

THE FORCEFUL CONVERSION OF THE THEATRE PEOPLE DURING THE  
COMMUNISM

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*Abstract: The post revolutionary literary histories talk about the radicalism of communism, about the various answers of the Romanian intellectuals, from the outrageous faction to the optimistic collaboration. However, it is fascinating to analyze authentic documents in which to discover the relations between the people of the regime and literati, especially on limited temporal units and specific events. The press after 1947 has monitored and influenced cultural life, as did the Theater magazine, whose articles from the first years of founding (1956-1960) offer us the opportunity to discover the insoluble dialogue between the two worlds, political and literary. The dramaturgy at that time appears to us, subjected to the drama of forcing itself into the only artistic pattern validated by the political authority that had to echo like an ovation.*

*Keywords: dramaturgy, communism, conversion, press, monitoring*

In 1956, June 18-23, the Communists besieged the Romanian literature, wishing to boldly condemn the official passage from the rules formulated in the press after "liberation" to the new "list of laws" announced at the first Congress of Writers of the Romanian People's Republic, in Bucharest, as we learn from the Theater magazine, the June issue of the same year. Because "the literary press is the first and most faithful mirror of the degradation of literary life"<sup>1</sup>, the analysis of this journal, insisting on the year of the first Congress of Writers and its echoes in the sixth decade, will give us data on customized conversion to the new ideological directions of thespians, with aesthetic implications. The literary phenomenon cannot be fully understood without resorting to the historical one: "The history of literature is written differently than history, but not without history"<sup>2</sup>. Because there are many events that took place between 1947-1989, on small periods of time which lasted only a few years, with significant features, flux and reflux controlled by the political ideology into the shores of literature, totally different from the decades, the half-centuries we are used to when analyzing the earlier epochs, we resort to a well-defined cropping to capture an official aimed at directing the culture, namely the thespians: 1956.

The year 1956 is located in "the stage of the slow exit from under the influence of the USSR towards a national communism / socialism, 1953 - March 1965"<sup>3</sup>, when "the process of removing the Stalin cult was initiated ... through the strategy of the backward step that would be quickly replaced by a new offensive proletarian culture".<sup>4</sup> When Nichita

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<sup>1</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 76

<sup>4</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 76-77.

Khrushchev was launching a policy of relief after Stalin's death, in our case, Dej had another option that limited our opportunities, "a Stalinism without Stalin"<sup>5</sup> "an antidogmatic ... rather a de-Sovietization than a de-Stalinization".<sup>6</sup> In domestic politics, loving power, Dej did not renounce prerogatives, but in foreign policy he was generous, being willing to eliminate a few party representatives (Lucrețiu Patrascanu) to obtain the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania (1958). As a consequence of these reliefs, the year of 1956 can be considered a "significant turning point,"<sup>7</sup> "a year of convulsions"<sup>8</sup> because of gestures of resurrection on the regime, by propagating the shock wave of the Hungarian Revolution on our territory, which trusted the iconoclastic gestures, through the criticism on the system enunciated by Alexandru Jar and the first arrest of Paul Goma. A time in which, in Romania, live together, "a cryptic Stalinism and an apparent de-Stalinization ... a libration between permissiveness and interdictions".<sup>9</sup> Like the political events of this year, 1956, and the first Congress of Writers was a moment of manifestation of two tendencies: the official critique of the early years of the literary life after 1944 that had the Dej imprint and the fresh assault on culture which assured a direction to its advantage, which, according to the representatives of the ideology in power, can only be drawn up by the political apparatus. Thus, from the congress tribune, through the intervention of the writers from the Steaua magazine in Cluj, who faced the system demanding separation from the proletarian culture and the modernization of the language, the thaw will allow, after a long time, the public denunciation of Stalinist dogmatism through important voices of the moment: Mihai Beniuc, Titus Popovici, Victor Felea, Aurel Gurghianu, Aurel Rău, A. E. Baconsky. There will be a transition from the proletarian culture, then tethered under the conditions of some liberalization, to socialist realism. The year 1956 was followed by the "perverse liberalization"<sup>10</sup> (1965-1971) by which Ceausescu wanted to detach himself from the Dej heritage, to associate himself with the prestige of the one who faced Moscow on the occasion of the invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968), to monitor the literary life, with the dramaturgy winners by the Academy (Ion Băieșu and Horia Lovinescu) and 1971-1989, "dynastic socialism"<sup>11</sup> in which the leader will want to emphasize the distance to Moscow, will seek to apply neo-Stalinism, involving activists in all fields and removing the technocrats by increasing control as a result of the Theses of July 1971.

The opening speech belonged to the academician Mihail Sadoveanu and the General Report on Romanian Literature and the Development Perspectives was presented by the academician Mihai Beniuc. The co-lecture were made and sustained as follows: On the problems of contemporary prose, by Petru Dumitriu, On the problems of poetry, by Dan

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<sup>5</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 84

<sup>8</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 233.

<sup>9</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 240.

<sup>10</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 244.

<sup>11</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 256.

Deşliu, On the problems of dramaturgy by Mihail Davidoglu, On literary criticism by Paul Georgescu, On the literature of cohabiting nations by Nagy Istvan.

Between other two radical interventions of socialist realism (the speech of the general secretary of the party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej of November 14, 1946, and Theses of 6 July 1971 presented by Nicolae Ceausescu), the dialogue at this first congress is initiated between the conquerors, the atheists of the scientific atheism and the Apollo believers, between the power and the literate subordinates, the most creative of the professional categories, by duplicity, amputating the magnitude of thought and fantasy as a Procrustean bed, choosing on the public scaffold of the first Congress of Writers of the People's Republic of Romania, to kill the struggle for spiritual freedom and to become the oath breakers of the new world.

Socialist realism will not have mentors of the notoriety of the ones from the 1848 Revolution, the Junimea Society, Modernism etc., but creators who did not know how fatal the association with socialism would be: Paul Georgescu, N. Moraru, I. Vitner, Mihail Novicov, Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, Mihail Petroveanu, Traian Şelmaru, Nestor Ignat, Sorin Toma, Silvian Iosifescu, Aurel Baranga, Paul Everac, Mihail Davidoglu, Lucia Demetrius, Alexandru Toma, Teodor Mazilu, Dumitru Radu Popescu, Eugen Barbu, Titus Popovici, Valentin Silvestru, Al. Voitin, Paul Anghel, Mihnea Gheorghiu, Maria Banuş, Alexandru Mirodan, Horia Lovinescu. The temple of Romanian literature cedes, wall by wall, through the breaches that have bent it, as it is clear from the answer of the Congress of the Writers of the People's Republic of Romania which is far from the sincere feelings of the literati. These, realizing that they were caught in a vise by the party's artisans, to embrace the "purple sympathy"<sup>12</sup>, adapt their discourse so that they, aware of the catastrophic moral losses, irrecoverable, cohabiting with the enemy of originality and truth. *The resolution of The Congress of Writers of People's Republic of Romania* strikingly resembles the official message of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party addressed in the opening of the First Congress of the Romanian Writers of the People's Republic of Romania both in terms of the assessments and the criticisms that impose future commitments for full harmonization with the so-called writer protector. The Central Committee, the executive of the Romanian Workers' Party, "did not even make a secret from guiding the literature,"<sup>13</sup> he had appreciated the literary achievements that he considered the exclusive result of the previously unseen support from the political system: "The historical achievements of the Romanian people in building and strengthening the regime of popular democracy in the construction of the new socialist society have determined the momentum of literary creation, creating the conditions for the appearance of some outstanding works that have enriched the patrimony of our culture."<sup>14</sup> The First Congress of Romanian Writers evaluates the literary work of the twelve years since liberation, and notes that between "the major victories in all areas of life"<sup>15</sup> literature has closely followed the political movement, receiving instead an exhaustive support.

The Central Committee speech shows that the Romanian writers, discovering the Soviet model, voluntarily apply it by prizing and elevating Romanian literature ("Our writers draw on the example of profound humanism, the richness of ideas, the artistic and educational force that it is given by the Soviet literature."<sup>16</sup>). A duplicitous game initiates the

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<sup>12</sup>Borbély, Stephen, *McCarthyism*, in Echinox Books, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, vol. 4., p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Niţescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup>*The Congress of the Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater*, Aug., 1956., p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>*Resolution of the Congress of Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater*, Aug. 1956, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>*The Congress of the Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater*, Aug., 1956., p. 3.

Congress of Writers who appear humble in the face of the great Soviet literature for saving them from lack of understanding and blindness ("It has been a great benefit to us to capitalize on the rich experience of Soviet writers, pioneers of the literature of socialist realism."<sup>17</sup>) Avoiding the utterance of the complete truth about the Russian literature in which were signaled dangerous contortions for the life of "socialist dictatorship"<sup>18</sup>, supported only by "opportunistic literature (Gorki, Fadeev, Fedin, Sokolov, Ostrovski, Gladkov, Leonov, Maiakovski, Tvardovski, Alexei Tolstoi, etc.) but contradicted by "evasive literature (...), subversive literature (...) and dissident literature"<sup>19</sup>.

The duet between the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party and the First Congress of the Romanian People's Writers surprised the identity of the ideas that is incredible, leaving for the detached eye the falsity of the literati that the people in the party could not notice. The meaning of the Romanian society, which until 1947 had been given by the famous figure Nihil sine deo, changes, in full agreement of the people of the party with the writers, with the paraphrasing of Nihil himself Marxism-Leninism. In the spirit of self-deception, the writers accept the new set of laws in which the "God of the Atheism system"<sup>20</sup> : "The Congress of Writers harshly condemns the deviations from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the problems of art ..."<sup>21</sup>

In changing the paradigm of the Romanian society after 1944 and 1947, as in ancient Saturnalia, is added the monitoring of cultural life by the culturally modest ones. The Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, already at its second edition, considered itself entitled to determine the number of exigencies the writers had to obey. Drawing the line and relying on the persuasive force they exerted on the nostalgic countless cases of political "crucifixion" of reactionary writers, the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party is virulent saying that there is no correspondence between the achievements of industry, agriculture, the continued rise in living standards, the consolidation of popular democracy and literature. The peasants, workers, intellectuals of the homeland that are touched by the ideas of communism cannot fully identify with the literary texts and it is natural to become a source of inspiration in the texts of revolutions. The party brutally ambushes the life of the writers, telling them to empathize with all social categories in communism and to highlight their psychological, moral and behavioral excitement stimulated by the new blatant existence framework. In the literature, the Central Committee established a very severe program of action, intervening in its substance, awakening its forces to educate and mobilize the people who could learn to heroically get rid of the capitalist phantasies because it was the only way to take control of the whole moral of the people, enriching it. To these reproaches, the Congress of Writers responds, "unanimously"<sup>22</sup> masking the absurdity of the situation to which they were condemned, by fake enthusiasm and conformism, in accordance with the directives of the Second Labor Party Congress: "Congress notes that, in addition to all the achievements, writers' work still has serious shortcomings. (...) In order to truly be the writers of the socialist era, we must mirror, as the Central Committee urges in its greeting, with

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<sup>17</sup>Resolution of the Congress of Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater, Aug. 1956, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 67

<sup>20</sup>Jacob, Andreea, *Manipulation methods of the crowd and Censorship of Thought*, in Echinoc notebooks, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, vol. 4, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup>Resolution of the Congress of Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater, Aug. 1956, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 100.

greater expressiveness, the picture of our life, so simple and rich. Greater are the tasks established by the Party's Second Congress (...) these tasks enliven the workers, peasants and intellectuals of our homeland, and for us the writers are inexhaustible and bright sources of inspiration." <sup>23</sup>

Evaluate by professional categories, thespians, writers, directors, critics, actors and the public reveal the interventions and norms imposed by the regime in the Romanian People's Republic considered by its supporters, affected by bovarism, a "free country" that astonished "a miracle, and the eyes of the enemies, through the encompassing dimensions of the renewals they represent" <sup>24</sup> carried out in sustained, unstoppable rhythm. After the first congress of the Romanian writers, Socialist Galatea are increasingly emerging under the work of these custom sculptors, converted under threat of censorship, relegation, imprisonment or murder, intervening on the marble block after Jdanovist and Leninist sketches. While preserving the "ceremonial ambience, the rhetoric of social behaviors" <sup>25</sup> after the millenary rupture with the sacred, the theater, "in its condition with laic basis" <sup>26</sup>, creates a universe that must produce metamorphoses in the public consciousness. The dramaturgy was supposed to be supporting the politicization of literature, "of undifferentiated, gross and paralyzing invasion of the literature of political and ideological slogans" <sup>27</sup>, to promote the patriotic-national and international cause; Romania, being part of the communist camp, had the duty to defend it and to constantly strengthen its power. The more the theater assured the growth and consolidation of the Romanian Communism, the more it allowed its strengthening and expansion in the world. The old world had to be subjected to harsh attempts by communism, which constantly provided a superior level of development to the capitalist empires, "disabled in the rhythm of growth of economic development as well as in the scientific, military and human sciences." <sup>28</sup>

The author of dramatic texts was called upon to "correctly" present, the relations between the bourgeois retrograde forces and the expansive socialist forces, "to participate in the world as an addition to the executioner" <sup>29</sup>. He was not allowed to change the gravity of the innovative element representing reality in favor of the bourgeois, for he would have distanced himself from the reality that had won this advantage, and the dramaturgy had to faithfully render it. "For it does not shed the dark and diseased corner of our life, but on the contrary, a huge selection of light, health, optimism, founding energy, represents and characterizes it (reality)." <sup>30</sup> Between the communist ideology and the bourgeois ideology there can be no reconciliation, the dramatic author being called to illustrate firmly and clearly the superiority of socialist thinking.

The author, "claiming his contact with reality as the supreme blazon of nobility" <sup>31</sup>, had to preserve his aspirations without becoming a tributary to sterile idyllic, for it was built by battle. The human sacrifice must not be forgotten so that socialism can be seen in such a

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<sup>23</sup>Resolution of the Congress of Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater, Aug. 1956, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>The High School of Communist Character, in the Theater, Aug. 1963, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Runcan, Miruna, *The Censorship Theater* in Echinox notebooks, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, vol. 4, p. 183.

<sup>26</sup>Runcan, Miruna, *The Censorship Theater* in Echinox notebooks, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, vol. 4, p. 184.

<sup>27</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 142.

<sup>28</sup>The High School of Communist Character, in the Theater, Aug. 1963, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Cernat, Paul, *Explorations in Romanian Communism*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2004, vol. I., p. 128.

<sup>30</sup>Tornea, Florin, *Lenin and Patos of Promoting the New*, in the Theater, apr. 1963, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup>Cernat, Paul, *Explorations in Romanian Communism*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2004, vol. I., p. 127.

solid structure of capitalism, and the authors have the honor of paying an homage to them, not to risk becoming, as Lenin said about those who are on the side of the old, "custodians of capitalism"<sup>32</sup>. The authors must be definitely communists in expressing their views on the bourgeois ballast, revolutionary vehemence of the elements of capitalist evil, for otherwise they would seem like " scribes " willing to tolerate them. The dramatists are attracted to become partisans of the Communists through the major roles they are offered: to preserve ideological "purity", having the obligation to check whether the novelty discovered or initiated by people is communist, to criticize the reality, to expose the exploitation and the ideological and ethical remnants of the past, to capture the reality that is being built under their eyes with a new attitude towards work, public goods and social duties, new relationships of mutual help among those who work, with that higher consciousness of workers, with proletarians who have the power to identify themselves with the general interest. To avoid the embarrassment inherent in any beginning, Lenin recommends ignoring "aesthetic precariousness"<sup>33</sup> for educating the masses, inspiring authors from the most open environments to new environments, factories and agriculture who needs publicity, public criticism.

Five years after the first Congress of Writers, at the Country Conference of Writers, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej appreciated the Romanian dramaturgy for the strong connection with reality, for the high artistic and ideological demands, adding to the elderly generation, young playwrights who study. From appreciation, the leader goes to advice for writers: "Works of art to make their way to the hearts of men, confronting their time, cannot be written on the run, but are the result of deep knowledge, long study of realities, sustained artistic effort, wrought labor, penetrated by modesty and exigency over the fruits of his toil."<sup>34</sup>

The Romanian directors, also caught in the "school of pretense, of an incessant mystical-party training"<sup>35</sup>, confronted with the new plays, are provided with setting strategies already verified in the communist space by notorious Erwin Piscator and Stanislavski.

Florin Tornea encouraged the acquisition of Piscator's new directorial vision, regarded as a total theater that addresses the real issues of the community, documentary and political, consequently, where the idea of revolt against norm, illegalities that bring dysfunctions was predominant. This theater is practiced lucidly, aware that it can influence the superior political structures. Individual and imaginary are categories that retreat ashamed of their own frivolity from this theatrical mechanism that turns into a court where the searching and speaking of truth counts, not the aesthetic form. Looking over time, even a defender of the socialist theater, Florin Tornea, in 1966, appreciated that Piscator's theater "had the imprint of a didactic rigidity and a vulgarizing simplism in the understanding of the themes which concerned and the fears that annoyed the mankind of those years; themes and fears that were primarily the object of his repertoire: the causes, promoters and profiteers of social injustice, the face and the subtleties of capitalist exploitation and imperialism, the real rise of the imperialist wars, the necessity and possibility, the laws and paths that can cause society to change. ..."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Tornea, Florin, *Lenin and Patos of Promoting the New*, in the Theater, apr. 1963, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup>Cernat, Paul, *Explorations in Romanian Communism*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2004, vol. I., p. 127.

<sup>34</sup>*Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's speech at the Writers' Country Conference*, in the Theater, feb., 1962, p.1

<sup>35</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 369

<sup>36</sup>Tornea, Florin, *Piscator - The documentary theater, the political theater*, in the Theater, jun., 1966, p. 44.

Piscator was engaging, through political theater, against ordinary art, entertainment, bourgeois, on the side of the workers' class and the Communist Party. So powerful his program was that, in his incursion into the US, at the "Dramatic Work-shop," he also influenced Arthur Miller.

Another role model director recommended by the Communists to the Romanian playwrights was Stanislavski, whose main directions are found in the article of the journal *Theater, Stanislavski's Ethical Idea* by A. Matkin. According to him, art has to come out of the bourgeoisie's tutelage and synchronize with social innovations. The power offered by theater is enormous, becoming a means of fighting the war, of embellishing the world and of influencing world politics. In the face of such potential that could improve community life, Stanislavski was dominated by a strong sense of responsibility. The avoidance of the present was perceived as an artistic lie. He thought that "only the immoral people hide from their time, maintaining themselves" above the clutter"<sup>37</sup>. Stanislavski asks the actor not to play a double role - backstage, a small bourgeois, and the socialist on stage, because he risks being fake. Stanislavski is flying the banner of ethical theater in which the actor is denied his pride, tricks, the ham actor spirit.

The process of converting Romanian directors to the new texts and the new political interventions should be monitored, as malfunctions could occur, as Mihai Raicu finds in the article in the journal *Theater, How do we work with the dramatic authors*.<sup>38</sup> Authors and directors are called to collaborate to serve ideology and viewers. It is noted in 1958 that the writer was asked for new dramaturgy, but did not keep a lively dialogue with him. The writers were given advice and ... that is it. "The freedom" of the dramatic writer has slowed down the theatrical progress, with few pieces really meeting the spectator's demands, as socialist criticism imagined. Collaboration with the writers was done only by theater and leadership offices as a bureaucratic work. As a model of the close and effective communication between writers, directors and actors, Mihai Raicu reminds the notorious day-to-night meetings on the plays which were developed between Stanislavski, Nemirovici-Dancenko, Kacialov, Leonidov, Hmelev from M.A.T.H. and Cehov with Gorki. The Romanian theater did not know a relationship of the same quality as the ones identified in the Russian theater. Dramaturgists must be treated as familiar to theaters, as steadfast interns who create as they collaborate with theater people.

The admiration for foreign dramaturgy was not followed by the effort to implement it correctly - Vishnevski, Pogodin, Stanislavski, Brecht were little identified in the Romanian dramaturgy at that time, because "the emancipation" of the theater was quite slow, with unfortunate situations, with stalemate. The authentic consultations between the authors and the people of the theater that ended with success were few, as was Laurentiu Fulga when the play "The last message" was mounted.

Between these fronts, the party and the people serving the theater are set up by the official system as an effective conductor for the implementation of socialism, the literary critic. His role was major, demanding vigilance and the courage to sanction artistic approaches that were diluted or contradictory to ideology. The world of writers understood that, besides the people from the proletarian culture who would be cruel to them, they would be added those with whom they were culturally bound, being forced to sanction their "brothers". The tension was created not only between the two obviously opposing sides, but was insidious, like a Trojan horse, even in the heart of literary life, to kill the solidarity and

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<sup>37</sup> Matkin, A., *Stanislavski's ethical idea* in the Theater, Jan., 1963, p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Raicu, Mihai, *How do we work with drama writers* in the Theater, dec., 1958, p. 45.

power of the great organism that at that time was the Romanian literature. The Writers' Congress, dissimulating the collaboration, announced the troubled future of the Romanian literary life in which they would be born, where the faith in morality and value will be more precarious, we Judah: "Our critics have a duty to promote a combative critique of studying with love and analyzing in principle, much more carefully, the literary works that appeared, to firmly support everything that is new and advanced in them, to discover and firmly fight the tendencies to conceal the shortcomings of literary creation in terms of the content of artistic ideas and craftsmanship."<sup>39</sup> How close the two camps are in speeches, although sincerity is lacking in that of writers, demonstrates the next cut in the opening message of the Central Committee : "Our literature needs a combative critique to analyze in the spirit of the party the literary works that have appeared, to firmly support everything new and advanced, to discover and firmly combat the tendencies of overlooking the shortcomings of some books in terms of their content of ideas and the level of artistic craftsmanship."<sup>40</sup>

Socialist criticism is strengthened as a powerful organism by some adhesions entirely devoted to refractory variations in the artistic alternatives of the moment, inflexible in relation to the possible escapes of some people in the theater of the imposed decor, lacking the sense of tacit complicity with those who did not share the same ideological opinion. Direct and public sanctions, the threat of lack of amendment after warning, are the means often used by critics for regulating dramatic life. The quantitative and qualitative monitoring continued, the pursuit of the particular and general evolution was highly appreciated by the critics of the moment, having the certainty of blocking all channels of escaping the people of the theater, forcing them to "collaborate".

The new plays are evaluated from the point of view of adherence to the socialist ideology, in the sense that only this respected coordinate brings value and lastingness to the play. Only the permanent invocation of socialism as a complex system created to save the new man from any conflict and capitalist trap must give particular attention to this dramaturgy. The plays are called down on the creation of unbelievable scenes with a tendency towards sensationalism. The place of the man of art, the intellectual, is alongside the proletarian, stating the superiority of the proletarian being credited with the historical role of removing capitalism. The recommendation for theater plays was that introspections were diminished, increasing the proportion of narrative sequences to make it easy and enjoyable for the proletarian public to follow them. The authors are called down on the symbolic treatment because there is a risk of confusing interpretations, but there are cases when writers are accused of schematism, asking them to descend into the psychology of the characters to highlight their superiority and exemplary thinking.

The tone of socialist criticism was radical, imperative, leaving no place of ambiguity for writers who could not write about the Soviet camp, the struggle against capitalist imperialism, optimism in the proletarian, etc. The songs that did not approach these aspects were rejected from the life of the theater. The sins featured in the plays that were not liked by the socialists: the blurring, the artificiality of the conflicts, the false light they throw on the party, the thorough ignorance of our lives and realities. Such pieces, ideologically wrong, prove to be weak, "unconvincing."<sup>41</sup> Critics inventor disappointed that for the 1959 season, some playwrights had not created any "original" piece, others created texts with ideological deviations which could not enter theaters, and others were artistically weak.

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<sup>39</sup>Resolution of the Congress of Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater, Aug. 1956, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup>The Congress of the Writers of R. P. R. in the Theater, Aug., 1956., p. 5.

<sup>41</sup>Florea, Virgil, *About the Immediate Situation and Tasks in the Field of Dramaturgy*, in the Theater, Dec., 1958, p. 5.



Through official statements, criticism, to create misgivings among playwrights and increase adherence, it was announced that many are working with great pleasure: "From the discussions we have had with some writers lately, we have yet been convinced by their desire and determination to address in the plays the most important themes of our reality, to mirror the present life in its most characteristic traits."<sup>42</sup>

The very leader of the country, Gheorghe Ghiorghiu Dej, intervenes with dramaturgy directives, allowing a lethal intrusion. It was the idea that the people are waiting for the new world that is being built or for its future shapes, its image as the free creator of his destiny for the first time in history: "The new, thirsty for the beautiful, demands that the creators make their works to a high level of craftsmanship, as it deserves by the themes they are given."<sup>43</sup> The writers were called upon to overcome the schematics of the plays of adherence or non-adherence and to include issues related to the difficulties inherent in the beginning and the solutions found to ensure progress.

The criticism artificially stimulated the creativity of the writers, stating that the post-war viewer is avid of communist theater: "Spectators always demand new and new pieces to stimulate their imagination, to emulate them, to exalt them for new ideas and to mobilize them for the realization of new and bold actions on the road to building socialism. New pieces are necessary for our theater as air and water, they are needed as a spiritual food for spectators. And it's not about any kind of plays, it's about simmering the revolutionary pathos of our day."<sup>44</sup>

The actor was mimicking, in order to play the socialists' game, at that time, the state of wandering in the labyrinth of art, the loss of aesthetic taste. In addition to talent, the actor must have had a high intellectual background, unite with the thinker who cultivates the general ideas of philosophy, aesthetics, politics, history, with the critic who has a sense of beauty. Actor's art has to remain a lot in the spectator's consciousness, and for this success he has to act complexly. But, essentially, the actor, the socialists say, is no longer alone in his search, dilettantism has been replaced by scientific methods by which theory interlocks with practice. "The actor's theoretical education will start from the study of Marxist-Leninist teaching. (...) the road an actor goes to achieve a powerful and valuable achievement of a role, the way he goes to interpret it, with the means specific to his art, the essence of reality, is nothing but observance the precise definitions that Lenin gave to the process of creation: <<From living contemplation to abstract thinking and from it to practice - this is the dialectical way of knowing the truth, knowing the objective reality.>>"<sup>45</sup>

It was not hard to be a good actor when the Socialists, they said, had found solutions to various theater problems. The Marxist-Leninist theory intervened to harmonize the relationships between the actor and the director, the acting-actor and the creative-actor, the transfer of the unity between the physical nature (the outer technique) and the psychic (the inner technique), the connection between what is general with what is particular. The socialists eradicated the improvisation in the Romanian theater through Stanislavski's methods that brought scientific methods, which became the ideal way of applying socialist realism.

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<sup>42</sup>Florea, Virgil, *About the Immediate Situation and Tasks in the Field of Dramaturgy*, in the Theater, Dec., 1958, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup>Florea, Virgil, *About the Immediate Situation and Tasks in the Field of Dramaturgy*, in the Theater, Dec., 1958, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup>Florea, Virgil, *About the Immediate Situation and Tasks in the Field of Dramaturgy*, in the Theater, Dec., 1958, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup>Vraca, George, *The Actor and his Art*, in the Theater, Oct., 1956, p. 7.

Ironically, the truth was the target of Stanislavski's dramaturgy and socialist realism. The actor asks for truth in interpretation, to achieve the performance of living what he does not just imitate. The actor, also taken in sight of the socialists, is accused of everything that is theatrical, superficial, of craftsmanship, but of self-representation, crushing the role. If the Romanian actor was hesitantly honest or just playing the difficulty of applying the demands of socialism, criticism was bound to offer examples of Russian theatrical life where actors showed a rare devotion on stage. Within the Academic Art Theater, "Maxim Gorki" of Moscow, which functioned as a permanently controlled organism of doctrine, the actor B.A. Smirnov from the play *Kremlin's Horology* by Nikolai Pogodin had played Lenin's role as the focal point of the play, which was highly written in the text by the writer, and he was also highly ployed by the actor. The author of the study in *The Theater magazine*<sup>46</sup> appreciates that, for the rhythm of Lenin's replies, Pogodin may have studied combat and scientific studies. Actor Smirnov is given as an example for creating a Lenin of peace, an intimate of ordinary people, close to reality, but also in touch with his political dream, being the hero of work and love for people.

The actor is asked to produce a transfer of ideas from the show to the spectators. The public must be formed in the sense that the content is needed to bring it closer to dramaturgy life, including through the press. The viewer's preference for a certain type of theater should not be forgotten and should be found in the repertoire of theaters. Even if the theater wants to evolve at a fast rate, it must give the public time to assimilate the new. Dina Cocea confessed that she was sometimes watching the hall, not the scene, and was delighted by the interested audience to the new dramaturgy, "refractory to everything that contradicts his thirst for truth, to all that is uninteresting, foolish, and therefore unable to excite him."<sup>47</sup> The working theater had to become a new form of dramaturgy without requiring the restriction to the strict necessity of enlightening the public without university degrees, workers and peasants. The workers' theater was called to gain even greater self-awareness because it was addressed to an attentive, excited audience, full of curiosity and avid of culture.

In the spirit of democratic socialism, there is a false dialogue with the public invited to express their wishes about the theater. *The Theater magazine* had a heading for this purpose that raises suspicions about their authenticity, for it resembles, through lexis and syntactical structures, the articles of critic specialists and authors.

The spectator is the one who shapes the play and the show, he, represented for the first time in the history of mankind was the most important in the temple of drama and this privilege was given by the socialist ideology through its founder, Lenin: "Lenin said that art belongs to the people, having to penetrate through its deepest roots in the masses of the working people, to be in their meaning, beloved and appreciated by them, to unite their feelings, their thoughts and their will. It cannot be a greater gratification for a writer of our times than in the work of the reader, the maker of the new order, to recognize his own life, his thoughts and his aspirations."<sup>48</sup>

The theater was directed to become incendiary, to transform the spectator's state from the moment of watching the play, from simple assistance involving him in stage events, not interested in how to play artistically, but more than that what is happening between the characters, in the plan of their consciousness about decisions about social and political life. Communion with the hall is not a directorial whim, but it must verify and develop the

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<sup>46</sup>Sadoveanu, Ion Marin, *Unbelievable Wins*, in the Theater, sept., 1956, p.14

<sup>47</sup>M.I., *Talking to Dina Cocea* in the Theater, apr., 1963, p. 45.

<sup>48</sup>*Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's speech at the Writers' Country Conference*, in the Theater, feb., 1962.

ideological-citizen component of the spectator. The construction of society through revolutionary attitude by the Communists is brought to the scene and the spectator is a part of it by the demonstration, the excitement and the ideas.

In conclusion, the first decade of *The Theatre* magazine recorded one of "the most faithful literary cards"<sup>49</sup>, the monstrosity with which Communism intervened in the existence of the thespians to convert them, being sterile for the artistic but fruitful ideal for affirmation of mediocrity. Authors, directors, actors, critics, and the public have learned to live in the "pen described by the party politics"<sup>50</sup>. The choir of the playwrights was invited to create songs of glory to chime in the new temple.

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<sup>49</sup>Nițescu, M., *Under the sign of proletculture. Dialectics of Power*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 104.

<sup>50</sup>Simuț, Ion, *The Romanian Post-War Literatures*, Transylvania School Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 107.

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