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Professionals' and amateurs' pasts: a decolonizing reading of post-war Romanian histories of gendered interwar activism

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an illustration of a decolonial and gendered approach that can shape 'new global labour histories' by re-reading histories of Communist women's interwar activism produced in state-socialist Romania with attention to the power context in which they were created and the clues about the work of social reproduction during the interwar that these histories provide. After discussing the main concepts and rationale in the first section, in the second section the author shows that women's history and women historians were marginalized in Romania after 1958 despite promising post-war beginnings. She shows that this evolution was made possible by the symbiosis between nationalist historians and autochthonist politicians in search of a break with Stalinist policies. She then hones in, in the third part of the paper, on the content of the *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* (RESEE) and two women's history volumes, as publications issuing from the conditions described in the second part. With regard to the standalone volumes, the author shows that in this body of work, the interwar period is described as one of women's increased activism within the social-democratic or Communist movements. On the other hand, the period is also described as one of worsening living conditions for proletarians. The intersection of these two narratives creates in this rather limited historiographical body the surprising effect of granting high visibility to reproductive labour.

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Gendering and decolonizing global labour history

The process of globalizing labour history requires analytical and narrative gendering and decolonization. Regarding the necessary process of gendering, both Marcel van der Linden and (more poignantly) Dorothy Sue Cobble have argued that a truly global labour history needs to include the work of social reproduction as well as non-factory-based productive work, both of which were types of activity historically reserved for women.¹ Regarding the decolonization of labour history, the process entails the integration of narratives about work and labour struggles occurring in non-sovereign or weakly industrialized territories, in settings where bonded work might predominate or non-formal employment might be the norm. Decolonial (and post-colonial) scholars, among whom are Ramon Grosfoguel and

Madina Tlostanova, suggest that besides inclusion of marginalized spaces, decolonization entails an examination of the knowledge production contexts that enabled marginalization in the first place.²

One of the most sophisticated ways of gendering histories of work and labour struggle entails looking at the historically feminized work of social reproduction. Looking at social reproduction work implies paying attention to the social and economic embedding of the 'drudgery' work that sustains lives physically and emotionally, activities usually occurring in familial settings.³ The focus on the centrality of housework, appearing first in feminist scholarship of the 1970s, can be expanded beyond the home by looking at the public operation of the 'affective labour' component of social reproduction.⁴ According to proponents of the concept, 'affective labour' can refer to caring activities, whether paid or unpaid, marked by self-regulation and accommodation to the needs of others.⁵ Studies from the past several decades have underscored the presence of affective labour (and thus of socially reproductive components) beyond the family or the workplace, in the realm of political organizing.⁶

Since the 1970s, social reproduction work and social reproduction issues (such as food provision) have shaped (if not sufficiently changed) European labour historians' understandings of workers' political organizing. Thus, Kathleen Canning underscores the importance of social and biological reproduction issues as the basis for factory-level activism beginning with the nineteenth century, among women especially.⁷ Other historians point out that activism was occurring very often outside industrial establishments, in relation to soaring food and rent prices and against abusive practices by state and para-state agents. Among others, historians of interwar Germany have shown that social-democratic and Communist parties recruited their considerable numbers of women party members not in factories but during political meetings focusing on food prices and inflation.⁸

Similarly, during the last two decades, parts of the world that had been absent from labour history due to neglect, explicit prejudices or implicit assumptions have received more attention.⁹ However, the investigation of how epistemological hierarchies have been produced has not been defined as central to the efforts of writing global labour history. So although Dorothy Sue Cobble argues that new global labour history must use as departure points historical narratives (including nation-state centric ones) that already exist,¹⁰ within the whole field there seems to exist little interest in looking at how these already-existing historiographies were constructed in specific locations and the particular trajectories that rendered them marginal on a transnational level. Historical narratives produced in state-socialist regimes seem particularly exposed to this tendency.

The case of Eastern Europe poses a particular challenge in relation to the decolonization (or de-Eurocentrization) of labour history because of its pre-1989 apparent formalistic ubiquity and post-1989 scholarly self-colonization. Thus, the current marginality of labour history research in many Eastern European spaces may go unrecognized outside the region, perhaps due to a persisting sense of the centrality of labour history in state-socialist regimes. Within Eastern Europe, the post-socialist process of (self)-Orientalizing socialist knowledge production which attended liberal democratization involved the delegitimation of labour history. In countries like Romania, what could be called a 'hermeneutics of derision' concerning the state-socialist era historiography of the working class flourished. The discrediting of already-existing narratives through consistent references to 'the wooden languages of communism'¹¹ to imply inaccuracy or falsification skilfully created an ideological barrier against building on whatever labour historiography existed locally.

The turn away from labour history had roots within the professional ecosystems¹² of state-socialist historical production – as I shall show. Nevertheless, after 1989, this devaluation could proceed with greater intensity, merging with the culturalist trend in the historical discipline at the time. At least in the Romanian case, until very recently, little new research on labour and working-class history was produced. The important exceptions have focused on the post-1945 period, leaving the interwar period to be dominated by a rich historiography on state-building.¹³ By extension, integrating the history of labour in Romania into a global narrative touches with even greater urgency than elsewhere on engagement with state-socialist scholarship, even when it is used only as starting point for new research. With different degrees of intensity, depending on local political and scholarly configurations, similar situations characterize labour history in Eastern Europe.

Attempting not just spatial decolonization but also the gendering of labour history focusing on Eastern Europe by using already-existing narratives as starting points appears to be an extremely contorted task when the context of post-socialist domestic derision and international low-visibility for the genre of labour history are considered. Specifically, with respect to enhancing our understanding of how social reproduction work is part of the labour history of this region, finding an initial footing in historiographies that seem to have ‘diverged’ from the particularly ‘Western’ turn to women and gender history in the 1980s – where notions of social reproduction were first (or, rather, most visibly) advanced – is difficult.¹⁴

With regard to a specifically Eastern European engagement with issues linked to social reproduction, Rada Katsarova has suggested (without detailing) that ‘post-Stalinist socialist humanists’ in the region were invested in notions of social reproduction that would have led closer to the ‘all-round development of the individual’¹⁵ – intellectual commitments to understanding what it means to continue or create a worthwhile existence which might open up an unusual path to historicizing social reproduction in the region through its local intellectual genealogies. It is certainly a strategy close to Grosfoguel’s entreaty to engage seriously with intellectual production from peripheralized regions. However, I would argue that the symbiotic relationship between historians and politicians in state socialisms, although by no means system-specific, asks for a thorough historicization of the conditions in which such intellectual production emerged. Besides enabling a switch from withering scepticism to a form of qualified interest for state-socialist historiography, this approach would contribute to the goal of decolonizing global labour history, as discussed above.

In order to integrate Eastern European cases in the construction of ‘new global labour histories’, differently from Katsarova and drawing on Susan Zimmermann’s work on Hungary,¹⁶ in this paper I propose a strategy for a critical engagement with work produced by historians in state-socialist ‘historical ecosystems’, with specific reference to the case of Romania and a spotlight on narratives of women’s work and political engagement during the interwar period. In line with decolonial commitments, in the second section of this paper, I untangle how women’s history became a marginal genre in post-war Romania (and in Eastern Europe), after promising beginnings. In the third section of the paper, I show how this marginality became apparent in scholarship produced for transnational scholarly consumption on the basis of a systematic content analysis of the Bucharest-based journal *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* (RESEE), published between 1963 and 1989. In line with commitments of gendering labour history especially through a focus on the work of social reproduction, in the fourth section, I also show how Romanian-language volumes

discussing interwar women's left-oriented organizing and activism provide information on the intensification of women's paid work and, unintentionally, on their performance of various forms of socially reproductive labour, including affective labour. I conclude this paper by restating the arguments, pointing to the limitations of the paper and mentioning directions for future research.

Gendered labour history in Eastern Europe after 1945

In state-socialist Eastern Europe, labour history was a privileged branch of a historical profession that expanded its infrastructure and gained influence in the cultural field. Arguably, because it made work and workers into central historical actors, the history of labour was the key component in the historical field's new function as 'a science of legitimation'. Women's history did not enjoy a similar centrality, in spite of what would appear, from a distance, as a similarly high capacity to contribute to the legitimization of state-socialist regimes. After all, state socialisms were regimes which had chosen to make women workers (rather than migrant male labourers, for instance) the motors of their post-war economies and occasionally used the rhetoric of gender equality in the propaganda battles of the Cold War. However, the genre actually waned in importance in Eastern Europe over the second half of the twentieth century.

This section discusses women's representation in state-socialist East European historical narratives, within and alongside the rather privileged genre of labour history, by spotlighting the fates of the historiographies of women as left-wing activists and of women as workers in post-war Romania. Drawing on approaches in the sociology of professions and the history of women and gender, I will be considering the conditions of intellectual production for women's history as resulting from an *assemblage* (or *dispositif*) that included the interaction of multiple types of actors, among which are historians and politicians, and discourses, including discourses on 'science' and 'amateurism' (non-science).¹⁷

I argue that throughout Eastern Europe, but very visibly in Romania, historical narratives that focused on women became part of struggles between intellectuals during the 1950s period of 'high Stalinism' and in its protracted aftermath. I show that in Romania, up until the moment when 'the rightist narrative' (in Lutz Raphael's terms) triumphed in the masculinized nationalist historical canon of the Ceausescu regime, gender was a crucial tool for shaping the hierarchies of the historical profession and the kind of research about the past the profession produced.¹⁸ As such, gender functioned indeed as a 'signifier of power relations', as defined by Joan Scott.¹⁹ Specifically, gender as *dispositif* was visible in the marginalization of women historians dedicated to the memory of interwar Communist activism and labour struggles and in the exclusion from representation of leftist women distinguished in interwar activism. This had effects on the basic visibility of women as historical actors and the amount of political power lodged in such representations.

Bonnie Smith, in her seminal study on the creation of history as modern discipline, has argued that in the nineteenth century, the historical field defined itself as an empiricist and objectivity-seeking profession by explicitly excluding women 'amateur' historians and discrediting their knowledge production.²⁰ 'Boundary work' is how Thomas Gyerin terms this separation of 'science' from 'non-science', a division he argues is inherent in modern processes of professionalization and professional hierarchization.²¹ In the decades after Stalin's death and the retreat from an aggressive politics of proportional representation of

'all labouring strata' in all areas of public life, the demarcation of the scientific from the non-scientific in Eastern Europe occurred by using women as foils.

The available sociological interpretations of post-war reorganizations in historical writing in Eastern Europe are not particularly attentive to gendered dynamics. They have stressed the quest for political control as underpinning aggressive policies of elite formation and professionalization and no less than the creation of new 'academic regimes'.²² According to these analyses, the post-war influx of outsiders fundamentally challenged the way in which the historical profession produced its internal hierarchies and systems of valuation. In fact, the challenge to the established ways in which the historical profession hierarchized itself was so great that until 1956, Bogdan Iacob suggests, the main dynamic of historical production in the entire Eastern European region relied on a tension set up between the imperatives of democratization and those of professionalization.²³ This dynamic overlapped with the contest between an older and newer historical paradigm, termed by Lutz Raphael the 'national' (or 'rightist') and 'a-national' (or leftist) paradigm respectively.²⁴ 'Leftist' narratives (associated with 'high Stalinist' affirmative action) generally included more women, whereas 'rightist' narratives, more attuned to interwar nationalisms, constructed other collective actors (such as 'the nation' or, eventually, 'the entire people').

Destalinization affected women historians and the inclusion of women or the notion of gendered labour in contemporary history narratives. Due to changed admission policies that were meant to foster new academic regimes, in 'high Stalinist' (roughly between 1948 and 1953) Eastern Europe, women historians found a warmer welcome in academia than during the interwar period, lack of interest among certain socialist states' policy-makers notwithstanding.²⁵ Thus, according to the preliminary data available, by 1955 Eastern Bloc countries could boast a far higher number than 'capitalist' countries when it came to women historians working in academic positions.²⁶ The difference in numbers was probably due to the 'policy of proportional representation of the labouring strata in all institutions'. After Stalin's death, in countries such as Hungary and Poland the distancing from the status of 'Soviet satellite' was enacted, among others, via the rejection of what were seen as the Soviet-style affirmative action policies that had favoured women.²⁷

Concerning women's history in Hungary, Susan Zimmermann has shown that standalone volumes published on women's history during state socialism occupied a marginal position within the field of the historical profession, before and after socialism.²⁸ This was due to these books' association with the non-academic institutions that facilitated their publications, among which were trade unions or official women's organizations. Although themes such as education, legal history or the history of work were highly present in this body of work, the focus on Communist and socialist women's activism imprinted a continuity with the interwar Left movement's publications on heroic women, one factor among several that led to their dismissal. All in all, during state socialism, Zimmermann argues, these books 'must have been perceived as something to be condoned, benevolently tolerated, or patronized, or as something that was both unavoidable and in substance irrelevant'.²⁹ As I shall show, similar attitudes existed in neighbouring Romania.

In the case of Communist Romania, the process of struggle for influence and resources among historians has been analysed in quite sophisticated ways. Studies by Katherine Verdery (1991), Bogdan Iacob (2011) and Francesco Zavatti (2016) have highlighted the symbiotic or otherwise deliberative character between historians and politicians as well as the importance of struggles for resources or personal advancement within and between

networks of intellectuals.³⁰ However, despite the fact that struggles for dominant positions have been the central theme of these approaches, the profoundly gendered character of these contests – in material and symbolic terms – has not been sufficiently highlighted. Among others, then, my argument concerning the symbolic and concrete marginalization of women in post-war Romanian history functions as an extension of these previous studies' conclusions as well as of recent findings by Luciana Jinga (2015) on the post-war marginalization of interwar Communist women.³¹

In addition, by arguing that an entire historical-narrative genre declined post-1954, this section of my paper strengthens one of Calin Morar-Vulcu's conclusions from his study on the representation of social classes in the Stalinist and Late Socialist (his terms) press.³² In his chapter, Morar-Vulcu suggests that depictions of social groups as involved in past social struggles (a 'historicization of agency') were characteristic of the Stalinist period's regimes of representation and largely vanished afterwards (post-1970, especially), swallowed by a presentist, abstract public discourse drawn from the relatively new expert field of management.³³

At the beginning of the people's democracy regime in Romania, the history of women as contemporary history actors was actually in a good political position. Immediately after the end of the war, women who had been active in Communist political organizing were prominent both among the post-war leadership of the country and depicted in the new historical narratives advanced by the new regime. In 1949, the Publishing House of the Romanian Worker's Party issued, as part of a collection of Communists' biographies called *Fighters for the Freedom of the Romanian People*, a booklet titled "Cazute in Lupta" [Women fallen in the struggle]. It contained grim biographies of women activists who had lost their lives for the cause only a few years earlier.³⁴ One of the contributions had been written by Ofelia Manole, Communist stateswoman after the war and herself an *ilegalist* (a quasi-honorary term denoting veteran members of the Romanian Workers' Party, attached to those who had been active in the banned, thus illegal, interwar Communist movement in Romania). A museum which opened in 1948, temporarily titled 'Moments of the People's Struggle for Freedom', contained a full-scale replica of a cell occupied during the 1930s by Ana Pauker, leader of the Romanian Workers' Party and Minister of Foreign Affairs by 1948.³⁵ Mass-circulation magazines reprinted the biographies of women active during the Communist movements' clandestine operation in Romania (especially in the mid-1930s).

At the time, the visibility granted to interwar women activists was not merely a tactic of legitimizing the unprecedented power amassed after the Second World War by Pauker, a woman and a Jew, in conservative and anti-Semitic Romania, nor to simply grant political clout to the handful of other women who had become very visible on the post-war political scene.³⁶ Rather, as Luciana Jinga has convincingly shown, Communist women organizing around (what I consider to be) social reproduction issues, such as welfare provision and prison support, had ensured a degree of continuity for the banned Communist Party and its imprisoned male leadership during the 1930s.³⁷ After the war, these women's version of the interwar story of the Communist Party constituted a threat to the power of the so-called 'prison faction' led by the future Romanian sole head of state (1961–65), Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.³⁸ The women's group could be tainted by the association with Pauker, its most visible member and most powerful backer. Due to these women's association with Pauker's assumed unflinching loyalty towards Moscow, they were stripped of influence once

Gheorghiu-Dej and allies began a process of autochthonizing the regime via a cautious distancing from the Soviet Union.

Importantly, a group of 'autochthonist' historians, rehabilitated by Gheorghiu-Dej, brought its contribution to this process, by facilitating the regime's backtracking on the representation of women in the history of the Communist movement (and, by extension, the history of the interwar period). This group of historians professionalized in the interwar period, represented among others by historian Andrei Oțetea, was politically empowered to produce historical narratives which replaced the Soviet-friendly 'a-national' historiography with one which combined elements of the 'national' and 'a-national' narratives. As a result, as early as in 1952, the replica of Pauker's cell was removed from the Museum dedicated to the history of the Romanian Communist Party.³⁹ By 1954, the break with the practices of intensive historical and political representation of women was completed, as exemplified by the refusal of the Party History Museum's curators to organize commemorative events for Olga Bancic⁴⁰ – an internationally prominent Basserabian Romanian Communist decapitated in wartime Stuttgart due to her French Resistance activities.⁴¹

In the broader historiographical discourse, the genre tensions between the a-national 'people's history' and the national 'history of the state' were being smoothed out after 1954. These tensions were eventually resolved through the installation, after 1958, of 'the nation' or 'the entire people' as principal historical subjects – a clear break with the favoured collective actors of the immediate post-war period.⁴² This adapted 'rightist' perspective was associated with the History Institute of the Romanian Academy, an institution that rivalled the other main institution dedicated to history production in post-war Romania, the Institute for Party History (IPH). While largely refraining from dealing with contemporary history (the province of the IPH), under the leadership of historian Andrei Oțetea, the Academy Institute began discussing the potentially positive role of the bourgeoisie in modern history and reassessing the contribution of interwar historiography.⁴³ Historians who were established figures during the interwar period (among them Nicolae Iorga) were reclaimed as 'critical historians' and consecrated as 'founding fathers' of the newly rehabilitated, post-Stalinist historical profession.⁴⁴

Among scholars and politicians, autochthonist historians enacted their rehabilitation through 'boundary work'. In a classic performance of Gieryn's demarcation work and as convincingly shown by Bogdan Iacob, they used public rhetorics about 'science' and 'non-science' to enact a break with the pro-Soviet, a-national master narrative promoted by the IPH under the oversight of historian Mihail Roller, a Moscow-educated Romanian scholar backed by Pauker.⁴⁵ The work of men and women who had joined either the Institute for Party History or the History Institute of the Romanian Academy on the basis of their credentials as Party veterans or Party School-educated propagandists began to be branded as dilettantish and unspecialized.

Concrete practices attending this rhetorical 'boundary work', among which were the demand for formal qualifications and marginalization of movement veterans hired by the IPH, implicitly or explicitly affected more women than men historians. In a 1952 round of dismissals, a third of IPH employees were let go because they were considered to not be sufficiently qualified: 10 out of the 11 historians dismissed in this way were women.⁴⁶ In historian Ion Bulei's interpretation of this and similar events, the Institute "has been created with not-so-well prepared researchers, it was composed mainly of the wives of communist activists who worked elsewhere. Their husbands also brought the wives."⁴⁷ That the wives

of veterans had been very much part of the clandestine movement themselves or could be trained as historians, as happened to many other ‘propagandists’ (i.e. historians without formal training in the discipline) in the following years, was disregarded during the 1952 rounds of dismissals and in Bulei’s remembrance, some six decades later.

The head of the IPH during the early 1950s, the now largely forgotten (by contrast with her infamous collaborator Mihail Roller), Moscow-educated historian Clara Cuşnir-Mihailovici, was similarly discredited because of her assumed lack of qualifications: considered a foreigner and an amateur, due to her Basserabian accent and presumed lack of university studies, she was firmly associated at the time and in some historians’ post-socialist writings with ‘a-national’ scholarship and Stalinist affirmative action policies.⁴⁸ A far more complicated and influential character in reality, as portrayed by Zavatti, Cuşnir-Mihailovici oriented the IPH towards collecting and recording the memories of interwar party ‘veterans.’⁴⁹ These recordings attracted the ire of Gheorghiu-Dej, leading to the demotion of Cuşnir-Mihailovici (from head of IPH to the leadership of the Party History Museum) and the complete removal of Mihail Roller from positions of influence.

Besides ‘boundary work’, the slow turn to a syncretic ‘rightist’ paradigm also employed gendered signifiers in symbolic terms successfully in order to reconstitute power relations.⁵⁰ Among others, newly powerful historians began celebrating the memory of bourgeois ‘founding fathers’ for the historical profession, the aforementioned Nicolae Iorga or Dimitrie Onciu among them. I would also argue that ‘autochthonist historians’ also decisively re-masculinized the very spirit of history by reinstating men as emblematic historical actors, in parallel with ‘the entire nation’. Thus, as a result of the downfall of Anna Pauker and her allies, the grim, Bolshevik-style ‘biographies of struggle’ commemorating men and women veterans were replaced with what Bogdan Iacob has termed an ‘increasing focus on personalities that embodied the *Weltgeist*.’⁵¹ These emblematic personalities consisted of an all-men collection of mediaeval rulers, popular leaders and modern revolutionaries.⁵²

The change of direction in discourse and personnel had long-lasting effects. Some of the women who were initially non-degreed historians – often because they had been participant-witnesses in the Communist movement in the interwar period – but subsequently became formally professionalized remained as a recognizable group of employees in the history-producing Institutes, often throughout their careers. They retained a focus on the key themes of the a-national narrative (among which were the history of the socialist movement and workers’ history) even as most colleagues switched to nationalism-inflected political history. They also remained loyal to the biographical genre so dear to internationalist Communists.⁵³

For example, the *Encyclopedia of Romanian Historiography* (1978) describes Elisabeta Ioniţă as a non-PhD-ed museographer of the Museum for Party History who had “contributed to the activity and political struggle of women and youth in interwar Romania”⁵⁴ – a type of mention used throughout the book to distinguish veterans-turned-historians from those with full, formal professional credentials. Throughout her career, Ioniţă focused on veterans’ biographies and oral histories. Historian Georgeta Tudoran, described in the *Encyclopedia* in similar terms, stands out even today as an unrepentant ‘high Stalinist’.⁵⁵ Whereas many state-socialist historians published post-socialist memoirs in which they sought to qualify their involvement in the regime and distance themselves ideologically, when interviewed by Zavatti in 2013, Tudoran spoke appreciatively of the Communist emancipatory project and of leading ‘a-national’, pro-Soviet Mihail Roller, detailing how

he convinced her to join the Party History Institute after her training in a school for cadres (the Bucharest Party School), based on his appreciation of her intelligence and regardless of her actual formal education as a painter.⁵⁶

Arguably, commemorative practices of the (more-or-less voluntary) gendered activism in interwar Romania morphed into these 'high Stalinist' women's researchers' interest in the history of women and their work. In the 1970s, Ioniță published extended biographies of two activists from the interwar period, Ecaterina Arbore and Suzana Pârvulescu.⁵⁷ In her turn, Georgeta Tudoran focused on veterans' biographies and published in 1985 a two-part journal article on 'The Socialist Struggle for Women's Emancipation During the Last Century'.⁵⁸ Whereas in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the a-national paradigm was still reigning, men did publish articles on emblematic women figures, this tepid enthusiasm virtually disappeared later, leaving this increasingly marginal topic in the care of these committed activist women.⁵⁹ They were not the only women publishing on women's history, but Tudoran, Ioniță and later a handful of other, younger women, did stand out through their publishing on contemporary history and on women as socialist and Communist movement participants.

In essence, due to the conditions of intellectual production in post-war Romania, women's history was the province of a handful of activist women historians and was shaped by 'a-national' paradigmatic commitments. In its turn, the a-national framework was defined by a focus on labour history as the history of working people (as exemplified in much of the work of Soviet historian Anna Pankratova,⁶⁰ for instance). It follows that state-socialist women's history occupied a similar position in the space of history production in Romania as a Soviet-inspired type of labour movement and people's history. However, whereas labour history could be hollowed out and transformed according to new paradigmatic dosages of nationalism and a-nationalism (to put it reductively), women's history did not establish itself sufficiently to warrant being kept alive after high Stalinism. It was instead revived occasionally.

The 'autochthonist' history cultivated in the 1960s triumphed after 1975 in a national-Communist master narrative. According to Katherine Verdery, in this period, nationalist historical narratives were recognizably structured around male heroes, 'producing the impression of the nation as a temporally deep patrilineage'.⁶¹ At the same time, as a somewhat separate development to which established historians seem to not have paid much attention, in conjunction with the Ceausescu regime's new policy of increasing women's representation in leadership positions, and perhaps in relation to the International Women's Year celebrated in 1975, women's history went through a brief period of revival and official sanction.⁶²

In this context, several newly researched volumes on the women's movement in Romania as well as biographies of interwar Communist activists (though not of Pauker herself) were published.⁶³ Significantly, interwar-activists-turned-post-war-historians such as Georgeta Tudoran⁶⁴ and Elisabeta Ioniță⁶⁵ would be the ones providing their expertise for this new research direction, by writing and publishing more often than previously. Younger professionals, such as Elena T. Georgescu and Titu Georgescu, in drawing up their volume on the 'women's revolutionary movement', used almost exclusively sources from the interwar labour press that reported on the increasing toll of the Great Depression, producing the kind of finer-grained 'people's histories' of the interwar period that had fallen out of favour with most historians.⁶⁶ Subsequently, young author Paraschiva Cancea relied heavily on the Georgescu and Georgescu volume in her own book.⁶⁷ The tentative rehabilitation of

side-lined research traditions and topics thus occurred through chains of citations and the textual reintegration of amateurish expertise.

As in Hungary, the new research had little impact on the broader professional culture of the period, issuing as it was from a social movement labour history that no longer dominated the field. As I discuss in the following, final section, it nevertheless contributed to defining the history of work and labour struggle in the 1920s and 1930s, all the while reproducing some less-than-generous discourses on women's work and activism fostered by the professional climate that began reconstruction in the late 1950s. The tendency to minimize political contributions and the reliance on labour press sources also contributed to an unintentional but currently interesting foregrounding of social reproduction work as integral to labour activism.

Rehabilitated narratives: discourses on women's history in Romania after 1965

With the recuperation of some of the traditions of interwar historiography and its tropes, by 1965 women were represented in scholarly discourse less often than during the Pauker era and immediately after.⁶⁸ At the same time, there was a marked decline of preoccupations for labour history in general. These changes are particularly evident in the contents of the multilingual *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* (RESEE).

RESEE was the quarterly journal published between 1963 and 1989 by the Bucharest-based Institute for South East European Studies Institute, itself part of a Balkan-based network that formed the UNESCO-funded International Association for South East European Studies.⁶⁹ Dominated by historians with ties to the Academy's 'Nicolae Iorga' Institute (rather than the Institute for Party History), RESEE showcased internationally historical research produced in Romania and mediated the reception of foreign scholarship in the Romanian professional community.

According to Bogdan Iacob, the goal of the IASEES was the "hegemonic internationalization of South East European Studies from the periphery"⁷⁰ – a project that would prove highly successful, at least until the 1980s. By settling on *topoi* to characterize the Balkan region, among which were 'autochthonous continuity' and Ottoman-generated backwardness, the IASEES and RESEE were participating in what Verdery has termed the 'indigenisation of Marxism'.⁷¹ Significantly, however, this flirtation with conceptualizing subalternity was gendered. For instance, Alexandru Dutu, writing on the contributions of South East European Studies to the history of mentalities, argued that they can lead to an abandonment of a 'tunnel vision' that privileges Western European narratives. Dutu pleaded for 'a thorough study of mentalities to analyse the image of the ideal man, be it the model proposed to a defined collectivity – such as the "corteggiano", "l'honete home", "the gentleman", "the citizen", "the patriot" – or the one able to fulfil everyone's aspirations and hopes "the good monarch", "the haidouk"⁷²

Between 1963 and 1989, there were two notable exceptions to the sporadic mention of women (as writers, artists or political leaders' spouses) in the pages of the RESEE. The first is the 1977 article by Victoria Francu on nineteenth-century feminist Sofia Nadejde's feuilleton novel *Tragedia Obrenovicilor* [The tragedy of the Obrenovitches].⁷³ The article argues that the novel was overlooked by literary critics because it had been published in serialized form. Francu believed that it deserved to be recovered as a historical materialist

analysis of nineteenth-century Serbia, as a commentary on the 1877 Independence War fought by Romanian troops and as 'revealing the sacrifices necessary for the realization of the common ideal of Romanians and Serbs, the removal of Ottoman domination and the assurance of an independent development'.⁷⁴ In effect, the approach was a cautious recovery of nineteenth-century intellectual production by feminists through its entanglement with the IASEES's discourses on decolonial geopolitics, its presence representing perhaps a hint of the growing interest within this transnational structure in women's history as recuperative endeavour. Secondly, in 1974 Robert Muchembled published a state-of-the-art piece on the history of the family and the history of mentalities.⁷⁵ Although reviewing English- and French-language scholarly literature published especially on the history of the family, Muchembled's piece mentions the need for more research on women's history. More importantly, his text describes a growing sociological interest in the history of the family, marriage and sexuality fuelling discussions on the mentalities of popular classes, themselves part of historical narratives that may 'open a view towards the reconstruction of our present'.⁷⁶

While the two interventions point to the existence of a certain interest in spotlighting women as historical actors, the recent past was not part of these sporadic discussions. In fact, the interwar period was discussed (rarely) in the idiom of comparativist political and economic history.⁷⁷ Except for highly repetitive articles on the 1944 'people's insurrection' that led to the creation of the People's Republic of Romania, the interwar period received a rather detached treatment, far from the 1950s style of people's history or social movement history. In the pages of the RESEE there was no sense of profound reflection on the social history of the interwar and there were few mentions of workers, be they genderless groups, women or men.

If in the RESEE journal the interwar period had proved rather difficult to tackle, in two volumes focused on women's history in Romania, the recent past of the interwar period is more explicitly portrayed as characterized by social structures that were oppressive to the 'popular masses' and to women in particular.⁷⁸ In these volumes, addressed rather more to a scholarly public than a general one, the interwar period is described, somewhat unsurprisingly, as one of women's increased political participation within the social-democratic or Communist movements, on the background of worsening living conditions for proletarians. This was the historical discourse on the interwar period that had dominated the 1950s and was being revived after two decades.

The volume *Mișcarea democratică și revoluționară a femeilor din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania] by Titu Georgescu and Elena Georgescu was published in 1975. One year later, the Editura Politică (Political Publishing House) printed Paraschiva Cancea's *Mișcarea pentru emanciparea femeii în România* [The movement for woman's emancipation in Romania]. The volumes coincided with celebrations of International Woman's Year. At the same time, they were probably meant to accompany significant changes in labour policy, which strengthened labour protective legislation and pushed for the greater presence of women in leadership positions.⁷⁹

In spite of admirable research efforts, the discomfort within the field of professional history with regard to a general politics of visibility for women was also manifest in the inconsistent interpretations present in the Georgescu and Georgescu volume. The publication, although devoted almost in its entirety to highlighting women's socialist and Communist political activism during the interwar period, often portrays women involved as uninitiated

or incompetent but worthy of praise. For instance, ‘women brought a precious contribution in the framework of the Antiwar Committee, an understanding of their duty’, ‘they were especially working women, the wives of striking men, many, a lot of them did not understand everything but they knew that inside the prison building was their husband or their son’, ‘[the activity of activist women in the 1930s] was not only important, it went beyond a simple contribution, it was actually necessary.’⁸⁰

At the same time, the book had a clear recuperative intent, dedicating ample space to illustrative quotes from the labour movement’s newspapers and magazines and engaging repeatedly in rostering the names of women activists who contributed to the continued existence and eventual triumph of the Communist movement.

Due to its detailed use of press reports and other sources, the Georgescu and Georgescu volume provides a valuable insight into the acceleration of the process of proletarianization of women and girls during the period. Statistical data from social surveys, reports to the International Labour Organization and quote snippets from socialist and Communist newspapers construct an image of precarious labour conditions, wage differentials of 50% or more between women and men and workplace abuses. The text makes particularly visible the question of illegal, night-time child labour in factories by quoting part of a report from the Communist *Facla* publication: “At night, children – boys and little girls – work shoulder to shoulder with the elderly, they are parched by the ovens ... They are pale, hunchbacked, thin with spindly legs, [...] with swollen bellies.”⁸¹ The landscape of urban interwar Romania is credibly represented as marked by the scramble for work in the context of highly exploitative labour conditions, an interpretation of the interwar period largely absent not only from histories produced from the 1960s on but from the post-socialist historiography of the period.

In passing, the Georgescu and Georgescu volume mentions the similarly dire situation of women workers from rural areas.⁸² However, the intellectual feat of the revived genre of women’s history was meant to be, among others, the discursive rehabilitation of ‘women industrial workers’ as historical subjects, in keeping with the new labour policy of the Ceausescu regime. Therefore, the apparent blindness towards the situation of the majority rural women in Romania, usually engaged in waged labour via semi-formal or informal arrangements, was not so much an accident as a structured choice.

It is interesting to note that one of the few passages in which the authors (or the censors) point to the 1920s and 1930s as oppressive due to characteristic forms of social organization, in their own narrative voices rather than in quotes from the labour press, is in mentioning the situation of ‘women mothers’, whose pregnancies were affected by unhealthy labour conditions. ‘There were women who, from workshops and factories, were taken directly home in insalubrious dwellings, where they gave birth on the same day. The reports of the labour inspectorate – veritable prosecution documents today – record incredible states of affairs. The workers’ press revealed more than once such situations, which add to the prosecution files of an entire regime’⁸³ – an unexpectedly skilful use of the interwar period as an *ancien régime* in order to legitimize socialist Romania’s violently pronatalist policy.⁸⁴

The actual primary focus of the volume, women’s increased participation in Communist political activism after the First World War, was not meant to be read as part of a history of work but rather as a contribution to the history of working-class movements, one occasionally aiming at transnational narratives (through mentions of Communist women’s participation in international congresses, for instance). At best, to the extent that women were portrayed as labouring politically, the rhetoric was of affect-infused labour, one that

might be associated with a conception of political work as unalienated, 'living labour'; articles referred to 'energetic common action', 'woman – a social and national reserve'. However, in spite of themselves (to a certain extent), born out of the tension between devaluing women's work and seeking to recover women's political participation nevertheless, the volumes provide interesting information about socially reproductive work, including affective labour.

Significantly, women's political labour is presented as having always occurred in support and defence of men's own militancy. As a historiographical discourse, this was the product of Gheorghiu-Dej's allies riling against activist women's 'feminist sectarianism'.⁸⁵ However, unintentionally, the 'workers' solidarity' harmonizing approach to gender struggle underscores a connection between affect and labour, within and outside political organizing, that goes beyond 'energetic action': the presence of 'emotion work' or 'affective labour', of consistent self-regulation and accommodation to the needs of others.⁸⁶ Read far from its intentions and with awareness of its limitations, this volume (and similar scholarship) provides an entry point for understanding and further questioning the gendered labour of affective fine-tuning involved in socialist and Communist militancy, during the interwar period and beyond.

The representational regime for this intensified participation suggests exactly the possibility of reading the newly visible engagement of women as visibility for the work of social reproduction performed in (politicized) working-class communities. For instance, women's participation in Communist prison and legal support organizations or other aid-oriented structures (creation of canteens, provision of medical assistance and childcare) is praised by Georgescu and Georgescu as a 'persevering and domestic-management-like (*gospodareasca*) activity that was well-conducted and most often by women'. Activist women were believed to have had 'considerable influence over members of their families'.⁸⁷ When, in 1936, Communist aid-oriented associations were also banned, political activity in Bucharest continued 'in the form of school shows, theatre plays or work gatherings in the homes of certain women' – political practices which linked agitational left politics to social reproduction practices in unexpected ways.

More importantly, the Georgescu and Georgescu narrative contains hints that it was not simply increased Communist militancy that was driving these developments but rather the veritable crisis of reproduction that spanned the interwar period but was aggravated by the Great Depression. (As 'social reproduction feminists' have shown, Silvia Federici among them, periods of economic crisis must be conceptualized first as marked by the growing impossibility of ensuring the survival of those engaging in waged labour and subsistence agriculture and the overexploitation of women's labour in the process).⁸⁸ In outlining the difference between Communist women's stance and 'bourgeois feminism', the authors provide the following quote from a 1923 edition of the *Socialismul* newspaper: 'We, working women and poor housewives, are overwhelmed by work and high prices; we, our men, our parents, our children are made sick by bad food ... and unhealthy houses, we are choked and killed by the dust and filth in the slum quarters, all of us labourers are suffocated by the terror of the masters'.⁸⁹ Besides making visible the incorporation of the idea of exploited non-waged labour into the socialist critique of the period, the paragraph provides an insight into the quotidian experiences and issues that informed activism. They constitute hints for a history of the everyday life of working-class women otherwise difficult to identify in the historiography of interwar Romania.

Similarly, the chapter dealing with the period 1929–33, albeit focusing on Communist agitational work, is titled “The Working Woman in the Years of the Crisis 1929–1933.”⁹⁰ Besides discussing industrial worker women’s participation in strike actions alongside men, the section highlights the particularly gendered struggle for ensuring basic household survival, among which was a 1936 ‘energetic demonstration’ for the fair distribution of firewood by the municipality. It also quotes part of an account from the social-democratic *Adevarul* newspaper of a procession of war widows to the headquarters of the Bucharest Ministry of Health in order to claim unpaid war pensions, in 1936: ‘Women dressed in rags, with livid faces, with black scarves on their heads, each with a clothes bundle in their hands, with some hope in their souls, started off towards the ministry.’⁹¹ While women’s rent and bread strikes are significant themes in the labour historiography concerning the European and American contexts,⁹² they (and similar protest actions) are unresearched in the Romanian case. State-socialist scholarship’s sketch of their existence, once looked at more closely, brings this type of political action, as well as some of its causes, to the foreground.

The second important volume published on women’s history in state-socialist Romania is Paraschiva Cancea’s *Mișcarea Pentru Emanciparea Femeii in Romania* [The movement for woman’s emancipation in Romania], which appeared in 1976. Unlike the 1975 Georgescu and Georgescu volume, Cancea’s book has enjoyed relatively high visibility in the post-socialist period, being used by a new generation of researchers in Romania as a fundamental resource for the history of women’s movements in the country beginning with the nineteenth century. And indeed, even for the interwar period, Cancea’s book is strongest in comparing (albeit not systematically), the achievements of bourgeois feminists and Communist women activists, a task accomplished not without a certain sympathy for the ‘insufficiently politicized bourgeois feminist organizations’.

With regard to histories of work, certain themes from the earlier, Georgescu and Georgescu, volume can be found in this second book on women’s history: participation in strike activity alongside men; the emphasis on the provision of social assistance through Communist organizations in the 1930s; and the abundant evidence of inadequate labour conditions.⁹³ These issues are treated as fugitively or even more so as in the earlier volume. On the other hand, as well-suited to a book published by the Editura Politica (The Political Publishing House), Cancea focuses more on identifying and presenting the interwar Romanian Communist Party’s explicit stance on the ‘woman question’. She thus mentions CPR reports and quotes press articles that discuss the ‘special situation of woman who bears the double exploitation as worker in the factory and in the house.’⁹⁴ However, while pointing to women’s being represented as the object of super-exploitation in the 1920s labour press, Cancea’s book also shows that women were also portrayed as part of the malleable reserve army, used by capitalists to drive down actual workers’ wages: ‘The [press] appeal referred first and foremost to the way in which the capitalists, relying on the lower combativeness of women and their lack of political organization, exploits her in particular, uses them to lower workers’ wages.’⁹⁵ These apparently contradictory positionings were rooted in the history of European socialists’ debates on ‘the woman question’ since the nineteenth century,⁹⁶ but could be uncritically taken up in the particular intellectual context of the 1970s.

In Romania, the minimal opening towards the ‘women’s history’ emerging – at the margins of the historical profession – in Western Europe and the United States, as evidenced in the publication of Muchembled’s article in the RESEE, was doubled by the 1970s by a rehabilitation of domestic and ‘Eastern Block’ traditions of writing on women’s activism.

Whereas the two significant volumes discussed here reproduced, in discussing productive and reproductive labour performed by women during the 1920s and 1930s, gendered blind spots cultivated as part of post-Stalinist backlashes against the academic regimes created immediately after the war, they nevertheless contributed to spotlighting this very labour.

Conclusions

In this paper I have argued that activism-focused labour history produced in state-socialist Romania can be re-read with attention to gendered work in order to contribute to the construction of a global labour history that further incorporates Eastern Europe as a topic and reproductive labour as a category of analysis.

In reconstructing the conditions for the production of history in state-socialist Romania, I have shown that women's history (i.e. the history of women as labourers and activists) and hard-Left women historians were marginalized in 1950s and 1960s Romania as part of a process of re-linking the new historical narratives to the interwar period's nationalist historiography, during struggles for influence and resources among historians and politicians. Women historians' 'amateurish expertise' would be recirculated beginning with the middle of the 1970s, in new biographies of women clandestine activists and in syntheses on women's militancy during the first half of the twentieth century.

In reading these volumes beyond their stated aims, with attention to the work of social reproduction they mention, I have pointed out that they reveal the importance of gendered caring practices in political activism, not just as survival strategies but as full-blown political tactics. I have also shown how discourses on urban women's participation in protest actions can be linked to a discussion on economic crisis as primarily a crisis of social and physical reproduction. These insights can inform the renewed interest in labour history as broadly conceived in Romania. They can also provide arguments for writing global histories of left-leaning mobilization and histories of women's work which take into account the strains that led to women's participation in the urban labour force in an agrarian country and the acutely precarious labour conditions which characterized it.

This study's ambition to entangle themes from women's history and the history of state socialism in Romania with the explicitly formulated concerns of global history in order to sketch a decolonial and gendered analysis underpins many of this paper's limitations. The argument on the re-gendering of history in post-Stalinist Romania requires more empirical research on collusions and resistances among the historians and institutions involved. Similarly, the final section's discussion on journals and volumes published after 1960 would certainly be nuanced by a consideration of representations of women's work before the interwar period and in Romanian-language scholarly journals. On the other hand, the section invites an extended discussion on the absence from representation of peasant women and non-conceptualization of agricultural waged and unwaged work in the Romanian (and Eastern European) historiography of labour during state socialism. Finally, this analysis of the marginalization of histories of women's work in a particular Eastern European polity before 1989 and the benefits for new, global labour histories is linked to the aftermath of destalinization and then the fall of state socialisms in identifiable ways, global connections this contribution has left, for now, largely unexplored.

Notes

1. van der Linden, *Workers of the World*, 6; Cobble, “The Promise and Peril of the New Global Labor History,” 99–107; For an older (1981) discussion of challenges of feminist theory for labour history, not concerned yet with global entanglements, see Davin, “Feminism and Labour History,” 176–81.
2. Grosfoguel, “The Implications of Subaltern Epistemologies for Global Capitalism,” 283–92; Tlostanova, *Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borderlands*, 20.
3. Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*; Laslett and Brenner, “Gender and Social Reproduction.”
4. Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure.”
5. Hardt, “Affective Labour;” Weeks, *The Problem with Work*.
6. Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, *Passionate Politics*, 14.
7. Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender*.
8. Evans, “Politics and the Family;” Eley, *Forging Democracy*, 257; For an overview of political organizing around social reproduction, Haider and Mohandesi, “Making a Living,” *Viewpoint Magazine*, no. 5 (October 28, 2015), <https://viewpointmag.com/2015/10/28/making-a-living/>.
9. van der Linden, *Workers of the World*, 9.
10. Cobble, “The Promise and Peril of the New Global Labor History”.
11. For a comprehensive discussion and deconstruction of ‘wooden language’ as a trope of post-socialist memory politics, see Petrov and Ryazanova-Clarke, “Introduction,” 1–16; For a different but related discussion on feminism and laughter in the archive, Hemmings, “Considering Emma,” 334–46.
12. On historians’ role in the ‘ecological’ balance of political culture, see Baron, “History, Politics and Political Culture.” http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/5_2000/baron.html
13. Cucu, “Producing Knowledge in Productive Spaces;” Marginean, *Ferestre Spre Furnalul Roșu; Grama, Labouring Along*.
14. Importantly, the absent discussion of social reproduction in the existing labour historiography is a specifically Eastern European, and not a broadly post-Soviet, conundrum. For instance, a relatively recent volume on Russian labour history conceives interwar workers in relation to the countryside and as embedded in household economies. Interestingly and helpfully, the volume argues that although Soviet workers’ quiescence was secured at different points through a welfarist ‘social contract’, the reproduction of workers embedded in families emerges from the studies in this edited volume as having been ensured during frequent periods of hardship and shortage through strategies such as state-encouraged subsidiary urban agriculture or broader cultural reconfigurations, such as a progressive weakening of an already feebly entrenched ideology of domesticity. Filtzer, *A Dream Deferred*, 24, 25.
15. Katsarova, “Repression and Resistance on the Terrain of Social Reproduction: Historical Trajectories, Contemporary Openings,” *Viewpoint Magazine*, October 31, 2015, <https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/10/31/repression-and-resistance-on-the-terrain-of-social-reproduction-historical-trajectories-contemporary-openings/>; See also Valiavicharska, “Spectral Socialisms: Marxism-Leninism and the Future of Marxist Thought in Post-Socialist Bulgaria” (University of California Berkeley, 2011), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6j85900c.pdf>.
16. Zimmermann, “In and Out of the Cage,” 125–49.
17. According to Mitchell Dean, the Foucauldian *dispositif* (apparatus) and the term *agencement* (assemblage), used by Latour and Callon following Deleuze, all refer to a conception of power as self-organizing. In Latour’s case, the assemblage is also defined to include non-human actors and social relations. Dean, *The Signature of Power*, 11; Latour, “Reassembling the Social.”
18. Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme*.
19. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.”
20. Smith, *The Gender of History*.
21. Gieryn introduces the concept of ‘boundary work’ to define a rhetorical style, common in ‘public science’, through which scientists articulate ideologies of science. This work of

- persuasion is accomplished in order to resolve both internal role strain (*pace* Parson) and pursue interests (*pace* Marx). 'Boundary work' usually requires a stylistic foil (the 'non-science') and is typical in processes of professionalization. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science."
22. Academic regimes are "a set of historically, politically and culturally contingent institutions and practices that organize cognitive (academic) activity and integrate it into the totality of social reproduction." Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism*, 2; quoted in Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation," 114.
 23. Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation," 114.
 24. Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme*, 58; Gorny, "Historical Writing in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary," 251.
 25. Connelly notes the disinterest of policy-makers in Czechoslovakia for including more women in higher education. Connelly, *Captive University*, 267. For an overview of women in higher education in Romania during state socialism Jinga, *Gen Si Rezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 226–7.
 26. According to data collected in 2014 as part of the NHIST research project, in 1955 the representation of women academic historians in Europe was highest in the following countries: Latvia (41); Estonia (40); Bulgaria (29); Hungary (21); Portugal (19); Belarus (18); Russia (16); United Kingdom (14); Irish Republic (13); Romania (12); Greece (11). By contrast, the countries from the lower half were: Poland (10); Turkey (9); Denmark (8); Finland (7); Germany (6); Belgium (6); Austria (4); France (3); Italy (2); The Netherlands (1). Porciani, "Janus-Faced Clio," Fig. 2.
 27. Fodor, *Working Difference*, 72.
 28. Zimmermann, "In and Out of the Cage," 141–2.
 29. *Ibid.*, 142.
 30. Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism*; Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation;" Zavatti, "Writing History in a Propaganda Institute." These approaches nuance what could be called the "Captive Clio" paradigm of understanding the relationship between historians and the Party as one of clear ideological overpowering of the latter by the former. Among the most influential interventions in this vein are Georgescu, *Politică Și Istorie: Cazul Comuniștilor Români 1944–1977* [Politics and history: the case of Romanian Communists 1944–1977]; Papacostea, "Captive Clio."
 31. Jinga, *Gen Si Rezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989].
 32. Morar-Vulcu, "From Subject of Action to Object of Description."
 33. "The majority of congruently expressed transactive actions (both active and passive) were situated in an increasingly distant past, within the framework of a historical account of class struggle, exploitation and conquering power, in which the classic transactive schema of Stalinism still functioned ('the working class' and 'the peasantry' as agent and, respectively, patient). This type of historical account was also present in Stalinist texts, but was complemented by a large quantity of transactive material actions situated in the present, within a narrative of empowering classes as political agents ('the working class' had been 'oppressed by the bourgeoisie', then it 'toppled' it). The 'historicization' taking place in post-Stalinism placed the agency of the classes into the past, as a ritual object, thus divesting it of real significance in the present." *Ibid.*, 97.
 34. Romanian Workers Party, *Cazute in Lupta* [Fallen in the struggle].
 35. Emblematic of the fact that the narrative on the recent past and the main actors of historical transformation had not yet been decided, the Museum changed name, director and direction four times between 1948 and 1965. Bădică, "The Revolutionary Museum," 96–7.
 36. Ana Pauker (1893–1960). Robert Levy, in his excellent biography of Pauker, has analysed in detail how Pauker's Jewish identity was entwined with her political choices as leader of the RWP between 1947 and 1952. Pauker's prehistory as a Communist militant among women and Soviet symbol of women's anti-fascist struggle received little more than a mention. Yet Pauker, beginning in the 1920s, was at the centre of women's mobilization in the generally

illegal interwar Romanian Communist Party. Involved in the Party's 'work among women' in Bucharest and abroad, in 1927 she became a student at the Moscow Lenin School through the intercession of Clara Zetkin. She was arrested in 1935 in Romania for agitational work among women. Her trial, marred by judicial abuse and government pressure, scandalized international public opinion. A coalition of feminists of all stripes, including Romanian centrist Ella Negruzzi and French socialist Ida Blum, became part of her defence team. According to Luciana Jinga, "the trial of Ana Pauker herself would constitute an important element in the coagulation of a women's group which would end up dominating the post-war political stage"; the group included prominent later activists such as Stela Moghioros and Liuba Chisinevschi. Released from prison in 1941, as part of a prisoner exchange with the Soviet Union, Pauker was considered a symbol of the Communist antifascist struggle, along with the Spanish Dolores Ibarruri and the Polish Wanda Wasilewska. In 1945 she would be one of the founding members of the Women's International Democratic Federation. Her rise to power was explained by her willingness to submit to Stalin. However, her early international prominence as a woman antifascist may have increased her status in Moscow. Levy, *Ana Pauker*; Kirschenbaum, "Exile, Gender, and Communist Self-Fashioning," 576; Jinga, *Gen Si Rezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 30.

37. Specifically, until the end of the war, a small group of women (which sometimes included Pauker) maintained organizations that dealt with the protection of women and children, or the provision of aid for the families of imprisoned Communists. At the same time, these structures functioned as fronts for explicitly Communist organizing, as attested by the repeated prohibition of these alternative associations by police forces and the arrests of members. Certain members operated as high-risk 'tehnic' (technical women), relayers of messages between Moscow emissaries and imprisoned men. In the 1941 trial of 53 members of one of the aid-oriented organizations, more than half of the women accused were sentenced to life imprisonment whereas four received death sentences. Jinga suggests that these and other shared experiences, among them Pauker's 1935 trial, coagulated women activists into a distinctive faction among post-war Communists. Jinga, *Gen Si Rezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 52, 31.
38. *Ibid.*, 51.
39. Bădică, "The Revolutionary Museum," 103.
40. Jinga, *Gen Si Rezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 58.
41. Olga (Golda) Bancic (1912–44). Born in Chisinau/Kishinev (present-day Republic of Moldova, part of the Kingdom of Romania between 1918 and 1940, previously in the Russian Empire), in a Jewish family. Prosecuted as Communist agitator and trade-union activist by the Romanian government, member of several Popular Front anti-fascist organizations in the country during the 1930s. Member of the French Liberation Army, Groupe Manouchian / FTP-MOI, charged with assembling bombs and transporting weapons, executed after being captured in what is known as the 'Affiche Rouge' episode (after the red posters with the faces of the 10 wanted members of the FTP-MOI, distributed by the German occupation army throughout France). Janouin-Benanti, *Au Nom de La Liberté: Joseph Boczov et Olga Bancic, Deux de l'Affiche Rouge*.
42. Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism*, 170.
43. Zavatti, "Writing History in a Propaganda Institute," 204; Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation," 143.
44. Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation," 168.
45. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science." According to Iacob, the main charge against the type of historical production promoted by Mihail Roller hinged on professionalism: "The fundamental argument used in the offensive against Roller [in 1956–58], a theme employed by all actors involved, was the imperative for scientific history and for an epistemic community regulated by norms developed on the basis of the practice of history as science." Iacob, "Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation," 153–4; furthermore, in

1965, during the definitive condemnation of the Roller period in historical writing occasioned by a formal meeting between new Party leader Ceausescu and well-regarded historians, Oțetea relied very clearly on the dichotomy between amateurs and scientists to advocate distancing from previous practices: ‘nothing endangers professionalization (*specializarea*) more than the continuation of some amateur practices and the intervention of amateurs in higher education. Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 144.

46. Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 69, 128.
47. Quoted in *ibid.*, 129.
48. Stefan, *Traite, Vazute, Auzite*, 8; quoted in Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 128.
49. Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 152–4.
50. Scott, “Gender.” On the concrete ways of defining the historical profession through gendered symbols, see Porciani, “Janus-Faced Clio,” 12.
51. Iacob, “Stalinism, Historians, And The Nation,” 170; Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*.
52. Verdery, “From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs.”
53. Kirschenbaum, “Exile, Gender, and Communist Self-Fashioning.”
54. Ștefănescu and Armbruster, *Enciclopedia Istoriografiei Românești*, 180.
55. Georgeta Tudoran (b. 1933) Historian, working within the IPH. “Preoccupied with the history of the old labour and socialist movement. Contributions to [...] elaboration of socialist militants’ historical biographies.” In Zavatti’s depiction, she was a direct beneficiary of ‘democratizing’ policies. A Party School graduate in 1951, she remained with the Institute until 1989, focusing on the socialist movement in the nineteenth century. Among others, in 1985 she published a two-part journal article on “The Socialist Struggle for Women’s Emancipation During the Last Century.” *Ibid.*, 328; Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 3; Tudoran, “Din Lupta Socialista Pentru Afirmarea Femeii La Sfsarsitul Secolului Trecut.”
56. Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 3.
57. Ionita, *Ecaterina Arbore*; Homenco and Ionita, *Suzana Parvulescu*.
58. Tudoran, “Din Lupta Socialista Pentru Afirmarea Femeii La Sfsarsitul Secolului Trecut.”
59. Constantinescu-Iasi, “Activitatea Comitetului Anti-Fascist Al Femeilor Din Romania (1933–1934),” 92; Constantinescu-Iasi, “Despre Asociatia Pentru Protectia Mamei Si Copilului,” 91; V V, “Noi Documente in Legatura Cu Arestarea Ecaterinei Varga,” 253.
60. Slezkine, “Reggie’s Bebbels: An Introduction,” 3–11.
61. Verdery, “From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs,” 242.
62. On the promotion of women as professionals and leaders, see Jinga, *Gen Si Reprezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 202–82.
63. Homenco and Ionita, *Suzana Parvulescu*; Ionita, *Ecaterina Arbore*.
64. Georgeta Tudoran (b. 1933) IPH Historian. “Preoccupied with the history of the old labour and socialist movement. Contributions to [...] elaboration of socialist militants’ historical biographies.” In Zavatti’s depiction, she was a direct beneficiary of ‘democratizing’ policies. A graduate of one of the Party Schools in 1951, she was recruited by Roller due to her good grades; whereas she had wanted to become a painter, Roller insisted she join the Institute as a historian, a sorely needed profession. She would stay at the Institute until 1989, focusing on the socialist movement in the nineteenth century. In 1985 she would publish a two-part journal article on “The Socialist Struggle for Women’s Emancipation during the Last Century.’ Whereas most state-socialist historians who published memoirs in the post-socialist period sought to qualify their involvement in the regime and distance themselves ideologically, when interviewed by Zavatti in 2013, Tudoran emerged as an unrepentant believer in the success of the Communist emancipation project and in Roller’s mentorship. Ștefănescu and Armbruster, *Enciclopedia Istoriografiei Românești*, 328; Zavatti, “Writing History in a Propaganda Institute,” 3; Tudoran, “Din Lupta Socialista Pentru Afirmarea Femeii La Sfsarsitul Secolului Trecut.”
65. Elisabeta Ionita (1931–90?). Author in 1973 of biographies of illegalists Ecaterina Arbore and Suzana Parvulescu, made her career as a non-PhD-ed museographer in the Party Museum. She

was described in the *Encyclopedia of Romanian Historiography* as having “contributed to the activity and political struggle of women and youth in Romania during the interwar period” – an interwar activist turned post-war historian. Ștefănescu and Armbruster, *Enciclopedia Istoriografiei Românești*, 180; Homenco and Ionita, *Suzana Parvulescu*; Ionita, *Ecaterina Arbore*.

66. Georgescu and Georgescu, *Mișcarea Democratică Și Revoluționară a Femeilor Din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania].
67. Cancea, *Miscarea Pentru Emanciparea Femeii in Romania* [The movement for woman's emancipation in Romania].
68. Until 1956, women were included in historical narratives produced for a scholarly public, and not only among the activist biographies meant for mass consumption. My analysis of the content of all issues published between 1948 and 1965 by the flagship journal of the Romanian historical profession, *Studii-Revista de Istorie*, reveals that women appeared as anti-fascist activists but also leaders of peasant revolts. Articles on labour history frequently included information on women's employment and militancy, while not squarely focusing on their activities. Constantinescu-Iasi, “Activitatea Comitetului Anti-Fascist Al Femeilor Din Romania (1933–1934).”
69. Iacob, “Southeast European Studies During The Cold War,” 21–54.
70. *Ibid.*, 22.
71. *Ibid.*; Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism*, 222.
72. Dutu, “Sources, Dynamics, Structures, Explanations of Change,” 559.
73. Francu, “La Participation de La Roumanie et La Serbie a La Guerre de 1877 Reflette Dans Le Roman de Sofia Nadejde ‘la Tragedie Des Obrenovitch.’”
74. *Ibid.*, 723.
75. Muchembled, “Famille et Histoire Des Mentalites (XVI-XVIIIe Siecles).”
76. *Ibid.*, 350.
77. Campus, “The Problem of the 1930s in Contemporary Historiography,” 321–50; Iordan, “Les Reformes Agraires Dans La Periode de L'entre Deux Guerres. Reperes Comparatifs,” 243–52.
78. Georgescu and Georgescu, *Mișcarea Democratică Și Revoluționară a Femeilor Din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania].
79. Jinga, *Gen Si Reprezentare in Romania Comunista: 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania: 1944–1989], 202.
80. Georgescu and Georgescu, *Mișcarea Democratică Și Revoluționară a Femeilor Din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania], 157.
81. *Ibid.*, 142.
82. *Ibid.*, 146, 172.
83. *Ibid.*, 144.
84. Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*.
85. Jinga, “Forme de Organizare ale ‘Muncii Cu Femeile’ în Cadrul PCR (1944–1954),” 73.
86. Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure;” Hardt, “Affective Labour.”
87. Georgescu and Georgescu, *Mișcarea Democratică Și Revoluționară a Femeilor Din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania], 175.
88. Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, 65–90.
89. Georgescu and Georgescu, *Mișcarea Democratică Și Revoluționară a Femeilor Din România* [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania], 134.
90. *Ibid.*, 143.
91. *Ibid.*, 198.
92. Among others, Moorhouse, Wilson, and Chamberlain, “Rent Strikes: Direct Action and the Working Class;” Brenner, “On Gender and Class in US Labor History,” 1; Srigley, “In Case You Hadn't Noticed!;” Ruth Milkman, *Women, Work, and Protest*.
93. Cancea, *Miscarea Pentru Emanciparea Femeii in Romania* [The movement for woman's emancipation in Romania], 111–13.
94. *Ibid.*, 104.
95. *Ibid.*, 107.
96. Weitz, “The Heroic Man and the Ever-Changing Woman,” 311–52; Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender*.

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