

In memoriam,
Profesor emeritus dr. doc. eng. Aron Popa (1917-2009)

Whenever we remember the personalities having modeled the existence of the Mines Institute of Petrosani, the vivid memory of Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa comes to front. The development and modernizing of Romanian mining higher education as well as mining engineering science are closely connected with his activity and strife to direct them towards progress.

He lived among us for a while and strongly influenced our careers owing to his powerful character, elegance, modesty, innate kindness and hope. He was a dedicated and rigorous professor, an exceptional rector, a kind and sober person, who contributed to the development of the structure of the educational process in the Mines Institute of Petrosani. All those, who had the opportunity to know and collaborate with him, have taken their perseverance, rigor, correctness, and resoluteness from him. He used to fascinate his audience and talk so elegantly that no one would interrupt his discourses.



He contributed to the enrichment of the material ground and to the increase of the book stock of the academic library as well as to the improvement of the academic staff's professional level. During his time as a rector of the Mines Institute (1963-1976), he strived to get specializations and trainings abroad for the most part of the academic staff (65 persons).

Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa was born on October 26th, 1917 in Ghelar, Hunedoara County, in a family of miners. He attended general education in his native village and further the courses of "Aurel Vlaicu" High School in Orastie, which he graduated in 1936. Between 1937 and 1942, he attended the courses of the Mining and Metallurgy Faculty in Bucharest.

After graduation he was sent as an apprentice engineer to the Jiu Valley Coal Plant in Petrosani, where he was employed at Petrila Mine, until November 1942 when he started his military compulsory stage. In November 1944, his military stage ended and he was employed as an engineer at Rosia Montana Mining Unit; subsequently, during more than 20 years, he worked at various mining units in different areas of the country, at the Mining Inspectorate in Baia Mare, at the Mining Research and Planning Institute in Bucharest, at the General mining Department of the Ministry of Mines, petrol, and Geology in Bucharest as well as at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, at the time it coordinated the most important metal mines in Romania.

During the period 1942-1963, when he took part in the productive activity, he passed through all hierarchical positions, beginning as an apprentice engineer and including the positions of Technical Manager of the Institute of Mining Research and Planning in Bucharest, General Manager of the General Mining Department within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and of the Ministry of Mines, Petrol, and Geology.

Throughout his whole activity carried out at the mining units, the institutes of research and planning, and coordinating entities, Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa proved to be a skillful organizer and coordinator, respected and valued by all those who knew him.



Besides his work at the productive units, a large part of his activity was connected with the improvement of mining education and training of specialists for the mining and metallurgic industries. He had carried out his academic activity for over 40 un-interrupted years in the mining higher education system.

He began his activity during the period 1946-1950, as a professor and manager at the Short Length Education Engineers and Chemical and Metallurgical School in Baia Mare, where he taught *Mining exploitations* and *Mining machines*. Between 1951 and 1958, he was a lecturer at the Institute of Mining Technique in Bucharest and the Mining Institute in Petrosani, while, between 1958 and 1971, he became an Associate Professor at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest, where he taught the course entitled *Systematizing and planning mining units*, to post-university graduates.

Beginning with 1963, when he passed his doctoral thesis entitled *Considerations Regarding the Economic Improvement of the Exploitation of Gold Ores Containing Free Gold within Barza - Brad Group of Mines*, until 1976, he was an Associate Professor; beginning with 1968, he became a titular Professor at the Mines Institute of Petrosani; as a rector of this Romanian higher education institution, he developed it and promoted it as a brand not only in Romania but outside its boundaries as well. In 1974, he was given the title of *Doctor Docent* in sciences, by the University of Bucharest.

Between 1976 and 1988 he was a Professor and head of the Chair of Mining Technique within the Faculty of Mines belonging to the Mines Institute of Petrosani, chair that held a prominent position, at the time. After 1988, Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa remained at the Mines Institute of Petrosani as a consultant Professor, primarily coordinating the scientific research activity and doctoral activity in the specialization *Mines, underground and day mining exploitations*.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa taught his students a series of specialized disciplines connected with the exploitation and capitalization, according to the economic efficiency principles, of the ores including useful mineral substances. As a member of the teaching staff and a coordinator of doctoral students at the Mines Institute of Petrosani, he strived not only to form engineers displaying superior moral and professional qualities, but also with a view to training planners and researchers exhibiting a high scientific and professional level.

Beginning with year 1970, when Professor Aron Popa was given the opportunity to coordinate doctoral students, he guided 25 engineers and helped them concluding their theses; those engineers further received the scientific title of *Doctors in Sciences*.



His scientific research activity includes more than 150 works, such as: projects, studies and researches connected to various issues in the mining industry as well as articles, books and courses for the mining technical schools and for the mining higher education. A series of the works belonging to Professor Aron Popa were published by prestigious specialized magazines in the country and abroad. Meanwhile, Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa represented Romania, owing to his valuable scientific and technical works, to a series of scientific events and national and international congresses.

Professor Aron Popa published alone or in collaboration over 30 books, treatises and courses, such as:

- Guiding Internship in Geology – Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1957
- Well Drilling – Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1962
- Technique of Exploring and Exploiting Deposits – Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1963
- Mining Exploitations – Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968 and Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993
- Polyglot Mining, Geology, and Petroleum Extraction Dictionary - Tehnica1 Publishing House, 1974 (coordinator), a book to be found at the University of Toronto Libraries
- Lead and Zinc – Technical Publishing House, 1975
- Mining Prospection and Exploitations – Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing, Bucharest, 1976
- Guide of the Mine Engineer (seven volumes) – Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986
- Gold mining in the Apuseni Mountains – INFOMIN Publishing House, Deva, 2000
- Mining technologies – INFOMIN Publishing House, Deva, 2000

A particular mentioning of Professor Aron Popa's coordination of the publishing of the Guide of the Mines Engineer, a prominent work in Romanian mining science, which was the result of hundreds of specialists, during several years of activity.

The remarkable results obtained in the didactic and scientific research fields determined the awarding of the titles of doctor, doctor docent in technical sciences, and Professor Emeritus, to Aron Popa; they not only emphasize his undeniable merits, but also testify of his strife with a view to increasing the reputation of Romanian science and technique.

As a Rector of the Mines Institute of Petrosani, a position he had detained for 14 years, he proved to be a very good organizer, succeeding in creating a milieu that encouraged the development of educational activity and scientific research, both among the academic staff and among the students.



A man of principles, sincere and open-minded, he provided an environment that favored working, in the groups and units he worked within, where all their members could express their personality and turn to good account their skills.

He constantly supported the development of the technical and material grounds of the Mines Institute of Petrosani as well as the development and close relations with the European and worldwide mining higher education establishments. He succeeded in providing the broadest opening of the Mines Institute both towards the East and towards the West.

He was a member of the Superior Diplomas Board of the Ministry of Education, of the College of the Ministry of Mines, Petrol, and Geology, of the Council of the Workers in the Coal Enterprise in Petrosani, of the Administration Council of the Administration of Rare and Radioactive in Bucharest; he was also a special issues technical counselor at the Ministry of Metallurgy and Chemistry as well as a counselor at the Ministry of Mines and Electric Energy.

For his activity and results obtained, Professor Aron Popa was honored with the 3rd class Labor Order, 2nd class Labor Order, 1st class Scientific Merit as well as other medals of the Romanian State.

In 1999, he was given the title of *Honorary Citizen* of the Municipality of Petrosani, for his activity at the Mines Institute of Petrosani, for his scientific works elaborated in the field of mining and geology and published in specialized magazines, for his papers displayed at scientific symposiums in the country and abroad, for his academic courses and technical works.

The Senate of the University of Petrosani gave him the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*, for his remarkable results in developing mining academic education, in the mining science and technique and in collaborating with research, planning, and production units.

The outstanding activity carried out during over 50 years in the productive, research and planning, and mining higher education by Professor Aron Popa was possible owing to an exceptional theoretical and practical training, owing to his tenacity, sobriety and high professional standards, to his didactic vocation and exceptionally demanding self.

The professional activity of Professor Emeritus Dr. Doc. Eng. Aron Popa has been carried on by the disciples he trained at the University of Petrosani, who at their turn feel obliged to transmit it to the next generations of specialists in the Romanian mining industry.

Professor Aron Popa showed an enormous passion for science as well as modesty, correctitude, and politeness, which came to define him as a kind-hearted person and rewarded him with respect, esteem and love !

Professor Ph.D Susana Arad