

# MARTOR



---

Title: "Smacked by the miners"

Author: Vlad Manoliu

How to cite this article: Manoliu, Vlad. 2005. "Smacked by the miners". *Martor* 10: 58-60.

Published by: *Editura MARTOR* (MARTOR Publishing House), *Muzeul Țăranului Român* (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

URL: <http://martor.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/archive/martor-10-2005/>

---

*Martor* (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review) is a peer-reviewed academic journal established in 1996, with a focus on cultural and visual anthropology, ethnology, museum studies and the dialogue among these disciplines. *Martor* review is published by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant. Its aim is to provide, as widely as possible, a rich content at the highest academic and editorial standards for scientific, educational and (in)formational goals. Any use aside from these purposes and without mentioning the source of the article(s) is prohibited and will be considered an infringement of copyright.

*Martor* (Revue d'Anthropologie du Musée du Paysan Roumain) est un journal académique en système *peer-review* fondé en 1996, qui se concentre sur l'anthropologie visuelle et culturelle, l'ethnologie, la muséologie et sur le dialogue entre ces disciplines. La revue *Martor* est publiée par le Musée du Paysan Roumain. Son aspiration est de généraliser l'accès vers un riche contenu au plus haut niveau du point de vue académique et éditorial pour des objectifs scientifiques, éducatifs et informationnels. Toute utilisation au-delà de ces buts et sans mentionner la source des articles est interdite et sera considérée une violation des droits de l'auteur.

*Martor* is indexed by EBSCO and CEEOL.

## Smacked by the miners

**Mihai Ionescu, scenographer, 62 years old**  
**Interview done by Vlad Manoliu**

On 14<sup>th</sup> June in the morning, around 11.30, when the miners' cohorts, waving their bats, invaded Bucharest, I was walking down Maghereu Boulevard, heading to the Union.<sup>1</sup> I met two colleagues, a property man, Bordeianu and Vasile Neagoe (a coward for a fact) a production manager. They were also heading to the Union. When we reached the traffic light in front of Notara Theatre, we wanted to cross the boulevard towards Eva shop. The miners were zealously marching on the middle of the boulevard, entirely blocking it.

Since the light was green, we walked through them. The two I was walking with stayed on the sidewalk because in the meantime they got red light. I passed those guys by and I stopped in front of Eva shop waiting for them. All of a sudden, I started hearing all sorts of opinions among those stopped to watch the miners passing by. And I heard a voice: "We shall teach them a lesson! They won't gather together for the rest of their lives! We'll take this Bucharest slyness and their stupid actions from the University off their mind! We'll put things in order!"

The civilians were taking to the miners. There were civilians and lasses down the sidewalk, buying gape seed.

While waiting, I was filled by a very irksome feeling, a sort of civic attitude. And I told the guy: "Yes, but why using the bat, mister?" Because they were waving bits of high-tension cable, and bats which were practically pick-mattocks or scoops and others carried crowbars. After my stupid question (I must have been an idiot when asking it), a guy said: "Hold on a little, mate!"

He was all dressed up in brown, wearing a helmet and a brown overall. I sensed that his tone was not announcing anything good but the next moment I was blocked on both sides, two miners grabbing my hands. Next, from behind, on the left side I received a punch in my jaw-temple, which I didn't like at all. It made me shaky.

The next moment, a guy whose face I remember only for that event showed up in front of me. Then, images started to slowly become blurry. The guy, wearing a short-sleeved shirt

---

<sup>1</sup> Mineriada – generic term attributed to the aggressive movements of the miners towards Bucharest, while led by the leader of the miners' union in Valea Jiului, Miron Cozma, targeted at violently stopping the protest against Iliescu's regime. The Romanian term 'mineriada?' means precisely miner riot and was coined during these particular events but has no exact counterpart in English.

with white and red little squares, seemed to be a civilian. He started hitting me like a boxer. And he kept on kicking my stomach and my phizog and my eyes became blurry. Obviously that I was also hit from behind. Those two were holding my hands while others were knocking my head off.

I honestly felt like melting, and I melted, I stepped out. As if in another world, dreaming, feeling something flowing down my face. I could very vaguely hear a crunching of angered ladies. I could distinguish two ladies shouting: "What, are you trying to kill him? Let him be!" Hence, I felt free and I fell down.

Those women and a guy fetched me and tried to lift me up, because I wasn't able to stand anymore. They supported me and dragged me near Eva shop, near an indentation. They took out some paper handkerchiefs and tried to wipe the blood off my face. The great production manager had vanished and Bordeianu showed up again.

The guy who helped said: "We must get a car to take him to the hospital." Bordeianu said he knew me that I was with him and that he was going to get a car.

He stopped a car which would take me to the hospital; all the more, it turned around there, even if it was a one way street and it drove in the opposite direction. They put me in the car and took me to the policlinic on Dorobanți Street near the German kindergarten.

They left me in a surgery where I met Doctor Safta, may God keep her safe, who was terrified and completely outraged, calling them "beasts and murderers".

She was actually expressing a perfectly normal point of view, after seeing the way I looked like. She cleaned all my wounds, stuck some bandages into my nose to stop the bleeding and then sent me to Hospital No. 9, to "Bagdasar". My head was all wrapped up in bandages and I felt as if it had been a huge bushel.

I was becoming more and more conscious. After the moment when they picked me up from

the street, I started to come into my senses and to realize what was going on. That things were wrong and that I wasn't one piece. Bordeianu found a minibus pertaining to I don't know what filming crew, put me into it and took me to "Bagdasar" Hospital.

I could see the climax of abomination only on my way to the hospital. Since the center was blocked, the car was redirected on small streets and we got to Rosetti Square, where everything was a turmoil with miners running randomly. It was pretty tough to drive towards the University round about, since the traffic was very heavy, with cars driving in all directions. It is there where I saw the first thing which terrified me.

A young girl, probably a student, had her bag hanged around her neck and they were pulling her arms on both directions; she was trying to get away shouting, but I couldn't hear her because I was in the car. They were jerking her on both directions and one of the miners was burning her hand with a cigarette. That seemed the utmost cruelty. And that wasn't all. Even if you weren't able to see the man who was the target of the miners' anger (because of their number), you could see the sticks and the rubber bats going up and down.

The image was terrifying. You could only see them going up and down and you could only guess that they were beating a poor soul to death.

And we passed through the round about and we stopped near a bridge next to Șuțu palace, at Bucharest History Museum, where there was a big bunch of miners, some with discoloured, torn overalls, some with newer ones and others with those brown overalls which seemed pretty new. And they stopped a white Olcit and the guy who was driving locked himself up in the car, but they broke the windshield and the side windows and they ruined his car and then, dragged him out of the car and stepped over him.

Meanwhile, the string of cars moved a little bit and we arrived at "Luceafărul" cinema hall. This is where I could witness two horrifying

scenes. You know, more or less like everything we know about the Nazi horrors.

Firstly, I saw a clamshell lorry scale (for building materials) in front of the church, at Saint George. Next to it, there was a group of brutes, carrying scoop sticks or any other bloody thing and other miners were coming from the crowd and they were almost throwing a man or a woman into the clamshell and they were pushing the others next to the cabin while hitting them with a stick. A terribly horrifying thing.

And then, another image, a woman who was half way on the boulevard, she might have been a gypsy, a cleaner gypsy... the utmost abomination, she was trying to escape from the hands of those who were grabbing her: one was grabbing one of her hands and the other another, while a third was pulling her hair for a fourth to hit her with one of those high-tension cables, over the breasts and in the thorax... they were hitting her while she was screaming. Now, that I am recounting these things, I get goose bumps. I had never thought that things like that could exist!

Only after seeing these scenes, I got horrified. I told myself that I got away cheaply. At that moment I couldn't think of who got them there. These were afterwards reactions. Slowly, while driving towards Unirii Square, the traffic became more fluid and we could finally get to the hospital. We got there, and I saw lots of people, crushing, and injured men. We were waiting when Bordeianu asked me: "What shall we do, mister Ionescu? Don't you know anybody?" I remembered that doctor Nae Popescu was working there, the CPR unit coordinator.

Bordeianu went and asked for doctor Nae Popescu at the information office. But Nae had already left. Yet, another doctor, one of Nae's colleagues, attended me. He took me and sub-

mitted me to a very minute checking, he also did me a puncture in the spine, taking some liquid out to see if he could let me go.

Apparently I had been lucky, because the liquid was clear. He sent me to the medico-legal hospital and to doctor Popescu at Colțea Hospital- the present manager of the hospital- to examine me for the rest of the injuries. And I finally got home where I started to use poultices. I must tell you that I had to use them till the end of August because my bruises wouldn't go away.

The next day I went to the medico-legal hospital. Those guys saw me and they mentioned on my medical certificate all my injuries, bruises, but I liked the doubt it contained, a doubt which I was able to notice only later, after I got back home: "the injuries could be caused by the events on 14<sup>th</sup> June". Which actually meant that it wasn't certain. I got hit by an elevator! It was formulated so as not to upset anybody. I have it even now- I don't know what I can use it for! The truth is I had head injuries and my occipital and my nose were broken, and my jaw was misplaced.

Of course that I also had to see doctor Popescu at Colțea Hospital who took off the bandages that doctor Safta put in my nose and they seemed endless, like spaghetti... but they proved very useful since they stopped the bleeding. The man more or less fixed my nose but he said that I might need a surgery. I had never had it done, I was left with a deviated septum, but I said that I was OK. My left eye astigmatism is also a consequence of what happened then, of that hit on the left side of my head. That's it. I have some scars on my face, still visible. A man can put up with everything.

*Translated by Raluca Vîjia*

