

## THE MINER CALENDAR. 1935-1938

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**ABSTRACT:** *In 1935, 15 years after its founding, the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, who edited a newspaper read in the mining world, "The Miner" took the initiative of publishing a calendar of the miner worker. "The Miner Calendar" was considered by those who have made it "a book useful to all workers in the mining industry..." As far as we know this first achievement, for the year 1935, will be continued in the years 1936, 1937, 1938, and the content analysis of each Calendar proves us that publishers had the ambition to find topical issues but also for information specific to the mining world, in the encyclopaedism spirit that must characterize such an enterprise.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Romania, the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, mining, calendar.*

In 1935, 15 years after its founding, the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, who edited a newspaper read in the mining world, "The miner" took the initiative of publishing a „Calendar of the Miner Worker”.

Who were those who proposed themselves to undertake such an enterprise, equally by journalistic nature, but having also a component of trade union policy and a cultural one?

The Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania (hereinafter, the Union) is the result of miners world desire to create their own trade union that would defend their interests.

Immediately after the Great Unification from 1918, the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Romania, in collaboration with several leaders of the miners will decide the convocation on March 23, 1919, at Sibiu, of a conference of representatives of mining workers to discuss the future of trade union organization under the conditions of breakage from The Mining and Smelters Workers Union from Hungary, which was created in September 1918. At the conference will attend 29 delegates from the mining centers of Transylvania, including the Jiu Valley<sup>1</sup>. Now will be decided the establishment of The Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, originally called The Mining Workers from Transylvania and Banat Union, which will happen in a Congress that will take place in Sibiu, in 7-9 December 1919<sup>2</sup>. Its deployment was possible given that, on October 20, 1919, the Governing Council of Transylvania, will give an *Ordinance relating to the operation of the Workers Unions and their subsidiaries, from the territory administered by the Governing Council*. Through this

Ordinance was accepted, in art. 1 that, „The Workers Unions, which have the statutes approved by the former Hungarian Ministry of Internal Affairs ... are recognized and will work further neconturbate in the frameworks of the Statutes above quoted ... The Union aims are: to serve the material and intellectual interests of the members; to develop the sense of unity; to support the tendencies which aim for improving working conditions; to give material aid (in cash), in case of missing members and in case of death, to their families”<sup>3</sup>.

The Union, which will set the Statute to the Congress in Cluj in May 16, 1921, aims to serve the economic and cultural interests of its members to assist and support all their aspirations and claims to fight for a better life through: the closure of the collective labor agreements and the supervision of their compliance<sup>4</sup>.

The Union will have its own newspaper, „The Miner”, subtitled initially „The Body of the Mining and Smelter Workers from Transylvania and Banat”, and from September 15, 1921, „The Body of The Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania”. The paper will appear from July 15, 1919, initially at Sibiu - Printing House Georg Haiser - in Romanian („The Miner”) and Hungarian („Bányamunkás”), and in German edition („Bergarbeiter”) from February 1, 1920, after the relocation of the Union headquarters from Sibiu to Cluj<sup>5</sup>. The paper will appear in the first

<sup>1</sup> *Raport către al VII-lea Congres al Uniunii Muncitorilor din Industria Minieră din România (București, 28-29 februarie și 1 martie 1932)*, Institute of Graphic Arts „Presa”, Bucharest, 1932, p. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Gazeta Oficială*, 1919, nr. 68, p. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> x x x, *Documente din istoria mișcării muncitorești, 1920-1944*, Deva, 1971, p. 18. About the struggle for the establishment of the Union, see, *Cum a luat ființă Uniunea minerilor*, in, *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, Edited by the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, The Pattern of the Printing House Cooperative „Litera”, Bucharest, 1935, p. 58-63.

<sup>5</sup> *Raport către al VII-lea Congres al Uniunii Muncitorilor din Industria Minieră din România*, p. 59-60. The newspaper history is older; since 1906 appears to Budapest,

two years in 20 issues each year, and in the third year, 1921, in 12 issues per year, except the last year, the year XXII, 1940, when will appear in six issues. In Cluj, the newspaper will be printed on printers „Új Vízág” (February 1 to August 1, 1920), „Háór” (May 15 to August 15, 1920), „Gutenberg” (September 24, 1920 to February 1, 1922), „Bernat” (from March 15, 1922), and since the VIII year, 1926, no. 6, again to the „Gutenberg” Typography. From the twelfth year 1930, no. 3, along with the relocation of the Union headquarters to Bucharest<sup>6</sup>, the newspaper will be printed here, initially to the „Munca Grafică” Printing House, and from no. 12, at the Institute of Graphic Arts „Presa”, and the issues of year 1940, when the newspaper is sub-titled, „The Body of The Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania”, to the „Presa Veche Românească” Printing House.

It was a newspaper read in the mining world, being printed, since the beginning, in more than 20,000 copies<sup>7</sup>, in an Activity Report of the Union for year 1935, stating that, „the most important activity [of a cultural nature] is, of course, the constant emergence of „The Miner” newspaper in three languages, from which tens of thousands of copies are printed annually”<sup>8</sup>.

The Union organizational experience, and the training of journalists who edited „The Miner” newspaper, seem to be important assets to finalize, starting with year 1935, an enterprise with trade union and cultural character, printing, once a year, of a calendar addressed to the miners. *In the preface to „The Miner Calendar” in 1935, is said that, „The Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania has reached in the course of 1934, 15 years of existence... Fifteen years of fighting, means a date worth noting. And of course, if the times would not have been so harsh... the 15 years of existence would have been celebrated by the Union and by the entire mining working class completely different and with the proper pomp. Our Union is however satisfied with the publishing of this paper... [which] appears for the first time in Romanian country. The Miner Calendar is a useful book for all workers from the mining industry and hopefully will be well received and with all the love, what will be an encouragement for us that from now on, every year, the Miner Calendar to appear regularly, becoming richer, more interesting, more instructive, for the development of the miner mind and soul, who needs more light after so much dark from bottom of the galleries”<sup>9</sup>.*

„Bányamunkás” („The Miner”), only in Hungarian, for the workers from mines in Central Hungary (*Ibidem*, p. 14), Romanian workers, including those in mining, being subscribers – about 500 at the end of 1917 (*Ibidem*, p. 20) – to the Romanian section of the Social Democratic Party newspaper from Hungary, „The truth”, which appear in Budapest, since the fall of 1903 (*Ibidem*, p. 11).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 74-75.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3-4.

We know from this preface that the first „Miner Calendar” appeared in 1935<sup>10</sup>, being continued, as far as we know, in the years 1936<sup>11</sup>, 1937<sup>12</sup>, 1938<sup>13</sup>. As in the case of „The Miner”, also „The Miner Calendar” will appear in the all four numbers which we know, in trilingual edition: Romanian, Hungarian („Bányász Naptár”) and German („Bergarbeiter Kalender”). He had a pocket card format, with a size of 14/10 cm, and costing 20 lei.

It is to be said that the appearance of this Calendar, is not a single enterprise in the era of the end of the interwar period, and we can exemplify even with two calendars published in the mining area of the Apuseni Mountains, at Brad: „The newspaper calendar „Zarandul” for the bisect year 1936”<sup>14</sup>, and „The Zarandul Calendar”, entirely due to a publicist from Brad, Gheorghe Micu Delabăsești, which appeared with intermittences, in the years 1937, 1938, 1939, 1944, 1946, 1947, 1948<sup>15</sup>.

Analyzing the contents of each Calendar we will realize that the publishers respected the idea of an almanac, in the form of a volume, with annual appearance, encompassing a calendar and other useful data, but at the same time, they had the ambition, from a permanent combative and critical position to find current issues, including those related to the trade union movement, but also of information, specific to the mining world, in the encyclopaedism spirit that must characterize such an enterprise.

The authors considered it a success, in the „Preface” section to the 1936 edition, by saying that, „the receiving which was done to the 1935 calendar was satisfactory... It has been helpful to our members. Very often we had the opportunity to see how... Many comrades wore on their calendar, in the pocket, our first calendar, as an object truly valuable, useful and guide every day”.

We could state that we will encounter fields or common themes in all four editions but also materials that come from the need to discuss a specific problem from the year in question or whose utility makes it now required.

Each edition has a debut heading in which the calendar owner can write personal data, and there

<sup>10</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, 148 pag.

<sup>11</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, Edited by the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, The Pattern of Graphic Arts Institute „Presa”, Bucharest, 1936, 145 pag.

<sup>12</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, Edited by the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, The Pattern of Graphic Arts Institute of Coop. „Litera”, Bucharest, 1937, 137 pag.

<sup>13</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, Edited by the Mining Industry Workers Union from Romania, The „Presa Veche Românească” Printing House, 1938, 137 pag.

<sup>14</sup> *Calendarul gazetei „Zarandul” pe anul bisect 1936*, The Pattern of the “Zarand” Printing House, Brad, 80 pag.

<sup>15</sup> It was printed at „The Moșilor Printing House” from Brad, except the 1944 edition, printed in „Astra” Typography from Deva.

are 14 pages with space left blank for notes about meetings.

As required by the rigors of such an almanac, there is a calendar on the respective year, each month of the year including data from the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant calendars. In the calendars from 1935 and 1936, is inserted at every month, also a historical calendar. Later in this chapter, informations are presented, important to know by any employee: legal holidays established by the Law for the regulation of the Sunday rest and of the legal holidays from June 18, 1925<sup>16</sup>; the religious, national and legal holidays which are established by the authorities; the Israelit and Muslim calendar; the eclipses of the sun and moon from the respective year; the moon phases; the postal tariff; the addresses of the ministries, legations and consulates; one can find in the body of the Calendars, the addresses of various trade unions from Bucharest and of the country, related to the socialist movement.

Immediately following this section for useful information, is published an extensive information on the activity of the Union in recent years, for the 1935 Calendar<sup>17</sup>, and for the years 1935, 1936, 1937, for all other Calendars. There are analyzed each time: *a.* the trade union activity conducted by the Union in all coalfields, seen in the light of general economic realities and of the situation of the mining industry, in particular; *b.* the struggle for concluding of collective labor contracts, and the progress achieved, especially in ensuring a satisfactory pay scale for all categories of employees, either through negotiation with the employer or through the triggering of labor disputes; *c.* the situations of retired persons, and the effort to compel the authorities to ensure full and timely payment of pensions; *d.* the activity of the reorganization, to maintain the trade unions and the number of their members; *e.* the cultural activity, exemplified by: the editing of „The Miner” newspaper; the enrichment of the trade union libraries with new books; supporting the miners choirs and brass bands; introduction of radios to the unions buildings; supporting the gazettes „The New World”, „Elöre”, „Neue Zeitung”, as well as of the journals „The Social Movement”, „Construction Site” and „The Society of Tomorrow”; the printing of some books of direct interest for the mining workers; *f.* the presentation of Union's international relations; *g.* the fluctuation of the number of members from the Union since 1932: 34 trade unions, with 4.170 workers and 1.604 pensioners<sup>18</sup>; 1933: 35 trade unions, with 6.117 workers and 3.680 pensioners; 1934: 35 trade unions, with 6.794 workers and 2.796 pensioners; 1935: 35 trade unions, with 7.749 workers and 2.623 pensioners; 1936: 37 trade unions, with 8.678

workers and 2.690 pensioners; 1937: 39 trade unions, with 8.548 workers and 2.656 pensioners<sup>19</sup>. In connection with the activity of the Union are published in the form of tables, the amount of aid that the Union pays to the different categories of members, for absence from work (four weeks per year), in case of sickness (two weeks per year), for moving to another house (once a year), for the funeral<sup>20</sup>. Are also highlighted other achievements of the Union, such as, for example, *Our homes*, that is the construction of premises for trade union activity in Steirdorf-Anina and Firiza de Jos<sup>21</sup>.

In each edition are elaborated extensive text which presents, global or thematic, the geological characteristics of ore mining, the historical development of the extractive mining activity from different basins and how to exploit primary resources, the aspects of evolutions in technics, in general, in mining, in particular: *The mining deposits from Romania* with reference to coal, oil, ferrous and nonferrous metal ore, gas and salt, the exploitation areas and the quantities extracted in the early 30s of the twentieth century<sup>22</sup>; *How the coals were formed*<sup>23</sup>; *What is extracted from coal*<sup>24</sup>; *The exploitation of deep coal*<sup>25</sup>; *Since when the coal is exploited in Romania*<sup>26</sup>; *The gold mining history from Romania*<sup>27</sup>; *Something about the Apuseni Mountains and their riches*, an analysis of the extent of the Golden Quadrilateral, of its geological structure and how are arranged the gold-silver deposits<sup>28</sup>; *The salt in Romania*<sup>29</sup>; *The man and the machine*, about the beginnings of mechanization and the use of steam, the need to accommodate the mining worker with the requirements and the performance of the mechanical tools<sup>30</sup>; *The energy reserves in the world*<sup>31</sup>; *The story of the diamond mines from Africa*<sup>32</sup>.

Interesting is also *Dictionary of common words used in the mining industry*, in Romanian, Hungarian and German, and reading it we understand why, in the multiethnic space of Jiu Valley the miners used the German word „steiger”, to name the mining foreman, or „obersteiger”, for the first mining foreman etc.<sup>33</sup>

There are articles dealing with issues of work safety in mining: *Safety Lamp*<sup>34</sup>; *Explosive*

<sup>16</sup> C. Hamangiu, *Codul general al României*, vol. XI-XII, 1922-1926, p. 983-988

<sup>17</sup> Is presented the Union activity from the Seventh Congress in February-March 1932, and by the end of 1934.

<sup>18</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, p. 48-49.

<sup>20</sup> See, *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 125-126.

<sup>22</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 105-108.

<sup>23</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 100-105.

<sup>24</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 117-119.

<sup>25</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 128-129.

<sup>26</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 85-89.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60-67.

<sup>28</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 135-138.

<sup>29</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 106-109.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60-69.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 130-132.

<sup>32</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 102-104.

<sup>33</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 111-115.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 92-97

gases<sup>35</sup>; *The biggest mining catastrophes*, occurred in the mining world between the years 1867-1934<sup>36</sup>; Petre Mihăilă, *From the life of mining workers*, about the 6702 miners died in collective explosions happened in the world between 1907-1935<sup>37</sup>.

There are published analysis texts of the present realities and of the future prospects within various mining basins: *The coal slaves*, a blueprint for economic and social status of workers in coal mines in the Jiu Valley in the years following the economic crisis of the years 1929-1933<sup>38</sup>.

Were published texts on the trade union movement and its organizational problems, about the relationship between the trade unions and the political parties: *The miners Internationale*, which makes a history of international congresses of miners since 1890, when shall be constituted the International Union of Mining Workers, and presents the rights earned through the trade union struggle in favor of miners<sup>39</sup>; Ion M. Feraru, *Organization of the modern trade union action*<sup>40</sup>; *How to speak at meetings*<sup>41</sup>; Petre Mihăilă, *Syndicalism in the field*, a text of analysis written by the President of the Union, which examines critically on the example of the great mining companies, how to respect the laws with working character and how to resolve the working conflicts in our country<sup>42</sup>; Lotar Rădăceanu, *The relationship between the trade unions and the party*<sup>43</sup>.

It is published under the title, *Additional Rights of the workers from the mining industry at the mining pension funds*, the decision of the Secretary of State Minister at the Department of Labour, Health and Social Protection, for applying the Law for the unification of the social insurance system from April 8, 1933 also in the mining enterprises<sup>44</sup>, shall be defined the invalidity pension and the characteristics of the legislation on this issue in different countries<sup>45</sup>; is analyzed the way of regulating the labor accidents and the accident pension after April 8, 1933<sup>46</sup>.

Doctrinal analysis texts are published: *The Future Society*<sup>47</sup>; *In the service of peace. For thousands of years mankind is kneaded to achieve the most holy ideal: the peace!*<sup>48</sup>; *The man of the future*<sup>49</sup>; Leon Blum, *What is Socialism*<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 134-139.

<sup>36</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 67-69.

<sup>37</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 54-59.

<sup>38</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 121-134.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 140-144.

<sup>40</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 68-76

<sup>41</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 56-57

<sup>42</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, p. 61-94

<sup>43</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 79-81

<sup>44</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 71-91

<sup>45</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 96-101

<sup>46</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, p. 107-116.

<sup>47</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 55-59.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 112-122

<sup>49</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 111-116

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120-125.

Are inserted literary texts or with historical character, dedicated to mining: *Horia, Cloșca and Crișan. 150 years since the uprising of the miners and serfs in the Apuseni Mountain*<sup>51</sup>; P. Brăileanu, *May 1st*, a text about how a Romanian and a German celebrated May 1st on the Nile in Egypt<sup>52</sup>; Ilya Ehrenburg, *The work in chains*<sup>53</sup>; *At 600 meters below ground*, a text written by a young miner about working conditions and activities taking place in the underground of the mines in the Jiu Valley<sup>54</sup>.

In the all editions of the Calendar are published poems that talk about the miner and his universe: *The Miners Hymn*<sup>55</sup>; Aron Cotruș, *The Miner*<sup>56</sup>; Aron Cotruș, *I feel like I'm a thousand years*<sup>57</sup>; George Lesnea, *Dig, miners!*<sup>58</sup>; Liviu Bratoloveanu, *The letter of a mining worker*<sup>59</sup>; B. Montana, *Miner*<sup>60</sup>; Florea Al. Crețeanu, *The swath song*<sup>61</sup>; *The miners of Klinton*<sup>62</sup> etc.

In all the calendars are inserted images with the personalities of the trade union movement, but most of them illustrates the underground work and the surface mines construction<sup>63</sup>.

At the end of each calendar are advertisements of potential sponsors, the major mining and metallurgical companies: „Petroșani”, The Resita Domains Plants, The United Metallurgical Plants „Titan, Nădrag, Călan”, as well as The Mines and The Metallurgical and Metal Chemical Plants of the State, accepting, perhaps, to pay a sum of money for material support of this enterprise.

Without being achieved an exhaustive look on the content of „The Miner Calendar”, we can say that through themes approached has become, for the years of its appearance, an important instrument of the mining world literacy.

<sup>51</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 70-82.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 83-91.

<sup>53</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 128-131

<sup>54</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, p. 51-60

<sup>55</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 99.

<sup>56</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 53. The poetry written in 1928, talks about the suicide by explosion of a miner, Ioan Cioară, theme which we find also in the film from 1988 by Mircea Daneliuc, *Iacob*.

<sup>57</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1935*, p. 102-103.

<sup>58</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1936*, p. 39.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 127.

<sup>60</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1937*, p. 37-38.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 117-118;

<sup>62</sup> *Calendarul Minerului pe anul 1938*, p. 105-106.

<sup>63</sup> Most of the the images that describe the Jiu Valley, are the work of a photography enthusiast, a miner foreman from Lupeni, of Ruthenian origin, Gaál Oszkár. About Gaál Oszkár, see, in vol., *Tradiția mineritului – factor de unitate în diver-sitatea etnică în spațiul românesc*, Photo exhibition - documentary film made by the Cultural Ruthenians Union from Romania, Alba Iulia, September 29, 2001.