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**THE DYNAMICS OF THE POWER STRUCTURES IN TIMIȘOARA AND
THE FORMER TIMIȘ COUNTY (1944-1965)
SUMMARY**

The collapse of the communist regimes in 1989 opened new perspectives for researchers in the analysis of a period written about only in terms of official ideology.

The purpose of this thesis was to depict a difficult period in Romanian history (1944-1965), centered on Timisoara city and its adjacent areas. The present paper is the first one trying to comprise, in a single whole, the most important **political, social and economic aspects in Timisoara, Timis- Torontal county, and Banat Region** during the already mentioned period of time. The novelty is that the thesis is based 80% on **archive documents**, being taken into account more than 2000 files. These were combined with the **epoch media** as well as **specialty works** appeared both before and especially after 1989.

The fundamental sources who served our approach are the **archive documents** contained in the following: Timisoara Police Officers, R.C.P Banat-Timisoara Regional Committee, R.C.P Timisoara Municipal Committee, Timis-Torontal German Anti-Fascist Committee, Timisoara Hebrew Democratic Committee, Regional Committee of Hungarian People's Union, Timis – Torontal County Police etc.

The structure of the thesis was determined by the need to capture various aspects of political, social and economic issues that influenced the events in Timisoara and its adjacent areas between 1944 and 1965. The summary shows the following parts:

Introduction. Historiographical and methodological considerations

1. Assumption of power in Timisoara, in Timis-Torontal county and the Banat region by the Romanian Communist Party (1944-1947)

I. Brief history of the Banat region. Territory and population

II. Brief history of socialism in Romania.

III. National and international context (1944-1947)

IV. Local organizational structure of the Romanian Communist Party

V. The parliamentary elections of November 19, 1946. The legitimacy of the communist power.

2. Non-communist groups and political parties (1944-1953)

- I. Opposition parties, National Liberal Party and National Peasant Party and their dissidences
- II. Social Democratic Party
- III. National Popular Party
- IV. Ploughers` Front
- V. Legionnaire Movement in Banat

3. National minorities in Banat and their political organizations

- I. The Swabians and the German Anti-Fascist Committee
- II. The Banat Jews and the Jewish Democratic Committee
- III. Serbians in Banat, the activity of the Slavic Democratic Cultural Associations Union and the Titoist issue
- IV. Hungarians in Banat and the Hungarian Popular Union activity
- V. The events in Hungary in autumn 1956 and their impact on Timisoara and Banat

4. Central and local power structures (1948-1965)

- I. Central power structures
- II. Timis-Torontal county commission work of verification of party members
- III. Romanian Communist Party Local party committees (district, regional and municipal)
- IV. Aspects of the Timisoara (Banat) R.C.P (Romanian Worker`s Party) Regional Committee`s activity
- V. Aspects of the Timisoara R.W.P City Committee`s activity
- VI. Staff and propagandists schools

5. Economic structures

- I. Industrial development
- II. The assault on villages
- III. Collectivization of agriculture (1949 – 1962)

The thesis has as a **point of reference the city of Timișoara**. This was the **capital of the historical Banat and of the county Timiș-Torontal and then of the region of Banat**, depending on the administrative and territorial reorganizations. The geographical boundaries of the Banat area are presented during different periods of time as well as statistics of the population per ethnic

group. The Romanians, although a minor group in the cities, have represented the majority in the province starting with the XVIIIth century. The **most recent census** presented is the one from 1956.

The penetration of the **socialist ideology** in Timișoara and Banat was carried out along the Vienna- Budapest line, at the end of the XIXth century. In 1921, upon Moscow's intervention, the Socialist Party in Romania split, the Communist Party in Romania and the Social-Democratic party being thus born. During the period between the two world wars, the Romanian Communist Party was just a simple appendix of Moscow, whose orders it fulfilled step by step. This Party fought for the tearing apart of the Great Romania and was mainly made up of foreigners. It underwent numerous "faction-related fights" which had as a central moment the "party strike" in April 1944 which led to the arrival of the secretary general Ștefan Foriș. In 1924, the Romanian Communist Party was declared as being illegal and it remained in such condition for 20 years. In Banat, between 1942 and 1943, there were massive arrests among the communists which resulted in their activity being almost inexistent. The attempt to organize a group of partizans in the Semenic Mountains during the summer of 1944 also resulted in a fiasco.

In the context of the advance of **the Soviet Army on Romania's territory**, in August 1944, the **Romanian Communist Party, which had in the whole country around 1000 members**, started its activity. It was received as a dialog partner by the historical parties, the National Peasant's Party and the National Liberal Party. The Socialist Democratic Party was added, and together with this party the Romanian Communist Party formed the Unique Worker's Front. After August 23rd, 1944, the Romanian Communist Party left the alliance with the National Peasant's Party and the National Liberal Party and together with the Socialist Democratic Party and other satellite parties it formed the National Democratic Front.

The actions of the communists taken in order to take over the entire state power were supported by the international circumstances. In Moscow, in October 1944, the influence spheres in Europe had already been divided, and Romania came under the influence of the Soviet Union for a period of 45 years.

In the Timiș-Torontal county, upon ending its illegal status, **the Romanian Communist Party had 40 members**. After this date, the number of its members started to increase in an exponential manner. Practicing a skilful demagogy, the Romanian Communist Party succeeded in getting tens of thousand of people on the streets of Timișoara to demonstrate against the Sănătescu and Rădescu governments and in order to request the establishment of a government of the National Democratic Front. At the same time, **the Patriotic Fight Formations** were set up which, from a theoretical perspective, were fighting against the fascists but they practically terrorized the political

parties. Lists of clerks were drawn up and such clerks were removed on the basis of the fact that they were not “democrats”. Others, in order to keep their jobs, had to become members of the Romanian Communist Party or of the satellite parties of such party. In all the rural establishments in the Timiș-Torontal county party cells were set up and the mayors, the notary publics were replaced etc. Different statistics with the dynamics of the party members are presented regarding the period between 1944 and 1947 in the Timiș-Torontal county and the Banat region. The regional committee of the Romanian Communist Party - Banat supervised the activity of the party organizations in the counties of Timiș-Torontal, Caraș, Severin and Arad.

The parliamentary elections of November 19th, 1946 made legal the Romanian Communist Party’s government and that of the satellite parties. These elections were won by fraud but electoral frauds were not initiated by the communists. During the entire period between the two world wars, the parties in the government obtained crushing results at parliamentary elections. The electoral campaign carried out by the Romanian Communist Party and its allies in Timisoara and the county of Timiș-Torontal is presented in detail. The reports of the police legion are presented regarding the estimate and the result of the elections in different rural towns in the county of Timiș-Torontal. Finally, it can be concluded that the Romanian Communist Party and its allies carried out a fraud at the elections of November 1946, by 20-25% and not by 75% as it was specified by a series of historians after the 1989 revolution.

Chapter “The opposition parties...” includes **a short history of the National Peasant’s Party and of the National Liberal Party**, the manner in which they both cooperated on a national and local level against the Romanian Communist Party and its allies in the National Democratic Front. A series of reports of the police legion in Timiș-Torontal county are presented regarding the electoral campaign of such parties in the year 1946. The main supporters of the historical parties in Timisoara were the pupils and the students and a part of the intellectuals. After the Tămădău case and after declaring the National Peasant’s Party as being illegal, the persecution was also launched against the members of this party in the Timiș-Torontal county. Many arrests were carried out under all sorts of pretences. Those who were not arrested were closely watched. The same happened with the members and supporters of the other opposition parties: National Liberal Party – Brătianu and Social Democratic Party – Titel Petrescu.

During the entire period between the wars, **the Social Democratic Party** refused any type of collaboration with the Romanian Communist Party. During the Second World War, however, the external circumstances determined the social-democrats to form together with the communists the Unique Workers’ Front. There were still many misunderstandings within this alliance and the

meetings of UWF Timiș-Torontal show this fact. Statistics are presented with the members of the Social Democratic Party, on a local level, as well as descriptions of the social-democratic leaders in the Timiș-Torontal county. In March 1946, the Social Democratic Party split, its president, Constantin Titel Petrescu leaving the communists and forming the Independent Social Democratic Party. This also generated different consequences upon the social-democrats in the Timiș-Torontal county. Some of these were arrested and rehabilitated at the end of the 1950s, when the Romanian Communist Party started to be interested in them again.

The National Popular Party was the follower of the Patriots' Union, an organization which during the war formed together the "democratic forces" which were against the fascists. In 1946, the Patriots' Union transformed itself into the NPP and became the satellite party of the Romanian Communist Party which grouped the "progressive intellectuals". This thesis contains the description of the N.P.P. organization at the level of the Timiș-Torontal county, of the main leaders, statistics with the members of this party, as well as the operations of the subsidiaries in the region until the year 1949 when this party dissolved itself.

The same as N.P.P., **the Ploughers' Front** was a satellite party of the Romanian Communist Party. The Leader of this political group, Petru Groza, was a prime-minister for a long period of time (1945-1952) and then head of the state (1952-1958). The same as in the case of N.P.P., the activity of the Ploughers' Front in the Timiș-Torontal county is presented and then within the Timisoara region, the main leaders as well as statistics with the party members. In 1953 this party also dissolved itself.

One of the chapters deals with **the evolution of the former members of the Banat Legionary Movement** until the mid 1960s. Between 1944 and 1947, the Romanian Communist Party via the voice of Ana Pauker tried to attract for collaboration certain "remorseful" legionaries since it was considered that they were "misguided revolutionists". In 1948, under the new international circumstances, the agreement between the Romanian Communist Party and the legionaries was broken. Few legionaries became members of the Romanian Communist Party and operated within such. The majority joined the subversive anti-communist movement. The reports of the Securitate (Security) regarding the Timisoara region offer evidence in this sense. The Banat legionaries were tracked and the informers revealed information about them even at the beginning of the 1960s.

The Swabians represented during the period between the two World Wars an important ethnic minority in the Banat region but especially in the Timiș-Torontal county. They benefited from autonomy during the Second World War being almost all part of the German Ethnic Group.

After 1944, they were subject to a real tragedy. Only in the Timiș-Torontal county, almost 14.000 young Germans had been deported for reconstruction works in the Soviet Union. The entire community lost, following the agricultural reform in 1945, their houses and land lots. **The German Anti-fascist Committee** was set up via which the Romanian Communist Party intended to recover the “democratic Germans”. The German Anti-fascist Committee carried out mainly cultural operations but also social and political activities. Starting with the year 1954, the Germans received their houses back. At the end of the 1950s they started to migrate considerably to West Germany and Austria. A series of statistics are presented in this sense.

On the lands and in the houses expropriated from the Swabians in Banat came colonists from other areas of the country such as: inhabitants from Dobrogea, Macedonians, inhabitants from Ardeal, from Moldovia, from Bessarabia etc. Few of these however fitted within the social and economic context of the region. Consequently, the economy in the Banat area was negatively affected.

Persecuted during the Antonescu period, **the Jews** were attracted after 1944 to collaborate with the Romanian Communist Party through **the Jewish Democratic Committee**. Statistics with the number of the members of this party in the Timiș-Torontal county and the Banat region and with the main leaders are presented. At the same time, the activity of the Jewish Democratic Committee is described. In 1948, a division among the Jews took place due to the international circumstances. The “Zionists” started to be persecuted. The Jewish Democratic Committee monopolized the Jewish political scene in Romania. Within the context of the country becoming monopolized by the communist influence, numerous Jews in Banat were affected by the statism-related measures promoted by the regime and, between 1945 and 1952, they chose the exile to Israel or the Western states.

The Banat Serbians were active from the war period within **the Anti-fascist Front of the Slavs in Romania**. Some of the members of this group fought also in the army of partisans of Tito. In 1945, taking into account the fact that a part of the Banat Serbians asked that the Romanian Banat be attached to Yugoslavia, the Anti-fascist Front of the Slavs in Romania was dissolved and **the Union of the Democratic Cultural Slav Associations in Romania** was created and it was no longer a political party; its main activities had a cultural nature. The Union of the Democratic Cultural Slav Associations in Romania was totally under the supervision of the Romanian Communist Party. In 1948, under the circumstances of the conflict between Tito and Stalin, the hunt for Tito supporters also started in Banat. Local examples are offered in this sense. The activity of the Union of the Democratic Cultural Slav Associations in Romania is also presented until 1953

when the Union was dissolved. The Tito supporters in Banat were involved and convicted in public trials in Bucharest and Timisoara in 1950 and 1951. In 1951, when a Soviet-Yugoslavian conflict was imminent, the Serbians were deported to Bărăgan. Serbians were **deported from Banat** but also Romanians, Germans, colonists, wealthy peasants etc, those who were considered potential opponents of the communist regime. In 1955, following the improvement of the relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the people deported were allowed to return to their homes.

The Hungarians in Banat were active after 1945 within **the Hungarian Popular Union**, a satellite party of the Romanian Communist Party. Statistics are presented with the members of the Hungarian Popular Union in the Timiș-Torontal county and the Timisoara region and the characteristics of the main local leaders and the activity of the Hungarian Popular Union until 1953 when this organization was dissolved. The Hungarian Popular Union had as a main purpose the fight against chauvinism among the Hungarian population and its union with the Romanian population and with the other cohabitant ethnic groups. At the same time, the activists of Hungarian Popular Union had to mobilize their coinhabitants for building socialism in Romania.

As a consequence of **the Hungarian revolution in 1956, public anti-communist movements took place in Timisoara**. The events in Hungary in the autumn of 1956 are briefly presented as well as their impact upon Timisoara and Banat: the students' riots, the arrests, the trials of the demonstrators, the state of mind of the population etc.

Between 1948 and 1965, **the Romanian Workers' Party** led by its leaders ruled Romania in an autocratic manner. At a theoretical level, the democratic system worked, while those leading the country were chosen following elections that were free. But in reality, taking into account the fact that the opposition did not exist, these elections had a plebiscitary nature. The same people remained leaders of the R.W.P. and of Romania for 20 years. When changes took place, they were determined not by the people's wish but by the internal fights among the leaders of the R.W.P. These fights were usually guided by Moscow. **The central structures of the R.W.P. are described;** here they are: **the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Organizational Bureau, the Secretariat** as well as their manner of carrying out their operations. **The main leaders of the R.C.P. (R.W.P.)** are presented as well as **the fights for power** within the party: the removal of the "nationalistic" Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu in 1948; the removal of the "anti-party group" Pauker-Luca-Georgescu in 1952; the removal of Iosif Chișinevschi and Miron Constantinescu in 1957 etc. The presentation of the events continues with the differences between Romania and the Soviet Union within Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the Declaration of April 1964, the death of Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu taking over the power.

The end of 1948 marked the start of **the process of checking the members of the R.W.P.** Thus, almost one third of the former members were removed based on different reasons, political reasons or reasons of any other nature. The number of the R.W.P. members started to increase again in 1955. The manner in which this check was carried out by the Timiș-Torontal county Commission is described with statistics as well as the manner in which this check was carried on after 1950 by the Timișoara Party College.

Everyone who wanted to hold a position within the party or a state position had to graduate party-related education. **The party education** courses could last from 3 to 6 months on a local level and for 2-3 years at the “Ștefan Gheorghiu” Academy. The higher the education level of the activist, the faster the promotion to higher positions. The state studies did not count but a “healthy” social origin was important, as well as the devotion to the party, the obedience etc. The local evolution of the party education is presented, within the Timișoara region.

In chapter “The local party committees...” the local structures of the R.W.P. are presented: **the purpose and the activity of the county, regional and city party committees.** Their purpose was to implement at local level the decisions and the instructions received from the Central Committee. The primary regional, county or city secretary supervised the entire activity of the area he was responsible for: economic, political, social, cultural, sports, organizational activity etc. Statistics are shown with the dynamics of the members of R.C.P. (R.W.P.) within Timiș-Torontal county, the city of Timișoara and the region of Timișoara (Banat) between 1945 and 1965 per occupation, ethnic group, gender, the parties they were part of in the past etc.

In chapter “Aspects of the activity of the Regional Committee of R.C.P. (R.W.P.) in Timișoara (Banat)”, a description, with actual examples, **is made regarding meetings of the Timișoara R.W.P. Regional Committee** and the manner in which decisions were made within such meetings. At the same time, the primary regional secretaries, the members of the Bureau of the regional committee and the members of the committee between 1945 and 1965 are presented.

Identical aspects have been presented regarding **the activity of the city committee of Timișoara R.W.P.** for the period between 1950 and 1965.

The chapter “Industrial development” briefly presents the economic development of Romania until 1945 and then it focuses on **the economic development of the Banat region** between 1945 and 1965. The Timiș-Torontal county was one of the most developed counties in the country in 1945. The county’s economy, as well as that of the entire country, underwent a serious setback between 1945 and 1950, which influenced the standard of living of the population. The impact which the two financial reforms had upon the population in Banat is described. The economic

improvement took place slowly. At the beginning of the 1960s the standard of living of the population started to improve. Finally, **the overall industrial development** of the region increased by 3-4 times in comparison to 1948. Still, this development had many drawbacks: a parasitical bureaucracy had been created, the supply of raw materials and materials to the factories was poor, considerable waste was made and numerous products were rejected, substantial overtime was carried out and work was carried out in “leaps” etc. All these aspects are emphasized with actual examples from the party documents of that time.

In 1945, almost 80% of the Romanian population lived in the countryside. **The peasants** were **very traditional and did not accept changes**. Between 1945 and 1949 the communists continuously disturbed the Banat villages. In the beginning, in order to attract the peasants to the regime, **an agricultural reform** was carried out. The peasants however could not benefit from the land granted because their crops were immediately blocked and **compulsory quotas were imposed**. This led to the tragic poverty of the peasants in Banat. The production of grain decreased by half in comparison to the period between the two world wars, and the live stock decreased to a third. Actual examples with statistics are presented in this sense.

Between 1949 and 1962 **the collectivization of the agricultural** activity followed in the region of Timișoara. The land lots were merged together and the first kolkhozes were set up. In the beginning, their operations were poor and thus some of the collectivists started to starve. Actual examples are offered in this sense. Reports of the advisors sent to villages are then presented. The dynamics of such kolkhozes in the region between 1949 and 1962 is described. The coercive methods applied against the disobedient peasants are described, the measures against the persons who tried to escape the handing over of the compulsory quotas or refused to join the collectivization is also pointed out. Collectivization was difficult to carry out. Until 1957, only one third of the region’s surface was collectivized. Between 1957 and 1958, this increased to two thirds. The peasants were tricked into getting enlisted into associations, and then such associations were transformed into kolkhozes. Only at the beginning of the 1960s, after 15 years of communist regime, did the condition of agriculture start to improve and the standard of living of the peasants to increase.

The period 1944-1965 was marked in Timișoara and its adjacent areas, as in the whole country, by the rise and then consolidation of R.C.P power. Until 1947 there was a transition period. After that period opposition parties have disappeared from the Romanian political scene. In early 1953, the so called “mass organizations” were still surviving as party allies to the communists. Then they were dissolved and the power was concentrated in the hands of the single party. National

minorities in Banat, Germans, Serbs, Jews, Hungarians, have suffered in greater or lesser extent, during the communist regime. The economy in Banat experienced dramatic rebound in 1945 - 1950 and then a slow return in the early 60s. It was marked by forced industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. These changes were reflected dramatically on the population's living standards.