

SUMMARY

This research focuses on a particular case of local history: the evolution of the political life of a county within the Kingdom of Romania during the interwar period. It is the county of Năsăud, a place located in the North of Romania. The topic I intend to approach is the *Parliamentary political life in Năsăud county: from the parties' dictatorship to the royal dictatorship* (1919-1938), a project intended to examine on one hand the way in which political life evolved in the actual county of Bistrița-Năsăud and to enrich, on the other hand, the approach to the history of this region in the interwar period, with information provided by archival documents, less or even not at all researched.

Interwar political life was based on a multi-party system which, starting with the elections of 1919, had a fluctuating evolution throughout the period under analysis, also influenced by the social, economic and especially legislative context. The electoral law of 1926, although aimed to reduce the number of parties, ultimately led to an increase in their number. Most of the elections and electoral campaigns followed the same pattern: there was a dominant party, the one organizing the elections, and the rest of the parties, trying to offer an alternative to the governing party.

Universal vote came itself with changes in the political parties' evolution, the new way of electing parliamentarians forcing political formations to adapt their electoral tactics. For the county of Năsăud, the interwar period began with a monopoly of the Romanian National Party, which in the 20s of the last century had as sympathizers almost the entire Romanian population of the county. However, once the universal vote slowed down and the other parties' organizations emerged, the political struggles intensified within the county. The electorate was influenced by the political groups' electoral tactics, largely based on lies, demagoguery, insults of opponents, promises, fluctuations from one party to another, all culminating in the 1937 elections, when a large number of voters voted with the parties close to the extreme right, as a result of the disappointment triggered by the political actions of the main parties considered democratic (the National Peasant Party, the National Liberal Party, People's Party).

Whether, at the beginning of political life after the Great Union, political competition in Năsăud county was practically inexistent (only representatives of the Romanian National Party

were elected in the first elections), political life became in time dynamic, with the emergence of new political formations and with the formation of branches of the parties from old Kingdom. Thus, in the elections of 1931 there were candidates on twelve electoral lists. This is an interesting paradox of Romanian political life (not only in the interwar period): from a single party we have reached dozens of parties which, in practice, shattered the smooth development of governing, influenced by various private and group interests.

During the interwar parliamentary democracy ten rounds of general elections were organized, more than double as compared to the situation in which the resulting Parliaments would have carried out their four-year mandates to the end. In addition, reported to these elections, three more partial elections for the Senate were organized in the county of Năsăud in 1928, 1931 and 1934, thus counting a total of thirteen general and partial elections in this period. The total number of elected officials that the county of Nasăud sent to the Parliament in Bucharest was 53, of which 32 were deputies, 21 senators, both in the universal college and in that of local and county councilors.

Therefore, in the elections of the period 1919-1937 held in Năsăud county, 29 people were elected to the Parliament, corresponding to the 53 mandates attributed to the county. Three people managed to be elected to both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate: Victor Moldovan, Laurențiu Oanea and Vasile Meruțiu.

In Romanian historiography, I have not found a work that exclusively deals with political life in Năsăud county during the interwar period, which is an additional argument regarding the usefulness of the thesis. There are authors, such as Ioan Scurtu, Gavrilă Sonea, Ștefan Deaconu, Sorin Radu, Cristian Preda, etc., who dealt with such issue, but they did it at a general level, for the entire Romanian area, providing me the required information luggage.

In order to write the thesis I used the following materials: sources, general works, special works, electronic works (sources), testimonies of some people (or their descendants) who lived in the interwar period.

For the source category I primarily used documents from the archives located in Bistrița, Sibiu, Bucharest, manuscripts located at the Academy Library in Bucharest, newspapers from the former county Năsăud and newspapers from the country during the interwar period, the Official Monitor of Romania from the same period, document collections and text anthologies.

The synthetic works focused on political life of the interwar period in general and at the level of the entire country are quite numerous, offering me the chance to investigate the existing situation from several angles and perspectives. These works helped me understand the existing political situation, the programs of successive governments during this period, the rise of some parties, the fall of others, political trasesism, the struggles for power, electoral campaigns.

This thesis includes an introduction, four chapters, conclusions and appendices. In the first chapter, *Electoral Legislation in Interwar Romania*, I made a presentation of the two electoral regulations that were applied during the analyzed period and the reasons that led to the exclusion of women from voters.

Chapter II, *Elections during the "party dictatorship" period*, focuses on parliamentary elections in the county of Năsăud until 1928, a period that I called the "party dictatorship", given the influence exercised by political leaders (especially those liberals) on the king.

I analyzed the elections between 1931-1937 in chapter III, *Elections during the Carlist restoration period (or the royal dictatorship)*, a period characterized by the repeated attempts of King Charles II to establish personal governments and to discredit political formations.

The last chapter, *Behind the scenes of the interwar political life in Năsăud County*, deals with some issues of the interwar political life in Năsăud County: political trajectories, parties' evolution, electoral propaganda, media role in the development of elections, interferences of central and local institutions in the electoral process, expenses caused by elections, changes in the electoral behavior of rural voters.

The political life of the county was influenced by the politics practiced in the rest of the country, the blame for certain dissatisfactions of the citizens primarily belonging to the economic-social-political realities existing at the national (even international) level and, to a lesser extent, to the activity of the elected within the county. Therefore, we have to consider these realities in the analysis of the political actors' actions on the political scene; criticism must balance the fact that democracy was at its beginnings and each politician had the approach considered most appropriate at the time. This should not however excuse the inactivity of some county parliamentarians or the slippages of some other who put their own interest first and for whom the only, or the most important goal was their own enrichment.

Even if authorities' involvement in the electoral process cannot be denied, results influencing based on such interference was not decisive in establishing the final results. The fact

that certain voters fell prey to promises, demagoguery, lies, electoral bribes in the form of money or drink, ultimately practiced by all political formations, cannot be included in cases of results falsification, as voters willingly offered their vote to a certain political list. For the county of Năsăud, parliamentary elections in the interwar period represented, in the vast majority of voting participation, a free manifestation of the electorate, and the elected representatives sent to represent the county in Parliament, good or bad as they were, were the indisputable result of the will of the voters in the county.