something in common with the interlocutor.

I translated this word with 'come on'. As it is endlessly repeated, I thought repetition in English would bring it closer to the original.

- he, hei = 1. exclamație care exprimă o chemare sau prin care se atrage cuiva atenția. 2. exclamație care exprimă voie bună, satisfacție, admirație etc.

he, hei = 1. exclamation through which one calls someone else or tries to get someone's attention. 2. exclamation expressing joy, satisfaction, admiration etc.

I also translated this interjection with 'come on', as the whole song is a call to animate Romanians to work harder and better.

- horă - the same word as in the previous song
- 'Horă' is also part of an expression 'a se prinde în horă' meaning to join something, to become part of something. The song plays with this double meaning: 'horă' as a dance and 'becoming part of something'. 'Horă' as the dance gives the song this slightly peasant touch together with the names used. 'Horă' as 'becoming part of something' is obviously an invitation to work. This is why I translated 'În această horă, prinde-te măi frate!' with 'This ring dance is for you, join in here then!'

The names were another difficult issue. They all had to be from the farming context. In order to deliver the whole oversweet tone given by the use of diminutives in Romanian, I only looked for names ending in 'y'. For the same purpose - as well as for the scansion - I added an extra 'boy' to the male names and 'love' to the female names.

These are the names with their diminutives and the translation. One of the names *Ștefan* (Stephen or Steven, in English) has the short form *Fane*. Its diminutive is derived from this short form *Fănică*. I could only use the English equivalent for *Ion* and *Maria*.

- Ion → Ionică = Johnny
- Maria → Marioară = Mary
- Ștefan → Fane → Fănică = Billy
- Floarea → Floricica → Floricico (Vocativ) = Maggie
- Marin → Marinică = Harry

Perhaps the important thing lost in the translation was the naiveness of the Romanian original given by the oversweet tone; the false familiarity and the

intimacy implied, and the contrast between what was supposed to be its message and the repulse probably all Romanians felt towards it.

No particular difficulties, other than those imposed by the translation with constraints, have been found in the translation of the third song.

6. Conclusions

*'There was an Old Man in a boat
Who said, 'I'm afloat! I'm afloat!'
When they said, 'No, you ain't!'
He was ready to faint,
That unhappy Old Man in a boat.'*
Edward Lear – The Book of Nonsense

Could these three songs be understood without a context? Would *Țărăncuța* and her impeccable life make any sense out of the context of communism? Would anyone listen to the urges in *Cincinal*? Would *Magistrala* awake any national pride nowadays?

As I have tried to show in this paper, these three songs together provide the listeners with a little manual regarding the recommended values to have in order to become a real communist. No major aspect of life is left unattended: one should have a family and provide the country with children; together with their country fellows, one should work hard for the country, so hard one should shorten the target set in a five-year plan to be done in four and a half; one should have a set of essential values that would make them part of a proud community who works towards the same goal and doesn't spare any efforts: Romania's thriving. The perfect communist doesn't need to think in order to provide themselves with guiding vital principles; everything has been carefully prepared and delivered by the all-caring almighty Party. The only thing citizens have to do is follow the Party. Alienation and lack of initiative are but consequences of this already-chewed mind-food.

From this point of view – values to follow – I believe these three songs mean absolutely nothing nowadays. The ‘new man’, the communist person as part of an enormous machine ruled by the Party has failed. Communism has failed. The family – as described in the first song – is becoming just a type of family, sharing now protagonism with other types of families (gay, mono-parental, adoptive). Nobody would now react to the urges uttered in the second song - goals set to ‘take the country further’. And one’s sense of belonging to a community would certainly not be ingrained by means of empty notions such as ‘patriotic love’.

The questionnaires answered by Romanians and people of different nationalities all come to sustain the same argument: these songs have ceased to communicate, if they ever did. With the only exception of the first song, which may still be the standard family for Romanians of this generation (participants were all in their 60’s), the interviewees have shown mainly disgust towards the songs. As for the others, the interviewees of different nationalities, again with the exception of the first song, which was mainly recognised as ‘traditional’ and also as ‘chauvinistic’ and ‘outdated’, the songs have failed to communicate their original intention altogether. Interviewees were puzzled and found the songs disconcerting. Some of them clearly admitted they couldn’t understand the songs’ message.

In their ‘Introduction to text linguistics’ (1981), the authors, de Beaugrande and Dressler argue that:

‘The cohesion of surface texts and the underlying coherence of textual worlds are the most obvious standards of textuality. They indicate how the component elements of the text fit together and make sense. However, they cannot provide absolute borderlines between texts and non-texts in real communication. People can and do use texts which, for various motives, do not seem fully cohesive and coherent. We should therefore include the attitudes of text users among the standards of textuality. A language configuration must be intended to be a text and accepted as such in order to be utilized in communicative interaction. These attitudes involve some tolerance towards disturbances of cohesion or coherence, as long as the purposeful nature of the communication is upheld. The production and reception of texts function as discourse actions relevant to some plan or goal.’

The first song is both coherent and cohesive. It is the story of a woman’s life. A model life with a happy heterosexual marriage, household and babies who will grow to be proud of their mother for being pretty and for having

provided such security and felicity. After all, at the same time, in the 50's, in the context of the USA, Doris Day had the same dreams in *Tea for two* and later, in the 60's, the Beatles sang of a similar story, *Desmond and Molly Jones* (see Appendix 5). The woman in Doris Day's song was also dreaming of a happy heterosexual marriage ('Picture me upon your knee// With tea for two and two for tea'), household ('Day will break and I'm gonna wake// And start to bake a sugar cake') and babies ('We will raise a family// A boy for you and a girl for me'). The only difference would probably be the new technology present in the American song, but not in the Romanian one ('We won't have it known// But we own a telephone, dear...'). The Romanian couple seems to be more sociable: 'And all this paradise enhanced// By **presence of beloved friends...**' and 'A happy household such as theirs// Cheerfulness, love and many **peers...**' versus '**No friends or relations**// On weekend vacation...'

So, *Țărăncuța*, although it served the regime well, actually had an audience. The life we found out about in the song was no different from others having the same wishes and desires. A proof that communication did take place between the author and the audience was the fact that the song was liked in those days and the Romanian interviewees admitted that they could listen to the song again. So, the song still communicates, because it is still sung and it has been 'recuperated' from the communist days. Probably, also, because *țărăncuța's* life is the perfect model a lot of people still wish for. More proof about the very different perception the first song versus the other two had and still has is the fact that I was able to find its guitar chords on the Internet, but not the others'.

Although the second and the third songs probably have both coherence and cohesion, they fail to communicate. It is very likely that whoever wrote and composed them may have received orders to do so. There were few really enthusiastic artists to collaborate with the regime. But, on the other hand, artists had to collaborate with the regime. They would receive orders to write and compose songs about whatever the decision-makers of the day considered necessary: Ceaușescu's birthdays, 1st of May (the Red Easter), 23rd of August (the national day) or simply songs of praise. There was no escape from such

'duties'. This may have well been the case with *Cincinal* and *Magistrala*. So, the author's intention was not really the author's; it was the Party's. And it is very arguable there were any real *listeners*, as we have seen from the questionnaires. The songs may have been heard - it was difficult to ignore them since they were so often on both TV and on air – but, as is apparent from the questionnaires, they were not listened to. The most common reaction was to switch off the TV or the radio. The intended (by the regime, not by the author) receivers wouldn't accept these songs. There would be no tolerance for the innumerable interjections and song-fillers such as: 'hai, hai, hai cu toții, hai'; 'la, ia și iaca, iac'așa!'; 'și tot așa, 'șa, 'șa, 'șa...' in *Cincinal* or this false national pride dug up for the Party's purposes in *Magistrala*, both trying to convey insulting messages to citizens brought to despair through years of demented rule.

So, in the case of these two songs, communication failed to take place. The intended message did not reach its target listener in those days. Even less so now – we have analysed the reaction the foreign interviewees had towards these songs. And nowadays, the regime that promoted and had the initiative to create such songs doesn't even exist anymore. They are non-texts; although the grammar is there, their message is null (clearly expressed by Romanian interviewee 3 who wouldn't accept them as songs). They are 'dead' texts which only 'speak' to people who want to study those years or to people who lived through those years but want to leave these painful memories behind (some Romanian interviewees would not admit they remembered the songs).

However, I did find an example of real listening. It was someone's comment on the www.youtube.com website in answer to *Cincinal*: 'da:))) tare:)) pun asta in birou de cate ori suntem depasiti de situatii si facem 3 in unu... hai-hai hai fanica hai!' (Yes! Fantastic! We play this song at work every time the workload is too much and we do three things at the same time... Hai, hai, hai, Fănică, hai!) It is another sample of Romanian humour.

7. Bibliography and other resources consulted

The corpus – includes the music and the lyrics of the three songs

The music

Tărăncuta, tărăncută

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4Y6CXwqfsM&NR=1>

Cincinal în patru ani si jumătate

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4Y6CXwqfsM&NR=1>

Magistrala albastră

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGSMnWDGTiQ>

The lyrics

Tărăncuta, tarancuta

http://www.versuri.ro/versuri/ehdl_dan+spataru+tarancuta+tarancuta.html

Magistrala albastră

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<http://dictionary.reverso.net/>

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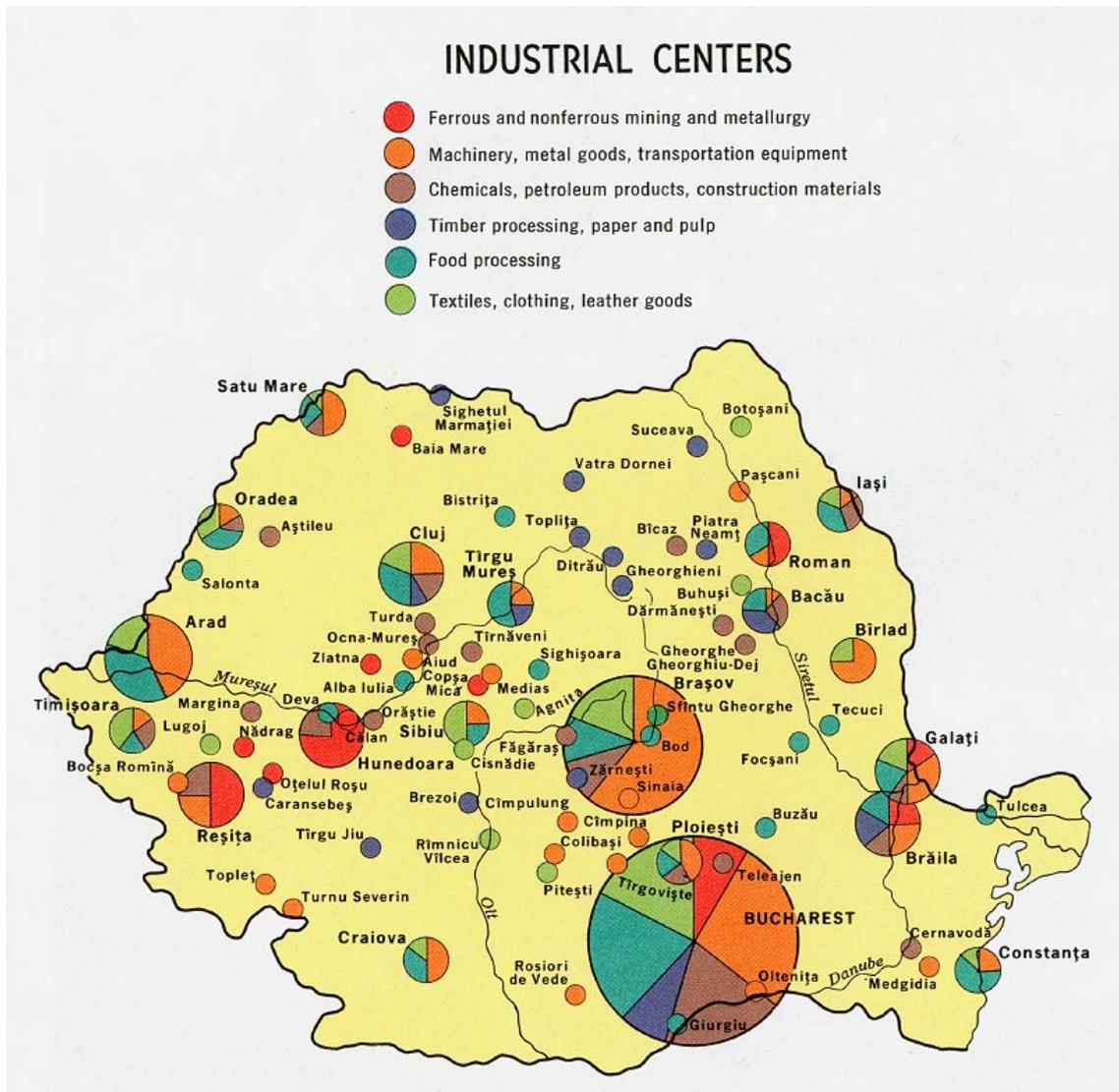
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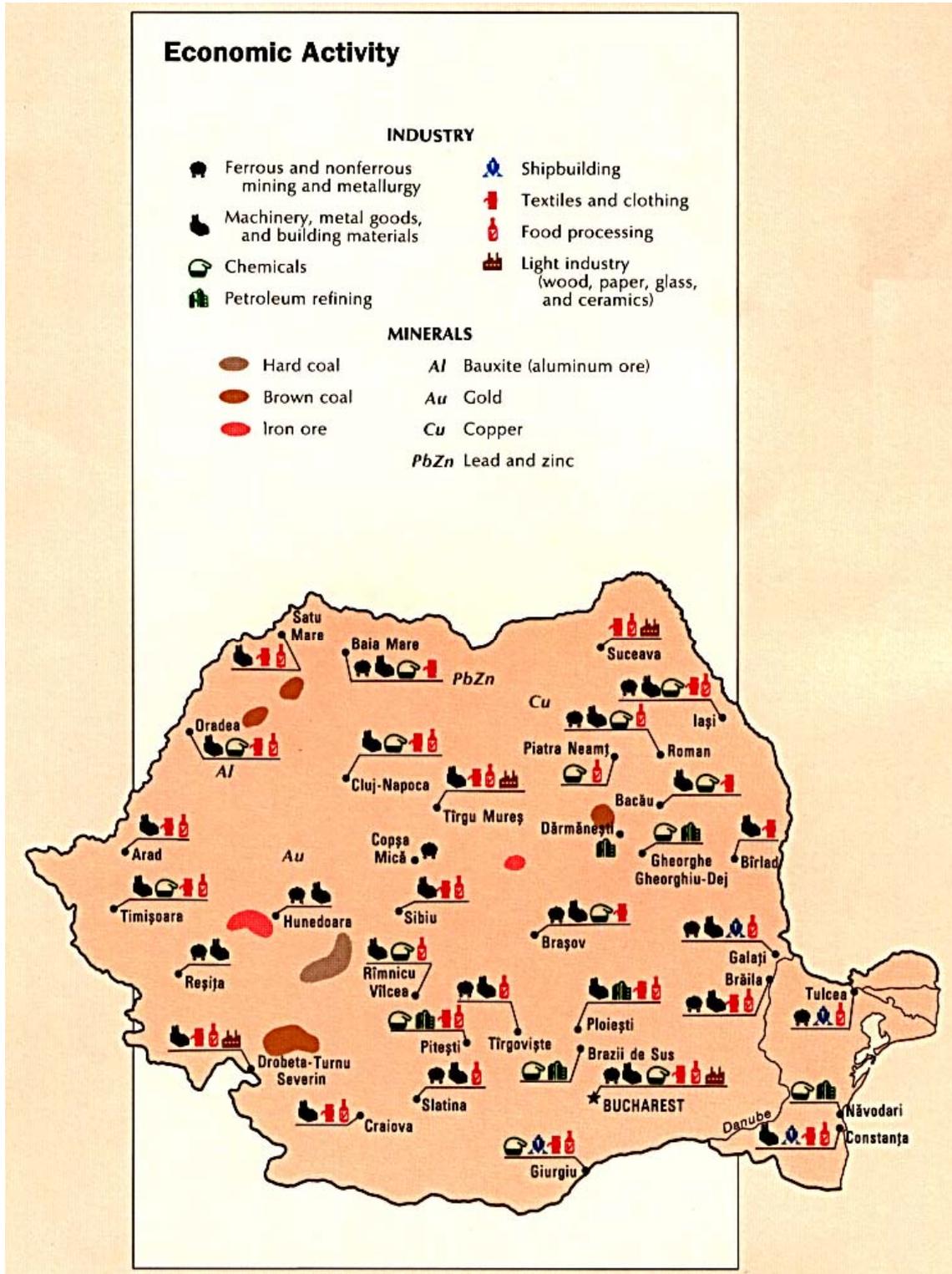
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8. Appendices

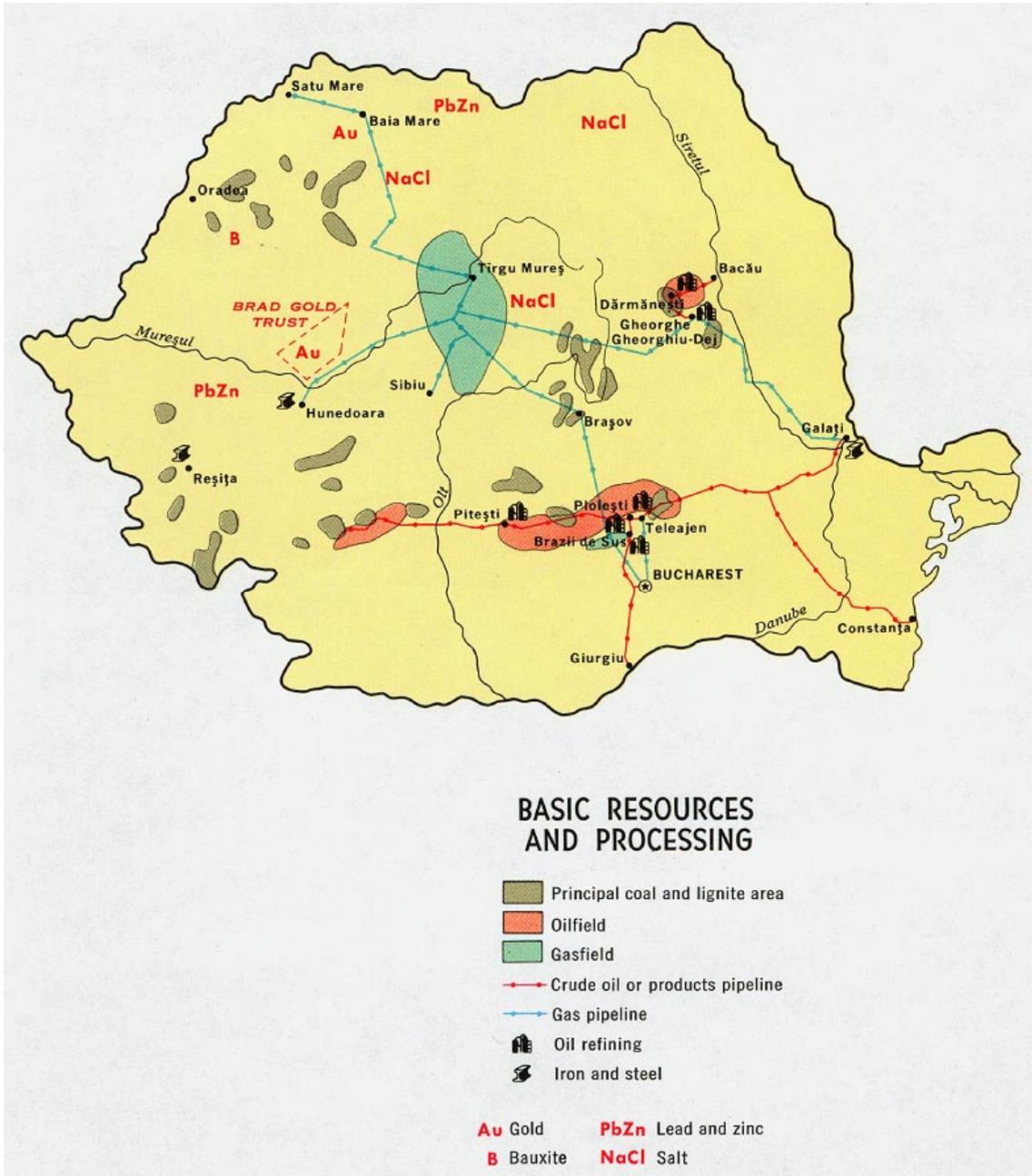
Appendix 1



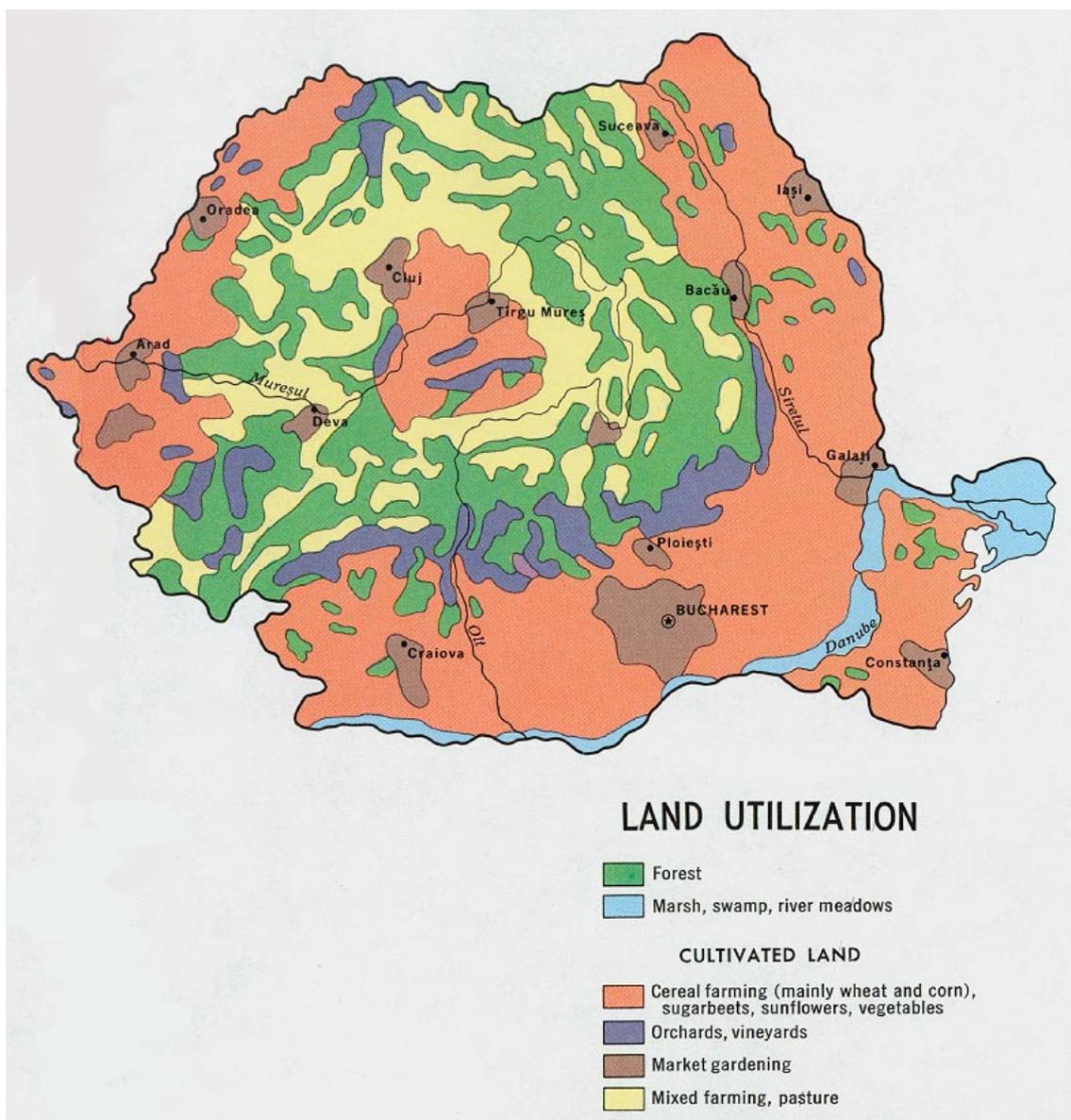
Appendix 1



Appendix 1



Appendix 1



Pagina 4 TELE-RADIO

TELEVIZIUNE Luni ★ 25 decembrie 1989 **RADIO**

19.00 Telejurnal

19.25

C **Ctitorii**
ale Epocii de Aur
ARC PESTE MUNȚI
Redactor Horia Vasiloni

19.45

DIRECȚII
ALE DEZVOLTĂRII
CERCETĂRII
ȘTIINȚIFICE
IN LUMINA
HOTĂRIRILOR
CONGRESULUI
AL XIV-LEA
AL PARTIDULUI



PLATFORME ALE INTEGRĂRII
CERCETĂRII ȘTIINȚIFICE CU PRO-
DUCȚIA - „ELECTROPUTERE”
CRAIOVA
Redactor Eugen Roibu

20.10

C **Tezaur**
folcloric
Cintec pentru pământul
românesc
Redactor Marloara Murărescu

20.40

PUTERNICĂ
MOBILIZARE PENTRU
INDEPLINIREA
EXEMPLARĂ
A PLANULUI
PE LUNA DECEMBRIE
ȘI PE ÎNTREGUL AN
ORGANIZAREA, MODERNIZAREA
ȘI SPECIALIZAREA PRODUCȚIEI
Raid-anchetă în unități economice
din industria constructoare de
mașini
Redactor Sorin Burtea

21.00

C **Democrația muncitorească,**
revoluționară în acțiune
PARTICIPARE ACTIVĂ, CON-
ȘTIENȚĂ LA OPERA DE CON-
STRUCȚIE A SOCIETĂȚII
SOCIALISTE ȘI COMUNISTE
Documentar
Redactor Emilia Diaconu

21.20

C **Din lumea**
capitalului
Documentar
Redactor Florin Mitu

21.35

C **Ce-ți doresc eu ție,**
dulce Românie
Versuri patriotice, revoluționare

21.50 Telejurnal

22.00 Închiderea programului

1

6.00 RADIOPROGRAMUL
DIMINETII
• Buletin de știri
6.15 Statul medicului
6.30 LA ZI ÎN AGRICULTURĂ
7.00 RADIOJURNAL
• Hotărârile Congresului,
chemările tovarășului
Nicolae Ceaușescu - program de
acțiune revoluționară al întregu-
lui popor
8.00 Revista presei
8.10 Curierul melodiilor
8.55 Publicitate
9.00 Buletin de știri
9.05 RĂSPUNDEM
ASCULTĂTORILOR
10.00 Buletin de știri
10.05 Cîntecele satului românesc
contemporan
10.25 Publicitate
10.40 Tineri soliști de muzică ușoară
laureați ai Festivalului național
„Cîntarea României”
11.00 Buletin de știri

11.05 ANTENA SINDICATELOR
Creșterea și diversificarea
creației tehnico-științifice -
preocupare majoră a organe-
lor și organizațiilor sindicale
Redactor Tudor Stancliu

11.25 Pagini antologice din creația cor-
orală dedicată patriei în repertoriul
Corului și Orchestrei Radioteleviziunii
Române
11.50 Buletin hidrologic
12.00 Buletin de știri
12.05 MAGAZIN TEHNICO-
ȘTIINȚIFIC
Hotărârile Congresului al XIV-lea al
partidului, mobilizator program de
acțiune deschis științei românești,
pentru progresul multilateral al pa-
trii
12.35 Din comoara folclorului
13.00 DE LA 1 LA 3
• RADIOJURNAL
• Voința întregului popor - în-
făptuirea exemplară a Hotărârilor
Congresului al XIV-lea al parti-
dului
15.00 Avanspremieră Radio-TV
15.15 Opera românească și Inter-
preții ei
15.40 FAPELE DE MUNCĂ,
RĂSPUNSUL ȚĂRII LA INDEMNURILE
SECRETARULUI GENERAL
AL PARTIDULUI, TOVARĂȘUL
NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU
(Mărturie, reportaje, însemnări de
scriitori). Redactor George Antof
16.00 RADIOJURNAL
16.15 ECONOMIA ROMÂNEASCĂ,
PE DRUMUL DEZVOLTĂRII
INTENSIVE
Sfârșit de an, început de an în eco-
nomie: realizări și perspective în
industria extractivă
Redactor Carol Mălinescu

Appendix 3 – ‘The Blue Highway’ (The Danube in blue, the canal in red)



Appendix 4

Doris Day – Tea for two

Oh, honey ...
Picture me upon your knee
With tea for two
And two for tea
Just me for you
And you for me
Alone ...

Nobody near us
To see us or hear us
No friends or relations
On weekend vacations
We won't have it known, dear,
But we own a telephone, dear

Day will break
And I'm gonna wake
And start to bake
A sugar cane
For you to take

For all the boys to see

We will raise a family,
A boy for you and a girl for me
Oh, can't you see how happy
We will be?

The Beatles – Desmond and Molly Jones

Desmond has a barrow in the marketplace,
Molly is the singer in a band
Desmond says to Molly, girl I like you face,
And Molly says this as she takes him by the hand
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on
Desmond takes a trolley to the jeweller's store,
buys a twenty carat golden ring, (rin-ring)
Takes it back to Molly waiting at the door
and as he gives it to her she begins to sing (sin-sing)
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on,
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on, yeah
In a couple of years they have built a home sweet home
With a couple of kids running in the yard,
of Desmond and Molly Jones
Happy ever after in the market place,
Desmond lets the children lend a hand
Molly stays at home and does her pretty face
and in the evening she still sings it with the band,
Yes, Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra
la la how the life goes on,
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on
In a couple of years they have built a home sweet home,
with a couple of kids running in the yard,
of Desmond and Molly Jones,
yeah Happy ever after in the market place,
Molly lets the children lend a hand
Desmond stays at home and does his pretty face
And in the evening she's a singer with the band
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on,
Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, bra,
la la how the life goes on
And if you want some fun,
take ob-la-di-bla-da

Appendix 5

Interviewee 1 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- Țărâncuță, țărâncuță
Excelent. Imi plăcea f. mult și îl pot cânta!
- Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate
Cîmpeneie. Îl cunosc, nu-l pot fredona.
- Magistrala albastră
Hortituțe muzicale. Îl cunosc, îl pot fredona.

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

Diferita. Se compensau reciproc.

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

"Țărâncuța" îl dădeam mai tare.
"Cincinalul" îl ignoram.
"Magistrala" avea melodie bună, îl ascultam.
"Na includeam micuțuța, hăteptam stirea ce a murit Nic. Ceaurascu."

4. Le-ați putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

"Țărâncuța" cu plăcere.
"Magistrala" cu indiferență.
"Cincinalul" nu-l auzeam. Aveam protecție anti-furcărie

5. Alte comentarii

Comunismul pe muzică este
ca tracă pe câmpule.
Provoacă amintiri plăcute

Vârsta: 62
Profesia: jurist

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!
Maria Bebis

Și eu pentru provocare.

Eugen Vasiliu

Interviewee 2 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- a. • Țărăncuță, țărăncuță *Da. Nu*
- b. • Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate *Nu. Nu*
- c. • Magistrala albastră *Da. Nu*

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

- a. *Satisfacție muzicală*
- b. *nicio reacție*
- c. *nicio reacție*

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

- a. *Le ascultam și îl fredonam*
- b. *Le ascultam*
- c. *Le ascultam*

4. Le-ați putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

- a. *Cu oarecare satisfacție.*
- b. *_____*
- c. *_____*

5. Alte comentarii

Cu excepția primei melodii care se încadrează în categoria muzicii avangardiste, celelalte două erau interpretate de amatori politici conform unui program de inducție politică

Vârsta: *68*
Profesia: *medic*

Silvia STOICESCU
S. Stoicescu

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!
Maria Bebis

Interviewee 3 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- a. • Țărăncuță, țărăncuță *Da. Da*
- b. • Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate *Hu. Hu*
- c. • Magistrala albastră *Hu. Hu*

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

a. *Agestrie*

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

- a. *aruncam*
- b. *nu le ascultam*
- c. *nu le ascultam*

4. Le-ati putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

- a. *da, foarte nice în sentiment*
- b. *nu*
- c. *nu*

5. Alte comentarii

*Cântecule de muzică urbane comuniste
au făcut și pe parte dintr-un vârstnic
care nu poate fi numit muzicant*

Vârsta: *61 ani*
Profesia: *PROFESOR*

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!
Maria Bebis

Rodica Stoicescu
RSt

Interviewee 4 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- a • Țărâncuță, țărâncuță *Da, da, da.*
- b • Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate *Da, nu, nu.*
- c • Magistrala albastră *Da, nu.*

2. Ce reacție vă provocau? *a) plocuter.*

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul...)

a *b, c*

4. Le-ati putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

- a) - da - fosa.
- b) - nu.
- c) - nu.

5. Alte comentarii

*Cântecul de neică ușor cu textul politicii
sau feribile. Considerăm unii să se
poate pentru interpret.*

maria libărt

Vârsta: *64 ani*

Profesia: *PROFESOR*

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!

Maria Bebis

Interviewee 5 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- Tărăncuță, tărăncuță
Da, Da, greu pîne la capet.
- Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate
Nu
- Magistrala albastră

Da!

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

Deprimă, prime - agresiune, pedel mai...
"impresionat".

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

Da, ca să știu căs, deprimă de neclăsi! Ca în
atenție nu am ascultat mai de la aici una.
Nu închideam telefonul, le ignoram, când era copil.

4. Le-ati putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

Ca simțata dar din ste urbre, Refoșă omeny!
sau din, blestem!, -notă de sic.

5. Alte comentarii

Vârsta: 60

Profesia: cercetător "greu" (membru al Acad. Române)

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!

Maria Bebis

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- Țărăncuță, țărăncuță *Da : Da*
- Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate *Da : Nu*
- Magistrala albastră *Da + Nu*

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

*Aferențioasă : Primul, Acelalaltă aplecându-se.
Acelalaltă doră, un sentiment puternic*

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

*Melodicitatea primă, nu... "fune", a celalaltă
doră mult cele două pe care murea a text*

4. Le-ați putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

Nu

5. Alte comentarii

*Cuândă că nu pot fi pur în aceeași categorie
Ultimele doră nu potea să se înțelegă (text + murea). Primul era mai "fune" prin
legătura amare pe care se transmite.*

Vârsta: 59 ani
Profesia: PROFESORĂ

DELIA VASILE
[Signature]

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!
Maria Bebis

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| a. Țărăncuță, țărăncuță | da, nu |
| b. Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate | da, nu |
| c. Magistrala albastră | da, nu |

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

Primul - agreabilă

Al doilea - silă

Al treilea - silă

3. Când le auzeți la radio sau la televizor ce faceți (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

Primul l-am ascultat cu plăcere odată, de două ori dar după aia m-am plictisit și de el, iar de fredonat nu mi-a trecut prin cap. Pe celelalte fie nu le dădeam atenție fie închideam televizorul dacă eram singur căci dacă ți-aduci aminte bunica sau mama erau totdeauna prezente.

4. Le-ati putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

Primul da, dar fără sentimente deosebite, restul nu as vrea să le mai ascult și dacă din întâmplare le-aș auzi mi-ar produce aceeași silă ca pe vremuri

5. Alte comentarii

Cu excepția primului care nu are tentă politică, celelalte două erau scrise la comandă și lumea printre care și eu le percepeam ca propagandă comunistă.

Vârsta: tata 65

Profesia: inginer

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!

Maria Bebis

Interviewee 8 (Romanian)

Chestionar

1. Vă mai amintiți aceste cântece? Le-ați putea fredona / cânta?

- 1 • Țărăncuță, țărăncuță *Mi-aș dori să știu dacă el pot fi ucloră melodia și chiar o parte din text. Se pare că există aceste există din epoca autocroriei dar ca un textul revizuit*
- 2 • Cincinal în patru ani și jumătate *Mi-aș dori să știu dacă există dar melodia și cu vântul nu li-au fost revizdate. Nu a fost la popor*
- 3 • Magistrala albastră *Încă mai amintesc că la pol 2. În sași sunt comunități nu erau ucloră cu textul că erau scutite pe tot.*

2. Ce reacție vă provocau?

Cu excepția țărăncuței, celelalte nu mi-au tulburat nu li-am răsunat

3. Când le auzeați la radio sau la televizor ce făceați (le ascultați cu atenție, le fredonați, închideți televizorul/radioul ...)

Mă făceam să nu aud la radio iar la televizor mă uitam doar la filme vintul magianului "m-e putam"

4. Le-ați putea asculta din nou? Cu ce sentimente?

Trădătorii. Restul nu există. Fără sentimente, sunt simple nu li-am răsunat și erau rău ca înainte nu trăsă că erau ucloră PCR.

5. Alte comentarii

Cu excepția țărăncuței, celelalte comunități ce par să vedă mare realizare a lui și pe lângă li-au trăsă dar nu mi-au răsunat și se simt.

Vârsta: 62

Profesia: economist actual pensionar

Vă mulțumesc pentru participare!

Maria Bebis

Interviewee 1 (English)

What do you think of this song?

The story doesn't interest me

Where would you place this song and when?

In a rural setting
Beginning of 20th, or earlier

Why?

Because of the traditional lyrics

Anything else you'd like to add?

What do you think of this song?

Interesting from a historical
point of view

Where would you place this song and when?

In communist times, definitely!

Why? Talk of "country's mission" "pride and
goodness"
and especially the part beginning:

Anything else you'd like to add? "And the best of youth...!"

What do you think of this song? I don't understand the
message very well: "We leave no TV sets?"
?? eh

Where would you place this song and when?

It's patriotic, I don't know if it's from
communist times or later

Why? "We build up to the skies... out of love
for Romania!"

Anything else you'd like to add?

Profession: Teacher

Age: 44

Thank you very much for your participation!

Interviewee 2 (English)

It looks like a peasant, traditional folk song. The values it portrays are somehow chauvinistic and outdated.

Where would you place this song and when?
Any rural European area. Although it may be an old song, it may still be popular nowadays.

Why?
Because of its contents

Anything else you'd like to add?

What do you think of this song?
It's a political song (or at least it looks like one!).

Where would you place this song and when?
Communist Eastern block before 1989.

Why?
It pledges for people to stick together and support a gov't plan & portrays values of common richness, communal

Anything else you'd like to add?

What do you think of this song?
It looks like a national anthem.

Where would you place this song and when?
Romania; it may be its national anthem and it may have "survived" through the communist period.

Why?
It includes landmarks and some appeals to national pride

Anything else you'd like to add?

Profession: teacher
Age: 42

Thank you very much for your participation!

Maria Bebis

Interviewee 3 (English)

Not in an English speaking country

Sung around campfires and large family gatherings
Where would you place this song and when? in traditional rural areas. It doesn't offend me. It's quaint.
It could be anywhere with traditional agrarian societies
Why? The society is settled not nomadic, they live in a community, not isolated. Life doesn't change from generation to generation. Traditions are valued.
Anything else you'd like to add? Maybe a wedding song.

What do you think of this song? It reminds me of the simplistic hollywood patriotic motif; the revolutionary posters -propaganda
Where would you place this song and when? Not in an English speaking country I can't tell whether there is irony in the five year plan in four and a half. If not, it is propagandistic.
Why? It's overly sincere, overly dogmatic. Its kind of insulting but if the society is naive, it may be a persuasive tool.
Anything else you'd like to add?

What do you think of this song? I don't really understand it. I don't see the connection between the inspiration that the river has provided and the signing of a plan - I guess to rebuild the country. Its message doesn't work for me.
Where would you place this song and when? Romania, maybe after the fall of the dictatorship.
Why? "Highrises", "towering flats" seems like something recent.
Anything else you'd like to add?

Profession: English teacher
Age: 53

Thank you very much for your participation!
Maria Bebis

What do you think of this song? *Bucolic. A description of a simple, natural & romanticized version of a very harsh reality.*

Where would you place this song and when? *England, perhaps Germany, in the late-17th to mid-18 centuries.*

Why? *The images & vocabulary.*

Anything else you'd like to add? *Seems too idealized & "silly."*

What do you think of this song? *It echoes the basic ideals of traditional Communism (collective vs individual)*

Where would you place this song and when? *Soviet Union (1920's) or China (1950's)*

Why? *The call to the country's youth to build a stronger country for a better tomorrow.*

Anything else you'd like to add? *Very political song.*

What do you think of this song? *Similar to Song 2, but more "social" & peaceful.*

Where would you place this song and when? *Romania, post-Communist (beginning of 21st cent.)*

Why? *The country's name is used. It is as if the country has survived a turbulent time & is now reflecting on its existence.*

Anything else you'd like to add?

With some differences, it is similar to the "bucolic" & peaceful images of Song 1.

Profession: *UNIV. ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR*

Age: *52*

Thank you very much for your participation!

Interviewee 5 (English) - this questionnaire was sent via internet which accounts for it being a word document and not a pdf like the others

Malá selka Little peasant little peasant

1/ What do you think about this song?

rýmování jako od J.V.Sládka, obsahem neurážlivá .

The rhymes are very similar to J.V.Sladek (more in the ppt presentation on the internet, try the link in the email), the content is inoffensive.

2/ Time and country.

60.-80.léta Československo

the sixties to the eighties, Czechoslovakia

3/ Why?

Zní jako veršovánky z čítanky na základní škole.

It sounds like children rhymes from a primary school reading book.

Pětiletý plán (Five years plan in four and a half) a Modrý kanál (Blue Canal)

1/ What do you think about this song?

Obě jsou něco jako budovatelské vcelku příšerné záležitosti.

They sound very "pioneering" (in terms of building, constructing, labouring), as a whole they are quite monstrous (hideous) songs.

2/ Time and country.

Silně mi připomínají československou socialistickou poezii

tzn. poválečná léta ...asi jakákoliv země socialistického tábora je možná...

They strongly remind me of Czechoslovakian socialist poetry, that's to say post-war years but any socialist block country is possible ...

3/ Why?

Hlavně slova jako kombajn, pětiletý plán, vlastenecká láska , kanál, hrdost , čest a další – prostě celkové vyznění-to je vražedná kombinace.

Mostly words like "kombajn", five year plan, love for one's country, canal, pride, honour and so on - simply the overall impression - is a deadly combination.

Interviewee 6 (English) – this questionnaire was sent via internet which accounts for it being a word document and not a pdf like the others

Song 1

What do you think of this song?

It seems to be a traditional British (English? Scottish?) or Irish song.

Where would you place this song and when?

From 16th to 19th century (or even beginning of the 20th)?

Why?

Talks about peasants and farmers and cows and dances... and seems to be written in 'contemporary' English.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 2

What do you think of this song?

It is more modern than the previous one. Talks about effort, work, (country) ideals.

Where would you place this song and when?

Modern Britain or US or Australia... (any English speaking country)... from the period of the industrial revolution until today.

Why?

It talks about 'being productive' or highly efficient, richness in relation to the whole country, etc.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Song 3

What do you think of this song?

It feels it has been written by a Romanian or by someone who knows Romania and its people very well.

Where would you place this song and when?

Romania (European Union), 2008.

Why?

Signing (treaties?), 'dreams yet to come true' (what some Romanians expect from joining the EU?).

Profession: Head of Studies/ English teacher
Age: 40

Thank you very much for your participation!

Interviewee 7 (English)

(27)

Where would you place this song and when?
I assume it's Romanian (translated into English)
pre-industrial revolution (18th - 19th century?)
Why? ^{When did the I.R. occur in Romania?}
rural, typical courting → marriage → children sequence
of events

Anything else you'd like to add?
Difficult to draw firm conclusions from a translation
I'd like to hear the original (with music) to give a
better opinion.

② What do you think of this song?
It has a chorus/refrain. It could be a march.
patriotic.

Where would you place this song and when?
Again, Romania presumably — after the II World War
— late 40s, early 50s?

Why?
clear communist/soviet references 'five-year plan', 'heroes'
'mission', 'same ideal'

Anything else you'd like to add?
The link with the first song is the 'ring dance'
(armel?) — but now the context is not bride
and groom alone — in marriage. Now the
ring dance is like a demonstration of patriotism
— like the sardana, perhaps.

What do you think of this song?
Another (more openly) patriotic song.
— but it looks more like a ballad.

Where would you place this song and when?
Romania (explicit!) Maybe in the 70s.

Why?
mention of TV sets, skyscrapers, cars

Anything else you'd like to add?

Profession: language teacher
Age: 54

Interviewee 8 (English)

in a small rural community.

Where would you place this song and when?

I'd say this was a traditional folk song, but it's difficult to say when exactly.

Why? It shows how simple folk's lives could be fulfilled by realizing ambitions like getting married and raising a family.

Anything else you'd like to add?

It makes you feel nostalgic about lost, innocent times.

What do you think of this song?

It seems like a state-induced patriotic song to get the country moving.

Where would you place this song and when?

During/At the beginning of the Cauececa regime?

Why?

It talks about his 5 year plan. It also sounds as if it comes from a totalitarian "your country needs you" regime.

Anything else you'd like to add?

What do you think of this song?

It breathes hope and optimism and nationalism.

Where would you place this song and when?

I'm not sure if this is post-Cauececa, could be.

Why? It seems to talk of a new optimism and future for the country, in the wake of Cauececa's assassination.

Anything else you'd like to add?

I'm not sure about when this song is set. Alternatively, it could be a kind of answer to the previous song.

Profession:

Teacher of English, UAB, Serviço de Inglês

Age: 55.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Maria Bebis