

Constructing Socialism at "Tehnofrig". A social history case-study into the ethnic structure of the Cluj workforce during the mid-1960s¹

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Abstract: *The advent of the Communist regime in Romania led to great social and economic transformation with immense consequences for the population. For a poorly developed country the insistence of heavy industry growth led to the development of its urban centres, and of the surrounding rural areas. Cluj's fate during the 1960s was no different as it represents a perfect example of these changes. The following paper looks at how complex said transformations took place in terms of ethnicity, education, gender, and migration by emphasizing the example of the "Tehnofrig" factory. The first part is an attempt at explaining the relation between ethnicity and skill by observing the dynamic between traditional work ethics and the numerical report of Hungarians and Romanians. The second part marks a look at links between age/generations and education. The third part stems from gender studies and is focused on the limited entrance women got in the 1960s in skilled positions. Finally, understanding migrational patterns between periphery and centre is essential to explaining how the ethnic balance change, and how this marked not only the evolution of Cluj's urban landscape, but also work ethics.*

Key words: *urban centre, rural area, ethnicity, education, gender, migration.*

Introduction:

In 1962, an informant of the Securitate reported to his bosses in Bucharest that Dezideriu Jenei, chief engineer of the "Tehnofrig" factory in Cluj, was guilty of 'chauvinism', favouring the hiring of Hungarians, and discriminating Romanians. These accusations continued throughout the rest of the 1960s and 1970s, making it seem as if the enterprise had become a nest of national revisionism and sabotage.²

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² The accusations brought forth against chief engineer Jenei Dezideriu by the Securitate seemed to have been mostly based on his prior work experience and education in Hungary, during the Second World War, aspects of his life constantly

Allegations of this type must be seen within their own historical context. It was only seven years earlier that the Hungarian Revolution had shaken the fabric of the communist experiment in East-Central Europe. In Romania it marked an increasing mistrust of ethnic and national minorities, the Hungarian one even more so, being perceived as a threat to state order because of its open support of the events in Budapest. This escalated to as far as making it a prime directive of the Securitate to keep Hungarian populated areas under strict surveillance (decree 70/1957).³ In fact, the first use of accusations of 'chauvinism' dated from when Soviet-Romanian troops entered Transylvania, and were also linked to propaganda against Fascism. It would remain characteristic to Hungarians, while Romanians guilty of the same crime would be called 'nationalists'.⁴ Under such circumstances, these allegations regarding Dezideriu Jenei's conduct are the result of higher political and social tensions and not necessarily a result of actual facts.

The chief-engineer's past is one characterized by a high-degree of professional training and much practical experience in high-end industrial facilities. He had a double university equivalent education both in Cluj and in Budapest, and during the war he had worked for the Siemens factory in Hungary, focusing on machines and electric appliances, this last one fitting more than perfectly with "Tehnofrig"'s profile. After the war he worked as a professor at a technological high-school, thus further developing his skills before being fired by the regime most likely because of his middle-class origins. To further add to his qualifications he opened a tools workshop after the war, hiring around thirty to forty workers. He was eventually forced to get a job at the "Tehnofrig" factory as his business was nationalized by the

mentioned in the studied files, see National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS), *Dosar Informativ, I 235724*, Vol. 1, ff.6-7, and *Dosar Informativ, I 235724*, Vol. 2, ff. 100-105, 247-249, 257-258.

³ Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State 1948-1965*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), pp.260-262, We should also take into account Gheorghe Gheorghiu's general mistrust of Hungarian diplomacy and the activation of the Hungarian intelligentsia in Romania. The revolution itself led to a verification of society, and the attitude of the Hungarian minority became of main importance for the regime. Csaba Zoltan, *Politica P.C.R. Față de Minoritățile Naționale, 1948-1975*, Teză Doctorat, (Bucharest: Academia Română, Institutul de Istorie "Nicolae Iorga", 2010), p.159.

⁴ Novak Csaba Zoltan, *Politica P.C.R. Față de Minoritățile Naționale*, pp.37, 90.

Communist regime.⁵ Under such circumstances it is highly doubtful that he would have hired individuals based on simple preferences, and that even those who had previously been his employees would not have been as qualified.

As historians we must ask ourselves to what extent are we to believe the fictitious reality constructed by the secret police? If the sources are not read appropriately one risks perpetuating the Securitate's story by following their reading of the information.⁶ Reconstructing the past implies exploring multiple dimensions as means of attempting to understand it more objectively. The best means of illustrating the true reality of the chief engineer's life is to research the evolution of his enterprise's workforce. By doing this, we can better emphasize were the Securitate exaggerated certain aspects, under the influence of a changing historical context.

The "Tehnofrig" factory was created in 1949, based on a decision from 1948 for the nationalization of all private enterprises. The initiative of creating it was the result of the entire Council of Ministers decision making process. This action can be seen as part of the Stalinist type industrialisation, which relied heavily on the idea of self-sufficient modernity. Thus, according to documents from the Securitate the main purpose of "Tehnofrig" was that of creating a means of production of machines for the national refrigeration industry. The man charged by the regime with laying the basis of the new factory was Hartman Ludovic, who had owned a scrap metal shop, he quickly hired Dezideriu Jenei to be his chief-engineer. He was not the sole former proprietor chosen to help, Baatz Erwin was one other. Even the person responsible for hiring new personnel was Branzas Isabela who had previously worked in another factory. By 1954 the enterprise already had no less than 760 employees with the firm objective that by the end of the year the number grow to 1,100. It was only a couple of months earlier, in 1953, that the secret police had identified 25 so-called potential enemies.⁷ Yet despite their categorisation as thus, the regime did not take any steps in stopping their entrance into the new system, although this was the time of high-Stalinism in Romania. This is very similar to

⁵ Ibidem, ff. 6-7.

⁶ Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp.11-20.

⁷ CNSAS, *Dosar Obiectiv Tehnofrig, D 2777*, Vol. 2, ff.1-5.

Fitzpatrick's explanation for what happened in the 1920s in the Soviet Union, when specialists from the old regime were co-opted for the construction of socialism.⁸

It is desirable that we attempt to illustrate the social and economic background of Cluj during the seventh decade of the 20th century. Thus realities tied to the origins, age group, gender, education, and ethnicity of workers become the focal point of this analysis. This shall serve to explain the current ethnic and national landscape through the understanding of past socio-economical processes. As we shall see in the following pages, there are important nuances to the information gathered by the Securitate, nuances which serve to change the initial conclusion. Indeed, there were more Hungarians hired at the "Tehnofrig" factory, many of the specialists did in fact have prior ties to the chief engineer, but these were in fact consequences of how society was back in the 1960s.

Any research has its limits, be it in exact sciences or Humanities, all because of the resources we have at our disposal. This is also true for this paper. While the documents used reveal a great deal of information about the lives of individuals from decades ago, they can also go only so far. The "Tehnofrig" fond held by the Cluj County Direction of the National Archives contains relevant information up to the 1960s, although some files do go further. Hiring sheets were the most relevant documents for this research, as they contain information regarding ethnicity, place of birth, address, age, education, familial status, and most importantly profession. Unfortunately there is a lack of continuity from file to file, as in more than one case, documents varied both in style and information. Thus, following the individual evolution of these workers over a long period is impossible, and this leaves only the possibility of a macro-history analysis. For obvious reasons this can lead to a more sociological approach, yet this can be avoided by the emphasis on historical context explanations.

Files from the former Securitate reveal a great deal of information regarding the lives of individuals. Dezideriu Jenei's case is not different, as there is much detail about both his private life and career. But as mentioned earlier, historians have to be prudent in how they read these reports, and for this it is essential to identify the

⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934*, (New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.16.

motivation behind this surveillance operation or any other for that matter. Individuals were not the sole targets of the Securitate. There are a great deal of files on various enterprises the regime had deemed essential to the national economy. One can find extensive knowledge on the history of factories from the first laid brick to the 1980s economic crisis. This information does not focus solely on machinery or the performance of the administrative staff and management, it also reveals much about the daily activities of workers, especially if it was something breaking with routine. Yet, even this can help only so much in illustrating social and economic developments at "Tehnofrig" in the mid-1960s.

Finding a place in the overall historiography of the subject can, at times, be somewhat difficult. This is because of a lack of Romanian papers and monographs of workers' lives during Communism. Historians have mostly focused on the hardships of intellectuals, and former political elites. While this is honourable and very-much welcomed we have reached a point where we must attempt to change our perspective. Communism was in fact something that touched the lives of all Romanian citizens, be they peasants, intellectuals or industrial workers. The proposed paper also aims at finding a place within the Western approach based on micro-history, which allows for a thorough understanding based on specific case studies. Unfortunately, Romanian historiography is lacking in such pursuits, that is not to say that the lives of workers have been totally ignored, yet most of what has been written was in a general key. One notable exception is the recently published *Ferestre spre Furnalul Roșu*, written by Mara Mărginean, a book in which she attempts to reconstruct the economic, urban and social evolution of the towns of Hunedoara and Călan, offering a new historical perspective.⁹

The proposed paper comes from the direction of approaches such as that of Stephen Kotkin's famous *Magnetic Mountain*, of course taking into account the many fundamental differences between what Magnitogorsk was and what Cluj's industrial landscape was.¹⁰ We shall follow the workers to their places of origin, attempting to reconstruct

⁹ Mara Mărginean, *Ferestre spre Furnalul Roșu. Urbanism și cotidian în Hunedoara și Călan (1945-1968)*, (Iași: Polirom, 2015).

¹⁰ It is imperative that we take into account the fact that the city of Cluj already had an industrial tradition by the time the Communist regime took power, while Magnitogorsk represents the Soviet attempt at constructing an industrial center from scratch in the middle of nowhere, Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1995).

migrational patterns, both from the periphery towards the centre (from the countryside to the city) and internally (from home to the workplace). This will also reveal economic decisions taken by individuals, in the sense of changing their livelihoods so as to improve standards of living. Age groups are relevant as they help us understand how individual aspirations change in the lines of generations. Gender is the elephant in the room that must be addressed as the Communist regime always claimed it had emancipated women, but then again as the work of some such as Melanie Ilic, Jeremy Smith, Liubov Denisova, and Lynne Attwood, Jill Massino, amongst many others have demonstrated this was done only to a certain degree, and that every new leader had his own contribution to the landscape of "gender equality".¹¹ Education and ethnicity are more linked in Transylvania than in any other part of Romania, as social stratification can be explained through their analysis. As a result of the pre-war political situation in this region it might be possible to assert that certain groups had better access to education as well as representing most of the urban landscape, a situation which, to a certain degree, perpetuated itself even after 1945.

I. Workers between ethnicity and skill:

This segment of the paper aims at establishing if Jenei Dezideriu was indeed a chauvinist or if the ethnic structure of the "Tehnofrig" workforce was the result of a broader phenomenon. We should ask ourselves if one single individual could manipulate the system in such a manner, especially one which the regime clearly mistrusted. In fact, his influence had little to do with the large number of Hungarians hired by "Tehnofrig", the cause laying in the changing ethnic structure of Cluj at the time.

¹¹ Ed. Melanie Ilic, Jeremy Smith, *Soviet State and Society Under Nikita Khrushchev*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), Ed. Melanie Ilic, *Women in the Stalin Era*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Liubov Denisova, *Rural Women in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*, Ed. & Translated Irina Mukhina, (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman. Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*, (New York: Macmillan, 1999), Ed. Shana Penn, Jill Massino, *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009, Coord. Corina Doboş, Luciana M. Jinga, Florin S. Soare, *Politica Pronatalistă a Regimului Ceauşescu. O perspectivă comparativă*, (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010).

There are indeed clear ties between the chief engineer and some of the people hired at the factory, they had previously been employed at Dezideriu's private enterprise before nationalization, a tool shop called "Meopel". But then again were such decisions strictly motivated by personal ambitions, affinities or was there something more to it? In this sense it would be useful to say more about this business he had. Hiring around 30 to 40 workers and an engineer who would end up also working at "Tehnofrig" this could be categorized as a mid-level enterprise. In fact, there were no less than five individuals we know for certain that worked at "Meopel" and then moved to "Tehnofrig". They had varying backgrounds being previously employed as lawyer, cashier, accountant, clerk or plain skilled worker, yet found a way of reintegrating themselves in the economy as chief of financial service, maintenance, planning department, chief accountant or just plain workers.¹²

Looking at the ethnic structure of Cluj throughout its recent history (late 19th and early 20th Centuries) the only logical conclusion one can come to, is that for a very long time after the First World War there was a balance between the number of Romanians and Hungarians living and working in the city. According to the research done by Rogers Brubaker and his collaborators, until the mid 70s most of the working force, especially skilled, was Hungarian, as they represented the majority of the city's population.¹³ This is a more than pertinent explanation, but in the interest of furthering the analysis we should take a close look at the workers hired by "Tehnofrig" in the first half of the seventh decade (1960-1966), relying on employment sheets, and on the enterprise's technical school lists of skilled workers trained.

From the beginning it must be said that after extensive research the main conclusion is that indeed the largest part of those hired by the factory were of Hungarian origin, comprising the majority of the workforce, while Romanians came in second, though in considerable numbers as well. As for other nationalities their presence is next to inconsequential, especially taking into account that most of Cluj's Jewish community had ended up in Auschwitz or migrated to Israel in the first post-war decades.¹⁴

¹² CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ*, I 235724, Vol. 1, f.7, 43.

¹³ Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, Liana Grancea, *Politica Naționalistă și Etnicitate Cotidiană Într-un Oraș Transilvănean*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Institutului Pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale & Kriterion, 2010), p. 126.

¹⁴ For more details see Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, *Istoria evreilor din Transilvania (1623-1944)*, (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), and Moshe Carmilly-

Beforehand, a methodological issue must be brought into discussion for the purpose of clarifying certain aspects of establishing nationality. While most workers' ethnicity is easy to establish based on their names, in some cases this proved somewhat more difficult as their family names were clearly Hungarian, while their first names were written in their Romanian variant. While this might pose an epistemological barrier, by relying on the fact that these names have a correspondent in Hungarian, and that mixed marriages were not common (it should be noted that this is strictly when referring to the "Tehnofrig" case), we can describe most of these individuals as being of Hungarian descent. This phenomenon is most likely due to clerical error, if it could be called as such, as there was yet no official policy of Romanianization.¹⁵

I.1. Majority and Minority, Hungarian and Romanian workers:

In 1960 there were approximately 180 Hungarians hired at the "Tehnofrig" factory. The number of Romanians is somewhat lower, at around 130. While there is a pretty solid Hungarian majority, one can easily assert that at this particular point there was a balance.¹⁶ Going forward, to 1961, the gap between these two nationalities further increased as there were around 189 Hungarians and no less than 100 Romanians.¹⁷ It would thus seem that despite massive migration of people from the countryside, the ethnic structure of the skilled workforce remained mostly unchanged.

The following year, 1962, brings a balancing of the nationalities numeric report as there are 71 Romanians hired, and 73 Hungarians, the two person difference is quite negligible. Further expanding on files from 1962 there were another 97 Hungarians and 51 Romanians hired,

Weinberger, *Memorial volume for the Jews of Cluj-Kolozsvár*, (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1988).

¹⁵ If those filling up the papers were Romanians then it would have been easier for them to write their version of the first names, as most of them have an equivalent in both languages, also see Iorgu Iordan, *Dicționar al Numelor de Familie Românești*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983), also see for "Romanianization", Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally. Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940-44*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 23, 30.

¹⁶ Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale Cluj (DJAN CLUJ), Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 168, 169, 170, 171/1960, *Fișe de Angajare*.

¹⁷ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 234, 235, 236/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*.

putting the first at almost double the others, a considerable difference.¹⁸ This trend continues way into 1963 and 1964, when the number of Hungarians was more than double compared to the Romanians, 280 to 105, and 295 to 145.¹⁹ Based on the few documents available from 1965, for the first time we come across an instance where Romanians are almost double the number of Hungarians, 94 to 55.²⁰ Yet, this does not mark a definitive change in trends as again in 1966, the Hungarians once more dominate the fresh workforce of "Tehnofrig", 102 to 73.²¹

I.2. Skilled or unskilled? Hungarians and Romanians workers at Tehnofrig:

The quantitative analysis rather raises more questions than it offers answers. Despite massive migration from the countryside to the cities, as described by Rogers Brubaker, Hungarian workers still dominated the landscape of the factory. This is explainable by the nature of "Tehnofrig", which focused on the production of machines, requiring a certain degree of specialisation in using complex machinery. This ties in perfectly to Brubaker's assertion that until the mid-1970s, the majority of skilled workers had been of Hungarian descent. There is no indication that children were inclined to seek employment at "Tehnofrig" because their parents had previously been hired there. Yet, looking at Virgiliu Țărău and Tamás Lónhárt's study, one can notice some patterns of skilled workers' children joining their ranks. In fact, starting from here there is another issue, as there are at least two interpretations to how skilled workers were formed. For older skilled workers trained under the previous system, one had to start as an apprentice and labour up through effort and sacrifice, ultimately learning through practice. The new category was the result of formal education, and thus with a whole different work ethic.²² This issue was not specific only for "Tehnofrig"

¹⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 275, 277, 278/1962, *Fișe de Angajare*, and File No.276/1962, containing Hiring sheets, school sheets, graduate lists.

¹⁹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 326, 327, 328, 329/1963, *Fișe de Angajare (Contracte de Ucenicie)*, and Files No. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, *Fișe de Angajare, Fișe de Angajare și Contracte, Cereri de Angajare*.

²⁰ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 39/1965, *Corespondența în legătură cu angajări*, 50/1965, *Evidența Încadrărilor*.

²¹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No. 76/1966, *Evidența Încadrărilor*.

²² Tamás Lónhárt, Virgiliu Țărău, "Remembering the Old City, Building a New One"- The Plural Memories of a Multiethnic City. The transformations associated

and Cluj or for that matter Romania, Sheila Fitzpatrick identified very much the same pattern in the Soviet Union, where apprenticeship was also perceived as the best method of learning practical skills, but it also angered syndicates because it threatened the welfare and security of the existing workforce.²³

Starting from the same files we note that beginning with 1960, and up until 1966, the general trend is in favour of Hungarians as skilled workers. There are two major categories which were employed by "Tehnofrig", machinists, and turners. Of course these were not the sole skilled jobs individuals could get as there were many trained for the foundry as casters or some as cutters (for mills), yet the first two seem to have clearly dominated the landscape of the factory.²⁴ Before moving on with the analysis it must be said that there were around three sub-categories of machinists: simple trained machinists who judging by the terminology used in documents might just well have been re-trained locksmiths (at least in the earlier years of the enterprise's existence, until it had managed to establish its own training/educational facilities),²⁵ then we have maintenance mechanics, who looked for, and repaired equipment, and lastly engineers specialised in mechanics (these seem to appear more often from 1962 onwards). To skilled jobs we also add occupations such as drivers, since this required a specific qualification obtained through an official examination. Here we also include electricians, who though not many, were still a constant presence worth mentioning.

Alongside skilled workers there were three other significant categories of workers at "Tehnofrig" in the 1960s. First of all we count the administrative staff, comprised of calculators (abacists), accountants and bookkeepers, typists and various other similar occupations. Secondly, there were specialists, not that many were hired between 1960 and 1966, but enough to be worth mentioning, here we include technicians, and

with Communism as remembered by Hungarian workers from Cluj/ Koloszvár/ Klausenburg", in ed. Maria Todorova, Augusta Dimou, Stefan Troebst, *Remembering Communism: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experiences in Southeast Europe*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), pp.313-314, 318-319, 324.

²³ Sheila Fitzpatrick, , *Education and Social Mobility*, p.14, 48, 59.

²⁴ At first glance, the historian might be tempted to believe that each nationality had a preference towards one specialisation, instead of the other, but as the research progressed this proved to be a mere illusion as any possible trend in this direction does not last over time.

²⁵ The "Tehnofrig" professional school, which functions to this day, although no longer as part of the factory's infrastructure.

engineers. Although this categorisation poses two essential problems or questions. Where do we place draftsmen and technical drawers? Undoubtedly these individuals needed a certain amount of skill and training, yet they had close ties to the administrative sector since their work was more tied to orders coming from central planning than other skilled workers.²⁶ Since the aim of this study is to look at how "Tehnofrig" fits into Cluj's industrialisation in relation to the workforce, and less to explore the relation between certain levels of the enterprise, this type of worker will be placed alongside other skilled workers. The other question we must ask regards foremen, if they are simple skilled workers or can we count them as specialists. Their additional training, which based on student lists from the "Tehnofrig" school lasted between two to three years²⁷, can indeed be counted as a further form of specialisation though their basic knowledge and qualification remained the same. Thus, we consider that they remained skilled workers, though better equipped for 'modern' industry. Starting from the issue of further training we must take into consideration the language of study at the professional school. It is more probable that it was Romanian, especially after the events of 1956, and the fall from power of higher Party members with ethnic minority origins. Thus this would have marked a further blow to traditional work ethics, widening the gap between new and old skilled workers.

The last category is that comprised of various jobs as unskilled workers. Most individuals placed here had only the most basic education, four to seven elementary classes. But these were not the only ones, people with diplomas from theoretical high-schools, professional schools, and in some cases even with university degrees could end up in such jobs,²⁸ although it can be noticed that there was some effort in putting them in better positions, usually in administration/ management. Among those deemed by the regime as unskilled we also count school

²⁶ See the Securitate's interest in designs, and relations between administrative and technical sectors, CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ, I 235724*, vol. 2, ff.103, 120-121 (the case of the hidden failed milk separator), CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ, I 235724*, vol. 3, ff.30, 34, 47-49, 70.

²⁷ Looking at any of the hiring sheets, one can observe that those in skilled positions had a usual of seven primary classes and three more years of training at a professional school (there were rare exceptions with just two years).

²⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no.171/1960, *Fișe de Angajare*, ff.94, 153, 169, 193, File no.234/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*, f.163, File no.235/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*, ff.98, 113, File no.236/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*, ff.92, 133, File no.370/1964, *Fișe de Angajare și Contracte*, f.291.

teachers, security guards, loaders, and carriers, since most had limited education, as mentioned above. Also, it is important that we distinguish between those who at the time they were hired were still pupils at the factory's professional school, and until they passed the final examination were counted as unskilled workers.²⁹

In 1960, "Tehnofrig" hired around 147 skilled workers, and 104 unskilled ones. Thus most Hungarians were skilled while Romanians were less qualified, the difference explains why the first group was more numerous, making the Securitate's accusations towards Dezideriu Jenei false and malicious. Of all skilled workers, no less than 92 of them were of Hungarian descent, the rest being Romanians with a few exception (a Turkish turner). When looking at the composition of the unskilled group we conclude that more than half were Romanians, 53 to be more precise, while 50 were Hungarians and one Saxon. To further disprove the Securitate's claims one needs only to look at the administration and specialist categories' composition, with 17 Hungarians in the first group and just four in the second, while thirteen Romanians were hired in the administrative sector, and eleven as specialists, much more than any other ethnic group. There is no proof to the Securitate's accusations of Dezideriu's involvement in the Hungarian management of Tehnofrig³⁰. The number of Romanians in the administrative sector increased starting from 1960, changing the previously mentioned order of things.³¹

The following years seem to add weight to this primary conclusion. Of 147 skilled workers hired in 1961, most, 117 were Hungarian, and only around 30 were Romanians. We counted no less than 57 unskilled workers, which emphasizes "Tehnofrig"'s character as a factory focusing on the production complex machinery, thus requiring skilled workers. Twenty-six were Hungarians, the rest Romanians, further illustrating that Romanians comprised mostly the unskilled workforce. Thus, it is unsurprising that under these conditions the ethnic structure of employees was as it was, certainly not the result of a chauvinistic conspiracy. Also, the process of Romanianizing the enterprise's

²⁹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no.329/1963, *Contracte Ucenici și Învățământ Tehnic*, ff.159, 161.

³⁰ CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ*, I 235724, vol.1, ff.89-92, CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ*, I 235724, vol.2, f.102.

³¹ DJAN CLUJ, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 168, 169, 170, 171/1960, *Fișe de Angajare*.

administration continued, as there were only eight Hungarians hired to twelve Romanians. This was also available for specialists.³²

By far the most illustrative documents are those referring to 1962, as they contain lists of students at the factory's school, revealing much about the ethnic composition of the workforce of the 50s. This year saw "Tehnofrig" hire no less than 211 skilled workers, of whom 139 were Hungarians, and only 72 were Romanians. As far as unskilled workers go there was a total of just around twenty, with most, thirteen, Romanians. We can hardly accuse anyone of having a hiring policy aimed at favouring a certain group more than others.³³ As school lists show, there were far more Hungarians enrolled in school to become foremen than Romanians, considering that this type of further specialisation was only available for already skilled workers. Thus the lists should be relevant to showing us the ethnic structure of the individuals hired before the 1960s. There were 217 people enrolled, 162 Hungarians and only 55 Romanians. There is however a level of doubt regarding these lists as there is one, following the evolution of somewhere between twelve and fourteen workers at a time, and most of them come from other enterprises, such as Steagul Roșu, in Brașov. This means there is a possibility that some of those on the lists were not in fact "Tehnofrig"'s own workers. Yet what we can say is that there was a practice of taking workers out of production during this education period, and still paying them, which does beg the question if they were used by the "Tehnofrig" factory as workers. We could speculate that this was part of a work-exchange program, there is no such clear indication in the archival sources. Unfortunately the documents studied or made available by the archives do not reveal much in this sense, though more research in the future could be useful.³⁴

Going back to the increasing number of Romanians hired in the administrative sector of the enterprise, it should be noted that in 1962 this process seems to have suffered changes as in this sector there were more Hungarians hired than Romanians, nine to six. Not the same can be said when it comes to specialists, where the pre-existing trend continues with more Romanians than Hungarians, most of them in fact

³² DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 234, 235, 236/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*.

³³ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 275, 277, 278/1962, *Fișe de Angajare*, and File No.276/1962, containing Hiring sheets, school sheets, graduate lists.

³⁴ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.276/1962, containing Hiring sheets, school sheets, graduate lists, ff. 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 116-117, 119, 120, 202, 256, 261.

being graduates of the Polytechnic Institute in Cluj and Iași, making them engineers, individuals with a higher education. This played an important role at the beginning of the Cold War as it was seen as a tool for the purpose of furthering national goals, by creating cadres for the planned economy.³⁵ Calling them specialists is not exaggerated at all as there were characteristics of a class. In the Romanian case only around 8 percent of secondary education were allowed to get to university, making this category numerically reduced. While one could argue that this would have generated a system promoting quality over quantity it ended up being another mechanism of control.³⁶

An interesting fact is that unskilled and specialist positions were mainly concentrated in the hands of Romanians while skilled jobs remained the principal profession for Hungarians.³⁷ Thus, there is a gap between certain social categories of Romanians, and an absence in them of Hungarians. This could be explained by the migration from periphery to centre (countryside to city), with more and more Romanians having access to industrial jobs and better education, while the overall number of Hungarians decreased quite considerably.

The following two years, 1963 and 1964, do not stand outside this pattern we have so far discovered. In fact, 1963 highlights the discrepancy between the number of Hungarians and Romanians hired as skilled workers, of 376, only around 151 were Romanians with the rest being of Hungarian descent, except for two individuals who were Jewish, and respectively of mixed origins.³⁸ In 1964, the situation suffered merely numeric changes as tendencies continued to be the same. From a total of 352 people hired for skilled workers' positions around 242 were Hungarians, one was of mixed origins, and the rest, slightly over 100 were Romanians. This is in relation to the hiring of unskilled labourers which was quite insignificant, at only 58 in two years, making any comparative analysis in this sense useless.³⁹

³⁵ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.275/1962, ff.47, 79, 108, 123, File No. 276/1962, ff.90-95, 160-162, 167, 170, 174, 176, 185-186.

³⁶ Lona Withmarsh, Roxandra Ritter, "The Influence of Communism on Career Development and Education in Romania", in *The Career Development Quarterly*, Vol.56, September 2007, pp.87-88.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 90-95.

³⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 326, 327, 328, 329/1963, *Fișe de Angajare (Contracte de Ucenicie)*.

³⁹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, *Fișe de Angajare, Fișe de Angajare și Contracte, Cereri de Angajare*.

In these two years there were around 37 people brought into the administrative sector of the enterprise; most were Romanians, although in 1963 there were only three of them hired by "Tehnofrig", while in 1964 their numbers once more increased. Despite the rise in employments, these years representing the peak of the period under analysis, there were quite few new specialists, only 27, with very few Hungarians among them. It would not be hazardous to assert that the Romanianization process mentioned throughout this chapter continued unhindered.⁴⁰

Documents relating to 1965 and 1966 are few and far between with the only three files containing hiring requests or contracts. There is no reason to believe that this is owed to a reduction in employment levels⁴¹, but it is more probable that this situation is strictly the result of the loss of documents in the chaos of 1990s privatization of state owned enterprises.

Yet from what can be gathered, these two years mark a complete break with previous patterns when talking about skilled workers. If between 1960 and 1964 there were more Hungarians in these jobs, now the situation is completely reversed with Romanians dominating. While this change might seem as a sudden one, there might be another explanation (except the migration one) showing towards a gradual change. Looking at the ages of those hired between 1962 and 1964 we notice that most of them have been born in the late years of the war or in the first three after it. This in corroboration with more educational opportunities, such as the creation of professional schools, "Tehnofrig" having its own, might explain or lead towards an increase in the number of Romanian skilled workers. It can also be related to what Rogers Brubaker discovered, namely an increase in the number of Romanians in the city at a higher rate than Hungarians.⁴²

II. Workers' Age and Education:

Continuing from the previous chapter, it must be stated that the 1960s marked not only changes in terms of ethnicity and qualification, but also generational transfers. The decline in numbers of hired unskilled

⁴⁰ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 326, 327, 328, 329/1963, *Fișe de Angajare (Contracte de Ucenicie)*, and Files No. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, *Fișe de Angajare, Fișe de Angajare și Contracte, Cereri de Angajare*.

⁴¹ This is based on Socialist economy's functioning, as it relies on continuous growth rates so it can integrate individuals in the workforce.

⁴² Rogers Brubaker, *Politică Naționalistă și Etnicitate Cotidiană*, p.93.

workers and the rise of those with certain skills can be explained by the coming of age of youngsters born in the last or immediate post-war years.

Between 1960 and 1963, those born before the Second World War, and in the inter-war period were an important component of the freshly hired workforce. The first noticeable tendencies towards a change in this sense can be noticed starting with 1964, even if the previous year had already marked a sharp decline. Of course, one could argue that such a conclusion is also the result of a lack of sources. But then again, it must also be mentioned that by this time "Tehnofrig" had its own well-developed system of training the new workers. This is clearly illustrated both from available student sheets, also from the development plans drawn in 1960. These clearly show the importance of the factory's professional school in the future of this enterprise.⁴³ It is not surprising if we take into account the Soviet experience of integrating peasants into industry and the system they wished to create, thus schools would have the purpose of preparing individuals for their new world.⁴⁴ The creation of schools which were under the patronage of factories seemed to have two reasons, that of solving issues regarding tuition, as class differences still survived, and making it seem it would offer a similar education to the previous one, keeping in tune with traditional ethics.⁴⁵ This was also a perfect means of finding workplaces for young graduates, as the regime had set the goal of eliminating unemployment, through the 1973 Work Code which officially banned it, thus forcing the state to ensure jobs for fresh graduates.⁴⁶ The attachment of schools to industrial enterprises and the subsequent investment made, determined the introduction of apprentice contracts, forcing graduates to continue working there for at least a couple of years.⁴⁷

⁴³ Sketches and plans drawn and written in 1960 reveal what the regime envisaged for the "Tehnofrig" factory, see DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no. 166/1960, *Dezvoltarea Finală a Întreprinderii Tehnofrig*.

⁴⁴ Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization. The consolidation of the modern system of Soviet production relation, 1953-1964*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.129.

⁴⁵ Mervyn Matthews, *Education in the Soviet Union. Policies and Institutions since Stalin*, Volume 9, (London, New York: Routledge, 1982), p.70, 82.

⁴⁶ Lona Withmarsh & Ruxandra Ritter, "The Influence of Communism on Career Development", p.88, for a broader understanding of this system and phenomenon also see Mervyn Matthew, *Education in the Soviet Union*, pp.82-84.

⁴⁷ Tamás Lőnhárt, Virgiliu Țărău, "Remembering The Old City", p.319.

Looking at previous years we also notice that there were some individuals engaged in either traditional occupations such as blacksmiths, whose occupation had been rendered obsolete by the new industry developing in Cluj, or in those who had lost their prestige (including a decrease in remuneration), and who found it easier to change what they were doing before. For some this meant becoming unskilled workers, this despite having education.⁴⁸ This leads back to the issue of traditional work ethics, but here one must take into account economic constraints felt by individuals, aptly illustrated by the witnesses interviews by Virgiliu Țărău and Tamás Lőnhárt.⁴⁹

There is also the issue of age. There were some cases, although not that many, of the people born either at the end of the nineteenth century or in the first decade of the twentieth. These are interesting as these individuals had quite an advanced age for that period, most of them coming back from retirement to join the workforce. They found employment as unskilled workers, mostly as watchmen as this did not involve any physical effort, but some also enrolled in school to gain a qualification.⁵⁰ Their decision raises an important question, what drove these individuals to seek jobs at such advanced ages?⁵¹ It is highly unlikely that this was the result of having to raise underage children, although it is possible that they would have had to contribute to the welfare of the extended family, thus prompting them to find jobs in industry. We must also take into account changes in the economical structure of the countryside, as a result of collectivization, as many families lost their previous means of supporting themselves (land,

⁴⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no.170/1960, *Fișe de Angajare*, f.49, File no.171/1960, *Fise de Angajare*, f.119, File no.329/1963, *Contracte Ucenici și Învățământ Tehnic*, f.104, also see footnote 20.

⁴⁹ Tamás Lőnhárt, Virgiliu Țărău, "Remembering The Old City", p.316-317.

⁵⁰ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no.168/1960, ff.64, 170, 183, 227, File no.169/1960, ff.159, 216, 248, 254, File no.171/1960, f.361, File no.234/1961, ff.238, 256, File no. 235/1961, ff.47, 146, File no.236/1961, ff.179, 245, 248, File no.275/1962, ff.15, 50, 58, File no.277/1962, f.222, File no.278/1962, f.22, File no.326/1963, ff.107-110, 118-121, 162-165, 198-201, 281-284, 321-322, File no.327/1963, ff.50, 58, 89, File no.329/1963, ff.98, 101, 290, File no. 371/1964, f.212, File no.373/1964, f.175, File no.374/1964, f.6, File no.39/1965, f.167, File no.76/1966, ff.19, 34, 77-78, 94.

⁵¹ The Securitate went as far as to accuse Dezideriu Jenei of hiring retired individuals which had previous ties to him, although unlike other mentioned accusations this was more subtle, see CNSAS, *Dosar Informativ*, I 235724, vol.1, f.31.

animals, machines, etc.) and were forced to seek alternative means of gaining access to the necessary resources for survival.

III. Gendering the workforce:

As mentioned in the introduction, gender is an important issue when talking about the social history of communism. While there was indeed some progress in regard to helping women enter paying jobs, most historians agree that this comprises only half of the story. East-Central European societies, at the beginning of the twentieth century still displayed many traditionalist ideas regarding gender roles in the economy.

There are many similarities between Romania and the Soviet Union at that time, according to Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, both were mainly rural countries with a similar agricultural background, thus after collectivization this pattern only deepened.⁵² Thus it would be safe to say that this was a world of hardship, and that mothers raised their children to look towards a brighter future, now represented by the rapidly growing towns and cities near-by or far-away.⁵³

The main issue with the Communist emancipation of women is that while it offered them the opportunity of entering the ranks of the workforce, it was also restrictive. It mainly succeeded in further burdening them as now they had to worry about their new jobs, but at the same time responsibilities of the household remained theirs.⁵⁴ Secondly, the so-called policies implemented by the regime were inconstant, and had little capacity for piercing pre-existing gender mentalities. There were considerable differences between Stalinist "emancipation" and the ones that followed under Khrushchev's, Brezhnev's and Gorbachev's rules.⁵⁵ "During the 1930s, the success of women's liberation and equality was measured by the numerical absorption and accommodation of women into traditional male spheres of activity in politics and the economy, in culture and the arts."⁵⁶ This is

⁵² Gail Kligman, Katherine Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege. The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962*, (Princeton & New York: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp.49-50.

⁵³ Liubov Denisova, *Rural Women in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*, p.1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.9, also see Jill Massino, "Workers under Construction: Gender, Identity, and Women's Experiences of Work in State Socialist Romania", in Ed. Shana Penn, Jill Massino, *Gender Politics and Everyday Life*, p. 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

⁵⁶ Melanie Ilic, *Women in the Stalin Era*, p.5.

the mentality on which communism based its assertion that it had emancipated women. But as most scholars have now proven in fact women suffered very much from discrimination, as the regime did little in terms of changing the patriarchal way of seeing both the role of women and of their role in the economy.⁵⁷ The "Tehnofrig" factory in Cluj was no exception from the existing state of facts.

Despite the growing number of women entering the workforce after the war, very few managed to become part of heavy industry, and even less were offered the opportunity of becoming skilled workers, which would have meant higher wages, and more independence.⁵⁸ Even the few who were given such a chance were assigned to unskilled or auxiliary positions for the management of the factory. Yet this does not mean there were no exceptions from the general trend. Some women managed to join either the rows of the skilled or that of specialists (such as technicians or even engineers), in fact, the second category was more likely.

In 1960, "Tehnofrig" hired thirty-five women in various positions, of which surprisingly enough only nine were in unskilled jobs, while there were five as specialists with university degrees. The rest were typists, accountants or book-keepers. The following year saw more women being hired by the factory, around forty-six. Of these, the majority of twenty-six were with some skill, for example, there was one who was a welder, a job specific to males, but again most were put in the administrative sector as auxiliary personnel. There were very few as specialists, only four. The rest were unskilled labourers in the cleaning or food-serving⁵⁹ (for the factory's canteen)⁶⁰.

The next two years brought about very little change, if none at all. The number of women hired by "Tehnofrig" increased, with only thirteen in 1962, and twenty-eight in 1963. If the documents in the archives are even remotely complete, then we could even assert that the hiring rates for women decreased considerably, with two years making

⁵⁷ Jill Massino, "Workers under Construction: Gender, Identity, and Women's Experiences of Work in State Socialist Romania", in Ed. Shana Penn, Jill Massino, *Gender Politics and Everyday Life*, pp.14, 26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.

⁵⁹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 168, 169, 170, 171/1960, *Fișe de Angajare*.

⁶⁰ It can be linked to Khrushchev's attempts at modernizing the U.S.S.R. with such communal facilities, and its subsequent failure, see Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization*, pp.32-34.

up only half of the quota of 1961.⁶¹ Following the same methodology of reading the sources, there were no further improvements until 1966, with just thirty-two women hired in 1964, of which one was a technician, and nineteen as auxiliary to the administration.⁶² While in one of the only files available for 1965 we can find only one woman hired, as a cleaner,⁶³ the last year under analysis does however seem to show changes in the system as there are four women training to become winders, these being skilled positions.⁶⁴

Explanations for the general lack of hired women at "Tehnofrig" could reside in the nature of the work done there. It is more than probable that daily tasks there involved heavy lifting or other activities of this type. Of course this does not inherently mean that women are incapable of performing such tasks, but we must understand that despite the regime's so-called emancipation of women, the dominant mentality remained pretty much the same. Thus they were seen as incapable of replacing men on the work-floor or in some instances this was unwanted by male workers and managers, as this could threaten their role as bread-winners.⁶⁵ Still, this is not to say that there was a stern opposition to women working in factories, after-all this meant more financial resources for the family, thus a higher standard of living. The only condition was that they mostly seek jobs in the textiles industry⁶⁶ or in less paid and less prestigious positions if engaged in heavy industry.

Earlier we mentioned the existence of a canteen at the enterprise. This, if properly functional, could have indeed alleviated much burden from workers, especially commuters, who would not have to bring food with them. However there is no mention of any facilities for day-care of

⁶¹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 234, 235, 236/1961, *Fișe de Angajare*, Files No. 275, 277, 278/1962, *Fișe de Angajare*, and File No.276/1962, Files No. 326, 327, 328, 329/1963, *Fișe de Angajare (Contracte de Ucenicie)*.

⁶² DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, *Fișe de Angajare, Fișe de Angajare și Contracte, Cereri de Angajare*.

⁶³ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No.50/1965, *Correspondența în legătură cu angajări*, 50/1965, *Evidența Încadrărilor*, f.27.

⁶⁴ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.76/1966, *Evidența Încadrărilor*.

⁶⁵ Wendy Goldman, "Babas at the Bench: Gender Conflict in Soviet Industry in Soviet Industry in the 1930s", in Ed. Melanie Ilic, *Women in the Stalin Era*, pp.70-71

⁶⁶ This was a sector rapidly developed in the first decades of communist rule, see David Turnock, *The Economy of East Central Europe, 1815-1989. Stages of transformation in a peripheral region*, (New York & London: Routledge), 309-311, also see Wendy Goldman, "Babas at the Bench", p.77.

children although this would have been quite helpful as many hired women had children, with some having more than just one.⁶⁷ Those who were childless belonged to a certain age group, younger women, though not always as there were spinsters, yet most remained skilled ones, as their priorities had changed. Of course exceptions from this trend existed as women who followed education and started families were not that uncommon.⁶⁸ Still, there might be a different explanation for this lack of day-care facilities, as this might not even have been economically profitable, as the "Tehnofrig" factory had a mostly male workforce. Also it would be useful if future research looked at the number and capacity of all day-care centres in the city. This would illustrate how much was the regime willing to invest in women's efficient integration into the 'modern workforce'.

When discussing gender issues in industry one should also look, at least shortly, at wages. One, and probably the best example, is that of engineers, a profession in which there was a better chance of finding women, when looking at heavy industry. According to one such list from "Tehnofrig", gender was not a factor, as both were paid the same, 1,100 lei per month.⁶⁹ This indicates that wages were calculated based on qualification and difficulty categories. This would merit a more ample analysis, which could extend in several directions (age, gender, nationality, etc), but the current paper has other questions to answer.⁷⁰ Of course this cannot account for other issues such as gender discrimination on the factory shop-floor. As previously mentioned, men were less than happy to see their traditional position threatened or changed.

IV. Workers from villages to cities:

The Twentieth Century was one of great demographic change for Romania. Before the First World War this had been a country with an enormous rural population, and very poorly developed urban centres,

⁶⁷ Donald Filtzer emphasized the Soviet case, where a lack of such facilities eventually led to overcrowding which in turn led to disease, only further hardening the life of women workers who had to take care of the sick children, see Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization*, p.201.

⁶⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.236/1961, *Fise de Angajare*, ff.61, 87, 106, 109, 144.

⁶⁹ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.276/1962, ff.90-95.

⁷⁰ see as an example DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File No.65/1966, *Stat de Functiuni*.

most of them being organized around peasant fairs, and not truly characterized by merchant or crafting activities. After the 1918 union of Transylvania with the Old Kingdom the percentage of city dwellers increased, and although at a slow pace, this trend continued in the following decades.⁷¹

The rise of the communist regime, and its over-emphasis on heavy industry meant a further development of urban centres, with new factories being built and these requiring more and more workers. Towns and cities themselves could offer only so much, yet their hinterland held an insufficiently tapped human resource which the communists aimed at attracting into their grand plans by offering them the opportunity of bettering their lives. While this is an interesting subject, it will be the focus of a future paper, with this chapter dealing with internal and external migrational patterns.⁷²

IV.1. External migration patterns:

Many peasants from Cluj's hinterland were attracted to the city by the prospect of an improved life, due to higher incomes and access to more resources.⁷³ This pattern seems to have also been followed by the "Tehnofrig" factory, yet rural-urban migration in this case was somewhat more complex. Looking over employment records reveals that individuals from all over the country, and even some individuals from abroad, sought to get jobs here.

In fact, it would be quite difficult to argue that most had come from the countryside because those from cities or town were not so few. Of course, this is explicable through "Tehnofrig"'s type of production and heavy use of machinery, thus it needed mostly skilled workers, of whom experienced ones already lived in urban centres. For example, in 1960, there were no less than eight people from Turda hired by the

⁷¹ Keith Hitchins, *România, 1866-1947*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994), pp.334, 342-343, Bogdan Murgescu, *Romania și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)*, (Iași: Polirom, 2010), pp.349-355.

⁷² Trond Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania. The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship*, (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), p.34, also see William E. Crowther, *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism*, (New York, Westport, London: Praeger, 1988).

⁷³ Rogers Brubaker, *Politică Naționalistă și Etnicitate Cotidiană*, pp.121-122, Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism. Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.15-16.

factory, with four from Gherla and Dej, each. All three towns either had their own industrial facilities or one in their proximity (the wire factory in Câmpia Turzii).⁷⁴

While one could argue that since these were smaller urban settlements people might have been motivated to seek employment in a larger city, especially taking into consideration that Cluj was an important regional centre. But this does not hold up entirely as those who come from similar cities were not few. In the same year, 1960, there were three individuals from Oradea, two from Bucharest, and just as many from Alba Iulia and Braşov, with others from Targu Mures, Baia Mare, Hunedoara, Ploieşti, Bistriţa, and Galaţi following suit. This was probably due to the system of repartition, which characterised the regime's distribution of workers in various sectors of the state command economy.⁷⁵ Yet, this argument cannot be seen as a definitive answer. It was only in the 1970s that Romania's communist regime took serious legislative steps in this sense. In 1972 the state took it upon itself to eliminate unemployment, and a year later even went as far as banning it by law.⁷⁶

In fact, as time went by, the selection pool of the factory only further expanded, as individuals from Timişoara, Mediaş, Buzău, Vaslui, Ismail, Sibiu, Sebeş, Satu Mare or Deva joined the Cluj workforce. This is relevant as moving forward with the analysis towards rural-urban migration we come to realise that most peasants coming to "Tehnofrig" were from villages in Cluj County, thus movement over large distances was rather between cities than between countryside and cities. Of course, this does not mean there were no peasants from other counties, but their number was small, and they mostly came from neighbouring areas such as Sălaj, Mureş, Alba or Bistriţa-Năsăud.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No.168, 169, 170, 171/1960, *Fişe de Angajare*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Lona Withmarsh & Ruxandra Ritter, "The Influence of Communism on Career Development", p.88.

⁷⁷ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No. 234, 235, 236/1961, *Fişe de Angajare*, Files No. 275, 277, 278/1962, *Fişe de Angajare*, and File No.276/1962, Files No. 326, 327, 328, 329/1963, *Fişe de Angajare (Contracte de Ucenicie)*, Files No. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, *Fişe de Angajare, Fişe de Angajare și Contracte, Cereri de Angajare*, File No.39/1965, *Correspondența în legătură cu angajări*, File No.76/1966, *Evidența încadrărilor*.

It was easier for individuals to seek a workplace in Cluj if they were from a near-by village as that meant they did not require accommodation since they could always commute, at least at first, and later get an apartment. Although, we should not ignore the fact that many were former students of the "Tehnofrig" professional school, and had come from the countryside⁷⁸, in their case it would be difficult to establish if their migration would end up being permanent or only temporary, but since life in the village offered mostly agricultural perspectives⁷⁹ it would not be far-fetched to speculate that many thought of making their move permanent.

Those who had previously lived in Cluj, the traditional inhabitants, remembered how new apartment buildings sprung at a rapid pace so as to make possible the accommodation of new workers.⁸⁰ Somehow, Cluj's industrial tradition offered a basis for the construction of new industrial and residential zone, and thus seemed to have evolved more harmoniously.

IV.2 Internal commuting:

Firstly, we must attempt to understand the changes brought about by the advent of communism over the existence of Romanian settlements. One could argue that there are two major paradigms: that traditional centres became mere points of transition, as workers commuted to their factories, or that they continued to be the essence of the towns, cities or villages.⁸¹

According to Robert M. Fogelson the downtown or city centre, as we understand it, was something rather specific to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, while Europe had no such thing.⁸² Indeed many European cities had been systematized by the end of the nineteenth century but he only focuses on those examples, overemphasizing his comparative analysis on Western and certain parts of Central Europe. Yet, in the more Eastern parts of the continent we can clearly notice that most cities and towns

⁷⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files No.326, 327, *Contracte de ucenicie*.

⁷⁹ Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa*, pp.349-355.

⁸⁰ Tamás Lónhárt, Virgiliu Țărău, "Remembering The Old City", p.318.

⁸¹ Mara Mărginean, *Ferestre spre Furnalul Roșu*, p.87-89, 145.

⁸² Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*, (Yale University Press, 2001), p.2.

developed around the old Medieval fortresses. Cluj is one city that fits this pattern perfectly, with its traditional main square being around the Gothic St. Michael Church. The Romanianization efforts of inter-war governments have indeed led to the development of a second main square focusing around the Orthodox Cathedral, and National Theatre and Opera building. This can be seen as a split of the city centre and the legitimacy it traditionally holds.⁸³

Communist development plans and their inevitable influence on the evolution of Cluj serve to prove that the city developed something akin to a downtown. The rise in population, due to worker migration, led to the construction of new residential neighbourhoods around already existing structures (Mănăştur, Mărăşti, Gheorgheni, Zorilor, and Grigorescu), adding to this, new industrial areas (Iris, and Bulgaria)⁸⁴. These new zones ended up surrounding the old ones focused around the city centre. Thus, the downtown became a transit area, from home to work, while it also maintained some educational and entertainment values. Authorities did take steps to building alternative solutions, such as Cinema Mărăşti, Cinema Dacia in Mănăştur (two of the largest working neighbourhoods in Cluj) as well as a commercial points such as Mercur or Minerva. Schools were also targeted, there were many old, prestigious schools downtown,⁸⁵ but there were also neighbourhood ones built by the regime, while others came under the patronage of the various factories, as was the case for "Tehnofrig".

In fact, Cluj followed many of the aspects of the Soviet planning model. One such example is that of the Students' House of Culture in the Lucian Blaga square, a big building which serves to promote the regime's propagandistic ends under the guise of entertainment. In Vladivostok the Bolsheviks had followed a similar if not identical

⁸³ <http://www.primariaclujnapoca.ro/ghid-multicultural.html?show=Scurta%20istorie>, accessed on 14th August 2015, Rogers Brubaker, *Politică Naționalistă și Etnicitate Cotidiană*, p.110, also see Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Ed. Ionel-Nicu Dragoș, Ștefan Damian, Ioan Ciupea, Marin Oprea, Traian Bradea, Virgil Salvanu, *Cluj-Napoca. Municipiu cu Vocație Europeană*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Studia, 2001), pp.45-46, 91-92, also see <http://www.romanalibera.ro/cultura/cultura-urbana/cum-au-aparut-primele-cinematografe-la-cluj-311226>, accessed on 14th August 2015, and <http://bunadimineata.ro/cluj/istoria-cinematografelor-din-cluj-napoca/>, accessed on 14th August 2015.

pattern constructing a Palace of Culture in a wide square.⁸⁶ According to the same author this can be related to the attempt at creating new central points for the city, thus gaining legitimacy by replacing the symbols of the previous age.⁸⁷

After careful analysis of employee records available from the "Tehnofrig" factory we must state that during the first half of the sixties one can notice no solid trend regarding internal commuting. Because of the ethnic composition of the enterprise there was no concentration of workers in one part of the city. There are in fact a couple of streets where larger numbers, though not very many, of employees lived, of these Horea, Traian, Armata Roşie, Anatole France, Deportărilor, Moşilor, Budai Antal Nagy, Janos Herbak, Republicii, Maxim Gorki, Someşeni, Karl Marx, Mihai Viteazul Square, and Libertăţii Square are the most noteworthy.⁸⁸

Starting from some of those listed above we realise that some of the most important human resources came from streets which are near or part of the city's centre. Under these conditions the 'downtown' is not a mere point of transit, but at that particular moment it also had a residential role, thus it also had to have had facilities such as shops, entertainment, and schools. This is hardly surprising, considering that the largest part of the "Tehnofrig" workforce were Hungarians, who lived predominantly in the central parts (an inherited characteristic from previous centuries)⁸⁹.

The various other streets spread all over Cluj are also explicable through migration from the countryside. Also the not so impressive number of individuals coming from new neighbourhoods illustrates that in fact the demographic boom took place later⁹⁰, and most neighbourhoods as known to us today were only built during the seventh decade of the twentieth century.⁹¹

⁸⁶ William Harrison Richardson, "Planning a Model Soviet City: Transforming Vladivostok under Stalin and Brezhnev", at 14th IPHS Conference, *Urban Transformation: Controversies, Contrasts and Challenges*, (Istanbul: 12-15 July 2010), p.5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁸⁸ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", Files no. 275, 276, 277, 278/1962, Files no. 326, 327, 328, 329, 330/1963, Files no. 369, 370, 371, 374/1964, File no. 39/1965.

⁸⁹ Rogers Brubaker, *Politică Naționalistă și Etnicitate Cotidiană*, p.102.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1956, 74,623 Romanians, and 77,839 Hungarians, 1966, 105.185 Romanians, and 78,520 Hungarians, 1977, 173.003 Romanians, and 86.215 Hungarians, p.102.

⁹¹ Interview with S.I. on 20th February 2014.

One aspect we do notice is that many workers, despite many being spread around Cluj, lived in Dâmbul Rotund. This is hardly surprising when taking into account that the settlement (since then turned into a neighbourhood of the city) was first known as Kerekdomb⁹², thus it had a mostly Hungarian population, and as we have already established they represented most of "Tehnofrig"'s workforce.⁹³ Also we should not ignore the proximity factor, as Dâmbul Rotund is not far from the factory. In fact, there were many workers living in other neighbourhoods in the proximity of "Tehnofrig", such as the train station area and the industrial zones, Iris and Bulgaria. We have two possible and plausible explanations for this. Firstly, the train station area had previously been heavily inhabited, with Horea street, which connects the centre to the railway, already an important one. Its closeness to the factory might have determined individuals in the area to seek employment at "Tehnofrig", for obvious reasons. The same is true for the Janos Herbak Colony, focused around the Clujana shoe factory; it housed a number of possibly skilled workers, making them perfect employment targets, while also being near "Tehnofrig".⁹⁴ The second explanation resides in previous arguments that other neighbourhoods have yet to have fully developed, although the number of workers from Mănăştur⁹⁵, Mărăşti, Zorilor, Gheorgheni, and another village encompassed by the expanding city, namely Someşeni⁹⁶.

Conclusions:

Without further expanding the paper, we must attempt to summarise the conclusions reached at this particular point of the research. The 1960s were without a doubt a time of transformation for Cluj and its citizens as the city expanded its industrial capabilities, a change which attracted many people from the neighbouring areas. The "Tehnofrig" factory is just one example of how both society and economy evolved during those times.

⁹² <http://www.primariaclujnapoca.ro/ghid-multicultural.html?show=Scurta%20istorie>, accessed on 14th August 2015.

⁹³ See Chapter I.

⁹⁴ DJAN Cluj, Fond 626 "Tehnofrig", File no.276/1962, ff.109, 110, 112, File no.328/1963, ff.238-240, File no.329/1963, ff.52-54, File no.369/1964, ff.353-356.

⁹⁵ Before becoming part of the city it used to be a village, and by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, <http://cluj.com/articole/cartierul-someseni/>, accessed on 23rd August 2015.

⁹⁶ Traditionally occupied by Romanians.

Chief-engineer, Jenei Dezideriu, from whom our story started, was not part of the conspiracy drawn up by the Securitate, he was just another individual caught up in extraordinary times⁹⁷. His past and his attempts at making the enterprise function properly when resources were scarce, while also trying to bring on specialists made him collide with the ideals of the regime, who wanted to create a new order. In a way this is a story reminding us of the Soviet Cultural Revolution, when in the end previous specialists had to be integrated in communism, even if just for the purpose of making it function.⁹⁸

This paper has followed certain aspects regarding social change at "Tehnofrig" and in Cluj. There are others linked to wages and using the factory's resources to enhance one's standard of living. But from what we have brought to light we can conclude that the 1960s were a period of transition, in which Romanians were becoming part of the skilled workforce as the Hungarian population's positive demographic growth lost momentum. This was based mostly on massive migration, not only from the countryside to the city, but also from other regions of the country. Simultaneously, the number of women entering industry was increasing, and while those who held skilled jobs was small, they did manage to earn some money. Although it must be stated that this came at a price, since they had to carry the double burden of the factory and household.

The purpose of this endeavour has been not only to illustrate and make known certain social issues of those times, and the changes that took place, but also to help develop this new field of historical study so as to better understand the past, and its inheritance for us.

⁹⁷ See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹⁸ See Ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1978).