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# The Cement Industry and its Social and Territorial Impact on Turda City and the Surrounding Area

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The Turda municipality has played a very important role since the daco-roman period of time for being a bundle centre between the golden zone of the Apuseni Mountains and the salt areas of Mureş. Its development starts especially after the arrival of the V-th legion Macedonica, it becoming, under the Septimiu Sever's command first a *municipium* and then a *colonia*. The importance of Potaissa (today's Turda) is also due to the fact that during the III<sup>rd</sup> century the only cities exceeding were Apulum and Sarmizegetusa. The economical base of the population was given by the agricultural works, by the salt exploitations and by commerce.

During Middle Ages, Turda was developing its mine and salt domains under the Hungarian influence. Starting with the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> the Transilvanian society encounters the feudal crisis at the same time with the appearance of new capitalist forms. Along with the handicraft production the manufactures appeared too.

Despite all these it is not possible to talk of a real industrialisation in Turda before 1920 when the cement and beer industry appear and develop at the same time with the foundation of the Industry of wires in the Câmpia Turzii City.

The cement factory from Turda is founded on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1913 as a consequence of the existence of 11 cement factories in the whole country, all appeared before 1913, also due to an increasing cement consumption/ inhabitant, but, most important, caused by the existence of optimal industrial developing conditions in the area (the presence of the methane gas in the Plain of Transylvania, the presence of raw material such as: limestone, gypsum, sand, not expensive working potential). The factory is the only one that continually functioned during the Second World War with 290 workers at the time. It has been founded by a financial group from Budapest belonging to Pesti Magyar Kereskedelmi Bank.

It follows a period of economical evolution due to important investments. As a consequence of the decision number 3321 of 12<sup>th</sup> November 1920 the cement factory from Turda was „exempt from custom duty for the machines, parts of the machines and the necessary accessories but also from changing situations, completing or additions to the factory” benefiting by transport taxes and deductions.

In 1922 the majority of the factory's stock has been bought out by the French- Romanian company “Cement Titan” Bucharest, company that will join it until 11<sup>th</sup> June 1948.

In 1926 Gypsum Turda, a company born in 1913, representing a very important gypsum and plaster producer, merges with „Turda Cement” developing progressively vertically integrated bonds while operating the gypsum mine and the processing factory, including wrapping lines.

As a consequence of the socialist revolution, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1948 the main means of industrial production are nationalized, passing from the extension of economic units to the creating of „new industrial colossus”. This way, during the socialist-communist period of the time Turda became a very industrialized town with industries of great importance for the country's economy. As a result of a Ministry Council decision, in 1951 the Sănduleşti limestone quarry has been taken by the cement factory. The limestone was brought from Sănduleşti and Cheia quarries. The lime factory is taken at the same time. But, because of the manual extracting and transportation system productivity was low. It was compulsory to modernise and endow the exploitation. The steam engines were replaced with Diesel and trucks with weightlifting wagons.

In 1973 the „Binder and refract materials Company” is formed including the Cement Factory, the Plaster Factory „Rapid” Aghireş and the Refract products Factory Dej. It will continue to function under this name until 1990. During this period of time, in spite of the affirmations of some political activists, and leaders of this industry at that time, that presented a situation far from reality, with „sustained efforts combined in order to build and insure the functioning of efficient collecting and reusing of dust systems,, (\*The cement factory Turda), the company remains a real danger for the health of the inhabitants as a main pollution factor. The actions presented as directed to reduce dust through tightening up actions, through modification and improvement of the transportation and loading systems were nothing than words, data and fake numbers.

The S.C Cement Turda Company was formed after the 1989 revolution as a joint stock company on basis of the Law no. 15 and the Governmental decision no. 1176/1990 on the old structure of the “Binder and refract materials Company” Turda.

After the separation from the Plaster Factory Aghireş, the social capital decided by the Governmental decision no. 500 included 49,2 thousand million lei, divided into 1.971.445 stock, each in value of 25.000 lei.

Between the ex FPS and the Holdebrang Financier Glaries Limited Company, with the head office in Switzerland, there have been concluded commercial of partnership no. 905 from 06/18/1997 and 212 from 04/14/1998 on the bases of the privatization of companies law no 58 for 51% of the „Cement Turda Company”.

As a consequence of the contract concluded in 1997, stocks in value of 11, 7 million American dollars have been sold with no restrictions of any kind. The articles bonded the company to invest over a 5 year period a sum of 15, 5 million dollars in this industry, in accordance with the investments programme stipulated in the annexe of the agreement.

In 1998, the „Cement” Turda set up another company, the commercial company „Gypsum” Turda SRL authorized as payment in kind of the commercial company „Cement „ SA, respectively the „Gypsum” active production and distribution network where the „Cement” company was a unique stockholder. A Dutch company was also created the „Carpathian Invest BV” which was supposed to receive investments. The concession of the social parts of the „Gypsum” SRL Turda has been realized by this company without being necessary the State Property Funds Organization agreement because the buyer had become the owner of the SC „Cement” S.A. major stock before the payment date.

On 17th of July 1997, the Holcim Group, the former „Holderbank”, realizes his first acquisition in Romania as a major stockholder. The Turda cement industry, thus becoming the only white cement producer of the country. The humid obtaining method is used. It is finally the step to an ecological technology, huge responsibility assumed by the present Holcim S.A Romania. As an active member of the of the action group „Cement Sustainability” from the Worldwide Business Council for Sustainable Development, Holcim is the promoter of the basic principle of the durable development: „providing current needs without compromising the possibilities of the future generations to respond to their own needs”.

I followed the several steps in the evolution of Turda cement industry. I shall try on the next pages to focus on the impact that this industry had on the population of the area, which was directly influenced by the presence and the transformations suffered by this company in time. I analyzed the evolution in time of the social capital, while dropping some conclusions:

Year	Number employees	Observations
1913	200	The cement company is founded (by a financial group from Budapest belonging to Pesti Magyar Kereskedelmi Bank.
1918	250	
1924	378	1922-1948 the Franco Romanian company „Ciment Titan” Bucureşti
1926	322	Gypsum Turda, company created in 1913, important gypsum and plaster producer, joins Turda cement
1927	249	
1928	350	
1935	200	
1936	290	
1940	474	
1948	900	The socialist revolution, on 11th July 1948 the main industrial ways of production

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		are nationalized, including the cement company( in 1951 the limestone quarry from Sandulesti is taken too
1973		The „Binder and refract materials Company” is formed including the Cement Factory , the Plaster Factory „Rapid” Aghireş and the Refract products Factory Dej
1984	3400	
1989	2593	
1990	2741	The SC Cement Turda ( separation from the Plaster Factory Aghireş)
1991	2268	
1992	1895	
1993	1914	
1994	1827	
1995	1815	
1996	1813	
1997	1769	Holcim Group, former „Holderbank”
1998	1592	„Cement” Turda creates another branch, the Commercial Co „Gypsum” Turda SRL
1999	1069 IX-1116, XII-732	
2000	I-659, VI-583, IX-488	
2001	XII -448	Holcim S.A Romania
2004	180	
2006	170	

The company increased economically especially during two periods of time. First, the socialist and communist government 1948-1989, when it has been transformed into a real industrial colossus, all the information available at the moment standing under certain doubts regarding its verity due to the former control and modifications of the data in that period of time and second the actual stage of controlled and durable development. The two stages are very different from each other, first because of the visible difference of the number of employees (1884 the maximum number being of 3.400 employees while the actual company has only 170). This fact is due to a certain number of factors:

- the first period is considered as an extension one while creating the industrial colossus, fact that inevitably leads to an increasing need of increasing the number of employees in the same time with an extreme lack of developed and modern exploitation technology conditions;
- during the first stage the company included the „Binder and refract materials Company” which also included the Cement Company and the Plaster Company“ Rapid” Aghireş and the Refract products company Dej. While the actual Holcim exploits only the cement, all the other branches function independently;
- the actual stage is related to one of the most modern country unit disposing of high technology, having as a consequence the drastic write off of the social capital, the former employees being replaced with machines (there is only one furnace of 400 t/ kiln/day of white clinker, the standard productive capacity for the white cement being of 140.000 t cement/year;
- the giving up of the rail transportation in favour of the motorized means of transport insured part of the Holcim employees with working places within other companies specialized in transportation, which collaborate with Holcim.

As a consequence, the impact of this company upon the population isn't that big nowadays regarding the percentage of the employees. At the same time, the former very destructive impact of the Cement Company is much more reduced in the present because of the use of an ecological technology.

How did the cement industry influence and is still influencing the population of the area? One must take into consideration a series of factors, such as:

- when this company was founded both Turda and Câmpia Turzii had already started their expansion and development as a consequence of the rich soil resources of the area;
- the two towns are still attracting labour force, first from the city population and second, starting with the collectivisation process, from the villages situated close to the cities, people left without their own land and young people attracted by the modern city life;

- the cement industry starts its development, by gradually increasing the number of employees;
- in 1948 the Professional school is founded in order to prepare the workers for various professions, specialized on subjects related to industrial units, most of the graduates being hired by the local companies;
- between 1971-1972 the Industrial high school is founded. Financed by the company, it represents a great opportunity for the young people to get prepared for a profession;
- blocks of flats are built for the employees;
- the negative impact upon the environment would be that Turda became one of the most polluted cities of the country because of the presence of the cement industry. Over the years this situation has affected the population's health.

Nowadays one can't consider anymore Holcim as having a major impact on the population, the number of employees representing a small percentage compared with the communist period. It is not the case of social movements or of significant dismissing. It is also very important to remember the good side of the presence of this company, besides the fact that it offers employment: all the investments, sponsorships and implications of this company in the town's activities, such as: the sponsorship of the informatics laboratory, of the project "Create your environment", addressed to primary and secondary students, the contest "We care" etc., actions having as a main purpose the people's consciousness about creating and maintaining a clean and less polluted city. The production was restricted to reasonable limits, advanced and non polluting technologies being promoted.

## Conclusions

The present offers us the chance and the image of a city more and more close to the demands of the European Union, a city where the former industries and their employees have paid and are still paying a tribute to the mistakes that have been made in the past, a city where many of these companies didn't get the chance to resist and develop on new healthy principles bases. Former employees had to keep abreast of changing conditions by participating to new trainings, founding own business, or, in many cases over passing this difficult moment of dismissals, going abroad. The economical development and the quality of the environment is continually influencing the quality of life. The Turda cement industry still remains for many of us the industrial symbol of this town. The only thing that we have left is the natural beauty of the area and the desire to change the former unpleasant image.

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