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FIELD: HISTORY

**FROM INTERWAR DEMOCRACY TO
TOTALITARIANISM. LUDUŞ TOWN BETWEEN THE
YEARS 1940 AND 1960**

-SUMMARY-

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INTRODUCTION

Choosing the research theme FROM INTERWAR DEMOCRACY TO TOTALITARIANISM. LUDUȘ TOWN BETWEEN THE YEARS 1940 AND 1960 sets out from the premise that the past is a very complex phenomenon, each of us has our own history, each of us is a product of history and therefore, history imposes itself for each with the same interest we would study ourselves.

"**A history of ours**" is also represented by the past of Luduș, an integral part of national history, which we intend to research in a dramatic period, the 5th and 6th decades, being convinced that through a study of local history we will be able to illustrate the features of the totalitarian communist regime. The studied period was a difficult one, which brought humanity in extreme situations, as well as ideologically, culturally and, especially, from the perspective of the human condition. They were the years of war and dictatorships, the years of unique experiences, the years of premeditated extermination of some people, Jews, Romas, Ukrainians, and so on.

Although 20 years is very little for a history of thousands of years, as in Luduș town, in fact, like all Transylvanian settlements, however, few epochs, periods in the history of the world can compete the changes that occurred during the Great conflagration and the years of settlement of the communist regime.

After 30 years since the fall of communism, during which thousands of studies and hundreds of books have been written about war and communism, one may ask why I opted for this topic.

Firstly, because the research applied at the level of a locality can be much more relevant to what the "extreme century" experiments represented at the level of a micro-community. Secondly, the historical bibliography of Romania doesn't include studies dedicated to the establishment of communism in Luduș and in the localities found near the city. Through this study, the main objective was finding an answer to the following questions: *How was this transition done from a society between the two world wars to communism? What implications did this change have on the population and what economic effects did it have on the locality? What role did the hard years of war play in the evolution of the population? What effects did the communist industrialization and the politics of the state have on the people's mentality?*

Clear identification of the subject and finding some questions that are at the basis of this research theme was the first step in our approach to the history of communism. The

research was thus opened to topics related to: Carol II's dictatorship, as a premise to totalitarian regimes, the Legionnaire governance, the military regime of General/Marshal Antonescu, the participation of our country on the Eastern Front, the everyday life during the war, the economy during the war, the transition of Romania on the side of the allies, the fighting for the liberation of Transylvania, the post-war economic life, the political evolution after August 23, 1944, the establishment of communism, agrarian reform, nationalization, collectivization, persecutions during Stalinist communism, and so on.

For the documentation and drafting of the thesis I have resorted to the rich literature written in recent years, the press of the time and the archive funds that record the history of Luduș. For the selection of the works considered relevant for the researched subject, I resorted to consulting the catalogs of libraries accessible online, of libraries, having as major reference *Bibliografia Istorică a României (The Historical Bibliography of Romania)*. These sources gave me the opportunity to understand the general context in which the main events took place throughout the entire country, as well as the influences exerted on the evolution of Luduș.

Along with these sources, the original sources of the paper played a very important role: The archive funds from the National Archives of Romania: București, Târgu Mureș and Cluj, as well as the documents from the archives of the CNSAS in București. For the most part, hundreds of files containing extremely important documents on Luduș town were studied for the first time. The archive documents have given me the opportunity to identify essential information on the evolution of the town during this period, in the context of the evolution of events throughout the country.

In choosing this topic, I have taken into account the fact that in the research activity, it is very important to have as few restrictions as possible from the harmonization of the subject with the resources available to them (time, accessible sources, level of training). The title of the research topic (the transition from the society between the two world wars to communism) synthetically reflects the object of research. As it is known, Romania became a communist country after the king's abdication. However, the rise of the communists began gradually, in previous years. The apostles of communism in Romania said that the population of the country chose communism because it was "*disgusted by the bourgeois-landlord regime*". In fact, Romania became a communist regime through an occupation regime. The change of regime, de facto, occurred through violence and manipulation, with part of the population moving into the new regime without understanding what was happening to them and what to expect. The common policy and Soviet system of Romania took place in several stages,

through a process coordinated by the Soviet Union, without too much merit on the part of the communists in Romania.

During the course of the research, I set the following objectives:

- analysis of the main information sources regarding Luduș town during the studied period (original archive documents, bibliography, press articles and specialized works);
- analysis of the general bibliography, having as theme the studied period in order to highlight the context in which the historical events took place;
- conducting questionnaires and interviews with contemporary persons with the events studied from the perspective of oral history;
- analysis of all sources of information and their verification;
- study the archive fund for the 40s and 50s existing in the National Archives of Romania and in the Archives of the CNSAS from București;
- final synthesis of the accumulated material;
- participation in scientific communication sessions and presentation of articles having as subject the theme approached within the doctoral thesis, in order to obtain a feedback.

The research methodology was based on the study of historical documents. Although the archive documents studied present the official version, frequently controlled by that political-historical context, the oral history came to the rescue, completing the image provided by the archive. In this respect, I used as research methods: interview, life story, autobiography, study of archive documents and analysis of this world through the prism of specialized works. For this research topic, the above-mentioned sources helped me to be able to restore with a certain ease the coordinates of the troubled world characteristic of the years 1940 and 1950. I affirm, with some ease, because it took a long time to study all documents, the archive sources used for this topic were as generous as possible. Based on these, I made the work plan, which I divided chronologically into 4 major periods: 1939-1945 (local administration during the war, economy, territorial concessions and participation in war); 1945-1947 (period of transition to communism, new local administration, agrarian reform and abolition of monarchy), 1948-1960 (Stalinist communism years: nationalization, collectivization, dismantling of the Greek Catholic Church, industrialization, the new local administration, persecutions). All these fundamental themes were treated in the thesis with great care, using a bibliography with specialized works and a rich archive documentary fund.

Time can be the number one enemy in the research activity, especially when one operates with a large quantity of documents, as it was in this case. Therefore, one of the advantages of modern technology offers us has been the possibility of photocopying some of the sources used in the work. In the research activity I used about 10.000 document photocopies, which were made during two months of work in the archives. These photocopies could then be studied, in detail, in the research activity. Along with these, a great deal of works have been studied in electronic format (books, magazines, recent publications or from the studied period) or purchased electronically. I have also used various web resources, magazines, publications and legislation specific to those years to understand the context in which historical events occurred. Printed books borrowed from libraries or purchased for personal library, photocopying of works or the local and national press in reading rooms of libraries of: Luduș, București, Târgu Mureș and Cluj-Napoca. Using all these means, I worked in parallel on several chapters for efficiency, browsing the sources completely, avoiding the use of information several times. At the same time I inserted the exact source citation for the information I have taken. In these working conditions, the computer offered me the possibility of a quick indexing of the hundreds of files used (photocopies of documents, books, magazines, articles and so on).

During the research activity, I have carried out a critical analysis every time the historical sources provided me important and novelty information. If sometimes there were doubts about the credibility of the information considered important, by using several sources I finally succeeded to rebuild the events. Only in the moment I was certain that the information was real then I included it in the narration of the work. In case, for the events considered important, the information from the sources was missing, I used the comparative method. I used the same method to verify the hypotheses regarding the causal explanations. Historical facts belonging to different periods were compared: the beginning of the war, the end of the war, the period of transition towards communism and the years in which the Luduș locality became an "industrial town in full development". In historical knowledge, the explanation of facts plays an important role. In the analysis of the causes of a historical fact, in this case, the transition from capitalism to communism in the area of the Luduș locality, I had to make a distinction between the concrete causes (direct and indirect) and the conditions that contributed to this fact. The questions I had tried to answer during the work were: "why?", "how?", "why not and not otherwise?" a transition occurred from capitalism to communism. As much as possible, in elaborating these answers and explanations I sought to use the information provided by the sources, as a basis for argumentation. In order to establish

the historical facts and to elaborate the explanations regarding the evolution of the events, I also proceeded to verify the initial work hypotheses. In the present case, the evolution of the locality during the war and the establishment of communism, with all its consequences for the country and for the inhabitants of the studied territory.

This research theme began with a well-defined plan and bibliography. But, due to the variety of sources used, but also due to the novelty information I discovered during the research activity, I had to turn to new sources to verify the information and to argue the evolution of some events. Thus, the bibliography eventually became much more extensive and diversified, due to these new topics addressed. All this finally led to the sketching of the Luduș locality development, throughout more than 300 pages, in an interval of two decades. In this work of historical character, in which the local evolution took place in a national and even international background, Luduș became, from an ordinary commune, but with a high commercial and agricultural potential, specific to the market economy of the late 30s, in a small town in full industrial growth, with a population belonging to the new working class, typical of the 60s. These are the events that occurred over the two decades. If we analyse these aspects in depth, taking into account the people of the place, those who wrote history, we see that the price of this evolution of the locality was very high. People paid with sacrifices, hard work and suffering, hoping that in the end it would be better.

The period depicted in the study is divided into several parts:

- *World War II*: from September 1, 1939 to 9 May 1945 (dictatorship of King Carol II, governments: Armand Călinescu, Gheorghe Argeșanu, Constantin Argeșanu, Gheorghe Tătărescu, Ion Giurtu, Ion Antonescu, the national-legionnaire state, dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu, Sănătescu and Rădescu governments);
- *the years of transition to communism*: from March 6, 1945 to December 30, 1947 (the government of Petru Groza, the abdication of King Mihai and the change of the form of government);
- *the years of Stalinist communism* (governments: Petru Groza, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Chivu Stoica, the state leaders: C. I. Parhon, Petru Groza, I. Gh. Maurer, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Chivu Stoica).

1. LUDUȘ TOWN. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Luduș is an ancient settlement located in the south of the Transylvanian Plain, in the south-west of Mureș County. The locality is documented in 1333.¹ Favourable physical-geographical factors have created the necessary living conditions since the earliest times. The confluence of the Pârâul de Câmpie with the Mureș, the meadows of the two running waters, the fertile soils and the landscape formed by gentle hills represented the determining factors in the economic evolution of the area.²

For several centuries, Luduș had the status of a village. According to the archive documents, Luduș has had several names over time, among which we mention: Ludas (1333), Marosludas, Maros Ludas (until 1918). After the Great Union, the town had the following names: Luduș-Murăș, Ludoșul de Murăș (1920) and Luduș (1928), a form that has remained to nowadays.³

Starting with the second half of the 19th century, Luduș was characterized by an important economic and demographic development, specific to the epoch in the whole Danube Empire. The main factors of the evolution of the locality were the construction of the Războieni-Târgu-Mureș and Luduș-Bistrița railways as well as the restructuring of the Turda-Târgu-Mureș road, which crossed the locality. These routes of communication have favoured the development of trade, the establishment of a large number of traders in the locality, mostly Jews. In 1862, Luduș was given the right to organize biannual fairs (on 4 May and 4 October), and since 1868 weekly fairs have been held, continuously until now.⁴ The fairs held here, especially those of animals and cereals, became so well known that merchants from all parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire didn't hesitate to come here to make trade.⁵ Along with ploughmen, traders, craftsmen and intellectuals contributed to the development of Luduș.⁶ The new economic status, which Luduș acquired in the second half of the 20th century, was gradually highlighted by the emergence of institutions specific to the more developed localities. Following 1850, Luduș became rural commune and estate centre. In 1851 the cadastre was introduced and the post was established in 1852. Between the centuries, churches, schools, a hotel and restaurants were built. There was a pharmacy, a doctor's office

¹ Denumirea localității Luduș este menționată pentru prima dată în anul 1333, într-un proces verbal scris în

² Antoniu Berar et alii, *Premise fizico-geografice în dezvoltarea orașului Luduș*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2018, p.9-10

³ Până în anul 1931, comuna Gheja, atestată documentar în anul 1366, a făcut parte din județului Alba, plasa Ocna-Mureș. Din anul 1931, aparține administrativ de comuna Luduș. În anul 1960 Ludușul a fost declarat oraș.

⁴ Adrian Mihai Olaru, *op. cit.*, p.228

⁵ Iosif Andreica et alii, *op. cit.*, p.76

⁶ Grigore Ploieșteanu, *Momente din trecutul Ludușului* în „Luduș-600”, Foaie volantă editată de Comitetul Orășenesc Luduș, 1977, p.2

and a voluntary fire brigade. In the estate centre carry out their activity: the town hall, the headquarters of the estate, the gendarmerie station, the court, the financial district and the Hungarian Royal Treasury.

The demographic growth of Luduș, which had become a real cereals, wood and animals trade fair, is proved by statistic data. From 2.301, the inhabitants mentioned in 1850, the population reaches 4.101 inhabitants in 1900.⁷ The evolution of the structure of Luduș population regarding nationalities in the period 1850-1910 was an interesting one. If in 1850 Luduș had a Romanian population in absolute majority (91,33%), Hungarians accounted for 2,91%, other nationalities 5,74%, and Gheja had a similar situation to 84,39% Romanians, 5,43% Hungarians, 10,17% other nationalities, in 1900 in Luduș the number of Hungarians (1351) became almost equal to that of Romanians (1359).⁸ In 1910, the situation changed, with the number of Romanians (2321) being smaller than that of Hungarians (3532). In religious terms, the situation was as follows: of 6026 inhabitants, 286 were Orthodox, 2177 Greek Catholics, 758 Roman Catholic, 1991 Reformed, 38 Evangelicals, 49 Unitarians and 727 Israelites.⁹ The causes which led to the major change in the national structure of the population during this period were the establishment of a meaningful number of Jews in the locality, who are engaged in trade, as well as the Hungarian State's policy of colonization with ethnic Hungarians in the northern part of Luduș, between 1902 and 1905. During this period, colonies were established:¹⁰ *Internal (Belső-telep)*, *Andrássy-telep* (the current Roșiori neighbourhood), *Eczken-telep* (the current Avrămești neighbourhood) and *Albis-telep* (the current small village Fundătură). These were established on the lands of the commune, as well as on the land bought from two of the great landlords of the time, Eczken Sándor and count Andrásy Gyula jr., but also on the lands belonging to the Bogata commune.¹¹

⁷*Ibidem*, pp.399,404

⁸ În Gheja, situația populației în anul 1900 era următoarea: 852 români, 308 maghiari, 5 germani, 52 alte naționalități.

⁹ Adrian Mihai Olaru, *op.cit.*, pp.399,407

¹⁰ Neoficial, scopul acestor colonizări în sudul Câmpiei Transilvaniei era acela de a crea zone maghiare în localitățile cu populație românească, extinderea comunităților maghiare minoritare și realizarea unui culoar din Ungaria până în secuime, de-a lungul râurilor și în Câmpia Transilvaniei, pentru ca mai târziu acest proces să continue și în celelalte localități cu populație majoritară românească.

¹¹ Iosif Andreica et alii, *op.cit.*, p.95

2. THE HISTORY OF A TRANSYLVANIAN FAIR IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

For the period corresponding to this study: World War II, the governments of this period (from 1945 to 1947 and the period of Stalinist communism between 1948 and 1961), Luduș underwent profound transformations in terms of: demographic, economic, political and administrative. Along with these transformations, we can't omit those changes in people's mentality and conscience. I have tried to present all of this, insisting on the general context, the factors that generated it, but also on the consequences.

Agriculture represented the basic economic activity of the Luduș people, up to the years of communist industrialization. The Agrarian Reform of 1921 didn't completely solve the land problem in the Luduș area, in the years between the two world wars. However, in Luduș there was an important middle-class peasants. The end of the 30s was a period of economic revival for the Luduș people. The structure of the land fund allowed agriculture to develop since the earliest times. The most numerous lands were the arable ones, with fertile soils, favourable for cereal crops. In addition to cereals, vegetables, leguminous and technical plants were also grown in Luduș. A significant proportion occupied the pastures, with the livestock sector being well represented. Sheep, cattle, pigs, horses and poultry were reared. Agriculture suffered to a certain extent during the war. A large part of the agricultural workforce was concentrated or mobilized on the front.

Trade was another economic branch very well represented during the period between the two world wars in the Luduș locality. The geographical position and the network of railways built in the 19th century boosted trade. Due to trade, Luduș developed a lot starting with 1870. The peak in trade was in the period between the two world wars. The Jewish families, who had much business in the field, also played an important role. The weekly and annual fairs were famous throughout Transylvania. All the quantities of cereals and animals reared in the Transylvanian Plain were traded through the fairs in Luduș. The town supplied the country's major cities, including the capital, with agricultural products.

The local administration of Luduș was concerned about improving the living conditions of the inhabitants and developing the town, as much as possible in this difficult period of war. During this period, the mayor, as head of the local commune administration and president of the Commune Council, was the representative of the commune, had the initiative and the decision on all matters of local interest. During the War, the mayors of Luduș were: Suciu Atanasie (1938-1940), Amos Horațiu Pop (1940-1941) and Vlas Ioan (1941-1945). In the

mandates of these mayors, large grain warehouses were built, trade developed, public wells were arranged, pavements were arranged in the centre of the city, a workshop of the commune was set up to manufacture concrete tubes for wells and bridges. The town hall took care of the functioning in good conditions of the slaughterhouse of the commune and of the fairs that brought important sums of money to the local budget. Also during this difficult period, local authorities took action against grain speculation, rationalized bread, set maximum prices and requisitioned goods. Part of the assets of the Jewish community passed into the state's patrimony. During these years, the mayor issued numerous ordinances.

The Luduş people in the years of World War II went through difficult moments. In order to be protected from air attacks of the enemies, a passive defence group was organized in the locality. After 1940, many refugee families came to the city following the territorial cessions. One problem that citizens faced was providing the necessary wood for the cold season and supplying with oil products. During this period, young people participated in pre-military training. The residents donated various objects to the militaries on the front. Becoming a border locality, Luduş benefited from specific institutions: The Border Guard and Customs Post. Under the conditions of territorial cessions, 14 ethnic Hungarian families left the town, returning to Hungary. The Luduş people fit for military service were enlisted in the Romanian Army and fought in those years on the eastern and western fronts. Along with civilians, many Luduş soldiers were killed in action. The invalids, orphans and widows of war were granted state aid at that time. A very difficult situation for the Luduş people was in the autumn of 1944. Romania turned the weapons against Germany and began the offensive for the liberation of Transylvania from the hands of the enemies. Most of the Luduş citizens had to leave the town on September 5, because of the front that took place along the Mureş River. They went south, settling for over a month in localities in Alba and Sibiu counties. In the vicinity, in Oarba de Mureş, but also in Luduş, there were heavy battles that caused great losses of human lives and substantial material damage. Returning to their homes, after the liberation of Luduş, after October 12, 1944, most of the Luduş people found their households devastated or destroyed. The same happened with the shops, institutions and churches of the locality.

3. THE TRANSITION FROM THE OLD REGIME TO COMMUNISM

Postwar Luduș agriculture (1945-1947) continued to be the main position of the local economy. More than ever, in those years, animal and plant products were a great need, both for the population, the army and for export, in order to pay the debts of armistice. An important role in managing the agricultural problem in those years was Ocolul Agricol Luduș (Luduș Agricultural Perimeter). In these years, in which the communists with the help of the USSR gradually began to seize power, it promoted and carried out the Agrarian Reform, an important law by which they hoped to obtain an image capital in the eyes of the population, after the hard years of the war, characterized by rationalizations, requisitions and concentrations on the front. The estates were expropriated with large areas of land, with part of the owners declared absentee. Step by step, agricultural production started to increase, a number of poor or people who had fought on the front received land from expropriations. The livestock numbers and cultivated areas increased. During this period, agriculture was the only source of income for most of the inhabitants of the settlement. Production resumed at the Yeast Factory, at mills and oil press. The three mills in Luduș provided the necessary flour both for the Luduș inhabitants and for other localities. By 1947, the electricity network was restored and the local power plant was put into operation. *The local administration* during the transition to communism (1945-1947) endeavoured to repair all the damage caused by the war: The bridge over Mureș, the streets and the public buildings and to provide basic food and firewood for the population. There were also attempts to separate Gheja village from Luduș commune, but without success. During this period the mayors Zichișan Simion (1945) and Stoica Petru (1945-1948) were in charge of Luduș commune. A new legislative body at local level emerged during 1947, *Comisia interimară a comunei Luduș (Interim Commission of the Luduș commune)*. It operated until 1949, when it was replaced by *Comitetul provizoriu (the Provisional Committee)*. The Commission included the representatives of the political parties in *Blocul Național Democrat (the National Democratic Block)*, which was approved by the Soviets. Even if there were difficult years, the local administration took some important measures: repairing of the buildings owned by the war-torn village, arranging the commune park, the construction of the Heroes' Cemetery, etc.

The transition to communism was the years when our country gradually entered under the influence of Moscow, years when we were forced to pay war compensations that drained the country's finances. All this also spread to Luduș inhabitants, where everyday life was becoming more and more difficult.

4. THE GREAT TRANSITION "FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM"

The years of Stalinist communism (1948-1960) began with the abdication of King Mihai. Historic political parties were disbanded, and central and local authorities began reforms aiming at leading to the victory of socialism: a new Soviet-style Constitution (1948), the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church (1948), administrative and educational reforms, nationalization of the factories, the transformation of agriculture on a socialist basis through the establishment of Camaraderie, GACs, GASs, etc. Along with these measures, the foundations of the industrialization policy of the country and, implicitly, of the Luduş locality, were laid which was up to that date a commune with a predominantly agricultural and commercial profile. These are the years in which, at local level, the "socialist competition" emerged between the people of the labour employed in those years in nationalized industrial units, and then in new industrial units that were built within the locality.

These years meant major changes in political life. Instead of the historical parties P.N.Ț. and P.N.L., which dominated local political life for years, *Frontul Plugarilor (the Ploughmen's Front)* and *Partidul Muncitoresc Român (the Romanian Workers' Party)* emerged. The main purpose of these political groups, which appeared after 1949, was to dismantle the middle class of peasants by "chiaburi" ("rich peasants") and enemies of the people, by imposing the burdensome quota system and the establishment of *Camaraderie* and *G.A.C.s*. The years when the communist authorities concerned themselves by various ways to collectivize agriculture remained in the collective memory as sad years for the peasants' fate. Shortly after the Agrarian Law was enacted, the peasants were forced to give up the lands they had acquired through the sweat of their labour and that of their ancestors, or through sacrifices made alongside their families both in time of peace and in hard times of war.

The collectivization of agriculture in the Luduş area was achieved, as in the whole country, in several stages. *The first stage of collectivization (1949-1953)* meant the unmasking of the reach peasants. During those years, the first arrests and the first internments in work colonies appeared, real punishing camps for those who opposed the new government or were guilty of having larger land areas and refusing to register in GACs, continuing to work the land "exploiting labour arms". In this first stage, the GAC of Gheja and Roşiori were established, as well as some Camaraderie. *The second stage of collectivization (1953-1956)* was somewhat calmer, with the collectivization process running without major incidents, giving a certain impression that the authorities had given up this process. This didn't prove to be true, in fact, the authorities continued the process of collectivization. Some camaraderie

was set up during this period. In *the third stage of collectivization (1957-1962)*, the communists resumed the process of collectivization with even greater momentum, especially after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Propaganda teams made up of party activists from the local administration began an intense clarification work in the Luduș area, under the close supervision of the repression institutions. The communist propaganda machine, set up in those years with Moscow's support, benefited from the input of institutions that established terror. The Securitate detached from these institutions. In 1962, the communists managed to achieve their goal, the collectivization of Romanian agriculture.

The process of stages of the production means was an important step in the consolidation of communism in our country. Although Luduș didn't excel in very important industrial production capacities in 1948, it has to be mentioned that in June, 1948 the Yeast Factory and the "Moldoveanu" Power Plant, the "Frații Alesz" Peasant Mill, the "Rosner Aladár" Oil Press, the Roller mill "Lăluț and the Nagy brothers" and the Peasant mill "Csiszer Adalbert". Besides these economic targets, two banks, two pharmacies, as well as Rusu Ioan's, nicknamed Ciorăscu, estate were nationalized. On July 5, 1948, the process of nationalization in the Luduș commune was completed. From that moment on, the foundations of the industrialization process of the locality were laid, which had as consequences: the accelerated population growth through migration from neighbouring villages and other regions, the development of the locality and its transformation from commune to town, at the end of 1960.

The communist propaganda manifested in those years by the press fully controlled by the rulers. In 1959, one year before the locality became a town, the county press was also headlining articles on the socialist changes that the Luduș locality had been going through. Although the difficulties experienced by the Luduș people in the period before 1947 were somewhat exaggerated, and were not taken into account in the context of those years, the press highlighted the benefits of agricultural collectivization and the changes that Luduș experienced: building factories (the Hemp Smelter, the Sugar Factory), new neighbourhoods and buildings of administrative, cultural and educational institutions, infrastructure development (streets, sidewalks, sewerage, water network, methane gas, electricity, etc.). All these achievements were due, in the view of the press, exclusively to the communists.

The communist industrialization meant a complex process, which fundamentally changed the structure of Romanian society. This process of industrialization started at national level has the same effects in the Luduș commune, which became more than a decade later a town. The representative economic units from the 50s and the beginning of the 60s were: *the*

"Înfrățirea (the Twinning)" Enterprise, the Regional Natural Gas Distribution Enterprise, the Local Industry Enterprise, the "August 23" Craft Cooperative, the Hemp Smelter and the Sugar Factory, unit that still works today.

The years between 1952 and 1960 produced major changes in the economic and social evolution of Luduș. The Hemp Smelter was the most important investment in the locality in the beginning of 50s. Along with this investment must be mentioned: connecting the locality to the National Energy System and the National Gas Network. Also, a great achievement was the making functional the Water Collection Station and the drinking water supply network. Along with these investments, the construction of new neighbourhoods for workers and administrative buildings played an important role, along with the Sugar Factory, in declaring Luduș a town.

But all this was achieved with great sacrifices for both the Luduș people and the inhabitants of the whole country. Several generations suffered. First, those who lived in the years of the war, their children, but also the generations that followed. Part of the local elite had to leave the town because of the persecutions. Some were deprived of their wealth after a lifetime of toil and had to move to other lands to secure their livelihoods. This category included: pupils, students, those considered "chiaburi (rich peasants)", owners of means of production, merchants, Greek Catholic clergy, etc. Others ended up in camps, labour colonies or prisons and didn't return home after their release.

5. TERROR AND CHAINS

The abolition of the Greek Catholic Church, the collectivization and the nationalization led to the establishment of communism in our country. The transition to communism, even if it was achieved very quickly, produced irreversible transformations in the structure of society and in the mentality of the people. The years of the establishment of "victorious communism in villages and towns" meant oppression, persecution, torment, sadness and many families destroyed. By the "care" of the repression bodies and authorities, all opponents of the regime were silenced or eliminated. The main body of repression was the Securitate that took under observation all former members of historical parties through the Problem Files. All the "hostile elements" in factories, enterprises, institutions, GACs and other state economic units were in the sights of the Securitate through Objective Files. These young people under observation had harmful consequences for many of those concerned: Securitate investigations, arrests, beatings, torture, removal from work, schools and colleges, persecutions, etc. In Luduș, the former members of P.N.Ț., P.N.L. and former members of the Legionnaire Movement, were targeted, mainly those who held leading positions at the local or county level. Besides these Record keeping files on objective or problem, the Securitate highlighted all those who had relatives abroad, those considered rich peasants, members of religious sects, and so on. All those who were suspected of having been active against the regime were also being watched through Personal files. Many Luduș people suffered for the fact that, in those years of terror, they had the courage to express their opinions sincerely towards the situation in the country or towards the situation in Europe. Many paid for this with years of imprisonment, being marked for life.

CONCLUSIONS

Through this case study, having as theme the evolution of the Luduș locality between 1940 and 1960, I have tried to highlight the multitude of transformations that the Luduș locality underwent in twenty years, when a rural community was subjected to a process of conversion both ideological and as a lifestyle. The two decades were characterized by an accentuated dynamism, and all the events presented were framed in a Romanian and European historical context. Throughout the entire history of the locality, from the first documentary evidence from 1333 to the present day, we have not encountered so many transformations that the Luduș locality had gone through as in these decades.

It can be said that these two decades that have been the subject of research were characterized by difficult times of radical change in human factor, administration and economic activity. In just two decades, Luduș experienced World War II and a major change in political regime, which represented the shift from capitalism to communism. The whole range of events presented during the work starts from the European and national context. In this context, are presented all the important events carried out at the level of this restricted area, corresponding to Luduș and neighbouring villages located in the south of the Transylvanian plain.

The dynamism of this period was due to the major historical events that marked the history of our country, Europe, but also the world.

In a relatively short time there had been a transition from an interwar society dominated by capitalist economic relations, with a multiparty political system and a relative democracy, influenced by the authoritarian leaderships during the war, to a communist political system, with all its attributes: a single political party, the regime of terror and major economic transformations in both agriculture and industry.

Communism appeared in the Tsarist Russia after the October Revolution in 1917, when the "planet level and decisive political phenomenon" took place.¹² After the heroic battles of World War II and the defeat of fascism, it seemed that the choice in terms of the conceptual design of social organization was situated between communism and liberal democracy. But democracy was distorted in the view of many by imperialist ambitions, by the fact that democratic proclamations were only making the great powers pursue their own interests.

¹² Petre Pandrea, *Garda de Fier. Jurnal de filosofie politică. Memorii penitenciare*, Editura Vremea, București, 2001, p.9

March 6, 1945 represented the beginning of the first stage in the struggle of the communists to fully take over the power in Romania. The government of Petru Groza, actually coordinated by Moscow, prepared the rise of the communists, the abdication of the king, the rigging of the elections in 1946, the dismemberment of historical parties and the change of the form of government.

Communism, which had swept away the remains of feudalism, had come up with the promise of Soviet-style industrialization, in flagrant contrast to the capitalist stagnation of the interwar period, offered the country a way forward, especially through the acceptable compromise solution, which was popular democracy.¹³

Under these circumstances, in just two years our country moved from capitalism to communism. The Agrarian reform initiated by the Groza government was a real means of obtaining political capital. The falsification of the 1946 elections represented the end point of the brief Romanian democracy reappeared after August 23, 1944, when the 1923 Constitution was restored. The first waves of arrests and the abdication of King Mihai on December 30, 1947 ended the democratic system. Following 1948 communism had been victoriously established in our country. The 1948 constitution was of Stalinist inspiration. New principles were being circulated, such as people rather than national sovereignty, the powers uniqueness of the state and the leading role of the working class through the Romanian Workers' Party. The Grand National Assembly was considered the elected representative assembly. The Petru Groza government continued the policy of strengthening the institutions of the communist state. In 1948, the main means of production were nationalized, the persecution of wealthy peasants, former members of historical parties, and students began. Security (political police) was established, the Greek Catholic Church was abolished. Stalinist terror began in the following years. Many opponents were annihilated and were sentenced to severe punishments. The aim was to cancel any form of anti-communist resistance, to destroy anti-communist groups, to arrest and to convict all the leaders of the anti-communist political groups and former dignitaries to hard years of prison. The state intervened in the economy, started the process of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture (1949-1962), Luduș becoming a small town where agriculture gave up the place of industry in the local economy as a whole, against the background of national industrialization policy. Only looking back, gradually, its deeper and more tangled patterns and meanings had been discerned and recognized by both the scholars and the participants. There is also another history of the past century, a "virtual

¹³ Mark Mazower, *Umbre peste Europa, Democrație și totalitarism în sec. XX*, Litera, București, 2018, pp.318-320

history", the story of those men and women who survived the 20th century and who didn't give up, who understood its meaning along the way. They weren't numerous. They didn't have to wait until 1945 or 1989 to find out what had happened and the significance of the events, to see beyond illusions. For various reasons, they saw the reality behind the veil earlier. Most are now dead. Some of them died young, paying dearly for their restless perspicacity.¹⁴ Others managed to survive the communist period, sharing of their life experience with the young generation after 1990. An experience lived in a complex of events that took place over a very wide geographical area, throughout Europe and that unequivocally influenced the historical evolution of the Luduş locality.

¹⁴ Tony Judt, *Reflecții asupra unui secol uitat. Reevaluări*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2011, p.59

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