Screenshot from censored film "Cenaclul Flacăra – Te salut, generaţie în blugi!" (Cornel Diaconu, 1982)

STATE-APPARATUSES OF CREATIVE CONTROL: ROCK MUSIC SCENES, YOUTH COUNTERCULTURES AND DISSENT IN SOCIALIST ROMANIA

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Abstract

By adopting an Althusserian (2008) outlook onto the highly convoluted relationship between (rock) musicians and the socialist ideology, this study delineates the ideological/ repressive state-apparatuses in the case of Romanian socialism (1965-1989). In addition to investigating such apparatuses of creative control (e.g., the Securitate, the Agitprop branch, but also ideological committees of the party), the present paper explores the role of (sub)cultural agents (such as rock musicians and the countercultural youth) and their efforts in navigating the hegemonic ideology. Drawing on archival sources that comprise nearly 13,000 pages, this delineation throws considerable light on broader sociological debates such as the role of musicians in totalitarian settings (Linz, 2000; Haraszti, 1988). A two-fold relationship ensues in the case of socialist Romania: firstly, one of compromise and duplicity, and, secondly, one of (symbolic) resistance. Ultimately, this study adds to the ongoing literature concerning the dissident configuration of countercultural youth movements in the Eastern bloc (Furlong & Guidikova, 2001; Risch, 2015). In the present case, music leads to the formation of entourages which practice anti-proletarian rituals, such as the ones constituted by csöves and punks. With the overall Romanian music scene failing to form a coherent movement of resistance, most musicians become labourers for the greater, collective good as a result of maintaining a self-sufficient, subservient position toward the state.

Keywords: popular music under socialism, Althusserian state-apparatus, countercultural practice, censorship, archival records analysis

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1. Introduction

The central aim of this paper is to explore the highly convoluted relationship between Romanian musicians and the state-apparatuses of creative control in socialist Romania. Therefore, in addition to investigating the cultural politics and the resulting governmental tactics during Nicolae Ceaușescu's reign (1965-1989), the present study takes into account the role of (sub)cultural agents (primarily rock musicians) and the lifeworlds of the countercultural youth in navigating the repressive/ideological state-apparatus. With pop soundscapes crossing worldwide borders and breaking the ideological barriers imposed by the socialist ideology, a new music alternative is provided to the local mainstream proletarian culture, and, similarly to its socialist sister states (Stahl, 2014; Wicke, 1992), Romania did not remain unaffected by such pandemic cultural changes. Given the proverbial incompatibility between rock music and socialism and as a result of a vast array of Romanian musicians succumbing to the alien, capitalist sounds of beat, rock or jazz in the late 1960s, and, punk or new wave starting with the 1980s, the socialist leadership was compelled to react.

With music fountainheads emerging under different auspices – either as a result of being drawn into the patriotic currents supportive of Ceaușescu's agenda of nationalist-communism, or through various efforts to counter the regime, the hegemonic exchanges between authorities and musicians become central to accomplishing the purpose of this paper. In this regard, taking an Althusserian view on the repressive/ideological state-apparatuses, this study examines the employment of creative control against domestic attempts of Westernisation and the introduction of an official, *proletkult* art, but also the struggles of Romanian musicians to create freely and the means through which youth countercultural movements are formed as a symbolic counteroffensive.

The broader relationship between rock music and Romanian socialism becomes an urgent and foremost interesting scholarly subject due to Ceaușescu's very own neo-medieval approach to culture, his reign being often labelled the most primitive and brutal application of socialism in the Eastern bloc (Deletant, 1995; Goldman, 1997). When compared to other similar studies, the present paper does not depart from the overused premise that alternative musicians inherently represent anti-establishment entities, but, rather, duplicitous ones. Additionally, the methodological approach brings forward a novel way of reconstructing history, one that extends this study into a genuine ethnographic and anthropological inquiry of the past. Drawing on previously unexplored archival sources that comprise nearly 13,000 pages which delineate the official discourse, the internal mechanism of spreading ideology and blocking divergent rhetoric through the secret-police

agency (the *Securitate*), the state-apparatus and its official directives, policies and transcripts become the main focus of analysis. Concentrating on a, still, scarcely explored case-study, this delineation will throw considerable light on sociological debates concerning (1) the role of (independent) musicians in totalitarian settings (Haraszti, 1988; Linz, 2000), (2) the hidden mechanisms employed by the repressive/ideological state-apparatus (Carroll, 2003; Frith, 1981; Garofalo, 1987), and, ultimately, (3) the dissident function of youth movements in the Eastern bloc (Furlong & Guidikova, 2001; Pilkington, 1994; Risch, 2015). Within this context, as mentioned above, the present research aims to critically explore the relationship between Romanian musicians and the socialist state in general, and its main apparatus of creative control – the Securitate. In doing so, it looks to provide an answer to the following research question:

How does the Romanian socialist regime employ its repressive/ideological state-apparatus, and how do Romanian musicians navigate its creative control?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Music, Totalitarianism, Post-War Socialism: State-Music Against Capitalist Decadence

Following the three main sociological debates described above, the main aim of this section is to investigate the scholarly perspectives opened by the implementation of socialism in post-war Eastern Europe in the case of popular music. In addition to the typical state-controlled music dominating totalitarian regimes, where the government is not only the legitimised agent of artists, but also the producer and distributor of events and records (Cloonan & Garofalo, 2003), a distinct kind of music emerges as a result of struggles and clashes for creative autonomy. Through what is being interchangeably referred to as either 'anti-state music' (Kürti, 1991), 'subcultural pop' (Stahl, 2014), 'unofficial music' (Ramet & Zamascikov, 1990), or 'music as resistance' (Ramet, 1994; Street, 2012; Wicke, 1992), artists start infusing their music with ambiguous meanings and metaphorical elements, or, depending on ideological thaws, with overt messages of dissent. More simply put, if mainstream, state-supported popular music plays an essential role in ensuring the political legitimation of the government, alternative genres serve the purpose of questioning the actions and even the very existence of the state itself, by means of critical and artistic expression.

However, the premise that popular music is instrumental in socio-political changes generates both scepticism and endorsement. On the one hand, pessimists regard popular music as an opiating force rather than a mobilising one (Rosselson in Shkuer, 1994), or as a mere provider of entertainment (Adorno 2002; Inglis, 2000), the worldwide rock

apparatus being established upon a weak delineation between the transgressive possibilities of rock music and its political affectivity (Grossberg, 1991). On the other hand, especially in the context of totalitarian Eastern bloc politics, the phenomenon of rock music is more widely considered to have taken place “long before the cracks in the system became apparent and resulted in its unexpected demise” (Wicke, 1992, p.81). With rock music embodying “probably the most widespread vehicle of youth rebellion, resistance and independence behind the Iron Curtain” (Mitchell, 1992, p.187), Western genres arguably stimulate the “realisation of a democratic process (Ryback, 1990, p.233).

Nevertheless, such optimistic ideas are primarily built on the presumption that rock music is incompatible with socialism, the reasons for such animosity ranging from moral issues to ideological ones. Firstly, the Soviet leadership sees rock musicians to be metaphors of Western decadence, and, thus, identify them as threatening elements to the Soviet status in the world (Cushman, 1995), rock music representing nothing less but the triumph of vulgarity (Pattison, 1987). Secondly, regarded as an antagonist to socialist ideas, rock music becomes an “ideological, anti-Soviet pollution” (Zhuk, 2010, p.4), where its “rebellious, loud, aggressive, chaotic [character]” (Wicke & Fogg, 1991, p.137) does not correspond with the image of the ‘new Soviet man’.

However, if this is actually the case remains to be seen. Such reflections are not fully embraced by all scholars that deal with popular music in socialism, a dichotomous approach between rock and socialist ideals being promptly dismissed as oversimplified and limited (Pekacz, 1994; Yurchak, 2005). If for Yurchak (2005) “it did not seem contradictory to be passionate both about [Vladimir] Lenin and Led Zeppelin” (2005, p. 219), Pekacz (1994) indicates that rock musicians profit from the communist state patronage to the same extent that the state – which bears more pragmatic rather than dogmatic valences – succeeds in domesticating and appropriating rock/punk music. Within this context, a complete ratification of the history of struggle between rock music and Eastern bloc politics needs to be approached with caution. Indeed, a wary perspective on the duplicitous and opportunistic nature of both entities – one, (rock) musicians, in search of financial and professional conveniences and the other, the state, seeking compelling instruments to propagate the socialist ideology – cannot provide but fruitful outcomes. By adopting a balanced outlook on such matters, the present research provides an enhanced identification of all nuances that establish the relationship between musicians and the socialist regime.

2.2. Repressive/Ideological State-Apparatus of Creative Control

Given the undoubted success that Western-imported genres enjoy especially among the socialist youth (Risch, 2005; 2015), the totalitarian governments of the Eastern bloc have two main strategies of dealing with rock musicians: first of all, nation-states feel the urge to become a cultural policeman, where censorship, in various forms, is bound to take place, directly impairing the creative expression of musicians (Cloonan & Garofalo, 2003); second of all, popular music scholars identify overt attempts of appropriating and institutionalising rock culture as a state enterprise (Wicke & Shepherd in Bennett et al., 2005). Taking a reflective step forward, these two main strategies fit the Althusserian theorisation of the state-apparatus (2008), where the repressive state-apparatus (RSA) operates by means of thwarting and censoring music (state-police agencies), and the ideological state-apparatus (ISA) by means of transforming music according to a well-established set of ideological prerequisites (agitation and propaganda branches and ideological committees).

In the case of Czechoslovakia's RSA, tangible steps are taken toward disembarrassing the alien sounds established upon Western scaffolds (Falk, 2003; Mitchell, 1992) in exchange for a complete Sovietisation of Czechoslovak music (Svatos, 2010). With the RSA banning the sounds of British/American imports, the readily adopted licensing system increasingly leads to widespread censorship and creative control (Mitchell, 1992). The Hungarian RSA follows a similar pattern, where the newly-adopted music genres (disco and mellow rock in the 1970s and rock fusion and peasant folk in the 1980s) enact a symbolic rebellion that provides Hungary with a new vision (Kürti, 1991). Transgressing genre boundaries or merely mixing various music styles is regarded as politically provocative, yet, paradoxically, it remains the only concession rock music is granted when fused with local music traditions (Haraszti, 1988). With Budapest-based musicians suffering some kind of censorship during their careers, bands are forced to disband or are thwarted from playing in larger cities (Kürti, 1994; Szemere, 1992). In the GDR, an extended range of rock musicians are forced to discontinue their artistic activities, due to exhibiting threatening symptoms to the working class (Leitner, 1994), while systematic censorship occurs on the basis of various apparently harmless words or phrases (such as "assembly line") (Wicke, 1992, p.84).

In addition to such censoring practices, the ISA prevails by means of transforming both the form and the content of socialist art. If, in the case of Hungary, "paintings are posters, theatre is agitprop, movies are newsreels, literature is unabashed exhortation" (Haraszti, 1988, p.96), GDR rock musicians are turned into state-run political

organs following the bureaucratic rules of the ISA (Wicke & Shepherd in Bennett et al. 2005). What is more, through ample processes of nationalisation, 'socially relevant' art is transformed from a mere eccentricity into a "respectable (and inescapable) duty" (Haraszti, 1988, p.45), one for which genuine artistic talent lacks individuality and is seen as belonging to the whole society. Thus, the socialist authorities proclaim a truly Brechtian view on art, where its proletarian value has to prime over any other. The result is a union of Marxist commitment and modernist techniques, according to which "art is not something individual, […], art, both in terms of its origin and its effect, is something collective" (in Giles & Kuhn, 2015, p.57). With the responsiveness of artists determining their right to work in Soviet Russia (and, in extreme cases, their right to live), the socialist-realist canon becomes the official standardised formula that artists are required to obey (Groys, 2013; Juraga & Booker, 2002). Following the renowned 'realistic in form and socialist in content' blueprint, Soviet artists attempt to thematise everything that looks specifically socialist and non-Western: "official parades and demonstrations, meetings of the Communist Party and its leadership, happy workers building the material basis of the new society" (Groys, 2013, p.144).

Such considerations undoubtedly bring the present study into an ideological sphere, where the state-apparatus plays a crucial role in establishing the role of music. In spite of the view that scrutiny of the dominant ideology in Eastern European socialist states would be redundant (Taras, 1984), the lack of homogeneity of the socialist spread of ideology together with the specificities of each socialist regime – Hungary's 'goulash-communism', Yugoslavia's 'long-standing dilettantism' or Romania's 'national-communism' – suggests otherwise (Taras, 1984). In connection to the 'socialist realist' canon developed by the socialist leadership, ideology becomes both the result of an individual system of beliefs, and the 'state of mind' of a society. In a study such as the present one, the preoccupation is not exclusively with individuals and their own ideological *Weltanschauung*, but especially with the state-apparatus (its statements, values, goals, institutions, policies) (Althusser, 2008). Under these circumstances, this study can be placed in the broader sociological debate that provides insights into the political leaders' ideological outlook onto cultural matters, but also into how the political system reacts to cultural counteroffensives.

2.3. Music Scenes and Youth Counterculture in the Eastern Bloc

Most theoretical debates that focus on music scenes account the role of adjacent, youth cultures that are constituted as a result of consuming various types of music genres (Cushman, 1995; Fenemore, 2007). To be more precise, it is rock and punk music – which

have their roots in predominantly hostile soil – that become associated with a newly emerging youth counterculture under socialism starting with the late 1960s (Ramet & Zamascikov, 1990). With a distinctively tight relationship transpiring between young people and subversive genres of music, Gelder (2007) identifies several prototypes and characteristics which are, in theory, shared primarily by Western subcultures: a negative relation to work and issues of social class, a direct association with territory rather than property, a transition toward non-domestic forms of belonging, and, ultimately, a refusal of the banal and of massification.

However, considering that scarce efforts have been made to ensure the applicability of subcultural theories across geographical boundaries and within varied political forms of governance (exception: Cherrington, 1997; Pilkington, 1994), it is clear that the Western (youth) subcultural tradition has its limitations (McRobbie, 1994; Thornton, 1995). Primarily, if, the focus of such youth subgroups is placed on their contestation of class hierarchy in Western capitalism (e.g., Hall & Jefferson, 2006; Hebdige, 1988), Eastern European youths negotiate their position with political institutions by primarily challenging the lack of freedoms in socialism (Apostolov in Furlong & Guidikova, 2001). With the socialist youth being expected to maintain traditional conducts and cultural preferences as expressions to a "commitment of a normal [i.e., Soviet] way of life" (Cushman, 1995, p. 182), it is through everyday practices and routines that the youth resists and counters the ideology. Similarly, by borrowing cultural products from the West (such as, fashion, rock and roll and pop icons), East German youths come into conflict with a highly didactic and controlling party-state (Fenemore, 2007). In addition to the tonality of the imported music – too abrasive and dangerous for the socialist ideology – beat and rock and roll directly impact upon the physical appearance of the German youth by creating a "crisis over modernity in the midst of the [party's] attempts at re-modernisation" (Fenemore, 2007, p. 176).

Through such a rejection of the imposed cultural codes, regular individuals resort to what is being theorised as '*guerrilla tactics*' (Fiske, 1989) or '*semiotic guerrilla warfare*' (Eco, 1976), where the weak systematically harass the forces of the powerful by assaulting the dominant and obtaining trivial, yet, highly emblematic victories (Roman, 2007). With these theoretical perspectives being especially valuable in the context of totalitarian political settings, such as the socialist ones from Eastern Europe, they provide fruitful departing points to study the relationship between broader music scenes (around which the socialist youth gathers) and totalitarian regimes.

2.4. The Romanian Cultural Setting: Collaboration and Resistance

In order to more aptly investigate the relationship between Romanian music scenes and the socialist regime, it is of great importance to formulate a contextual framework of post-war Romania. With Nicolae Ceauşescu's reign starting in 1965 and ending in 1989, when the violent civil unrest culminates with his bloody execution, the socialist regime fluctuates between liberalising thaws (such as the one during late 1960s) and harrowing oppression (Deletant, 1995; Verdery, 1991). In addition to drawing to his side valuable cultural allies, such as well-known poets Ana Blandiana or Nichita Stănescu, impressive ideological allowances are made to popular culture: 1969 sees the opening of a Pepsi-Cola factory and an exhibition of American art that includes the previously 'degenerate' Jackson Pollock (Barbu, 2006). Alongside Ceauşescu's overt support of the Prague Spring that conveys anti-Sovietism, the cultural setting makes direct attempts to break away from Soviet influences as well, and the weekly journal of the Writer's Union features articles by Norman Mailer, Noam Chomsky or Roland Barthes, while previously exiled avant-garde figures such as Gellu Naum, Victor Brauner and Eugen Ionesco are now cherished (Bowd, 2016).

Notwithstanding this context of optimism and national approval, Ceauşescu makes a tremendous ideological and cultural turn, by importing Maoist indoctrination tactics after his 1971 visit to East Asia (Cioroianu, 2007). Subsequently, Romania embarks on an austere journey during which new peaks of ideological orthodoxy are reached. Mounting new campaigns to promote amateur, *proletkult* art, the society is dominated by folklore and historical pageants that promote Ceauşescu's cult of personality (Bowd, 2016). Through mechanisms of distorting facts and implementing new creative prerequisites, the reality becomes "what the party wanted it to be, and not what the artists perceived it to be" (Tismăneanu, 2003, p.225). With Romania's most popular music show *Metronom* being shut down after broadcasting 'Back in the USSR', Cornel Chiriac defects to West Germany where he continues to broadcast for Radio Free Europe (hereafter, RFE), until he is found dead in 1975 in a Munich parking lot (Fichter, 2011).

Regardless of such repressive practices, the recurrent idea that under the patronage of socialist realism the entire Romanian music scene comes to an end takes a rather reductionist view. While the frail freedom of artistic expression starts to crumble once the totalitarian tendencies proliferate, Romanian popular music does not cease to exist, nor is it transformed into vain acts of patriotism, or transmuted into an entirely subservient entity (Roman, 2007). Rather, alongside party-supported nationalistic folk and patriotic tunes, other genres such as rock, classic, jazz or pop continue to synchronically and

diachronically co-exist (Roman, 2007). Local rock scenes grow out of semi-underground, student clubs and Romanian musicians soon hold festivals and competitions, up-and-coming bands (such as *Phoenix* or *Roşu & Negru*) outraging authorities with "the volume of their music, the length of their hair, the disordered behaviour of their fans" (Fichter, 2011, p.572). Despite such forms of symbolic dissent, the overall Romanian rock scene fails to become a major source of political resistance, musicians being largely ineffectual – apart from irritating communist officials and providing the youth with a platform for their rebellious tendencies (Fichter, 2011). More than anything else, rock music becomes a form of mere escapism for its fans and, at the same time, an opportunistic creative compromise for artists, as it fails to bear the valences of a genuine subversive weapon.

A decisive role in blocking the capacities of Romanian musicians is played by the Securitate (The Department for the State's Security), or the state-apparatus' instrument of repression, "set up according to a Soviet blueprint and under Soviet direction" (Deletant, 1999, p.114). Working as a moral filter, or as a 'moral entrepreneur' (Becker in Marin, 2015), police terror is used to eliminate opponents in the drive to consolidate the hegemony, and, to ensure compliance with the socialist ideology (Deletant, 1995). Much more than that, the Securitate becomes a crucial methodological tool as well, accounting that its classified archival records contribute with an important (yet, not an exhaustive) angle to the present research.

3. Data and Method

The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the socialist regime and alternative music scenes, such a scholarly interest being answerable through archival research. Even though archival sources do not generally allow an enhanced level of control over how the data is recorded, these historical sources undoubtedly offer a novel, insightful, and, usually, hidden perspective into the state-apparatuses of creative control that mark Ceaușescu's rule (1965 - 1989). Under these circumstances, the present research draws its data from Romania's most resourceful archival institutions: on the one hand, the National Council for Studying the Archives of the Security/Securitate (CNSAS), and, on the other, the National Archives of Romania with its National Central Historical Archives service (ANIC).

The first institution provides extensive information with regard to issues of domestic/ foreign dissent, but also the problematic aspects of youth culture and Western bands and capitalist radio stations. With their primary function of disclosing the detected (and, eventually, corrected) dissident behaviour, the (usually-restricted) Securitate records

contain highly sensitive, confidential data, such as personal documents and statements given by collaborators, sources, informers, but also the investigation of established suspects and their activities during the regime. Going back to Althusser (2008), the Securitate files are used to critically analyse the main repressive state-apparatus (RSA), an amount of 9,450 pages being accessed as a result of inquiring 27 CNSAS files in May, 2016. The second source supplies this study with official policies and documents originating from the Agitprop branch and the Ideological Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. Additionally, as a result of official transcripts recorded during such ideological meetings, the ANIC contribute to delineating the ongoing processes of politicising culture, the established ideological prerequisites and the main themes imposed from above, but also the role of state-owned unions. Such files are utilised in order to reconstruct the main ideological state-apparatus (ISA). Throughout April, 2016 a number of 50 documents comprising of 3,276 pages were accessed from ANIC.

The investigation of nearly 80 records is conducted: deductively, or from a top-down perspective, by following certain keywords, such as 'music(ian)', 'instrumentalist', 'composer', 'song', 'band', 'tour', and other synonyms, and by inquiring documents which bear a broad relevance to the topic (such as Arts & Culture files, Agitation and Propaganda, Education folders) and inductively, or from a bottom-up perspective, by explicitly looking for personal data of certain individuals from the music sector. Given the structure of the analysis – the first section focusing on the ideological apparatus of control and its ideological prerequisites and the second outlining the possibility of establishing various movements of dissent – ANIC files dominate the first half of the analysis (the ISA), while CNSAS ones the second (the RSA).

4. Analysis

4.1. A Politicised Culture: Ideological Prerequisites, Unionisation, Official Art

Starting with their upsurge to power in 1948, the communist authorities incorporate all cultural industries within the state's own Agitprop department, which effectively serves as a monolithic tool of indoctrination and propaganda, a genuine ideological state-apparatus accredited with licensing the official socialist art and with further delineating cultural restrictions. In this sense, all cultural items produced within the geographical space of Romania are retained by the state and used according to its own interests, in what represented an intrinsic, systematic mechanism of politicising culture. Of course, the music sector does not elude these ideologic-repressive transformations and receives a multifaceted, utilitarian role, carrying political and educational responsibilities.

Within this context, music creations are required to bear a conscious revolutionary character, and to convey messages that are "highly representative, relatable and understandable to the working class" (ANIC, 125/88, p.1). Alongside proletarian, typical, realistic valences – that naturally match the Soviet socialist-realism aesthetics (Juraga & Booker, 2002), music has to ensure a partisan spirit so to represent the goals of socialism, and, at the same time, to educate the masses. In this regard, music is sworn to emancipate the Romanian people from the elitist, conservative culture inherited from the interwar bourgeoisie. Bearing in mind the pragmatic and instructive role that music has to accomplish, musicians are strongly advised to take inspiration from the venerable Romanian culture and its prosperous history (ANIC 43/66). On these grounds, imperative subject matters are the grand tale of the construction of socialism, the labour and daily tasks of the people, where history plays the main source of inspiration, out of which "appropriate heroes need to be drawn for the younger generations" (ANIC 46/85, p.19).

It goes without saying that the regime acknowledges the importance of the music sector in propagating the socialist ideology, and, thus, has overt attempts to keep its minstrels happy, the leadership offering medals and decorations in order to stimulate a positive stance toward the party (ANIC 4/73) and significant financial benefits and better payrolls for subservient musicians (ANIC 32/77). By contrast, in order to more effectively supervise and control musicians – regardless of their compliant or refractory character – the state establishes new branches of labour for most sub-sections of culture. Therefore, just like regular workers, musicians become a thoroughly organised and rationally subdivided group composed of state employees. With Romanian socialism failing to escape a detrimental administrative mindset – where everything has to be organised, unionised and standardised according to a specific set of rules – the role of *Uniunea Compozitorilor* (Composer's Union, hereafter, UC) is reaffirmed. In addition to functioning as a representative institution for all labourers in the music sector, the UC's main tasks are ideologically and educationally orientated so to "build the new Soviet man" (ANIC 43/1983, p.52) and to promote the principles of the Marxist-Leninist aesthetics through music creation. In accordance with the draconian system, the unionisation of the professional practice of musicians draws additional harmful consequences when bands stop associating themselves with any kind of youth or labour union, where artists run the risk of losing their membership on the basis of illegal emigration, hostile attitudes toward the state, or immoral conduct (ANIC 43/1983). For instance, after failing to form affiliations with state unions (either labour or student), Craiova-based band *Redivivus* is denied access to festivals and concerts and is subsequently dissolved.

Of course, considering the strictness with which these ample sets of prerequisites are imposed by the ideological committees, the musicians' possibility to resist through music is drastically affected. Since literary or folk sources are part of the already well-filtered canon, musicians turn to the Romanian past and its ancient traditions in order to – paradoxically and compromisingly – improvise and create more freely. This can also serve as an explanation to the growing number of folk singers and folk-inspired records that have saturated the national music market starting with the early 1970s, with singers such as Valeriu Sterian, Nicu Alifantis representing the ethos of the 'urbanised peasantry' and bands such as Transsylvania Phoenix pioneering the ethno-rock sub-genre (Dobrescu, 2011).

If the production of folk or traditional music is not only encouraged but strongly recommended due to its inherent connection with the Romanian authentic values that Ceaușescu's protochronist, national-communism is established upon, other genres undergo a more fastidious, even cynical, censoring process (ANIC 46/85). As such, the committees discredit and vilify music genres that they situate on the commercial side of the spectrum – through the all-encompassing notion of *muzică ușoară* (light music) – one that lacks a propagandistic, educational potential. Present at one of the numerous ideological meetings, comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu fundamentally sanctions foreign manifestations and influences in the music field and, naturally, when it comes to such bands, the committees are straightforward in their censoring practices (ANIC 26/81). In this regard, a report enlists a series of bands that need to be approached with caution because they propagate – either lyrically or stylistically – anti-communist ideas, neo-Nazi concepts, and rebellious sentiments: "The Killers, Vampir, Maniac, D.A.F., AC/DC" (the Securitate translated the last acronym into 'Anti-Christ against Communism' to justify their criticism of the band) (CNSAS, D8833/25, p.381).

Under these conditions, a definitive kind of official socialist, *proletkult* art naturally emerges, whose purpose is to elevate the common worker by presenting his life, work and recreation in an admirable fashion, to create what Lenin calls the 'new Soviet man' (in Rockmore et al., 2012) with the help of artists, whom Stalin refers to as the 'engineers of the soul' (Westerman, 2011). The peaks of this proletarian sovereignty, which references Marx's dictatorship of the proletariat (in Draper, 1987), are reached with the introduction of several official music festivals and cultural assembles: *Cântarea României* (Song to Romania) and, respectively, *Cenaclul Flacăra* (The Flame Circle). If the former represents a platform for amateur artists aiming to replace intellectual art with a traditional one (during 1983-1987, 2.3 million performers register, out of which 1.3 million regular labourers, 426k

students, 437k foremen, technicians, engineers, 366k women) (ANIC 103/1987), the latter promotes a mix of left-wing politics, poetry and folk music and, despite its initial propagandistic function, the state seems to lose control at times over its leader with 'patriotic folk' paradoxically becoming the engine of anti-socialist activities in the 1980s (CNSAS, D8833/10).

4.2. Mechanisms of Control: Hunting Musicians and Blocking the Occidental Mirage

The installation of the communist regime brings about strict changes in the music industry, where the Securitate – the official repressive state-apparatus – receives the crucial responsibility of preventing, detecting and annihilating hostile attitudes toward the state. Artists are systematically harassed, intimidated, or tortured and, upon more serious charges, ruthlessly prosecuted by the state. Singers, composers and instrumentalists are most frequently charged with hostile stances against the social order, agitation of the masses, war crimes, fascist attitudes and propaganda, illegal border crossings, political and social hooliganism, 'milder' punishments including workplace relocations or displacement into labour camps (CNSAS, D7806/18). A report issued by the Securitate shows that in April, 1978 more than 10.000 individuals are actively involved in the music sector, out of which, 257 artists are under surveillance and 111 under direct investigation (CNSAS, D120/5). By concentrating substantial efforts, the Securitate conducts actions of preventing hostile activities through counterintelligence operations: 750 such activities, 58 operations of positive influences, and 27 warnings are served in the first quarter of 1978, counterintelligence efforts being ensured by a number of 400 people (150 informers, 120 collaborators, 130 close sources) (CNSAS, D120/5).

Notwithstanding the scarce number of artists with prior criminal records or with refractory political orientations, musicians are more likely to have intentions of emigration or to maintain suspicious relationships with foreign citizens due to frequently touring the West. As a matter of fact, it is this artificially built 'occidental mirage' (which fits Yurchak's theorisation of the 'imaginary West') (2005) that urges the Securitate to prioritise musicians over other artists (and musicians who tour abroad over musicians who do not) by implementing rigorous investigative strategies. If, in 1980, it is revealed that out of the 115 inadequate individuals from the Arts & Culture field who illegally flee the country, more than half come from the music sector (mostly as a result of legally touring abroad) (CNSAS, D120/5), the phenomenon escalates and becomes worrying for the Securitate by 1982, when 886 artists are reported to have "exited the country illegally, out of these 43% being musicians" (CNSAS, D120/5, p.303).

For instance, in February, 1985 several musicians from *Sfinx*, *Roșu & Negru*, and *Cromatic* attempt to cross the border illegally, but are intercepted by the Securitate. Their actions led to a more "drastic surveillance, multiple checks at their residence, workplace or studios, their written correspondence seized and (international) phone calls monitored" (CNSAS, D13147/1, pp.18-20). With the personal reports of musicians being highly systematised, the Securitate comprises voluminous (sometimes ludicrous) files containing extensive genealogy of the musicians' families, their social and marital status, when and under what circumstances they entered the Securitate evidences, intentions to acquire personal goods, the level of understanding and harmony in their family, the comfort of their home, extended descriptions of their vices, passions, personalities, interactions with neighbours and how polite they are during these encounters, and, finally, the probability of receiving visits or parcels from foreign citizens.

The Securitate interferes to such an extent in the music scene that it institutes an apparently unimaginable mechanism of controlling musicians, urging artists to subscribe to a dual, highly duplicitous role: musicians by night, undercover agents by day. Through a device that shows the intricate tangles spread by the secret police, band members are recruited to spy on each other and to inform the Securitate regarding any potential acts of dissent. For instance, *Sfinx* perfectly illustrates how such compromising yet opportunistic practices are put into operation. The source known as 'Marian' (who proves to be the band's leader, Mihai C.) is recruited in 1982 with the objective to clarify the status of anti-socialist targets from the abroad music scene. Appropriately following the internal rules of conspiracy, 'Marian' supplies his superiors with a number of over 30 useful notes and reports, concluding that the internal ruptures of the band are caused by the insubordination of the other members, such as the Romcescu brothers, Ecaterina O. and Sorin C., who disobey the regulations and refuse to return to Romania (CNSAS, D13147/1). In a truly dramatic fashion, another source infiltrated in the band (by the codename 'Spătarul') reveals that Mihai C. himself has a severely anti-socialist behaviour: in addition to engaging in intimate relations with other band members, Mihai C. is accused of bribery, maintaining relationships with renowned fugitive and RFE broadcaster Cornel Chiriac, and, ultimately, of having intentions to repudiate socialist Romania over the Netherlands (CNSAS, D13147/1).

Moreover, the *Sfinx* case is not an isolated one. For example, Primo from *Romanticii* (The Romantics) abnegates and reports on the activity of his own brother, another musician defected to West Germany, in order to prove his subservience to the state and to receive more work permits abroad (CNSAS, D13147/2). In a similar manner, a series of

documents show that *Cromatic* musician Păun denounces his former band colleagues on their intention to remain in Kuwait, and sends a compromising cassette of some *Cromatic* songs which are considered scandalous and obscene by the Securitate, the entire episode resulting in the cancelation of the band's tour in Middle East and Asia (CNSAS, D13147/1).

4.3. Dissenting from Abroad: Munich the Romanian Hub of Anti-Socialism

The Securitate fears emigration, not only because defection reveals internal weaknesses and deficiencies, but especially because the Western world stimulates the emergence of a transnational space where active forms of dissent can take place. If Paris represents the cultural capital of Romanian exiled writers – such as Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca, Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran (Neubauer & Török, 2009), Munich becomes the most important cultural hub for the Romanian music scene of anti-socialist resistance, where multiple associations and cultural assemblies are established. With RFE – the provider of one of the most disparaging anti-socialist criticism – having its headquarters in Munich as well, the Romanian authorities engage in hostile intelligence activities but also violent attempts to destabilise Munich's emigrant community. Through what is popularly known as the 'ether war' (Cunningham, 2008), the involvement of Nicolae Ceaușescu in the 1981 Munich bombings represents the most powerful example which denotes the uneasiness propagated by Romanian émigrés.

Consequently, in 1983, RFE increases its airtime devoted to young Romanian listeners to 19 hours per week by broadcasting "an intense, insidious and hostile propaganda with the purpose of indoctrinating the Romanian youth and of creating an ideological diversion", (CNSAS, 8833/41, p.35). During the same period of time, a number of 1635 letters to RFE are intercepted, while 400 pseudonyms are introduced into the Securitate evidence having made it on to live airtime, sometimes this practice taking organised forms of dissent: for instance, student groups *Discomanii* and *Melomanii* (The Discomanics; The Melomaniacs) repeatedly make solicitations to RFE under referential, Westernised pseudonyms (e.g., Bruce Dickinson, Fernando von Ard, Lemmy Kim Mister, etc.) (CNSAS, 8833/15)

When it comes to the Munich-based music scene, the Securitate reveals that a group of 15 fugitive musicians of Romanian origin set up the *Ars Libera* movement, also known as the *Union of the Free Romanian Artists* in Munich. The declared purpose of the association is to unify the creative forces of all Romanian musicians trapped in the communist exile in order to prevent the alienation of genuine Romanian traditions and to foster the affirmation of Romanian values worldwide (CNSAS, D120/5). With 139 sources

being sent abroad in order to provide a close surveillance of the targets during 1981, the Securitate – through the vigilant eye of undercover agent "Someșan" – detects the dissident activity of the *Apoziţia Cenacle* set up in Munich, under the patronage of RFE (CNSAS, D120/5). Moreover, the Securitate intercepts an interview given by Romanian artist Mia Braia for RFE, claiming that a Romanian fugitive opened a music studio and label in Munich, where exiled artists are free to create and record their music (CNSAS, D13147/52). At the same time, she denounces the censoring practices of the Romanian state, especially the poor working conditions (tiny, unlit studios, which lack a proper canteen, musicians eating their lunches on the piano) and the bureaucratic regulations of the state-owned record label *Electrecord* (the complicated procedure to release albums taking up to one year or even longer).

Nevertheless, in addition to these arguably better-organised forms of bypassing the ideology from abroad, musicians resort to oblique – even symbolic – ways of countering socialism. In this sense, it is not their creative means of expressing themselves that bears anti-socialist messages, but rather the way musicians exploit their opportunity to temporarily (and legally) tour Western Europe. The Securitate detects numerous cases of possession of foreign currency, smuggling activities, achievements of illicit earnings, petty thefts, prostitution in exchange of goods and financial advantages, hooliganism, etc. (CNSAS, D13147/19). For instance, members of *Romanticii* are charged by the FRG Polizei with stealing from local shops, while renowned instrumentalist Gheorghe Zamfir (who was to compose the Kill Bill soundtrack a couple of decades later) sells his music to porn film producers from the FRG (CNSAS, D13147/19). Furthermore, members of *Sfinx* manage to smuggle foreign currency hidden under their car's hood, tires, and inside their amp. Moreover, after extensive check-ups, it is revealed that *Sfinx* uses a fabricated contract with a fictional touring agency from Denmark in order to prolong their tours abroad and to avoid taxes (CNSAS, D13147/1). In their attempts to understand the motivations behind such actions, the Securitate notes that musicians have an excessive desire to work abroad as a result of the ongoing economic shortages from back home (especially food, gas, energy), their lack of chances regarding further professional advancements in Romania, lack of concerts and interest from the public, but also due to the mismanagement of the music sector and of the Radio-TV network (CNSAS, D13147/1).

4.4. Indigenous Dissent and Internal Struggles for Creative Autonomy

Despite such forms of resistance that take place outside the country, the situation of dissenting through music within the Romanian borders is much more complicated, given

the repressive state-apparatus of creative control. The Securitate discovers a series of denigrating comments directed toward the leadership of the party, the circulation of false rumours and news originating from anti-socialist media outlets (primarily, RFE), eulogistic comments regarding the occidental lifestyle, but also the augmentation of the emigration psychosis (CNSAS, D120/5). Another conclusion of the Securitate is that renowned musicians fail to act sufficiently so to positively influence the rest of the artists, especially, those who might be susceptible to hostile acts.

Nevertheless, when overt acts of disobedience indeed occur, the state is unequivocal in its decisions and is not afraid to entirely suppress its problematic musicians. For instance, instrumentalist 'BA' from Ploiesti is signalled with severe manifestations against the party, threatening with grave acts of social disorder and is, subsequently, sent to prison for 1 year and 6 months (CNSAS, D120/5). In a similar manner, a member of a cenacle from Arad puts forward the initiation of a series of music shows "which can instil in the Romanian youth a new revolutionary concept, a new way of fighting against the system through music" (CNSAS, D120/5, p.393). Believing that the existent Romanian climate forces him to plead for cultural and political dissidence, target 'POC' faces a series of measures of prevention, the Securitate managing to entirely suppress the hostile activity.

Other forms of internal struggles for creative freedom turn into indigenous forms of (symbolic) dissent. In this sense, a 14 year old boy from Arad forms a new band called *Uniunea Forțelor Disco* (The Union of the Disco Forces), proclaiming that his goal is to become famous through his music. Even though the Securitate admits that the band does not serve political purposes, only artistic ones, the police still breaks up the group motivating their decision on its hostile activities (CNSAS, D8833/25). Additionally, at various *Iris* and *Holograf* live performances, the Securitate detects violent manifestations, stopping the shows to restore the order (CNSAS, D8833/25). In more extreme cases, the secret police has to deal with a metalhead who pays tribute to "all metalheads from block nine" by unleashing the lions from the local zoo, creating havoc among the population (CNSAS, D8833/25, p.381). Additionally, even mere contacts with anti-socialist, pro-occidental personalities are not ignored by the Securitate: renowned jazz composer Johnny Răducanu is supervised for maintaining a friendly relationship with the American ambassador to Bucharest, but also for going to the American library to watch films (CNSAS, 8932/67).

A truly interesting and highly atypical case that can show how indigenous dissent can actually occur is the case of Florian Pittiș, a very popular actor and musician, who has played an active role in the Romanian theatre and music scene throughout the 1970s and

1980s. Widely considered the representative figure of the Romanian youth during communism and dubbed the "prophet of the blue-jeans generation" (Lupu & Lupu, 2007), Pittiș is introduced into Securitate's evidences in 1970 and acquitted in 1988, when his file is closed (all data from this section are taken from: CNSAS, 232097/DUI).

Two main elements of interest can be identified as a result of the Securitate's investigations: firstly, a worrisome morality, the subsequent, symbolic disobedience emerging through daily practices and attitudes, and, secondly, the organisation of various anti-socialist music shows during the 1980s. After recognising his capacity to influence the youth, the Securitate focuses their investigation on Pittiș' embodiment of a purely decadent morality: his spiritually-orientated, or sometimes nihilistic *Weltanschauung* is regarded as a form of symbolic rebellion against the state (DUI/1975). Moreover, he is repeatedly identified as an individual who treats his parents very coldly, and as a cocky, proud, libertine element in the local community (DUI/1977), who still hesitates to settle down and get married (which are, according to the Securitate, the only changes that can bring him back to reality) (DUI/1987). Moreover, Pittiș' physical/sartorial appearance seems to be completely pervaded by the Hippy movement: in addition to wearing outfits representative of the movement which, after all, inspire neither seriousness nor trust among the socialist youth, Pittiș refuses to have his hair cut despite repeated warnings, knows the English language particularly well and owns an extensive collection of music records (DUI/1977), developing a true cult of worship for bands such as The Beatles (DUI/1985).

Due to his well-established position as a popular actor at the *Bulandra* Theatre, Pittiș manages to set up two main acts throughout the 1980s which enter the official schedule of the institution. Through *Poezia Muzicii Tinere* (The Poetry of Young Music) during 1981-1985, and *Poem Despre Mine Insumi* (Song about Myself) during 1985-1989, Pittiș provides an alternative to the state-owned festivals and music events. Despite its clear pro-occidental valences – the shows being centred around the music of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Edith Piaf, Led Zeppelin and Walt Whitman's poetry, *Poezia Muzicii Tinere* seems to elude the vigilant authorities, taking place four times per week, and selling over 100-200 tickets over the venue's capacity (DUI/1983).

4.5. Youth Counterculture: Csöves, Punks at the Intersection of Capitalism and Socialism

In the context of investigating the relationship between music and socialism, the role played by the Romanian youth culture in establishing organised entourages around their shared music taste needs not be neglected. In this regard, two main youth countercultural movements are identified by the Securitate: csöves and punks. Despite varying thorough

distinctive practices, sartorial choices, and, of course, music preferences, both groups exhibit the same anti-socialist, pro-occidental characteristics (CNSAS, 8833/11), and, thus, similarities with Western sociological traditions and Eastern peculiarities.

Firstly, csöves groups are mainly comprised of Hungarian-ethnics who live under bridges and in sewer networks (their name comes from the Hungarian *csö* meaning tube or pipe) (CNSAS, 8833/14) and who are influenced by Hungarian magazines (*Nők Lapja, Világ Ifjúsága, Ifjúmunkás*), and radio shows (*Kékfény*) (CNSAS 8833/14; 8833/43). In a turn of events that leaves Romanian authorities to question the capacity of Romanian bands to positively influence the local youth, various photomontages and audio materials are discovered (with Edda, Dinamit, Piramis, Scorpio, Khartado, Omega from Hungary), some youngsters even maintaining contacts with Hungarian bands in order to acquire records (CNSAS, 8833/14). Secondly, punk groups promote a new revolutionary vision that opposes the domineering system of governance. Getting their influences from foreign publications that document the punk phenomenon such as *Neckermann* or *Best*, and, subsequently, infusing their vocabularies with English phrases, punks are registered with an excessive passion for aggressive types of music (CNSAS, 8833/10).

Drawing elements from the West and re-appropriating them according to a local setting (e.g., acquiring cassettes of Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft and Nina Hagen and listening to them in the basement of derelict buildings) (CNSAS, 8833/15), it can be argued that such youth groups form at the intersection of capitalism and socialism. To a certain extent, they exhibit similarities with Western subcultural movements while, at the same time, embody the manifestation of a distinctive kind of youth that emerges in different, totalitarian circumstances. Seemingly subscribing to Western moral panics (Cohen, 2002; Skleton & Valentine, 2005), the Romanian youth engages in various anti-system practices allegedly under the influence of occidental music: active consumption of alcoholic beverages, brawls and violent disputes (manufacturing makeshift firecrackers and firing them at various events), petty thefts and robberies, vagrancy, or truancy (CNSAS 8833/10).

Fitting the Western tradition of a sociology of deviance (Adler & Adler, 2000; Cohen, 2002), all subjects investigated by the Securitate are indeed deviants, as they reject the traditional, mainstream community in favour of establishing subcultural hubs or micro-communities. Furthermore, Romanian subcultural youths manage to win back space territorially, by claiming their own space (Gelder, 2007): csöves disciples gather in obscure places in order to listen to foreign cassettes of hippy bands, while, *Panchistii* (The Punks) regularly gathers at the regional cultural house and at Hotel Dacia's pastry shop in order to

listen rock/punk bands from the United Kingdom and France (CNSAS 8833/14). By utilising various accessories and household items – what Cohen (2002) refers to as the signs of the hegemonic culture, or Lévi-Strauss (1966) as 'cultural bricolage' – in an unorthodox manner, Romanian subcultures reference the material deficiencies of the socialist society: csöves distinguish themselves by attaching locks, crosses, blades to their ears (CNSAS, 8833/43), and *Panchistii* decorate their clothes with various ornaments (shaving blades, shells, crosses, knives) and insert needles or safety pins in visible parts of their bodies (forearms, necks, faces, ear lobes) (CNSAS, 8833/9).

In addition to these processes of deterritorialisation, anti-commodification, and, ultimately, hierarchisation, Romanian subcultures present preeminent anti-working class traits, which make them standout in the Western – Eastern dichotomy. By performing anti-proletarian rituals, csöves and punks reject the sense of working-class community promoted by the socialist authorities, indeed, fitting the lumpenproletariat layer that Marx is so critical of, being by no means typical working-class individuals (2005). Starting with simple mottos such as csöves group *Sixa's* "*Laziness is not a sin*" (CNSAS, 8833/14, p. 328), the Securitate is chiefly worried by the increasing levels of individualism and uselessness that the youth seems to propagate, and, that, directly counter the socialist working class culture. For instance, the main activity of *Diszko* is accounted to be that of "having fun" (CNSAS, 8833/43, p.292), while other csöves have embraced a total parasitic life, "refusing to conduct useful activities within the socialist society" (CNSAS, 8833/14, p. 322). Moreover, the Securitate identifies several problematic songs which seem to be csöves favourite. If Edda's *Minden Sarkon Álltam Már* ("I Stood at Every Corner of the Street") promotes an inadequate message to the youth, discouraging them from working and dismissing the precise utilitarian function of the youth that the socialist ideology proclaims, two other songs (*A Keselyű* /The Vulture and *A Hűtlen* /The Unfaithful One) are identified as allegorical messages of revolt against the system (CNSAS 8833/14).

5. Conclusion

As a result of investigating 13,000 pages of archival records, the present study has delineated the repressive/ideological state-apparatuses of the Romanian socialist regime, but also the subsequent strategies used by musicians to navigate such politics of creative control. Firstly, in virtue of this paper's Althusserian focus (2008), it can be concluded that the Securitate ensures the operations of the repressive state-apparatus (RSA) by means of detecting, preventing and annihilating hostile attitudes toward the state, while also destabilising the musicians' creative autonomy. At the same time, the state's Agitprop

branch and the Ideological Committee of the Romanian Communist Party constitute the ideological state-apparatus (ISA), as a result of their distinctive role of systematically setting creative prerequisites and altering music according to a previously delineated agenda. Building on this study's Althusserian approach, future research could evaluate and expand this theoretical framework into other socialist contexts in order to check the homogeneity (or lack thereof) of the socialist ideology in the Eastern bloc.

Secondly, this study contributes to the broader sociological debate regarding the role of musicians in totalitarian settings (Linz, 2000; Haraszti, 1988). In the case of socialist Romania, a two-fold relationship ensues between musicians and the regime: a compromising, duplicitous one, and one of (symbolic) resistance. Difficult as it may be to determine with complete certainty the motivations that prompt musicians to resort to such abnormal, dual tactics – ranging from artistic survival, professional opportunism or a mere race for resources (or all of them combined), what can be stated with certitude is that this duplicitous nature of artists and their tacit allegiance to the state is beneficial for both fractions. Therefore, the idea that musicians are manipulated, while also manipulating the system itself, shall not be entirely rejected. After all, despite the creative compromises it endows, duplicity is a different manifestation of cultural resistance (Kligman, 1998; Roman, 2007), a deceitful stance allowing Romanian musicians to access various resources (from domestic gigs to international tours), and, due to their privileged position, to briefly negotiate with the hegemonic state-apparatuses and navigate their creative control.

At the same time, musicians are found guilty of plenty of prohibited activities, but very rarely of dissenting through their own music. Actually, the present study concludes that Romanian musicians are able to perform a more active role of dissidence from a distance, rather than from within the system, in a process that confirms the capacity of the regime to oppress its own artists. Such practices of resistance are not always well-organised (exception made by the Munich groups and Florian Pittiș' events in the 1980s), the Securitate being particularly worried by the moral values of artists. Thus, indecency becomes a (distinctive and symbolic) form of dissidence that stains the working-class paradise image of socialist Romania. Alternatively, fruitful outcomes could be also reached by adopting a semiotic approach – either linguistically or sonically-orientated (van Leeuwen, 1999) – in the case of Romanian (rock) songs in order to unearth connotative meanings hidden in the lyrics or styles adopted by musicians.

Thirdly, the present study adds to the sociological debate regarding the dissident configuration of countercultural youth movements in the Eastern bloc (Furlong & Guidikova, 2001; Risch, 2015). In the case of socialist Romania, the rebellious aura that

music proliferates leads to the formation of youth groups, such as the ones constituted by csöves and punks. In addition to their universal characteristics shared in the West – East dichotomy (e.g., deterritorialisation, anti-commodification, hierarchisation), the Romanian youths become symbolic structures that practice anti-proletarian rituals. Operating within micro-sites of cultural struggle, such individuals that coagulate around their shared music preferences are endowed with erosive and counter-hegemonic capacities. With their separation from mainstream collectives representing a possible reaction to decades of socio-cultural repression, the existence of such youth groups (that match Marx's lumpenproletariat) (2005) represents a symptom – and, at the same time, an effect – of a broken social system that aims to include all social classes but fails to do so. Taking a step forward, future research could provide interesting outcomes by specifically focusing on the dissident activities of such countercultural movements through the means of interviews.

Overall, during Nicolae Ceaușescu's reign, music becomes the perfect vehicle for the construction of a new narrative of a local, re-invented modernity, one where electric guitars, power amps and loud drums can freely mingle with the archaic, folk themes and styles into a sonic and ideological hybrid that, ultimately, represents a way of eulogising a communist past and justifying a communist present. Following the prerequisites set by the state-apparatus of creative control, the music industry is run onto the same proletarian populism that gives birth to a perpetually claimed 'our music', where the artist is nothing more than a worker for the greater, and, especially, the collective good. As music institutions are turned into simple feeder clubs to the greater cause of the party, the musician becomes a genuine *primus inter pares*, where his/her talent is no longer individualised and unique, but regarded as the good of the entire society.

Despite such a detrimental turn of events, the overall Romanian music scene undoubtedly fails to form a coherent movement of resistance. Yet, by relying exclusively on official archival records, the chances of finding failing operations of resistance are naturally higher than successful ones, owing to any detected manifestation against the state being immediately documented, abolished and penalised according to its gravity. Romanian bands indeed lack cohesion and consistency – in their line-ups, discourse or style, while musicians seem to fall into a self-sufficient state of being, overly satisfied with scarce, yet satisfactory, resources, maintaining an apolitical or, quite frequently, a subservient position toward the establishment. Ultimately, it seems that the only responsibility is claimed by the socialist youth who, not incidentally, is to become the generation that puts an end to Ceaușescu's dynasty, and whose actions express the ethos of a different kind of generation, one that, despite its proverbial laziness, is committed to change.

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Appendix

Used archival records (ANIC/CNSAS)

Document	Institution	Themes	Branch
43/66	ANIC	Artistic activity	Agitprop
4/73	ANIC	Work plan	Agitprop
32/77	ANIC	Decisions in the art field	Agitprop
26/81	ANIC	Transcript ideological meetings	Agitprop
43/83	ANIC	Creative Unions status	Agitprop
46/85	ANIC	Repertoire plans	Agitprop
103/87	ANIC	National festivals	Agitprop
125/88	ANIC	Repertoire plans	Agitprop
120/5	CNSAS	The West psychosis	Documentary Fund
13147/1	CNSAS	Sfinx, Cromatic tactics	Documentary Fund
13147/2	CNSAS	Informative note - moral aspects	Documentary Fund
13147/19	CNSAS	Surveillance activity	Documentary Fund
13147/52	CNSAS	RFE interceptions	Documentary Fund
7806/18	CNSAS	Arrests and convictions in the Arts sector	Documentary Fund
8833/9	CNSAS	Hostile elements in education	DF/Education
8833/10	CNSAS	Punk's inspirational sources	DF/Education
8833/11	CNSAS	Punk & Csöves: Mata Hari, Colina, Kind Klan	DF/Education
8833/14	CNSAS	Punk & Csöves descriptions	DF/Education
8833/15	CNSAS	Metronom, Discomanii	DF/Education
8833/18	CNSAS	Punk: We want movement	DF/Education
8833/25	CNSAS	Foreign bands & Social disorder	DF/Education
8833/41	CNSAS	RFE interceptions	DF/Education
8833/43	CNSAS	Csöves groups: Diszko	DF/Education
232097	CNSAS	Florian Pittiș' file	DUI