

THE COST OF LIFE IN ROMANIA DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD¹

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ABSTRACT

THE TOP ONE PRIORITY FOR EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN EVERY TIME WAS TO ACHIEVE AS MANY RESOURCES AS NEEDED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FOOD IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN LEVEL OF COMFORT FOR ITS MEMBERS. THIS LEVEL OF COMFORT WASN'T THE SAME THROUGH HISTORY. IT WAS INFLUENCED BY THE ECONOMY AND BY THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA. IN ROMANIA, IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD, AN INDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS TOOK PLACE. THIS PROCESS NEEDED WORKERS; MOST OF THEM RECENTLY ARRIVED INTO THE CITY, FROM THE NEAREST VILLAGES. THIS PHENOMENON AFFECTED THE NATURAL ECONOMY. THE WAGES WERE LOW; THE PRICES WERE HIGH, ESPECIALLY INSIDE BIG CITIES.

WHAT WAS THE COST OF DAILY LIFE IN ROMANIAN'S CITIES? WERE THE SALARIES HIGH ENOUGH TO ASSURE THE RESOURCES NECESSARIES TO FAMILIES' SURVIVAL? WHAT FOODSTUFFS WERE CONSIDERED ESSENTIALS? THOSE ARE THE CORE QUESTIONS THAT WE INTENT TO ANSWER DURING THE STUDY USING PRESS AS MAIN SOURCE.

KEY WORDS: *ECONOMY, ALIMENTATION, PRICES, FOODSTUFF, WAGES.*

INTRODUCTION

Primary human needs, those that bind tightly to his survival are those related to food. This was the main concern of all times. The famous frescoes of Lascaux, depicting the act of hunting, illustrates perhaps the most eloquent this aspiration towards food security. During late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, man has adapted by finding new and different food resources, but neither of them failed to ensure survival during times of famine. The triumph of the latter may be considered that it took place in the twentieth century, despite the two great periods of shortages during the First and the Second World War. The triumph as we defined it, not necessarily depends on the harvest collected and reared, but rather to the capacity to produce money, the object of the exchange on the world's market. The end of the 19th century brought with it a wide development of transport and food preservation methods, which determined the use of foodstuff even if they have been obtained on other continents.

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This unprecedented development, industrialization and alongside the development of cities has led to rethinking the idea of famine, due to a lack of financial resources.

In exchange for daily bread, the man of the twentieth century, living in a town, didn't sow or harvest, but worked in the factory, in public institutions or private ones, being properly remunerated for its work. This remuneration ensured him a minimum of comfort, allowing him to sustain his family, assuring them food and clothing.

In Romania, in the interwar period, due to the low rate of industrialization, natural surplus and excessive migration into the city, to achieve the ideal of comfort becomes an aspiration more than an accomplishment. An employee's salary only reached to ensure monthly family's food, other needs being often ignored.

In this study we aim to follow the indicators of economic life that have an immediate impact on living standards in urban society in the interwar period in Romania (food prices of essentials and the relationship between the latter and the wages paid by employers, the quality of food, the link between quality and price and speculation with food). We considered relevant the journalistic usage; in this case, the newspapers "Gazeta Transilvaniei", "Telegraful Roman", "Clujul" and „Buletinul Camerei de Comert si Industrie Cluj” were the favorite sources. The choice of these four papers out of over 1 000 registered in the interwar period is not coincidental. Each of them represents one of the great cities of Transylvania, Braşov, Sibiu and Cluj, they had a tradition of decades and within their pages relevant information to our research were find.

MAIN TEXT

I. SALARIES DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

In 1920, the Ministry of Labor has set up employment Offices in every town-center of each County. These offices became necessary due to the demand for personnel of the new factories and the requests for jobs coming from those leaving their native village in favor of industrialized city. Due to the natural surplus, work force throughout the period has exceeded the number of jobs available. The figures provided by the national statistics are telling in this regard (Scurtu, I, 2003). Wages offered, viewed in relation to the prices of food essentials, are quite small.³ This holds in particular for poor productivity of the newly established industry, but also on hand surplus in relation to the offer. Thus, in 1923 it varied between 300 and 1350 lei. At the base of the hierarchy were guard agents, housekeepers, day laborers and caregivers, midwives, and at the top of the hierarchy- pharmacists, physicians and heads of Office.⁴ Because the meat price varied between 16 and 38 lei and the bread's between 5 and 10 lei, 300 lei, the lowest salary, wasn't enough to assure family nutrition not even for a week. It should be noted, however, that the timetable was still not covered, and the work of women, a novelty from the social point of view, was significantly undervalued.

A few years later, in 1927, wages seem to have increased remarkably, ranging between 2 500 and 4 000 lei.

An investigation of Veturia Manuila, held in December 1927 shows us what it meant in terms of food, a modest budget and a richer one. If modest income allowed the hostess to acquire 2 liters of milk daily and monthly 30 kg of flour, 4 kg of fat, 2 kg of butter, 2 kilograms of rice, two kilograms of lentils, 70 eggs, 4 kg of meat, various vegetables and oranges, rich income allowed the purchase, in addition, of a quantity of 6 kg of sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ kg

³ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome LXXXVI, 1922, no. 125 and 152, 2 showed that the price of meat was 16 to 38 lei and the price of bread was 5 to 10 lei. A 300 lei wage could only cover the bread expenses for a month.

⁴ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome LXXXVI, 1922, no 23, 4.

coffee, 4 kg of Frank (coffee substitute), a double quantity of rice and lentils. These purchases were worth 2 610, respectively 3 136 lei.⁵

Distributing the quantities given in 30 days of consumption we observed that a usual diet was composed of an average of: a 1 kg of bread daily, 133,3 gr of lard, 66,6 gr of butter, 2,3 eggs, 133,3 g of meat, 200 g of sugar, 25 g of coffee and 133,3 of Frank. A menu not too rich, as we can tell today, but these were the conditions in which the workers and officials lived in the years of economic development's peak of Romania and represents a true breakthrough in relation to the figures set out above for the year 1923.

During the great depression those wage values have dropped significantly. Civil servants have seen their salaries reduced by 25%, and those working in the private sector were just happy that they haven't lost their job. Accepting that the maximum salary for a civil servant was up to the amount of 3 500 lei, after applying wage decreases of it, remained with a remuneration of 2,600 lei, which they only received when the money entered in the budget of the State, this meant even a delay of three months.

After 1933, the salaries reached and exceeded the amounts before 1930, allowing a certain comfort to workers and officials.

II. PRICES OF FOOD ESSENTIALS

The price of a foodstuff in relation to the salary or other foodstuff prices, reflect the status enjoyed by it on its market outlets, its degree of use and measures taken by the authorities to adjust the price/quality ratio.

Given that the sources taken into account by us do not reflect the entire outlet in the country and that it had in the viewfinder only than foodstuff whose price is relevant for society as a whole, we refer in this study only at the prices of basic foodstuffs, such as perceived then. Thus, the foodstuffs whose prices were reported in the pages of the newspapers were: bread, meat, milk and sugar. The inclusion of sugar in this category is not accidental. Its popularization and its cheapening in, along with some social measures have led to its takeover of especially poor strata of society who saw in it the ideal food, offering a great deal of energy in relation to its quantity.

THE BREAD

Country with an extensive grain crop, Romania founded its diet on carbohydrates obtained from cereals: bread was the foundation of the city's food and polenta in the villages. Thus, of all the foods mentioned in the newspapers, bread stands out, being frequently mentioned in terms of its price, its variations due to the conditions of the free market, or to regulations of local authorities, etc.

Following its price, we can see that it varies according to the grain harvest of the previous year and the year to which we relate. Immediately after harvesting, the price dropped until it gradual climbed in winter, reaching a peak in the summer of the next year. High prices of bread were determined also by the massive grain exports to Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Thus, the bread could be purchased with rates ranging between 5 and 18 lei. Purchase variants were: white bread, wholemeal and brown. The difference between the purchase price of the white and brown bread was always up to 2 lei, with a few exceptions when the difference dropped to a leu or increased at 4-6 lei.

The prices curve, as we described it above, with a low price in the autumn and a high toward summer, it can be observed in 1925 (the maximum price for bread was originally set

⁵ Veturia Manuilă, „O anchetă socială”, in *Buletin Eugenic și Biopolitic*, tome. I, 1927, no 12, 370-374.

to be 9 lei brown bread, 11 wholemeal bread and 18 lei white bread, the price dropped after evaluating the new harvest at 9 lei brown bread, 11 lei wholemeal bread and 13 lei white bread), 1935 (initial maximum prices were between 7,5-9,5 lei and they dropped to 7 or 9 lei) and 1937 (initial maximum price were between 8.5 and 10.5 lei, they decreases to 7.5 and 9.5 lei).

This curve of prices has not always taken this form. Bad harvests caused by floods, frost and hail have overturned it. Year 1924 is eloquent in this matter; it begins with rates starting at 5 lei for brown bread, 9 lei for wholemeal bread and 10 lei for the white one. A few months later, prices rise slightly to 11 lei wholemeal bread and to 13 lei for white bread. Later on, the wholemeal bread could be bought for 13.5 lei and the white one for 14.5 lei. The peak was reached in the autumn. Then, the prices were 15 lei for wholemeal bread and 16 lei for white bread.

In the third decade the average price of brown bread was 8.18 lei, the wholemeal one of 11.11 lei, while the white bread rate was 12.57. The next decade brought a substantial change: cheapening off and removing the wholemeal bread. The average prices recorded were 7.42 lei for brown bread and 9.57 lei for white bread. What should be noted is that throughout the crisis, prices for bread were not published, but only the changes that they were suffering.

With regard to the bread's regulation, we note that at the beginning of the third decade, we had to deal with three kinds of wares covered by the maximum prices: brown bread, wholemeal bread and white. In 1925, white bread was replaced by loaf for which there wasn't a recommended maximum price, and in 1932, to ease the life of Romanian citizens the Government has decided to allow the mills to extract no more than two types of flour from wheat: bread flour and pastry flour, each being used according to the technique of extraction. Therefore, from the bread flour only bread could be obtained, when from the bakery, croissants, rolls and baguette could be baked.⁶

Returning to the price problem, we must note that these were imposed by municipalities, without interference of the central authorities. This way it could be explained the price differences between the various cities of the country. The only intervention of the government in the issue of price of bread was materialized in the Law for the Suppression, the Supplement and the Amendment of some articles of the Law for the Recovery of Agricultural Production. Through this law, the Government imposed a tax stamp for bread: values in excess of 200 g for white bread, 250 g for loaf, 700 g for whole meal bread, 500 g loaf of special recipe (graham, rye), and 500 -1000 g brown bread).⁷ The role of this stamp duty was to ensure the funds needed for the aids designed by the Government to be granted to farmers to facilitate exports of cereals. Its amount was ranged between 0.5 and 1.5 lei depending on the type of bread and it had to be paid by bakeries, not by the final consumer. The price's development, however, show us that this tax was reflected in the trading price of the most important staple food.⁸ Exception to this tax was imposed only for those who prepared the dough for bread at home and just baked into bakeries. Stamp duty was maintained also in 1932, but its amount was changed.⁹ Thus, for wheat bread a fee of 1 lei stamp was charged, for the others 0, 50 lei.¹⁰ Neither the press nor economic history studies consulted do not mention this fee after 1932, therefore we cannot determine exactly when it

⁶ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCV, 1932, no. 90, 4.

⁷ *Buletinul Camerei de Comerț și Industrie Cluj*, tome X, 1931, no 1, 12.

⁸ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCIV, 1931, no. 76, 4.

⁹ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCIX, 1931, no. 112, 6.

¹⁰ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCV, 1932, no. 90, 4.

was taken out, it is certain that the price of bread has undergone substantial declines in the years immediately following the economic crisis of 1929-1933.

Regarding to the manufacture of this foodstuff during the crisis, "Gazeta Transilvaniei" published in the issue 102 of 1931 some complaints of the consumers. They were coming from the unemployed persons who benefit of the state's aid consisting of bread, meat, lard, soap, sugar, wood and others. The bread that they offered was the worst quality, because the very next day it caught mold and got sour.¹¹

White wheat bread, recently baked is considered to be the symbol of the opposition between rural and urban space. Taking into account the price of bread in line with the salary level of the time, we can find that white wheat bread was to be the preserve for a luxury dinner or celebrations. The ordinary worker couldn't afford it every day.¹²

THE MEAT

Another symbol of the otherness from rural to urban space is the meat, in particular fresh meat. This foodstuff was to be found very rarely on the tables on rural environment. In urban areas, due to the variety existing on the market and its prices steadily dropping to adjustment to a new era, the consumption of this foodstuff was much more popular. With regard to its outlet on the market, one could find it as: first class beef (muscle coming from the lower limbs of the calves) and class II (muscles coming from the upper limbs of the calves), roast beef, beef, mutton, pork (with or without bone and fat), lard and bacon.

Fixing prices for meat and sausage was the prerogative of an Association of butchers, consisting of all the butchers who worked in a town. Although prices were settled in the plenary, there have been rare cases in which its members have violated the provisions of the set and have marketed the products at higher prices. These cases were brought to the attention of the public by the gazettes and punished both by the Association and the City Hall.¹³

None of the sources cited treat the problem of poultry. It is recalled how poultry was sold on the market and its price, but the butchers weren't selling this assortment of meat. As regards to fish, this sort of meat is remembered occasionally, especially during the Christian abstinence when, due to the increasing market demand, we've recorded a more or less pronounced price increase. A superficial analysis of meat's prices reveals that animal fat was much appreciated. Pork meat with fat has long been the most appreciated meat, being rated as a peak value. Also, bacon and lard were marketed with a three-fold price asked for a kilo of beef.

Beef, both with regard to its trading price, and that popularity in its time, was to be found in the wealthy menus and in the weekly ration of workers. The price for beef of second quality has varied between 11 and 36 lei; the minimum price was reached in 1935, and the peak in 1927 and 1940. With regard to beef of high quality, its price has seen important changes too, enrolling for a maximum of 16 and 42 lei recorded in 1935 and 1940. The average price per kilogram for low quality meat was 22, 09 lei, and for the superior quality - 30 lei.

The price of veal is much higher than that of beef, and let us understands that it was enjoying a high prestige. Thus, the price of a kilo of calf ranged between 26 and 46 lei, while the average price per kilogram was 32 lei, with 2 lei more expensive than a kilo of high-quality beef. Mutton has not enjoyed a great popularity among the townspeople, was considered to be of lower quality meat. In rural areas, it was consumed during the autumn

¹¹ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCIX, 1931, no. 102, 1.

¹² Alina Șuta-Bogățean, „Habitat și alimentație în societatea rurală românească din Transilvania de la Revoluția Pașoptistă la Marea Unire din 1918”, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2012), 263.

¹³ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome LXXXV, 1922, no. 74, 4

when the barren sheep and rams were cut off, being preserved only by transforming into pemmican. Its trading price is consistent with the prestige it enjoyed. Thus, in Braşov, Sibiu and Cluj, a kilo of mutton cost between 16 and 28 lei. The minimum was reached in 1923 and in 1927 the peak. The average price per kilogram was 19, 42 lei.

As regards pork meat, we can strongly affirm that has been the most appreciated variety until late, in the 20th century. The appreciation is due to the fat contained, capable of supporting body substance in heavy working conditions. The price of it reflects those set out above. Thus, a kilo of pork cost between 26 and 56 lei, the maximum prices was attained in 1935 and 1927. A differentiation can be made: pork is marketed in two versions: the quality I and II. The average price achieved per kilogram for the first quality pork meat was 46 lei, and for the quality second of 39, 33 lei.

Bacon sold in the butcher's shops in the inter-war period was also classified into raw bacon and smoked bacon. The price for raw bacon was generally lower than that for the smoked bacon. Thus, the raw bacon was market with a price range between 46 and 50 lei per kilogram, and the smoked with a price of 52-54 lei per kilogram. Lard was marketed with a price ranging between 48-58 lei, and fat with 70-74 lei.

Ham's price was 130 lei per kilogram in 1931 according to the report of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cluj, and sausages could be purchased at the price of 60 lei per kilo according to the same source.¹⁴

Despite the low pay and harsh conditions of existence, workers, whatever was their profession, they bought monthly a variable quantity of meat, if not for their own consumption, at least for meals that felt compelled to organize or for a particularly menu on Sundays. Slowly, the meat started to be considered an ordinary food and not a luxury. In support of this claim we bring the list of foodstuff provided as aids for the unemployed during the crisis. The menu had invariably contained a quantity of meat. The food offered at the unemployed canteen contained 250 grams of fat and 500 grams of meat.¹⁵

THE MILK

G. Constantinescu appreciated that the average consumption of milk in the 1930s on the whole territory of Romania was 120 ml of milk per capita, unevenly spread. The area in which was consumed a higher quantity of milk was, according to the author, the Western cities of Timisoara and Oradea-Mare, and areas with a low consumption of milk were the southern and eastern slopes. The lowest milk consumption values have been registered in the city of Constanţa.¹⁶ Prof. Dr. Constatinescu went further and presented in his article the average consumption, in 1940, in the main cities of the country. Thus, the highest milk consumption is recorded at Oradea (350 g/capita), Timișoara and Cernauti (300 g/capita), while the lowest values were recorded in Bucharest and Iași (100 g/capita). Cluj occupied a median position with an average consumption of 260 g/capita.

The figures offered, broadly sketch the popularity of milk during that period. If at the country side this foodstuff is considered to be a staple food, especially for children, in the cities, the figures show us a completely different situation. Experts recommend a daily intake of 500 ml of milk for adults, which was rarely purchased and consumed. This situation is caused by its price, as reflected in the press.

The price of this staple food was constant throughout the period, between 5 and 8 lei for cow's milk and 8-9 lei for the buffaloes, although in rural areas, the direct producers sold milk with a price of up to 3 lei per litter. Price increase is somewhat motivated by the costs of

¹⁴ *Buletinul Camerei de Comerț și Industrie Cluj*, tome X, 1931, no. 1, 27.

¹⁵ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XCIII, 1930, no. 10, 3.

¹⁶ G. Constantinescu, „Săptămâna Laptelui”, in *Revista de Igienă Socială*, tome II, 1932, mai, no 5, 380.

milk's pasteurization, especially in the conditions under which all medical studies, even the press insisted not to consume raw milk due to bacteria and dirt that might be contained in it.¹⁷

THE SUGAR

The sugar, although it was not one of the staples of daily meal, didn't miss from the pages of newspapers. Its use was widespread in Europe and the Americas, barely at the beginning of the 18th century¹⁸. In Romania, it was considered until towards the end of the 19th century as a luxury food, being found only in shopping lists of the most prosperous. Its trading price was considered high, and its use was not so widespread as to be considered essential in a household. Veturia Manuila's survey completed in 1927, recalled sugar on shopping list only of those with a relatively high budget. His ascent may be made in connection with the intensive cultivation of sugar beet, but another of his propeller was its ability to sweeten foods without having to change the taste, which is why it has been used to sweeten drinks, coffee, tea and chocolate. Since the 1930s it was included in the list of aid offered to the unemployed and other persons in financial difficulty, and in 1934 the *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, discussing the increasing price of it, pities the poor who used this foodstuff combined with bread to feed their children, we consider it appropriate to include in the list of basic foods. In terms of price, we can consider it a relatively high, and remained so throughout the period, and his presence on the market is problematic.

In 1920, "*Gazeta Transilvaniei*" signaled a price of 16 lei for a kilo, although mentioning that the food had suffered a considerable increase from the 9.5 lei practiced until then¹⁹.

Four years later, the same newspaper indicated a price of 24-26 lei per kilogram, mentioning that his price leveled off with State interference in this issue.

The quantities produced in Romania, obtained from sugar beet crops were not enough, which is why towards the end of the third decade of the last century there were further increases up to the threshold of 38-41 lei. In 1931, the Chamber of Commerce and industry Cluj mentioned among the reference prices in the city the one for sugar that rises to 43 lei for a kilogram sold as cubes and 39 lei as granulated.²⁰

The prices weren't maintained at these values though. During and immediately after the crisis, meanwhile the economic recovery one can notice a cheapening of this foodstuff up to threshold achieved in 1924.²¹

The importance of this foodstuff and the appreciation awarded to it by the society may be interpreted in the light of the state of nutrition of the population. One of the speeches held in the Chamber of Deputies on 19 March 1932 aims to convince that sugar is an important source of carbohydrates needed by the human body. Under the terms of the malnutrition, obvious at the majority of the citizens of Romania, the Deputy asked the Chamber to take action to reduce the price of sugar and to encourage the production or the import of a quantity sufficient to raise the nutritional level of the population.²²

The speech of Deputy preoccupied with the state of nutrition of the people is not without merit. Sugar is a quick source of glucose, but one not exactly cheap and quite hard to find on the food market in the interwar period. Testimony in this regard is the letter received

¹⁷ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome C, 1937, no. 47, 2.

¹⁸ 3.4. Kiple, K and Ornelas K C, „The Cambridge World History of Food”, [Online] Available at: <http://www.cambridge.org/us/books/kiple/sugar.htm>. (June, 29, 2014).

¹⁹ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome XXXIV, 1920, no. 83, 1.

²⁰ *Buletinul Camerei de Comerț și Industrie Cluj*, tome IX, 1931, 27.

²¹ Sabin Manuilă, „Statistica prețurilor. 1937”, (București: Institutului Central de Statistică, 1939), 158.

²² Dr. S. Irimescu, „Probleme de igienă publică și de politică sanitară”, (București: Imprimeria Centrală, 1932), 19-21.

by Coriolan Suciu from his parents living in Ciugudul de Jos, in which they demand that "if you find some sugar in Blaj, send us at once".²³ The newspapers from different cities of the country also announced that there was no sugar on the market because it's produced and imported in an insufficient quantity and that the traders hide it to sell it more expensive.

"Gazeta Transilvaniei" deplores the situation of Temeswar in 1923. The city has come without resources of sugar, and the amount they wanted to import was stocked because a delay in transport occurred. It seemed that the city had a sufficient amount of sugar, but that wasn't offered for sale by the operators in order to raise prices. The city of Brasov hadn't had a better situation. Sugar resources here weren't sufficient, but the State decided to get involved in this issue, ordering substantial requisitions at the Bod factory. The amount requested was to be distributed to the townspeople in order to reduced prices.²⁴

The number 52 of the same newspapers announced that from Netherlands were to be imported an amount of 450 carriages of refined sugar, incomplete, to be accomplished in Transylvania. Because the State has ordered substantial requisitions, Transylvanian factories decided not to process the sugar imported because they did not have security for their investment.²⁵

To resolve the issue of sugar, both in terms of quantity and in terms of prices, the State has encouraged the cultivation of sugar beet. The authorities call to farmers has been played in the media and reiterated the years of the line, promising that the price will fall, and the food stuff will be purchased by representatives of all social classes.²⁶

Officials, State workers with low wages, paid late and with low scores, benefit of certain measures taken to ease the way. Thus, for them, a provision was introduced, whereby paying in advance, immediately after sugar refining of it, it would be issued for the applicant, but at a reduced price. This measure facilitated not only the lives of officials, but also of the factory that benefit from the money for raw material processing. However, "Gazeta Transilvaniei" announced that a portion of the amount paid in advance by officials has disappeared, and that the factory refuses to issue the sugar for the ones who paid.²⁷

In an attempt to reduce the price of a food that became more and more appreciated, researchers have made considerable efforts to develop new methods of extraction using other raw materials. One of these tests was published in "Cultura Poporului". Here, D Calugareanu exhibits a much more efficient process for obtaining a large quantity of sugar using the sap of a Palm tree from the Philippines. The technique is similar to that of sugar cane production, using the juice made from the sap of the tree. (Călugăreanu, D, 1924)

"Telegraful Român" published an article alike, discussing of sugar wood. As set forth in article quoted, a doctor in London obtained 37 kg of sugar using 50 kg wooden bran. These two articles identified by us translate the acute need for cheapening of a first need food, considered a luxury due to its extremely high price.²⁸

Used as a sweetener for beverages such as tea, coffee and chocolate, sweet food, but also for jams and compotes, we can consider that its status has evolved during this period, enjoying a great popularity depict its high price.

²³ Colecția de manuscrise în limba română a Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare Cluj-Napoca, *Fond Coriolan Suciu*, dosar *Corespondența cu părinții*, fila 1 recto.

²⁴ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome LXXXVI, 1923, no. 24, 2.

²⁵ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, tome LXXXVI, 1923, no. 51, 3.

²⁶ *Clujul*, tome I, 1923, no 11, 3

²⁷ D. Călugăreanu, „Zahăr din palmieri”, in *Cultura Poporului*, tome II, 1924, no. 53-54, 3.

²⁸ *Telegraful Român*, tome LXXIV, 1926, no 66, 3.

CONCLUSIONS

Veturia Manuila's investigation along with the of analysis of prices in comparison with the wages of reference stated that workers and most of the officials of the State of Romania used the wages offered to provide daily nutrition. Grigore Benetato, Romanian hygienist who worked during the same period at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cluj, in a field study he found that besides the costs of heating and lighting, food is the one that occupies a position of priority in the concerns of Romanian workers. However, reporting the quantities offered by the investigation of Veturia Manuila to a number average of 4 family members, we've noted that the body's needs were not complemented by it. The bread occupied the first place in the shopping list, alongside vegetables purchased in the market. The meat, 4 kilograms referred to in the inquiry, weren't included in the daily menu; the lent was respected, along with an abstinence caused by food shortage. Beef is the most popular meat for consumption; the pork was served especially in Christmas time. The milk enters into the children's menu, but adults rarely used it. They served it especially in combination with coffee for breakfast. Sugar, in his dual capacity of foodstuff and spice, although intense newspaper noted, it was used in a few households, its use was generalized only in the last years of the period considered.

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