

SPECIAL FEATURE

# Gendered Work, Skill, and Women's Labor Activism in Romanian Tobacco Factories from the 1920s to the 1960s

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## Abstract

In this article, I choose struggles over skill development as an entry point to uncovering features of women's labor activism in state-owned tobacco factories in Romania, from the 1920s to the early 1960s. I look at the processes that constructed women tobacco workers, especially those at the Tobacco Manufactory in the city of Cluj, as non-skilled workers, and examine the forms of labor activism in the tobacco industry that challenged those constructs. I describe how women's work at the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory, from the mid-1920s to the mid-1950s, was shaped by successive waves of production intensification and rationalization, demonstrating that these reorganizations affected female workers more than they affected their male coworkers. I point out that although they were considered non-skilled laborers, female tobacco workers exercised an amount of control over their work and were important contributors to their families' maintenance. I show that spanning two different political regimes, matters of skill were at the core of labor activism. For female workers, in the interwar period, labor activism in male-dominated organizations and structures entailed skill-mediated political strategies that emphasized experience and shopfloor status besides skill. By the 1950s, labor activism encompassed engaging in confrontational politics over seasoned women workers' lack of access to skill training programs. I show that both in the late 1920s and in the early 1950s, illiteracy and women's more limited access to formal schooling in general shaped new experiences of participation in labor politics.

**Keywords:** women's labor activism; skill; state socialism; tobacco industry; trade unions

## Introduction

In 1951, a brochure of female shock workers' biographies, titled "Women in Skilled Work", was published in Romania by the communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor (CGM), the national trade union organization. The pamphlet, prefigured a spate of CGM decisions commencing in 1952<sup>1</sup> concerning the need to promote women in skilled positions in enterprises and relatedly, to have more

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women in “positions of responsibility” within trade unions.<sup>2</sup> No doubt, the new focus on skill training for women was underpinned by the push for greater productivity during the Popular Republic of Romania’s First Five Year Plan (1951–1955). As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, training female workers was part of the internationally inspired governance framework of a new regime.<sup>3</sup> It led to a boom in discourses on gendered skill and to the elaboration of concrete policies to address women’s concentration in unskilled positions on shopfloors. Yet were these preoccupations entirely new for trade unions in Romania?

The emphasis on women’s skill and trade unionization in Romania in the 1950s might be construed as mere window dressing for the harsh reality of exploitation and penury experienced by women in both urban but especially in rural environments, one which took decades to improve. This can be determined from two monographs, by Grama and Cucu respectively, on labor control in postwar Romania.<sup>4</sup> The authors stress postwar economic planners’ overreliance on burdening households (and within households, women) with the tasks of provisioning and caring for their families. They make visible women’s presence in a wave of popular, sometimes violent, radicalism, in the early postwar years,<sup>5</sup> mention women’s negative experiences in factories, and point to women’s low status as workers, especially in heavy industry.<sup>6</sup>

A focus on rapid transformation in women’s lives is an enticing style of interpretation in gender and women’s history.<sup>7</sup> However, as the studies discussed above underscore, sobriety is called for when trying to understand the first two decades after the Second World War in Romania, and more broadly in Central and Eastern Europe. Also, long term trends and continuities have not been sufficiently researched. We do not know enough about the labor history of this region during the interwar,<sup>8</sup> especially women’s labor history. Because of that, the extent to which both government and popular politics of the late 1940s through the late 1960s indexed older local grievances, tactics, and areas of struggle in women’s labor politics rather than simply incorporating a politics of women’s emancipation largely shaped by the Soviet experience, is underexplored. As demonstrated in Jan Burek’s discussion of unskilled female textile workers’ postwar protests in the Polish city of Żyrardów from a “transwar perspective,” workers’ protests about urgent situations were embedded in longer local labor histories. The broader temporal perspective Burek adopts reveals that in the late 1940s nonunionized women consciously used activist repertoires that were developed in the interwar period. Forms of action (sit-down strikes, workers’ delegations barging into a director’s office) had emerged in the 1920s because the male-dominated unions focused on representing skilled male workers’ issues.<sup>9</sup>

In this article, I choose struggles over skill development as an entry point to uncovering the features of women’s labor activism from what I call a “cross-regime perspective”. I do so in the context of tobacco factories that had state-driven labor regimes, which favored male workers and labor organizations dominated by men, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. I look at the processes that assigned women tobacco workers in Romania, particularly those in the Tobacco Manufactory in the city of Cluj, to the position of nonskilled workers. I examine forms of labor activism that challenged those constructs in Cluj, while also integrating mentions of and examples from the “Belvedere” tobacco factory in Bucharest.<sup>10</sup> A state-owned factory already in the interwar period, the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory was in

operation until 1964, and its archives allow for a reconstruction of how production was structured during both the interwar and postwar periods. Publications and limited archival materials offer a glimpse into labor organizing at the factory from the 1920s to the 1960s.

The connection between skill status and trade unionism has long been demonstrated to have limited female workers' participation in trade unions.<sup>11</sup> However, newer research shows that in parts of the trade union movement—for instance, in the 1890s in the Berlin-based Association of Male and Female Letterpress and Lithograph Workers of Germany—female workers who were classified as unskilled were central to labor organizing and developed struggle tactics tailored to their more precarious employment status.<sup>12</sup> For the interwar period in Europe, the historiography of women's work and women's participation in trade unions notes an increased interest in including women in labor politics.<sup>13</sup> In some settings, such as England, growing panic about low-paid "unskilled" women replacing men in increasingly mechanized jobs, led to far greater interest in including working women in the trade union movement than in previous decades. However, union demands and approaches were not adjusted to "unskilled" female workers.<sup>14</sup> In the Soviet Union, having women acquire advanced skills was state policy, one which encountered strong union and male resistance on shopfloors, and also floundered because of the lack of time women had for skill-training programs on account of their household duties.<sup>15</sup> Most women remained concentrated in the lowest pay grades of a skill-based wage system and their activism often became oriented toward issues linked to everyday life.<sup>16</sup> I aim to contribute to the global historiography of women's work by helping to further the inclusion of histories of women's activism and historical gendered work experiences from the Central and Eastern European context—experiences shaped by global developments (including 1930s rationalization) but also marked by regionally-specific postwar entanglements with the Soviet model of women's emancipation through wage labor.<sup>17</sup>

In line with approaches to skill and organizations in feminist sociology and geography, I consider skill as a site of struggle and a "mechanism unevenly empowering workers based on recognition (or lack thereof)"<sup>18</sup> and skill differentiation as not only rooted in production processes but in social construction processes mediated by families and communities.<sup>19</sup> I argue that for those women who did become involved in politics, participation in labor activism in tobacco factories, across the first half of the twentieth century, involved a skill-mediated "active self-assembling" of a "political self"—in Judy Giles's and Stephanie Ward's terms.<sup>20</sup>

In the first section of this article, I introduce the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory and its workforce. I show that in the 1920s and 1930s women tobacco workers in Cluj had strong work identities rooted in their specialized work and were key contributors to the family budget. At the same time, these workers were misconstrued as nonskilled via gendered wage structures, and their status was threatened by waves of rationalization which affected women at the factory more than men. Next, I uncover how, between 1928-1929, in the context of labor intensification but also of a certain political relaxation in a new Social Democratic trade union dominated by skilled men, the vice-president of a female union established (or "assembled") her legitimacy among

her colleagues from sources other than skill. Finally, I discuss the emphasis on women's training and trade union involvement in the tobacco industry in Romania in the period 1945–1963, arguing that in that context engaging in conflicts over recognition of skill was central to at least some women's political participation. I show that struggles over skill and upskilling occurred against the backdrop of continuity with the interwar in the organization of production, at least in the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory. I conclude by restating the key arguments and suggesting directions for future research.

## 1. Gendered Skill and Tobacco Work in the Interwar Period

During the interwar period, tobacco factories in Romania belonged to the Regie of State Monopolies (RMS), a body subordinate to the Ministry of Finances. In 1929, the RMS became the Autonomous House of the Monopolies (Casa Autonomă a Monopolurilor, CAM), an institution through which a large state loan, contracted in 1930, was handled.<sup>21</sup> Throughout Europe, state-owned tobacco factories offered female workers more stable employment than the private sector, with access to onsite facilities such as creches, baths, or small libraries, and the possibility of an old-age pension.<sup>22</sup> These benefits were offered in part to model good practices for private industry but more directly to secure a steady, inexpensive, majority-women labor force for a highly profitable but labor-intensive industry.<sup>23</sup>

The six tobacco factories functioning in Romania after the First World War processed around fifteen million kilos of tobacco annually.<sup>24</sup> Much of that tobacco was grown in Romania, through a system of RMS/CAM-supervised subcontracted cultivation by peasants.<sup>25</sup> A small fraction, less than one percent of the tobacco leaves used to produce cigarettes, were imported from Anatolia, Macedonia, and the United States.<sup>26</sup> Some Romanian tobacco leaf was exported to Czechoslovakia, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, and Germany—albeit in relatively small quantities compared to the exports of Bulgaria and Greece.<sup>27</sup> The tobacco products manufactured in Romania were destined exclusively for domestic consumption. The CAM targeted male peasants with tobacco products with growing insistence during the interwar period consumers of tobacco products.<sup>28</sup>

The Cluj Tobacco Manufactory produced and packaged loose tobacco, rolling papers, cigars, and cigarettes. Whereas the “Belvedere” manufactory in Bucharest was the state's flagship tobacco factory,<sup>29</sup> Cluj specialized in hand-rolled thin cigars similar to cigarillos (*țigări de foi*). The enterprise and its workforce were an important part of the city's economic and social landscape. In 1918, when the city of Cluj (formerly Kolozsvár) became part of the Kingdom of Romania, the Tobacco Manufactory was one of the oldest industrial establishments, founded in 1851 in this previously Austro-Hungarian city.<sup>30</sup> Cluj, located in Northwestern Romania, was a key cultural center in the Transylvania region. Although less important as an industrial hub, compared to more heavily industrial Timișoara or Reșița, also part of the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918, Cluj had a strong tradition of small- and mid-sized workshops and factories.<sup>31</sup> After the First World War, Cluj grew quickly, with more Romanians moving to the city. The population of Cluj increased steadily: from around 80,000 in 1920 to more than 100,000 in 1930 and reaching 110,000 by 1941. Despite the flow of Romanian-speaking workers from rural areas, until the 1950s, more than half of the city's inhabitants identified as ethnically Hungarian.<sup>32</sup>

Because Cluj had been an important cultural and commercial center in Hungary, in the 1920s and the 1930s, it was the site of cultural nationalizing policies and property “nostrification” initiatives, with the aim of securing the Romanian Kingdom’s claim to the city and increasing the influence of the Romanian elites.<sup>33</sup> However, as Máté Rigó points out, contrary to a historiography that emphasized ethnic strife in Cluj, continuities abounded. For instance, “nostrification” did not mean the kind of nationalization that would occur in 1948. In the interwar, several Hungarian-speaking businessmen learned to forge “marriages of convenience” with Romanian businessmen and politicians, and thus continued to thrive.<sup>34</sup> In this context, the state-owned Cluj Tobacco Manufactory may have been a stronghold of industrial and worker nationalization practices by the state in the interwar period,<sup>35</sup> even so, many of the highly skilled workers and key production techniques, not to mention its premises, were the same as before the First World War.

Tobacco work was badly paid and damaged workers’ health. Yet it also meant a certain power for women, rooted in breadwinner status and (de facto) skilled work. In a country where most women worked in agriculture, women tobacco workers were an atypical section of a numerically small (but by the 1930s, rapidly growing) industrial proletariat.<sup>36</sup> Until 1937, new (and harsh) tobacco factory functioning rules set the minimum employment age at 18 (and the maximum at 30), many of the women workers joined the factory at age 14 or 15 seemingly, with the intention of working there until they could benefit from the rare right (for industrial workers in Romania) to a pension.<sup>37</sup> Most workers there, be they skilled men (*meseriași*) or unskilled women and men (*lucrătoare, lucrători*) were considered “permanent workers,” with a handful of additional workers employed during high demand periods for tobacco products in summers.<sup>38</sup>

A 1937 “social study” by a student from the Bucharest-based Superior School of Social Assistance (SSAS), shows that of the 693 employees at the factory, 519 were women and 174 were men; 409 employees were reported as ethnically Romanian, 267 were Hungarian, two were German, seven were Jewish, and three were “of other nationalities.”<sup>39</sup> At the time, there were twice as many Romanian male workers as there were ethnically Hungarian ones, while among the women workers, there were only slightly more Romanians (294 compared to 219). Notably, the data on the enterprise’s ethnic structure likely captures the effects of an antisemitic, nationalist law passed in 1934, which mandated that 80 percent of all industry employees in the country had to be ethnically Romanian.<sup>40</sup> Most of the women working in the factory in 1937 were married, some 357, but there were also 71 widowed women, 55 single women, 21 divorced women, and five living in common law marriages.<sup>41</sup>

In her discussion of the *cigarerras* in Sevilla between 1887 and 1945, Lina Gálvez-Muñoz argues that in a city with a relatively volatile economy, in which many employed men were actually day laborers, women tobacco workers’ incomes, albeit low, were dependable—making tobacco workers sought after marriage partners.<sup>42</sup> In addition, being a regular earner in a dual-income household gave tobacco women greater control over family income than married women who did not regularly work outside the home and whose earnings were more casual in nature.<sup>43</sup> Skill-wise, Gálvez-Muñoz shows that until 1930s mechanization, *cigarerras* could control the pace of work, attendance, and the training of new cigarette-makers

(usually their own daughters).<sup>44</sup> Workers in the smaller and more tightly controlled Cluj Tobacco Manufactory may have had less influence, but their work experiences were not so different from those of their peers in Spain—mechanization included.

Among the 517 women surveyed in the 1937 study, the reasons they gave for why they chose to work in the factory suggest that in many cases tobacco women were the sole or main breadwinners in their households, and in most cases they were important contributors to their household budgets. Thus, 230 women reported that they worked in the factory due to a “desire to earn money,” 120 cited “the husband’s unemployment,” 60 invoked “pauperism,” 40 “an old age pension,” 40 “a large family,” and 10 “orphanhood.”<sup>45</sup> For women whose husbands did not have steady incomes, the factory offered employment opportunities that were not strongly conditional on skilled male family members’ recommendations that women kin be hired in the same workshops—as seems to have been the case in other factories in Cluj which employed women.<sup>46</sup>

In practice, the women performed specialized work and were well-positioned to minimally shape their labor conditions. Most of the fabrication processes in the manufactory consisted of groups of seven to ten women working around long tables. In the 1920s, female workers were tasked with either rolling allotted portions of tobacco for the hand-rolled luxury cigarettes or hand-packing an average of 140 kilograms of loose tobacco into seven thousand packages over the course of an eight hour shift, work that required strength, dexterity, and fast coordination between the workers on a team.<sup>47</sup> Despite being closely supervised by “control women” and workshop foremen, the women still exercised a degree of artisan-like control over the rhythm of work—as did the admittedly much more autonomous *cigarreras* in Sevilla.<sup>48</sup> In addition, female tobacco workers were employed in a factory that had a long history in Cluj and a long history of labor organizing—a 1911 strike and lockout was likely within living memory of at least one of the women who, in 1930, was reported to have been working at the factory since 1907.<sup>49</sup>

Even if their power within and outside the factory was greater than might appear at first sight, the structure and composition of the wages they earned gave women the status of unskilled workers. In Romanian tobacco factories, women were almost exclusively put in the category of “manual execution personnel.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, workers were considered unskilled or (de facto) semi-skilled (as in the case of women with “low level” supervisory positions in certain workshops). They were paid from a “workers’ payment fund,” rather than receiving “budget salaries”; the latter were reserved for white-collar workers and some of the factory’s mechanics. Male workers could also be “manual execution personnel” but their tasks entailed lifting, hauling, or basic maintenance,<sup>51</sup> not the fast, team-based jobs typical of women’s work. All the mechanics were male, categorized as “technical personnel” and considered skilled workers.<sup>52</sup>

A “price notebook” drawn up by management, or—at least in the first half of the 1930s—by management and workers’ representatives as part of the yearly negotiations for collective contracts, set day rates, piece rates, and other benefits. In 1930, at the Cluj Manufactory, 723 female workers and 131 male workers were paid through a combination of low fixed daily wages and piece rates reserved for unskilled workers.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, 55 “quality control women” (senior workers, de facto semi-skilled), 13 supervisors, and 68 mechanics were paid higher daily wages (so, exclusively, time



rates). Based on this payment scheme, most female workers in the factory earned between 2,000 and 3,000 lei in 1936, low wages, admittedly in a country where wages were very low for all workers.<sup>54</sup>

Besides the “basic wage” (the day rates) and the “production bonus” (piece rates), the wage structure was composed of monetary bonuses and in-kind benefits specific to tobacco factories in Romania. A worker’s wage also included a family allowance, a seniority bonus (*gradația*), and a monthly allocation of cigarettes (*tain*).<sup>55</sup> Like the basic wage, these additional components were allotted based on gendered constructs about skill, as well as by gendered ideologies that transcended the factory. For instance, “the *tain*”—a monthly cigarette allowance—was distributed to all male workers, whether skilled or unskilled. Semi-skilled “control women” also received cigarettes until 1928, when this in-kind benefit was canceled for them.<sup>56</sup> The *tain* reasserted male dominance within the factory and reflected men’s status as the main intended consumers of tobacco products beyond the factory walls. Still, in tobacco manufacture, the gendering of benefits seems to have been less extreme or explicit than in the steelmaking industry, for example—there family allowances were paid to men but not women.<sup>57</sup> In tobacco factories, the family allowance was paid according to the number of children in a household. Bonuses paid at Christmas and Easter were available to both women and men, but they were higher for men (25 lei) compared to women (20 lei).<sup>58</sup> The factory offered a creche and a cafeteria as well, but female workers seem to have made little use of these facilities.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory introduced new machinery and otherwise reorganized production in several waves. The changes affected women and men differently both in terms of earnings but also with regards to how women’s skills became visible to managers. Globally, mechanization in the tobacco industry outpaced mechanization in other sectors, starting in the 1880s but picking up pace in the interwar period.<sup>60</sup> Between 1923 and 1929, 43 machines were acquired for the Cluj factory.<sup>61</sup> The 1931 Congress of the Social-Democratic CGM argued that in the period 1920–1923, the mechanization of industry in “Greater Romania” proceeded at break-neck speed because inflation had led capital to reinvest profit in fixed means rather than pay out dividends to shareholders.<sup>62</sup>

During a large-scale reorganization of production at the Cluj factory in 1930, white-collar staff members worked on a “factory monograph.” A malgams of “accounting monographs” (listing of the patrimony of a factory or institution) and exercises in institutional history,<sup>63</sup> factory monographs, especially as historical narratives, proliferated in state socialist Romania, with copies published at the factories’ expense and distributed to various stakeholders.<sup>64</sup> The 1930 Cluj factory monograph remained a manuscript and appears to be one of the earliest incarnations of the genre. Divided in ten sections, it described the history of the factory, the factory grounds, the evolution of production methods, the evolution of personnel over time, factory investments, and its welfare institutions.

Produced at a time when the Great Depression was picking up pace, the unpublished document divulges the harsh effects that the new machinery and new production methods had on the factory.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, chronicling the factory, its production methods, and its personnel, produced a kind of unintended recognition of the female workers there. Factory management essentially admitted

that the faster production expected after the 1930 introduction of new work methods involved acquiring skill. For instance, in describing the introduction of a new method for cutting and packaging pads of tobacco rolling paper (a process that was partly manual), managers outlined how Taylorist speed depended on skill: “As this manufacturing method has only been recently introduced, the workers do not yet have sufficient dexterity so we do not yet know the definitive capacities [of the new process].”<sup>66</sup> Or quite explicitly, “Four machines for cutting [box] corners. The capacity of each machine depends on the smartness of the working woman [operating it].”<sup>67</sup> Read differently, the instances when new technologies were introduced were points of inflection, when managers reckoned implicitly or explicitly with the power workers had on the shopfloor, especially in relation to the machinery that was supposed to replace the workers.<sup>68</sup> As factory managers in the late 1940s would come to realize when faster production methods were introduced in their own enterprises, piece rate work was difficult to supervise, and could undercut the authority of the foremen and senior workers while (temporarily) elevating the status of the fastest and most dexterous.<sup>69</sup>

The mechanization wave during the period 1925–1930 led to a significant drop in the number of women working in the factory, from 1,035 in 1925 to 639 in 1930; a 39 percent decrease over five years. By contrast, the number of male workers decreased at a much slower pace: from 320 in 1925, to 248 in 1930; a decrease of only 22.5 percent.<sup>70</sup> Whereas the standard interpretation of rationalization has been that it introduced women to new sectors and undercut men’s jobs and wages,<sup>71</sup> in this Romanian state-owned enterprise rationalization and cost-cutting resulted in women’s loss of employment. The late 1920s were only the beginning of a steady process of downsizing of the factory, until its eventual local closure in 1964.<sup>72</sup> In 1936, production methods were rationalized (“standardized”) at all tobacco factories in Romania.<sup>73</sup> As the 1937 study by the social-work student noted, this led to a major intensification of the pace of labor in Cluj. Norms were set in relation to the output of the fastest and most dexterous woman, so that most women worked without a break in order to maintain their piece rate wage levels.<sup>74</sup>

Before the 1936 rationalization, in the late 1920s, against the background of an economic crisis being steadily felt in Cluj, as labor conditions worsened, but also in the context of a somewhat more favorable atmosphere for (noncommunist) labor organizing, the tobacco factory in Cluj became part of a Social Democratic unionization drive. The process involved a different kind of reckoning with the intersection of gender and skill than in the case of managers pursuing rationalization. Yet whereas management was quietly aware that women’s contribution to production transcended their status as “unskilled workers,” Social Democratic labor organizers were themselves bracketing questions related to skill. In their organizing strategies at the factory, they sought to decrease the political distance between skilled men and unskilled women by organizing across skill lines, and by emphasizing seniority and worker solidarity as a source of legitimacy on the shopfloor. In Cluj, this strategy created a larger temporary space for political involvement by women in the trade union in 1928 and 1929.



## 2. Women's Labor Activism in the Factory in the Late 1920s

In 1927, the Social Democratic Party gained six parliamentary seats, after a successful election campaign, in a coalition with the National Peasant's Party. The opposition's victory against the National Liberal Party, which had dominated politics since 1920 brought, for a short period of time, a loosening of the state repression that had surrounded labor organizing in Romania ever since a 1920 general strike.<sup>75</sup> Among others, the Social Democratic Amsterdam International-affiliated General Confederation of Labor (CGM) was re-energized. In 1926, state-owned companies, such as tobacco factories or the railways, were permitted to once again have unionized workers.<sup>76</sup>

A year after the Parliamentary victory, two CGM activists, Ferenc Bruder and Nicolae Muntean, began organizing workers at the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory. In January 1928, the workers there saw their salaries lowered and working hours increased and their complaints in the ensuing weeks went unheeded by management. Taking note of the discontent, on February 3, 1928, Bruder and Muntean called and hosted a gathering of several hundred factory workers at the local Workers Dormitory, the de facto headquarters of the Cluj Social Democratic Party to discuss the re-constitution of a trade union at the factory. Despite informing the head of the local police about the meeting in advance as required by the law, the authorities interrupted the gathering and escorted Bruder, Muntean, and several other male workers to police headquarters.<sup>77</sup>

Undeterred by the initial obstacles, by August 1928, Bruder and Muntean were publishing a quarterly newspaper *Solidaritatea* – the *Newspaper of Male and Female Workers at Tobacco and Match Factories*.<sup>78</sup> The *Solidaritatea* was a four-page Romanian and Hungarian bilingual publication with news about tobacco and matches factories throughout Romania, but essentially focused on the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory and the related matches factory in the city (also an RMS/CAM holding). Bruder and Muntean's organizing efforts were tied to a broader CGM strategy of reviving trade unionism in state-owned companies.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, the two men's organizing strategies were pioneering. At the founding Congress of the Sectoral Union of Workers from Match and Tobacco Factories in Romania (UWMTR) in 1929, Bruder claimed that it was the printing and distribution of the *Solidaritatea* in other CAM establishments that made possible the creation of this CGM-affiliated sectoral trade union.<sup>80</sup>

In the process of unionizing, gendered notions of hierarchy and skill within the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory were reshaped. In April 1928, a request was submitted to the Cluj courts for the legal recognition of the *Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor în Industria Tutunului și Chibrite Cluj* [The Trade Union of Workingmen and Workingwomen of the Tobacco and Match Industry in Cluj].<sup>81</sup> At first sight, the specification "workingmen and workingwomen" might suggest a strategy of including female workers in the trade union and making women visible as workers. Yet the designation was as much about skill as it was about gender. As previously mentioned, at the factory, almost all the women were paid as "laborers" and considered unskilled; only men held manufacturing positions regarded as skilled. The designations "workingmen" and "workingwomen" referred, in this case, to the new trade union's goal to represent workers across the interlocking divisions of gender and skill.

The trade union was recognized by the Cluj courts in July 1930. This, however, was not before protests by the CAM representatives, who claimed that the union was stirring up workers needlessly, and since Muntean and Bruder were part of the Metalworkers' Union they were therefore not entitled to push for the creation of a trade union at the CAM factory. In addition, the men were publishing a newspaper "through which they agitate workers against the current organization of the State, against the Directors of the Manufactory and the Match factory, and against the foremen of these establishments."<sup>82</sup> In 1931, the tobacco worker's union general assembly approved new statutes and affiliation to the UWMTR. On this occasion, the Trade Union of Workingmen and Workingwomen of the Tobacco and Matches Industry in Cluj reaffirmed its commitment to including "all working men and working women, without differences of sex, religion and nationality," so long as they paid their dues and adhered to the statutes.<sup>83</sup>

In Bucharest, the female labor activist Paraschiva B. was a nationally recognized trade unionist by that point, with significant backing from Social Democratic MPs. Meanwhile in Cluj, men still dominated Social Democratic organizing.<sup>84</sup> Still, several women were active in the steering committee of the new union. At its founding, the trade union was led by Aladar G. Balogh (Aladar Gyurka), with Bruder serving as secretary and another man serving as notary—in all, nine men served in the leadership of the union. Yet notably, five women were also part of the committee, serving as vice president, cashiers, "committee member," or control committee member of the trade union.<sup>85</sup> Many of the women and men who became trade union leaders at the factory had been part of the workers' delegation that three years prior in August 1928 had negotiated a convention concerning work conditions with factory directors, which remained in force until the following year.<sup>86</sup> The convention did not touch upon the key issues of wages and piece rates, but the negotiations brought certain improvements in working conditions at the factory.

The mobilization model of the new union was predicated on the "men of trust" (Vertrauensmänner) system inspired by trade union and Social Democratic party practices in German-speaking Europe. Women could serve as Vertrauensmänner but the role was built around male sociability. An article in the first issue of the *Solidaritatea* introduced the concept of "system of delegates (men of trust)" as being of great importance to the "modern labor movement." The man of trust was meant to deal with all the organizing issues within the factory and make sure that collective contracts or any conventions were being observed. At the same time, the workers' delegate was supposed to take note of any complaints by fellow workers and, last but not least, help with the distribution of a trade publication like the *Solidaritatea*.<sup>87</sup>

In Transylvanian trade union practice the position was clearly tied to shopfloor seniority and respectability. As summed up by Grama, "The typical 'man of trust' had to be male, skilled, married, (...), 'always honest and cordial' even when his political views were not shared by his workmates."<sup>88</sup> An Austrian Social Democratic guidebook for Vertrauensmänner that circulated internationally in the 1920s further outlined the technical aspects and time commitments of such a position, pointing out that delegates were meant to be knowledgeable about the legal frameworks governing public meetings or be able to structure and deliver a speech effectively.<sup>89</sup> Few women

working at the Cluj Manufactory had the time and seemingly, the shopfloor visibility, for such intensive political involvement.

Yet as the roster of workers' delegates and trade union functionaries from 1929 shows, some women made time for politics. A retirement letter published in the second issue of *Solidaritatea* by "Mrs. Ferenc Oroszi" (Ana Oroszi) reveals that Oroszi, who served as the vice president of the trade union was an experienced worker, someone who was retiring after seventeen years in the factory. (Oroszi had been a workers' delegate in the 1929 discussions with management.) In her letter, Oroszi expressed the hope that her fellow workers would have a fond memory of her, exhorted factory comrades to keep working for the benefit of the trade union, and promised to not abandon the "good [political] road, the one which takes you too towards a better fate"—referring probably, to Social Democratic practices and beliefs. That the trade union vice president may have felt a certain unease about her role can be inferred from her self-assessment as having contributed to the trade union "through my modest knowledge and power."<sup>90</sup> The remaining three issues of the *Solidaritatea*—the newspaper had a run of four issues—do not contain statements signed by women, leaving Oroszi's retirement letter as the sole clue as to how women who had key positions in the trade union did their work. Although she did not enjoy the same pay and job security as mechanics (Muntean's and Bruder's positions), and was uninclined towards compromise, Oroszi drew on her seniority and "modest knowledge" of her workplace to build legitimacy among workers.

A 1930 conflict over elections for the factory's disciplinary committee, a body the Social Democratic trade union had pushed for,<sup>91</sup> underscored how women's more limited access to schooling (be it vocational or general) could be perceived as complicating their engagement in labor activism and new forms political participation. Fourteen workers, especially men, claimed in a letter to the factory director that one of the control women had falsified the election results in her workshop, in favor of "the socialist" Gyurka Aladar. According to the letter, the accused had forged the signatures of illiterate women in her workshop on voting bulletins. The woman was also accused of using threatening words towards Romanians in the factory, in the context of an election the letter's signatories saw as fractured along ethnic lines.<sup>92</sup>

In the 1930s the general political climate became less favorable towards labor organizing in Romania, although the trade union was active in the factory until at least 1936. When in November 1936, the CAM management in Cluj replaced the existing collective labor contract with a new convention that dramatically reduced wages, workers complained that the delegates who had signed the convention had not been their true appointees<sup>93</sup>—a process of fragmentation or perhaps an undermining of the Social Democratic trade union that requires further investigation. Trade union competition and declining support for the social Democratic union were very much the case at the Belvedere tobacco factory during the same period.<sup>94</sup> Certainly, labor organizing and agitation continued at the Cluj factory. In 1942, with Cluj under Hungarian administration,<sup>95</sup> female tobacco workers who were not given potato rations engaged in a wild-cat strike and beat up several policemen—an incident reported by a clandestine communist agitator at the factory.<sup>96</sup> However, it would not be until 1946 that trade unionists in the factory would again grapple systematically with the meaning of their roles, now in a radically changed system.

### 3. Female Workers, Skill and Activism After the Second World War

In the first decade after the Second World War, under the watch of a series of communist-dominated then squarely communist governments, women's rights and women's work gained unprecedented prominence as political issues in Romania. This visibility was in keeping with international and local communist and Social Democratic demands from before the war, but also fit the labor power needs of postwar reconstruction and increased production. All Romanian women gained the right to vote in 1946—previously women's franchise was conditioned on educational qualifications.<sup>97</sup> The 1948 Constitution of the new Popular Republic of Romania enshrined women's legal equality with men and the principle of equal pay, whereas the 1950 Labor Code contained a chapter on youth and women's work, which included gendered labor protection rules—particularly with regard to pre-natal and post-natal leave and a ban on night work for pregnant women.<sup>98</sup> In addition, organizations such as the Union of Antifascist Women of Romania (1944–1947) and the Union of Democratic Women of Romania (1944–1989) were active in mobilizing women to undertake public action, at a scale without precedent in the country.<sup>99</sup> Yet changes concerning women's lives and women's workforce participation were, likely, slower than in other state socialist countries after the war, most probably because rapid industrialization was a reality of the 1970s rather than of the late 1940s and early 1950s in Romania.<sup>100</sup> In 1947, when the first postwar labor statistics were released, women accounted for 23 percent of the processing industry, compared to 19.7 percent in 1930.<sup>101</sup>

The women who joined the factories soon after the end of the war and during the first years of planned economy in Romania, in 1951–1955, were already living in urban environments.<sup>102</sup> It was these women, especially those with some experience in industrial work, who became the focus of workplace-based skill training programs, and of the subsequent media around them. The factories of the Autonomous House of the Monopolies, especially the Belvedere factory in Bucharest, were at the center of critical press campaigns about the lack of attention paid to women acquiring the status of skilled workers.

In 1948, the Bucharest CAM Belvedere factory was praised for addressing “the problem of promoting [women], of their professional qualification with all seriousness.”<sup>103</sup> The enterprise had set up a school for training workers, particularly women, in the use and basic repair of machines. In reality, the initiative had less to do with the pure goal of promoting and training women, and more to do with the explicitly stated goal of freeing up more (male) mechanics involved in the production of cigarettes, and shifting those mechanics to the maintenance shop—where they could repair machinery which could not be replaced due to lack of funds; devoting resources to repairs was a make do strategy adopted in many other workshops during the late 1940s.<sup>104</sup>

At the same time, the training process had genuine benefits for some the women who attended the “qualification courses.” For some, participation in these courses entailed learning reading and basic math. CAM regulations before the war required women applying for CAM positions to demonstrate at least basic literacy. That such basic literacy training was sometimes necessary points to the fact that such provisions were only loosely observed when hiring new personnel. Also, it shows how in

a country with very high illiteracy rates for women,<sup>105</sup> achieving the goal of promoting women meant dealing with illiteracy first or finding ways to train unskilled workers experientially.<sup>106</sup> The challenges for female workers and for the trade unions organizing such courses were summed up by one of the women schooled at the CAM. Aurelia Dinu, who was almost fifty, told a reporter she nearly quit such a training course: “I had made a request to quit, and to be allowed to go back to my machine which I love [...] Even now I am afraid when I think of multiplication tables. But in the end I learned it by rote! I was not afraid at all of the practical parts...”<sup>107</sup>

Yet after being praised in 1948, two years later, in 1950, the Belvedere factory was made into an example of the ill-treatment of female workers in the party daily *Scînteia*. The paper reported how one worker, Alexandrina Tașcău, who had been an employee of the CAM for more than thirty years, could “only now, in the Popular Republic of Romania follow the courses in a training school.”<sup>108</sup> Rather than supporting her, mechanics in the factory were espousing “bourgeois conceptions” and treating women who sought to become skilled with spite. At CAM Belvedere, men hid women’s tools so that they could not do their work properly while training. Still, 26 women became machine operators, despite the continued presence in the factory of men who despised and swore at women—the article stated.<sup>109</sup> After Tașcău complained about the situation during a consultation with female workers organized by the *Scînteia*, men at the factory denounced her through the enterprise’s wall gazette, exposing the woman to more bullying. Unlike Anna Oroszi in Cluj two decades earlier, Tașcău, a senior worker, appears to have emphasized her thirty years of experience in the factory not in order to bypass a clash with skilled workers’ interests, as the Cluj union sought to do. Rather, her many years as an unskilled worker in the factory meant she could become the voice, amplified by the main daily newspaper, of the campaign against men’s resistance to women becoming skilled. Of course, most likely, what was happening in the Bucharest factory was not simply manifestations of men’s resistance to women challenging the skill and status hierarchies, but also a clash over potential loss of income by male mechanics reassigned to do maintenance work rather than production work.

The article about the Belvedere factory was part of a broader trend of exposing managers, foremen, and skilled workers who would not internalize the twin priorities of “promoting women in positions of responsibility” (within a work team, and in factory trade unions) and helping women become skilled. Several 1951 articles that were critical of the practices at various enterprises revealed the practical measures intended by broadly formulated policy goals: a complaint about factory sections where all workers were women being led by men suggests that “more women in positions of responsibility” meant, at least in part, a political objective to foster the proportional representation of women within factories’ decision-making.<sup>110</sup> The articles prefigured a February 1952 Decision of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the CGM. Besides emphasizing the need for enterprises to lower expenses and save on materials, as well as prioritize rationalization and the training of workers in general,<sup>111</sup> the decision made explicit mention of the need to attract more women to factories, of helping them become skilled workers, and properly categorizing them within wage schemes (“*incadrarea lor corespunzătoare*”). In addition, more women were to be drawn into trade unions and trade union work.<sup>112</sup>

Whereas reports about the Belvedere factory claimed that gender hierarchies related to skill were being challenged, the archives of the Cluj Tobacco manufactory suggest that at least in Cluj, the basic mode of operation had not changed much. For instance, in 1945 the standard work norm and hence the pace of work was “sensibly diminished”—and stayed relatively low until 1947. Yet successive norm increases in 1949 meant that norms “were almost equivalent to those we started from, in 1945”; they continued to increase in the 1950s.<sup>113</sup> While in steel factories a fixed, low, basic salary topped by piece rates was introduced in 1949,<sup>114</sup> as part of an attempt to generalize piece rates,<sup>115</sup> at the CAM factory, rationalized since the 1930s, this structure of wages and the shopfloor relations it engendered were entrenched.

Still, women’s concentration into unskilled positions was more explicitly acknowledged by managers, compared to the 1930s, when CAM publications avoided using the term “unskilled.” In 1954, a different factory monograph about the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory, tallied the following skilled and unskilled workers in the factory: in 1946, out of total personnel of 693, 556 were unskilled workers, and 85 were skilled; by 1956, there were 437 employees, of which 306 were unskilled.<sup>116</sup> In keeping with new policies, certain attempts at skill training workers on the job were made throughout the 1950s. Between 17 and 24 workers underwent training at their workplace in the years 1951–1957.<sup>117</sup>

Considering the mix of continuity in the organization of production, structure, and wages and changes in policies toward women workers, did the profile of workers in the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory alter? An examination of the records for 46 workers recognized as production leaders in 1953 reveals a similar heady mixture of strong continuities and significant changes in how production was organized. Among those taking part in the state effort to chase greater productivity by participating in shock work at the factory, 28 had been hired in the 1920s, and four in the 1930s. That is, more than half of those rewarded in 1953 had witnessed not only the rationalization of 1930s, but also Social Democratic unionization efforts in 1929. Among the 34 women declared Stakhanovites in 1953, most were registered as having undergone four years of primary schooling. However, the relatively high number of 18 workers among these 34 exemplary workers had benefitted from “workplace literacy training,” night-school classes, skill training (to operate machinery), or political education training (for instance, as agitators) after 1945, or a combination of these.<sup>118</sup>

In 1946, trade union leaders served as members of the factory’s disciplinary commission, dealing often with cases of factory theft.<sup>119</sup> Throughout the 1950s, together with the party organization in the factory, the trade union was charged with setting up training courses for workers in the factory, but also with helping run the factory’s choir and dance brigade. By 1963, a year before the factory closed down, women trade unionists were expected to visit sick comrades recovering in hospital or at home during a hepatitis epidemic, or help devise ways to make workshops more orderly.<sup>120</sup> The changing tasks suggest that as in the late 1920s, by the early 1960s, women trade unionists (now in the majority at the various trade union groups of the factory) had to grapple with new ways in which forms of unpaid work (such as care work) were becoming linked to labor activism.



## Conclusions

Were the preoccupations with skill and women's involvement in trade unions entirely new in 1950s Romania? Or were these preoccupations also related to older areas of struggle in women's labor politics in the country? In this article I have adopted what could be called "a cross-regime perspective" to show that women's skill in the Romanian tobacco industry had been an area of social construction and contestation already in the interwar period, with concerns about the topic intensifying after the Second World War, in a different legal framework but in the context of a continued pursuit of productivity by a state enterprise. To this end, I examined the ways in which women's skill was constructed and struggled over in state-owned tobacco manufacturing in Romania across the division of the Second World War.

Women's involvement in labor activism meant dealing with the insecurities of insufficient formal knowledge, as Oroszi's 1929 retirement letter and training-course-participant Dinu's 1948 newspaper statement suggested. It also meant confronting men's resistance, as was Tașcău's strategy in 1951. And in the late 1920s as well as in the 1950s, it meant grappling with the legacy of female workers' more limited access to basic education, an issue which conditioned (as did the duties of housework and childcare) women's formal certification as skilled workers as well as their political participation.

In the Introduction of the paper, I made a case for the benefits of broad(er) temporal perspectives and paying attention to continuities in understanding the politics of women's work in Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. In the interwar period, the Cluj tobacco factory's majority female workforce was not entirely disempowered by their status as nonskilled workers. As (relatively) stable wage earners, they could minimally shape their circumstances because they contributed to their household budgets and did specialized team-based work that enabled them to exercise an amount of control over their work process. In spotlighting Ana Oroszi's involvement in 1928–1929 as the vice president of the Cluj-based Trade Union of Workingmen and Workingwomen of the Tobacco and Match Industry, I argued that within a Social Democratic union that sought to represent women and men across skill (and other) divisions, Oroszi invoked seniority but also projected unease about her role. Finally, I revealed how Alexandrina Tașcău's 1950 government-backed fight for access to a training program in her Bucharest-based tobacco factory necessitated a willingness to confront skilled male colleagues, including by exposing them in the main daily newspaper.

With regard to labor regimes, I have shown how tobacco factories saw the early introduction of machinery and rationalization in Romania. I pointed out how, unlike in heavy industry, the high piece-rate-based production norms of the postwar period were not simply the mark of Soviet-style productivism, but of the intensified reapplication of cost-cutting and efficiency principles existing since the interwar period. The discussion of labor intensification during the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, and from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, revealed the role of specific constructs of women's skill in such processes. In the interwar period, regulations and management practices denoted most female workers as nonskilled "manual execution personnel," even if reorganizations of production revealed (and led to management's implicit

acknowledgement) that female workers' specialized knowledge and dexterity was integral to the success of new production processes. In the postwar period, women becoming skilled was encouraged, ostensibly to enable increased productivity but circuitously, to also allow for the sheer continued functioning of old or damaged machinery.

In this article, I mentioned but did not fully analyze how ethnicity intersected with gender, skill, and labor activism at the Cluj factory. Furthermore, I hinted that communist politics shaped labor activism in the interwar period but did not develop this topic. Both these issues are worthy of detailed treatment that they could not be granted here. More research is necessary on the social determinants of women's labor activism in the first half of the twentieth century—what kind of female workers became involved in trade unions and factory politics more broadly? And, comparative, transnationally entangled research on gender and rationalization across the twentieth century could bring to the forefront the geopolitical dimensions of constructing female workers as nonskilled or low-skilled laborers, dimensions left unexplored here.

By the early 1960s, the Cluj Tobacco Manufactory had an old building and installations, fewer clients for its specialty cigarettes than several decades earlier, and required technological upgrades.<sup>121</sup> As the Romanian economy was being steered toward the flexible production of more easily exportable goods, produced with newer technologies,<sup>122</sup> in 1964, a knitwear factory was installed in the nearly century-old building that had housed the tobacco factory. Local lore suggests that some female workers from the tobacco factory switched to work in the also woman-dominated but more technologically up-to-date knitwear factory. This evolution points further than a cross-regime perspective, to the need to study women's struggles over skills in the context of flexible production as socialist states reintegrated into capitalist flows of commodity and capital.

Rather than helping answer questions concerning improvement or rather degradation of wage-working women's status in relation to regime change in the first half of the twentieth century in Romania and Central and Eastern Europe, these findings might best be seen as underscoring the endurance of the structures shaping women's work and activism in the past century. They can support interpretations of social transformation that recognize women's power within collectives (in the tobacco industry and beyond it), and their struggles to improve their lives, while accounting for the weight of the structures of domination and exploitation in their paths—thus granting renewed attention to what Judith Bennett underscored more than two decades ago as the need for “recognizing that change [in women's history] is seldom dramatic and seldom complete.”<sup>123</sup>

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## Notes

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68. For worker resistance to mechanization in male-dominated industries, in North America, respectively, and South Africa, Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980*, First Edition (Toronto, 1988), 228–29; Eddie Webster, *Cast in a Racial Mould : Labour Process and Trade Unionism in the Foundries* (Johannesburg, 1985), 50–53.
69. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 241.
70. Data compiled from "Monografia fabricii 1851-1930 [Factory monograph 1851-1930]"; Webster, *Cast in a Racial Mould : Labour Process and Trade Unionism in the Foundries*.
71. Deborah Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present* (Psychology Press, 1998), 232.
72. The equipment of the Cluj Tobacco Manufacturing was moved to the city of Timișoara in 1966. The archives of the factory ended up being housed in the city where the third Transylvanian manufacturing, in Sfântu Gheorghe, functioned until the mid-2000s. Coriolan Comloșan et al., *Fabrica de Țigarette Timișoara 1848 - 1973 - Monografia* (Timișoara, 1848–1973, 1973), 30.
73. For a succinct description of the features of rationalization, see Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work*, 230–31.
74. "Femeia muncitoare în fabrică," 13.
75. Nicolae Goldberger, ed., *Greva generală din România - 1920* (Romania, 1970).
76. "Conference Syndicale Balkanique 1926 - La Situation Economique de Proletariat et la Condition des Syndicats en Roumanie," 1926, Ar.SGB.G.164/1, Collection SGB - Schweizerischer Gewerkschaftsbund, Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv, Zurich, Switzerland.
77. "Csendőörök aszalták fel a szervezkedni akaró dohánygyári munkásokat," *Új Kelet*, February 5, 1928, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.

78. For a discussion of the same context, see Alexandra Ghit, “Re-Reading Local Sources: Finding Gendered Trade Unionism in a Transylvanian Factory Newspaper,” ZARAH Blog, November 26, 2020; available at: <https://zarah-ceu.org/re-reading-local-sources-finding-gendered-trade-unionism-in-a-transylvanian-factory-newspaper/>.
79. Confederația Generală a Muncii din România, *Mișcarea sindicală din România în anii 1926-1930: Rapoartele și procesul verbal al dezbaterilor congresului sindical din 4-7 ianuarie 1931*, 6.
80. “Muncitorul RMS - Organul lucrătorilor de la manufacturile de tutun și fabricile de chibrituri din România” 1, no. 1 (September 1, 1929): 3.
81. Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj, “Notificare. Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj către Președintele Tribunalului Cluj,” May 22, 1928, Microfilm roll 263, Fond 2881 - Mișcarea sindicală din regiunea Transilvania 1886-1943, code 257-258., ANIC - Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Bucharest, Romania.
82. C.C. Malcoci, “Răspuns. Regia Monopolurilor Statului - Direcțiunea Generală a Contenciosului către Președintele Tribunalului Cluj, Secțiua I,” November 14, 1928, Microfilm roll 263, Fond 2881 - Mișcarea sindicală din regiunea Transilvania 1886-1943, Cluj, ANIC - Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Bucharest, Romania.
83. Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj, “Proces verbal al Adunării Generale a Sindicatului Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj,” August 26, 1931, Microfilm roll 263, Fond 2881 - Mișcarea sindicală din regiunea Transilvania 1886-1943, Cluj, ANIC - Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Bucharest, Romania. In 1930, a second union, a union affiliated to the Federation of National Christian Trade Unions in Romania received a court approval. It does not seem to have played a significant part in shopfloor politics, considering its lack of mention in any of the correspondence preserved in the factory’s archival collection. Petru Păteanu, “Onor. Tribunal Secțiua I,” April 19, 1930, Microfilm roll 263, Fond 2881 - Mișcarea sindicală din regiunea Transilvania 1886-1943, Cluj, ANIC - Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Bucharest, Romania.
84. Ghiț, “The Treacherous Trade Unionist”, 271.
85. Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj, “Notificare. Sindicatul Muncitorilor și Muncitoarelor din Industria Tutunului și Chibrite din Cluj către Președintele Tribunalului Cluj.”
86. The convention stipulated improvement in work conditions and safety on the shopfloor, observance of the eight-hour work day (a legal requirement that was nevertheless frequently ignored in state factories, not to mention in privately-owned ones), confirmation of numbers of days of paid holidays depending on seniority in the factory, improved procedures for the payment of wages, and better pay for overtime. “Cu ce rezultate s’a încheiat lupta muncitorilor de la Manufactura de Tutun din Cluj?” *Solidaritatea*, August 15, 1928.
87. “Rolul bărbaților de încredere,” *Solidaritatea*, 1, no. 1 (August 15, 1928): 2.
88. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 33.
89. Robert Dannenberg, *Der Vertrauensmann. Winke für alle, die in der Arbeiterbewegung wirken* (Vienna, 1921).
90. Oroszi Ferencne, “Rămas bun,” *Solidaritatea* 2, no. 1 (January 15, 1929): 2. For a preliminary analysis of the same source, see Alexandra Ghiț, “Re-Reading Local Sources: Finding Gendered Trade Unionism in a Transylvanian Factory Newspaper.”
91. “Copie după adresa Uniunii Muncitorilor din România no. 17.” February 24, 1930, File 25/1930, Fond 179 - Întreprinderea de Țigarete Cluj, National Archives of Romania, DJAN Covasna, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.
92. “Domnului Director al Manufacturii de Tutun.”
93. “Conflict de munca la fabrica de tutun din Cluj. Un contract colectiv neluat în seamă,” *Dimineața*, November 1, 1936, Arcanum Digitica Digital Archive.
94. Ghiț, “The Treacherous Trade Unionist”, 270–74.
95. On the change of administration following the Second Vienna Arbitration in 1940, see Cucu, *Planning Labour*, 2019, 28.
96. Egon Balas, *Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey Through Fascism and Communism* (Syracuse, NY, 2008), 50–51.



97. Ghizela Cosma, *Femeile și politica în România. Evoluția dreptului de vot în perioada interbelică* (Cluj-Napoca, 2002). Luciana M. Jinga, *Gen și reprezentare în România comunistă: 1944-1989* (Bucharest, 2015), 73–74.
98. Marea Adunare Națională, “Codul Muncii [Labor Code],” Pub. L. No. 3 of 30 May 1950, *Buletinul Oficial* no. 50, June 8, 1950; (accessed August 14, 2022) <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/21570>.
99. Jinga, *Gen și reprezentare*.
100. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 255.
101. Gluvacov, *Afirmarea femeii în viața societății: Dimensiuni și semnificații în România*, 86 Table 6. The “processing industry” was distinguished from the “extractive industry.”
102. Cucu, *Planning Labour*, 2019, 134.
103. Ada Gregorian, “Ce se aude cu școala? De când o așteptăm?” *Scînteia*, August 7, 1948, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.
104. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 219.
105. The 1948 census revealed an average illiteracy rate of 15.3 percent for women in urban and 35.9 percent in rural areas. Alin Goron, “Alfabetizarea în cadrul educației adulților.” *Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești* 24, no. 1 (2018): 240–41.
106. The issue of women’s illiteracy as an obstacle to professional training was mentioned explicitly in other articles as well. For instance, Lizica Lupan, “Sa atragem cat mai multe femei în școlile de calificare profesională,” *Scînteia*, November 11, 1949, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.
107. Gregorian, “Ce se aude cu școala? De când o așteptăm?”
108. “Atitudine de dispreț față de femei la CAM,” *Scînteia*, May 29, 1950, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.
109. “Atitudine de dispreț față de femei la CAM.”
110. Ada Gregorian, “Viața de partid. O conferință de partid la un nivel înalt,” *Scînteia*, September 15, 1951, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.
111. See Grama’s discussion on the austerity program of “growth without investments” in the postwar period in Romania. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 226.
112. “Hotărîrea Plenarei Comitetului Central al Confederației Generale a Muncii din 22-23 Februarie 1952,” *Scînteia Tineretului*, March 9, 1952, Arcanum Digiteca Digital Archive.
113. “Monografia întreprinderii 1851-1957,” 1958, 10, File 36/1958, Fond 179 - Întreprinderea de Țigarete Cluj, DJAN Covasna, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.
114. Grama, *Laboring Along*, 239.
115. Cucu, *Planning Labour*, 2019, 80.
116. “Monografia întreprinderii 1851-1957,” 8.
117. “Monografia întreprinderii 1851-1957,” 25.
118. “Dări de seamă și procese verbale cu ocazia alegerilor birourilor de grupă sindicală de la 01.01 - 19.12. 1963,” 1963, File 33/1963, Fond 179 - Întreprinderea de Țigarete Cluj, DJAN Covasna, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.
119. Disciplinary Commission of Trade Union of CAM Employees Cluj, “Declarație C. P.,” February 18, 1946, File 6/1945, Fond 179 - Întreprinderea de Țigarete Cluj, DJAN Covasna, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.
120. “Dări de seamă și procese verbale cu ocazia alegerilor birourilor de grupă sindicală de la 01.01 - 19.12. 1963.”
121. “Monografia întreprinderii 1851-1957,” 1958, 80, File 36/1958, Fond 179 - Întreprinderea de Țigarete Cluj, DJAN Covasna, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.
122. Alina-Sandra Cucu, “Going West: Socialist Flexibility in the Long 1970s,” *Journal of Global History*, 2022, 1–19.
123. Judith M. Bennett, “Confronting Continuity” : 78.