

ANALYSIS OF CORNELIU ZELEA CODREANU'S SPEECH FROM THE "O RUINĂ" MANIFESTO

IDENTIFICATION OF PERSUASIVE LEVERS USING THE SOCIAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS METHOD

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the extent to which there is an attempt to manipulate in the writing "O ruină", by identifying persuasive levers, using the method of social document analysis. These persuasive attempts in the political environment, used maliciously, can create serious social dissent and can have a significant impact on national security and good governance. Manipulation and ethical persuasion are two very close concepts and often assimilated as one and the same thing, in reality the facts proving to be in total opposition. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between these two concepts and take measures to prevent the unethical use of persuasion. Finally, the resources used and the arguments brought, our analysis concludes that the writing "O ruină" by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is not exactly an attempt at ethical persuasion, but on the contrary, it is an attempt at manipulation of the audience through various techniques, some of which have been analyzed previously, techniques that have been used in a veiled manner and, most importantly, for an approach to manipulation, coupled with good, interesting, captivating oratory.

Keywords: ethical persuasion, manipulation techniques, analysis of social documents.

Introductory Aspects

The social problem that will be addressed is the manipulation attempt of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (CZC) through his writing "O ruină" (En. *A Ruin*), from the work *Cărticica șefului de cuib* (En. *The Nest Leader's Booklet*). Thus, CZC wants, by outlining a decadence of the country, by highlighting some moral and material emergencies, to create an immediate need for control and hope for the future for the Romanian people, who were going through an unstable period both from a socio-political point of view, as well as economic.

The main question this article will answer is "Was CZC's Manifesto in *Cărticica șefului de cuib* an Attempted Manipulation?"

First of all, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is a controversial historical figure from Romania, who founded and led the Iron Guard - an ultra-nationalist and anti-Semitic organization - in the 1920s and 1930s. He had an important role in the political and social history of Romania in the interwar period and exerted an influence on the events in Romania during the Second World War (Schmidt, 2018).

There are several reasons why the analysis of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu may be appropriate to approach:

1. Its impact on the political and social history of Romania: Codreanu and the Iron Guard had an important influence on the events in Romania during the interwar period and during the Second World War. The study of Codreanu and his movement can provide insight into how right-wing extremism and nationalist ideologies have evolved in Romania.
2. Relevance to the study of right-wing extremist history: The Iron Guard was a right-wing extremist movement with an anti-Semitic character and a nationalist agenda. Analysis of Codreanu and his movement can provide valuable information for those studying the history of right-wing extremism and its forms of propaganda.
3. Its controversy: Codreanu and the Iron Guard have been a controversial topic in Romanian history, and its analysis can provide opportunities to examine how history is written and how it is perceived by different groups.

Democracy, stability, security, peace itself, these are not a given, they are not things won to be displayed as trophies, but they are privileges of the highest rank that must be fought for, even day by day.

The motivation for writing the article lies in the desire to approach the subject of extreme right-wing ideology during the interwar period and after the Second

World War, since political groups and personalities such as the Iron Guard are still today candidly evoked in public discourse as a suitable solution to the problems facing today's society. At the same time, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu himself is romanticized as a national hero, although his writings are controversial.

The premises from which we start are objective, so that we will have factual data about the whole context as a point of departure, namely the fact that CZC was a political activist, used anti-Semitic phrases in his language and was part of a political group of right-wing ideology that used pathos in the various addresses to the public.

The purpose of the article is, on the one hand, to define conceptually, to fully understand what manipulation consists of and how it is used covertly, and on the other hand, to determine objectively, factually, through an analysis, whether CZC only tried to ethically persuade its audience or if it clearly used techniques of audience manipulation to get some actions in motion.

To better understand the situation, we will analyze the political message of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu from the manifesto "O ruină", trying to see if he used manipulative elements to influence the opinions, decisions and perceptions of those he addresses.

Conceptual Boundaries

If we want to analyze a speech in order to discover potential manipulative elements, we will first have to understand what manipulation essentially is.

The term of manipulation is recognized as such, action that intends to deceive, to defraud, to obtain from an audience the acceptance of ideas without being aware of this (Breton, 2005).

Manipulation is a process of social influence that involves the use of deception, tricks, or hidden means to control or influence the behavior or emotions of others (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1-18). It is often associated with negative connotations and is seen as a form of power, where one person uses their influence to control or direct the actions of another person. Manipulation can take many forms, including emotional manipulation or psychological manipulation.

Emotional manipulation is a form of manipulation that relies on manipulating emotions to control or influence others (Cialdini, 2001). This can include using guilt, fear or sympathy to manipulate someone's behavior or emotions. Emotional manipulation is often used in personal relationships and can be considered a form of abuse.

Psychological manipulation is a form of

manipulation that involves the use of psychological means to control or influence the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of others (Gould, 2016, pp. 789-811). This may include the use of manipulation techniques such as gaslighting, mind games, or psychological manipulation. Psychological manipulation is often used in personal relationships and can be considered a form of abuse.

Manipulation can have negative consequences for both the manipulator and the manipulated person. Manipulation can damage trust and relationships and lead to feelings of anger, resentment and betrayal. It can also lead to feelings of self-doubt, low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

Manipulation consists in substituting the inclination towards reason with the omnipotence of instinctual drives (aggression drives, hunger, authoritarian and sexual drives) associated with political opinions and attitudes through conditioned reflexes (Radu, 2012).

In reality, manipulation involves a gain of the manipulator at the expense of the manipulated, a kind of unconscious exchange based on a false premise.

Braker (2004) identified the following basic ways in which manipulators control their victims:

- *Positive reward* – includes praise, superficial charm, superficial sympathy (crocodile tears), excessive apologies; money, approval, gifts; attention, facial expressions such as laughing or forced smiling; public recognition.
- *Negative reward* – includes nagging, yelling, the silent treatment, intimidation, threats, swearing, emotional blackmail, blaming, sulking, crying, and victimization.
- *Intermittent or Partial Reward* – Partial or intermittent negative reward can create a climate of persistent fear and insecurity, an example being terrorist attacks. Partial or intermittent positive reward can encourage the victim to persist – for example, in most games of chance, the player wins money from time to time but may lose overall.
- *Punishment*
- *Traumatic learning* – using verbal abuse, explosive anger, or other intimidating behavior to establish dominance or superiority; even a single incident involving such behavior can condition or teach victims not to upset/confront/contradict the manipulator.

An argumentative fallacy that is also an interesting form of manipulation to address is the *ad baculum* fallacy, which refers to the use of threat or force to support a claim or force a conclusion. This may include threatening retaliation or pressuring you to accept a particular opinion or action. It is considered a fallacy of

reasoning because it is not based on evidence or logical argument, but on intimidation or manipulation (Smith, 2018, pp. 45-50).

Ad baculum can be used in a variety of contexts, such as political discussions, business negotiations, or even in personal relationships. It is important to recognize this tactic and not let threats or force influence our opinions or decisions (Smith, 2018, pp. 45-50).

A speech in front of an assembly or a piece of writing in a publication is not intrinsically manipulation, although the communication itself has the component of persuasion. To differentiate between an ethical attempt to persuade and manipulation we need to consider several factors.

Manipulation and persuasion are two related but distinct concepts that are often used in different contexts. Manipulation refers to the act of controlling or influencing someone's behavior or emotions through deceptive or underhanded means (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1-18). Manipulation often relies on emotional appeals, trickery or deception to achieve a desired outcome. It can be considered a form of power, where one person uses their influence to control or direct the actions of another person.

On the other hand, persuasion refers to the act of getting someone to believe or do something through the use of reasoning, logic, or other forms of non-coercive communication (Cialdini, 2001). Persuasion is based on the idea of influencing someone through rational arguments and logical reasoning. It aims to change someone's beliefs or attitudes by presenting evidence and logical reasoning. Persuasion is seen as a form of influence that is based on mutual understanding and agreement.

A similarity between manipulation and persuasion is that both rely on the use of communication. Both manipulation and persuasion involve using language, verbal or non-verbal, to influence or control others (Cialdini, 2001). This communication can take many forms, including verbal communication, body language, or written communication.

Another similarity between manipulation and persuasion is that both can be used in various contexts, such as personal relationships, business, or politics (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1 - 18). Both manipulation and persuasion can be used to achieve different goals, such as gaining power, control, or influence, or to achieve a desired outcome, such as a sale, a vote, or a certain behavior.

Both manipulation and persuasion can also have an impact on the emotions of others, manipulation usually relies on negative emotions such as fear, guilt or sympathy to achieve their goals, while persuasion relies

on positive emotions such as trust, understanding or agreement (Cialdini, 2001).

In short, manipulation and persuasion are two related social influence processes that have some similarities. Both are based on the use of communication, can be used in various contexts and can have an impact on the emotions of others. However, the main difference between the two is that manipulation relies on deception, trickery or cunning means to achieve one's goals, while persuasion relies on honest and open communication and reasoning (Cialdini, 2001).

Ethical persuasion occurs responsibly only if the people involved have equal chances to persuade (skills, communication channels). Both sides of the persuasion will have to reveal their goals clearly and concretely, but also the means by which they want to reach the described objective. Receivers must be critical and able to test the claims made (Buluc, 2022).

On the other hand, manipulation wants to convince without revealing the proposed objective, but rather by hiding it from the audience. According to Nichols (2012), handling has three major components that we need to consider as follows:

- **The omnipresence of fear** – when we introduce the component of fear into the discussion the principles of ethical persuasion begin to disappear, because there is no longer a discussion, there are no more arguments, but there are orders issued by an authority with coercive power or suggestions of actions that the audience should he takes them into account so as not to put himself in serious danger. The suggestion becomes an order through the prism of the fact that danger is imminent and threatens the core values of the group (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).
- **The need for a prompt response** – usually manipulators want to get things done quickly, because this way the audience cannot weigh the arguments, even if they exist and even if they are valid. This need for a prompt response itself comes as a result of the omnipresence of fear – if there is a danger as great as described, surely a quick response is needed, and with any luck the response lies with the manipulator (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).
- **The level of sophistication of the manipulation** – manipulation takes countless forms, and the more skilled the manipulator, the harder it is to realize his true intentions and the fact that what he is putting out is not ethical, but is in the truest sense of the word manipulation. The levels and forms of sophistication of manipulation are varied, without limit, and the future and imagination will bring even more forms and levels of veiling (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).

The Socio-economic-political Context

A month before, general Ion Antonescu had overthrown King Carol II from power. Greater Romania, after 1918 the eighth largest state in Europe, had lost a third of its territory following the dictates of Hitler and Stalin. Romanian society was deeply devastated, and the unloved monarch, even hated by many, had fled the country with great difficulty (Schmidtt, 2018).

This is how interwar Romania pretended to be, crushed by social problems such as anti-Semitism brought to the highest rank, found on all social scales, from workers to university professors; ground by the armed conflicts of Europe at that time; crushed by ethno-administrative problems, after Romania had almost doubled its territory (Schmidtt, 2018).

In the first three quarters of the 20th century, Europe went through difficult periods, of war, crisis, starvation, even a lack of respect for human life itself.

In these periods of uncertainty, of both material and spiritual crisis, so-called providential leaders had often emerged to give the impression that they revived the country, and most importantly, the nation - the European states had gone through an identity crisis, as long as the borders were often changed, entire peoples were forced to flee the path of war, and the need for safety, belonging to the group was at the highest possible level - this was also the case of Romania, which over time was in a point of continuous conflict, either directly or indirectly. On the border between west and east, this territory had been the scene of countless conflicts, both internal and external (Schmidtt, 2018).

Reporting the Results of the Case Study

A first remark in the analysis of texts of nationalist origin, regardless of whether the speech belongs to an extreme right ideology or even an extreme left ideology, there is a very small chance that the attempt at persuasion represents an ethical persuasion. Usually, when it comes to taking power at the macro level, very often the actors who want to grab power will not do it ethically, because it is very likely that when they try to do it, someone else will take the path of manipulation.

We will use Annex 1 of this document as a basis for analysis, in this case the speech of Corneliu Zelea

Codreanu, which later appears in *Cărticica șefului de cuib* and which wants to draw a clear dividing line between the ambushers (DEX, 2022), the unprincipled people who they got rich overnight from the war fought by the Romanian army, and legionnaires, people who bonded together to remain poor until the grave, they who are rich will also become poor, but they bonded to conquer, defeat and revenge (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

In the first paragraph of the text, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu contextualizes the situation as a desolate one, by repeating the word "ruin", so that the image of Romania at that time is in a shadow, thus creating an omnipresence of fear, uncertainty, the need to act as quickly as possible. Social inequity is itself a manipulation technique often used at the macro level, especially by those seeking to seize power or a mass political capital (Vilines, 2019).

Another sign of an attempt at manipulation is even the use of generalization and hyperbole (DEX, 2022), these two techniques being used both in person-person interaction, but also at the macro level, as we discussed previously, in the political sphere (Riggio, 2018). Corneliu Zelea Codreanu uses hyperboles and generalizations with tact, in a context favorable to him - a deepening of the details is needed to understand the socio-economic-political context of Romania in a very troubled period with the average level of education he had the ordinary Romanian; thus, hyperbole, generalizations and big talk without a factual basis can catch, influence, change minds and affect the collective mind without much trouble.

In the given text we find an abundance of generalizations that characterize the type of personality that proves to be to blame for bringing the country to "ruin" (Riggio, 2018).

It is obvious that through these things said by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu it is very difficult not to be emotionally involved, not to believe that all the problems of society are due to a human typology and that, unlike the "mișei", the legionnaires represent a good alternative.

Another manipulation method often used at a high level is the creation of a *kompromat* campaign - a term used in Russian politics, which refers to compromising material, such as damaging or incriminating evidence, often used for political purposes or to manipulate and control individuals or groups. In her article on manipulation tactics, Shahida Arabi (2022) explains that often these smear campaigns attempt to change public opinion when the other side does not yield to please and pressure, or sometimes this method can even be used as a preemptive tactic, when it is known who could be the

potential counter-candidate or the person who will want to deconstruct your created narrative. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu used this tactic to target his possible opponents - party leader, parliamentarian.

From here, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu moved to what Shahida Arabi (2022) calls "preventive defensive". Usually, manipulative and abusive people will try to show that they are good, trustworthy people, but not through actions, but mostly through words (you can trust me, I am a good person, towards others, now the world is bad, you can't trust anyone anymore, but know that you can trust me), this term getting the name "nice guy" in the American space (Arabi, 2022). In many cases, manipulators cover up in their speech exactly what they accused others of doing, why they criticized them, and in our case, it is the same. In his speech, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu tried to explain that the group of legionnaires was not a group of ambushers, it was not a group of foreigners or a group of people who wanted to get rich, nor a group that wanted to rob the country.

Conclusions

Our analysis concludes that the writing "O ruină" by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is not exactly an attempt at ethical persuasion, but on the contrary, it is an attempt at manipulation of the audience through various techniques, some of which have been analyzed previously, techniques that have been used in a veiled manner and, most importantly, for an approach to manipulation, coupled with good, interesting, captivating oratory.

In conclusion, according to the analysis grid in Annex 2, we find ambiguous language, appeal to emotions, ad hominem attacks, repetitions, but also "scare tactics", all of which are elements of the manipulation with which Corneliu Zelea Codreanu wanted to rally people on his side, to gain political power.

Thus, the main objective of concluding whether the writing "O ruină" from *Cărticica șefului de cuib* by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu represents an obvious attempt at manipulation or not, has been achieved, contextualizing the details of the manipulation and its techniques, ultimately revealing the fact that writing itself contains manipulative elements, most abundantly found in ambiguous language.

¹ Treacherous people.

Annex 1

There is no man who has eyes and does not see that this once wealthy country has become a ruin. The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined. The widowed mountains are ruined, the abandoned fields that no longer bring anything to the poor plowman are ruined. The state budget is ruined, the country is ruined. And on top of these ruins, spread as far as the Romanian land can reach, a gang of thugs, a gang of imbeciles, a gang of shameless robbers have built palaces in defiance of the country that groans in pain and to slap your suffering, Romanian peasant. Never has a more outrageous, painful and impudent picture been seen (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

Above the millions of households that are being destroyed, above the millions of poor souls who cry out, the thieving palace of the country's plunderer rises in mockery (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

Who is he? Look for him in the estranged cities and you will find him. He is the former bushwhacker from 1916, he is the hero 100 km behind the front or the traitor of brothers-in-arms and country, he is the war-enriched man, the businessman, he is the profiteer from the blood that you spilled drop by drop from your deep wounds (Codreanu, 1940, pp.72-73).

When you returned in 1918, you bowed to him, seeing him fat, well-dressed, while you were in rags. Since then, he has taken you on lease, and you have fallen under his rule with the country that you created on the battlefields (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

How will the poor country go forward when a Stere, sentenced to death for high treason and then pardoned, is the party leader in Romania, when a Socor convicted and degraded for treason is a parliamentarian and newspaper director and leads Romanian politics, when so many bushwhackers are at the head of the country's affairs (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73)?

I have raised a flag against them, against those who have ruined the country, against the hordes of foreigners and estranged who have sucked the marrow from our bones, I have raised a flag (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

When I left under its shadow, I asked for the blessing of the soldiers who fell on the battlefield for Greater Romania and appealed to all those who survived the grave struggle. This avenging flag has defeated the bold troops of politicians in Neamț. This flag has crushed them at Tutova. This flag, sanctified in two battles, we carry from one end of the country to the other. It encourages us and terrifies adversaries (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

We called ourselves legionnaires. We, the servants of this flag, did not made a deal to steal the country, we do not prepare together to gain partisans and give them to gnaw bones from the bones of the country. We have bound ourselves together to remain poor until death; we will make the rich poor too, but we have bound ourselves to win, to overcome, and to revenge. We are ready for sacrifice, we are ready for death, all of us. These are us, the legionnaires; some villagers and city dwellers have wrongly confused us, thinking that we are fighting to seize them and to fulfill their desires, to give them the country to devour. Well, we're not (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73)!

Annex 2

Ambiguous language	Appeal to emotions	Ad hominem	Scare tactics	Repetitions
<p>And on top of these ruins, as far as the Romanian land stretches, a gang of thugs, a gang of imbeciles, a gang of shameless robbers have built palaces in defiance of the country that groans in pain and to mock the suffering of the Romanian peasant.</p> <p>I have raised a flag against them, against those who have ruined the country, against the hordes of foreigners and alienated who have sucked the marrow out of our bones, I have raised a flag.</p> <p>Let us give them bones to gnaw on from the bones of the country.</p> <p>Above the millions of destroyed households, above the millions of poor souls who weep, rises the mocking palace of the country's plunderer.</p>	<p>The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined.</p>	<p>When so many bushwhackers are at the forefront of the country's affairs.</p>	<p>The world has never seen a more revolting, painful and insolent scene.</p>	<p>...that this rich country has become a ruin. The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined.</p>
	<p>He is the profiteer from the blood that you shed drop by drop from your deep wounds.</p>		<p>Above millions of poor souls crying, rises mockingly the thieving palace of the country's plunderer.</p>	<p>This avenging flag has defeated the daring politicians' hordes at Neamț. This flag has crushed them at Tutova. This flag sanctified in two battles, we carry it from one end of the country to the other.</p>
	<p>When you returned in 1918, you bowed to him, seeing him fat, well-dressed, while you were in rags. You fell under his control with the country that you created on the battlefields.</p>			

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