

CRAIOVA – HISTORY AND URBAN CULTURE

CRAIOVA IN THE YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: JUNE 1941 – AUGUST 1944

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Abstract: During the years 1941-1944, Craiova had certainly the same fate as all the big cities of Romania. The subject of the research conducted by the authors consists in the activity undertaken in this period by the iron-guardists, the communists, as well as in the attitude of Antonescu's regime towards Jews, Romanians, Polish refugees, people from Bessarabia and Bucovina and also towards the German troops in transit. The paper also presents the authorities' informing notes regarding the population's state of mind in this period and the aftermath of the Anglo-American bombing over Craiova.

Keywords: war, iron-guardists, Jews, bombing, state of mind.

On 27 January 1941, after *the iron-guardists' rebellion* had been annihilated, a new Antonescu government appeared, entirely formed from military and technicians¹, which, on 14 February, abrogated Romania's name as "national and iron-guardish state" and interdiction of any political activity². A period marked by war, dominated by the unpredictable, a period of disastrous human and material cost for the Romanian state.

Craiova, a city important for the economic and political sphere of the country, was affected both regarding the industrial and urbanistic development and regarding the social life. Being the political and administrative centre of one the most high-ranking counties of the country, during the two inter-war decades the city witnessed a significant stage in its economic and social development, though the rhythm was slow and unilateral. Lacking in great factory production, at the

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¹ Dinu C. Giurescu (coord.), *Istoria Românilor. Vol. IX. România în anii 1940-1947*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2008, pp. 105-107.

² See Dinu C. Giurescu (coord.), *Istoria României în date*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2003, p. 451; the Official Journal no. 39 of 15 February 1941.

beginning of the analysed period it appeared as having 7 enterprises with over 100 workmen and other several tens of small enterprises, workshops and family associations³. The commercial activity, the permanent market places in which food products and household items were sold⁴, as well as the urbanistic activity aimed at improving the city condition were to be seen during the whole period of the war waged on the east front. In spite of the difficulties brought about by the political and social circumstances, Craiova represented a vast urbanistic conglomeration, having public buildings mixed with civil ones, without an architectural ensemble, palaces lying next to shabby houses and ruins, “giving the impression of an Oriental town in a phase of reconstruction”⁵. The absence of an urbanistic programme led to the city merging with the neighbouring communes, thus enlarging the area of the city though without increasing the population density. The outskirts of Craiova “had a thoroughly rural life, producing the necessary food by itself and contributing only in a small measure to making up the city budget”⁶.

The decrease in the living standard, the price increase as well as the profiteering brought about a series of trade disputes, leading to the claiming actions of the workers of the factories “Semănătoarea”, “Concordia”, “Scrisul Românesc”, “Oltenia”, “Richard Graepel”, “Brătășanu” etc. The informing notes of the police office in Craiova point out the population’s discontent at the prices increasing more than salaries, as well as the arresting taking place in the autumn of 1943 and spring of 1944. The taxes paid for using the market places, the communal fairs, the cattle

³ During the war years, *the prosperity* of the Romanian society was influenced by the existing political conjuncture in Europe, which was under a state of siege, by the material effort required in order to support the front, as well as by the authoritarian policy of the governments. Romania’s economy was subjected to the state of war regime, a situation that had repercussions for the population’s prosperity. In those years, Craiova was economically represented by industrial enterprises, such as metallurgical, chemical, textile, food industry, wood industry, building industry: “Semănătoarea” Factory, “Brătășanu” Metallurgical Enterprise, “Richard Graepel” Factory of Farming Machinery, “Negoiu S.A. Craiova” Factory of timber and cases, “Progresul” Furniture Factory belonging to Duțulescu family, “Alexandru Căciulescu” Tannery, “Frații I.D. Petrescu” Factory of varnishes and paints, “Mofleni” Factory of bricks, “Oltenia” Factory of cloth, “Ștefan Barbu Drugă” Commercial Mill of Craiova, “Victoria-Oprea Pretorian” Commercial Mill, “Moise Mendell” Commercial Mill, “Oltenia” Commercial Mill, “P. Marotineanu” Factory of flour pastes and marmalade, “Ștefan Barbu Drugă” Bread Factory, “Paul I. Schmidt” Factory of bread, “Grigore Petrescu” Factory of salami and sausages, “St. Giuvăra” Factory of candies, “Mercur S.A.R” Factory of soda waters, “Albina” Factory of vinegar, Factory of Ice-belonging to Craiova Town Hall, “Ramuri” and “Scrisul Românesc” Printing establishments, as well as a range of handicraft workshops; (also see Cezar Avram (coord.) et. al., *Dicționar istoric al localităților din județul Dolj. Craiova*, vol. V, Craiova, Alma Publishing, 2005, pp. 286-291.

⁴ Elca Marketplace, Central Marketplace, Chiriac Marketplace and Știrbei Marketplace in which there were market halls for fish and for meat; for details see the County Service of Dolj National Archives (Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Dolj) (hereafter will be cited as SJAN Dolj), Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 911/1944, ff. 134-136.

⁵ *Ibidem*, file no. 4/1943, ff. 45-47.

⁶ Cezar Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

fairs and the market halls, added to the taxes and the working carried out in the benefit of administration, as well as the interdiction of all kinds deteriorated the living conditions of the citizens. The medical statistics mention cases of tuberculosis, typhus and diseases of the respiratory system, though Craiova had 6 hospitals⁷, two head physicians of the city, 3 hospital physicians, 4 hospital attendants and 4 midwives⁸.

There were a series of social measures aimed at assisting the needy population. On 20 May 1941 the Council for Sponsoring the Social Works in Craiova Municipium was constituted, which would carry out during the whole analysed period a substantial activity of social welfare for the families of those mobilized on the front, the war widows and the soldiers disabled in war, as well as for the needy children⁹. The mayor of Craiova, Ion B. Georgescu, was elected as president of the Council, while general Popovici¹⁰ the garrison commander was chosen as vice-president. In the winter of 1941/1942, people collected foodstuffs, money and clothes amounting to a total of 3,647,909 lei as Winter Aid, especially under the form of donations, money used for helping 1,461 needy families selected by the Welfare Assistance¹¹. In the school “Obedeanu”, “Traian”, “Ferdinand”, “Poienaru”, “Trişcu” and “Romanescu” school canteens were organized where 760 “completely destitute pupils”¹² had their meals. During the entire period, special attention was given to orphans and war widows, according to Marshal Antonescu’s orders. In June 1943 an administrative office was set up at Dolj Prefecture, which looked after the disadvantaged social categories all over the county. With that end in view, the Ministry of Internal Affairs allotted to the Prefecture a subvention of 232,000 lei, a sum which was used both for remunerating the two clerks working in that office and for other activities¹³. In October 1941, during Queen Mother’s visit to the Red Cross Hospital school no. 228, the Red Cross branch in Craiova was appreciated for the assistance given to all the hospitals in Craiova and Dolj county. Craiova’s Red Cross Society organized canteens for soldiers in the railway stations, especially in Craiova station, where, since the first day of the army mobilization, the passing or the leaving soldiers were given bread, salami and sousages, tea,

⁷ Military Hospital with 441 beds, Filantropia Hospital with 400 beds, Hospital for Contagious Patients with 110 beds, Th. Preda Hospital with 100 beds, Social Insurance Hospital with 50 beds, Oltenia’s Sanatorium with 20 beds; see SJAN Dolj, Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 252/1940, ff. 320; file no. 672/1943, f. 26.

⁸ *Ibidem*, file no. 252/1940, f. 321.

⁹ Idem, Dolj Townhall fund, file no. 15/1941, f. 37.

¹⁰ A series of personalities were co-opted as members, among whom Florian Popoviciu – the city’s head physician, Marieta Dăbuleanu – president of “Principele Mircea” Society, Craiova branch, the inspector of constabulary and ex mayor of Craiova, general Constantin Z. Vasiliu, the president of “Red Cross” Society, Craiova branch, doctor Aurel Panea etc. Oltenia’s metropolitan bishop Nifon Criveanu was chosen as honorary member (*Ibidem*, f. 37).

¹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 99.

¹² *Ibidem*, f. 29.

¹³ Idem, Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 10/1943, ff. 20-26.

items for dressing the wounds etc. The teachers and pupils in schools, high schools, colleges for girls and private boarding schools in Craiova¹⁴ were all involved in the work of Red Cross.

Over the whole analysed period, a series of cultural activities took place in Craiova, carried out by the National Theatre, "The Friends of Science" Society, "The Revival" Priests' Society, "Traian Demetrescu" Society, "King Michael I" Cultural Foundation etc. and even an Eminescu festival was created, together with several lectures and concerts¹⁵.

The characteristics of the political plan were determined by the population's state of mind, closely related to the war evolution, by the population's attitude towards the extremism represented by the iron-guardists and communists, by the behaviour of the quartered or the passing German troops and, last but not least, by the Jewish issue. Since March 1941, the Antonescu regime adopted a restrictive policy, especially on the Jews. Through a law decree issued on 27 March 1941, the Jewish urban buildings were transferred to the state patrimony. At the same time those people were "forbidden to acquire similar properties or certain real rights to those houses", with the exception of the Jews who "had been wounded, decorated or cited on the military order of the day for bravery, in Romania's wars, or the descendants of those who had died in those wars"¹⁶. On 3 May, the National Centre for Romanization was set up through a law decree having as objective "the transfer of Jewish property that had come into the state patrimony to the Romanian entrepreneurs"¹⁷. A series of actions of purging, confiscation, dispossession of property, imposition of contributions and compulsory work followed, measures which were also taken in Craiova during the years of Antonescu's regime. It is to be emphasized that by the Marshal's order the Jews in Romania were neither supposed to bear the "David's star", nor did the state authorities send the members of this ethnic community to the extermination camps the way it happened in the Northern Ardeal, a territory annexed by Horthy's Hungary.

After the Decree of 2 October 1941 concerning the extension of work duration to 56-72 hours per week, the Decree of 17 December of the same year followed, which dissolved the Federation of the Unions of the Jewish Communities in Romania. This was replaced by the Central of the Jews in România, "a tutorial and guiding organization of the Jews that had been counted by the census", an organization which was supposed to exercise its attributions on those of Jewish

¹⁴ According to the school's census of September 1942 in Craiova there were 12 school districts in which there were distributed 8,820 children and young people aged between 5 to 21 (*Ibidem*, file no. 749/1942, f. 3).

¹⁵ For instance "Oltenia's Song" Cultural centre organized in August 1941 a concert of choir and orchestra dedicated to the Romanian-German Brotherhood, the benefit of the concert was intended to the wounded and to the families of those who had fought on the front (*Ibidem*, file no. 5/1941, f. 310).

¹⁶ Dinu C. Giurescu (coord.), *Istoria României în date ...*, p. 451.

¹⁷ SJAN Dolj, Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 5/1941, p. 452.

blood”¹⁸. The year 1942 brought other legislative settlements, among which the Order of deportation of all the nomadic gypsies to Transnistria¹⁹. In October the Council of Ministers decided the cessation of the Jews’ deportation from Romania to Poland “in order to put into operation the final solution”, a decision through which almost 300 thousand Jews of Romania escaped death²⁰.

During the same period, the great democratic political parties remained in a cold neutrality towards the governing political force. The divergences between Ion Antonescu and Horia Sima concerning the way of ruling the state, as well as the marshal’s barracks-like authoritarianism, brought about discontent and hostility all over the country. One of the immediate measures taken by Antonescu after stopping the iron-guardist rebellion was the militarization of a great number of institutions and state or private enterprises (18 February 1941). On 2–5 March 1941 a plebiscite was organized, which approved the marshal’s policy by 99,9 per cent²¹.

During the years of iron-guardist government, a series of abuses were committed in Craiova, especially towards the Jews. On 9 September 1940 the Prefect of Craiova ordered the county chiefs to shut down the houses of prayers of Mosaic religion and “to reopen them only after receiving new instructions”²². Later, after the banishing of the iron-guardists from power, the Synagogue of Spanish rite and the Synagogue Temple of prayers of occidental rite in Craiova were reopened²³. On March 1941 the police office in Craiova let the Prefecture know that the ex police officer Vâlcu Vlad had ordered on 10 January that the radio reception gadgets should be confiscated from the Jews “so as to stop the spreading of alarming news”²⁴ which worried the public opinion. On 24 September 1941 the prefecture advised the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the iron-guardists had confiscated from the Jews 170 radio-sets, to which there were to be added other 60 radio sets “in good condition” confiscated by the police and the military police force after 20 April 1941²⁵. These were stocked in the deposits of the Police headquarters office in Craiova until Romania’s joining the war, after which they were distributed to a series of military and civilian institutions, such as the Army Corps I, the School of Artillery Reserve Officers, the IIIrd Bomber Squadron, the Airport of Craiova, the hospitals for the wounded people in Craiova, the Recruitment Centre of Dolj county and 153 cultural centres²⁶. The Jewish issue entered a new stage after 22 June 1941, the date of Romania’s joining the war. On 30 June, the Prefect of Dolj county advised the Police Office, Craiova Garrison,

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 454.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 455.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 456.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 451.

²² *Ibidem*, f. 310.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, file no. 52/1941, f. 4.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 140.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 47, 132, 169.

Dolj Police Soldiers Legion and Supervision 3 Movement-Romanian Railways of the arrival in Craiova's railway station of a train with 30 carriages of Jews from Moldova. The supervision of the 30 carriages with Jews was the responsibility of Calafat police (20 carriages) and also of Craiova's police and garrison (10 carriages). The Jews were accommodated in barracks or huts under guard, and later they were sorted as follows: the women and children were quartered to the Jewish families in Craiova; the able-bodied men were distributed to "farming or any kind of work so as to earn their living"²⁷. The police force throughout the county and the Police soldiers' legion of Dolj were obliged to have "charts with the exact situation, so that the Jews should be kept under the most strict control, knowing that they were not allowed to leave the location where they were distributed for work"²⁸.

On 6 July 1941, the Prefecture reported to the higher authorities that in Craiova there were three camp-like centres for the Jews evacuated from Moldavia:

- a) A centre for men at Obedeanu School, with a number of 238 persons (128 able-bodied and 110 disabled);
- b) A centre for women and children at Trişcu School, housing a number of 465 persons (239 women and 226 children);
- c) A centre for women and children at Lumina School, housing 320 persons (216 women, 63 children, 41 old people aged over 60)²⁹.

In conformity with the orders, a set of rules was established which stipulated the daily nourishment per person (500 g of maize porridge, a bowl of sour soup or cooked vegetables for lunch and dinner, 20 g sugar for a mug of lime tea), the total ban on being supplied with eggs, milk, bread and poultry, because "these are lacking or can be found only in small quantities, being insufficient for the local population"³⁰. The regulations especially stipulated that the complaints should be addressed only to the political Police officer of Craiova through a delegation. On 8 July 1941, following the detainees' protests, it was disposed that they should "be given wheat flour once a week and mutton or beef in the quantity of 250 g per person on Sundays"³¹.

Ever since 2 July 1941 the Prefect Romulus Petroianu announced the President of the Jewish community of Spanish and of occidental rite that the Jews' families quartered in Craiova municipium "were not allowed to go into town otherwise than one person, at the most from each family and only during 8-9 in the morning and 16-17 in the afternoon. At the same time a permit for going around the town was issued for each family, but only for one single member"³².

²⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 1.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 36.

³¹ *Ibidem*, f. 53.

³² *Ibidem*, f. 12.

According to the Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs the able-bodied Jewish men aged 18-60 and Jewish women aged 20-50 from Craiova were sent to carry out public works: building of streets, highways, railways, bridges, etc. On 14 August 1941, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers ordered that the Jews who had been brought from Bessarabia and Bukovina and “quartered” in Craiova should return to the capitals of the counties from which they had been sent away. So, during the night of 25-26 August 1941 at 2⁰⁰ a.m., a train with 42 carriages where 1,806 Jews were made to get on, protected by 81 police soldiers led by warrant officer, left Craiova in the direction of Rădăuți³³.

Within Dolj Prefecture, the Service for Administering the Property Expropriated from the Jews was functioning, with several bodies: the Commission for property administration, the Commission for auctions and the Commission for evaluating the expropriated buildings³⁴. This service had taken over from the Jews in Craiova and Dolj county 96 economic enterprises (of food processing, selling of clothes, footwear, warehouses, etc.) Romanian businesses³⁵ started up in their place, some of them going bankrupt soon after that. In the autumn of 1942, 7 Jewish communists were deported from Craiova to Transnistria, a fact which aroused a state of anxiety not only in the Jewish community, but also among the Romanian population of the town³⁶. In the summer of 1943, when the Jews of Craiova were notified that they should contribute to the extraordinary tax for the army equipment (4 billion lei), a commission was set up, which arbitrarily decided on each Jewish family’s contribution to the payment of the tax. The largest sums money were paid by the families of the some entrepreneurs already known throughout the country, such as Israel Baruch (5 million lei), Jacob Baruch (5 million lei), Moritz Eschenasy (3 million lei), Arnold Eschenasy (350 thousand lei), Marcel Eschenasy (350 thousand lei), H. Max (700 thousand lei), Dr. B. Safir (150 thousand lei)³⁷.

During the war, the Iron-guardist Movement “remained active in Craiova, especially by carrying on a propaganda action between man and man”³⁸. In January 1942, the Court-Martial of the Ist Army Corps judged the case of the iron-guardists Mititelu Nicolae and Mircea Vasile, arrested after a clandestine iron-guardist organization had been discovered in December 1941³⁹. The state political police and the investigation department of the Oltenian police also interrogated and brought to justice the group of “The Sworn Brothers from Carol I College”. The punishments given to the members of the group consisted in days in prison and

³³ *Ibidem*, ff. 430, 432.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, file no. 18/1942, f. 3.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, file no. 85/1942, ff. 10-11.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, file no. 53/1942, f. 450.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, file no. 315/1943, f. 265.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, file no. 53/1942, f. 450.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 12.

fines. Ștefan Boianțiu and Nicolae Nedelcu, the two chiefs of the iron guardist movement, were given 10 years of hard labour⁴⁰.

On 4 May 1942, the Prefect of Dolj informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the listing of the property of the iron-guardist movement in Dolj, property that was to be returned to good account in the next period⁴¹. During 1942 and 1943 a series of people were arrested for possessing materials of iron-guardist propaganda and actions were brought against those who had organized and participated in forbidden political actions⁴².

During the war years, there was also an activity of the communist group, consisting in propaganda and actions of reorganizing the Regional Communist Organization in Oltenia. A range of informing notes given by the police brought to the fore the communist propaganda of that period. Thus, on 26 August 1943, the informing order of the Police Soldiers Legion mentioned that the Central Committee of the Communist Party had sent propaganda groups to the villages to urge the peasants to rise against the requisitions, to destroy the fodder, and to urge the women “to refuse to work in the field in the place of their husbands who were on the front. At the same time, the propaganda groups had orders to get in touch with the soldiers who were on leave and determine them not to return to the front. In Craiova the communist movement consisted of 57 persons, activists and sympathizers. In July 1943 M. Cruceanu, one of the founders of the Communist Party, arrived in Craiova with the task of reorganizing the Regional Communist Organization of Oltenia. He had contacts with old local communists and with some of the Polish and Jewish refugees⁴³. The informing notes of the police also mentioned the non subversive actions of the 5,000 workers from Suburbana Bordei Romanian Railways Building sites, though the communist activists tried to mobilize them to start strikes and anti-governmental demonstrations. At the same time, by using spies in enterprises and among the civilian population, Craiova’s police kept an eye on the 150 Soviet prisoners working in the local enterprises⁴⁴. An informing note from the Political Police Office in Craiova, dated 27 April 1943, was referring to the state of mind of the soldiers back from the front, pointing out that many of them had declared they would no longer return to fight in Russia “because apart from being shot by Russians, they were shot in the back by Germans too⁴⁵”.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 87.

⁴¹ The scrap iron given to Reșița Works for cash; the goods of the organization “The Country’s Sentinel” were given to the representatives of the undersecretary of State for educational affairs; foodstuffs distributed to school canteens and old people’s homes; clothes items distributed to the needy people by the County Committee of Social Work, on the occasion of holidays (*Ibidem*, file no. 25/1942, f. 1).

⁴² SJAN Dolj, Dolj Prefectura fund, file no. 315/1943, ff. 13, 119, 131.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, f. 337.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 437.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 338.

The increasingly violent offensive of the Russians on the eastern fronts induced anxiety among the city's inhabitants, who were afraid of the Soviet expansion, a fact mentioned in several notes of the police and political police of the city⁴⁶. Mussolini's resignation aroused comments from Craiova's inhabitants, while the members of the Liberal National Party and those of the Peasants' National Party were convinced that the Anglo-American troops "in case of a deterioration on the eastern front, would block the Bolsheviks' attempt at expansion"⁴⁷. The police advised the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the "dismay felt by the German ethnic group and by the iron-guardists in Craiova at Mussolini's resignation"⁴⁸.

A largely commented element was also Italy's capitulation in September 1943. The Anglophiles and the Jews in the city held that Romania, in order to be saved, had to leave the Axis, "lest Hungary should be in advance of it"⁴⁹. The informing notes of Craiova's Political Police also signalled that many of the town's citizens were of the opinion that "the Allies were not disembarking in the Balkans because the Russians were opposed to it"⁵⁰. The note of 16 April 1944 specified that some PNP members "started the rumour that important political events would take place in Romania too and that the only person apt to form a government that should save Romania was Iuliu Maniu, who was in favour with England and the USA"⁵¹.

The Soviet's going beyond the Nistru river limit represented a serious reason for the city's population to get worried, just like the arrival in Craiova of the 1,500 German soldiers who had come from the front for recovery. The beginning of the year 1944 intensifies the fear of a Soviet invasion of the country, the more so as new contingents of refugees from Bessarabia and Bukovina were trying to settle in Craiova⁵². The refugees wave brought the local authorities a range of problems to be tackled, regarding the provision of accommodation and nourishment. Canteens and restaurants were set up for the refugees, such as the Restaurant of the Social Work Committee in the Central Marketplace, the Canteen of B.P. Haşdeu High School Management at Carol I College for pupils, the Canteen of PTT Office at the post office seat in Unirii Street the Canteen of Chişinău Town at no. 2, I Hera street, etc.⁵³.

In accordance with an informing note issued by the officer of Craiova Police Office on 22 April 1944, the refugees from Bessarabia and Bukovina living within the area of the city created, through the things reported to the population, "a trend

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 437.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, file no. 69/1944, f. 63.

⁵² *Ibidem*, file no. 39/1944, f. 14.

⁵³ *Idem*, Craiova Town Hall fund, file no. 2/1944, f. 19.

hostile to the Germans and detrimental to the Romanian authorities”⁵⁴. They held that the German military retreating over the Nistru “entered the houses indulging in robberies and damaging, and doing nothing else but feasts and orgies, insulting the population”⁵⁵. At the same time, the Romanian authorities were accused of carelessness because though “the situation on the front was known, the population was not allowed to place their goods in a safe place and flee in time, being held back until they could no longer retire to a place of safety”⁵⁶. Another note dated 28 April 1944 showed that Craiova’s population was alarmed by the German troops’ presence, the people in town saying “that their presence at the railway station, airport and other places will determine the Anglo-Americans to bomb Craiova too, the only big city in the country which has remained untouched until now”⁵⁷. After 24 April 1944, when “500 inimical planes flew over Dolj county”, on 6 May the Romanian railway station Craiova was bombed, 6 goods vans, the Romanian Railways supply Office, the luggage depot, the transit office, the station building, as well as the railways in the station area being destroyed. The damages also included Craiova branch of Timișoreana Brewery and many houses in Valea Gangului street. The number of victims, including those in the area of the suburban communes Bariera Vâlcii and Gherceștii Noi, amounted to 45 persons⁵⁸. On 7 May 1944, around 23⁰⁰, the air-raid alarm was sounded because a wave of airplanes belonging to the allies had launched flares and incendiary bombs on Craiova. One of them fell in the yard of Frații Buzești High School, another in the yard of the Regiment 14 Artillery, 3 bombs fell near the ammunition dump, however without causing damages or victims. In the commune Atârnații de Dolj, paratroopers were launched, who were going to be captured during the same night⁵⁹.

On 8 May 1944 Marshal Ion Antonescu landed on Craiova’s airfield and inspected the bombed railway station, the damaged neighbourhoods, the Red Cross canteen, enquiring about the refugees’ nourishment⁶⁰.

On 6 June 1944 a new bombing on Craiova took place, the allied planes launching 89 bombs, which fell on Bulevardul Gării and on Frații Golești street. They destroyed or damaged 95 dwelling houses, Traiul Bread Factory, the Customs Inspectors Office⁶¹. On 10 June 1944 the enemy’s aircraft machine-gunned the city’s water reservoir⁶², and on 24 June another bombing followed. This time 91 persons were killed and 56 injured, 261 buildings (146 in the town and 115 in

⁵⁴ Idem, Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 39/1944, f. 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 36.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 233.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 155.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 189.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, ff. 190, 193.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 194.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, f. 269.

⁶² *Ibidem*, f. 303.

the suburban areas) were damaged or destroyed⁶³. The bombing aroused the population's indignation against the Anglo-Americans "who were labelled as murderers because they dropped bombs in the residential districts, causing damages and casualties"⁶⁴. The population's state of anxiety was also maintained by the scarcity of petroleum (petrol, diesel fuel) to which the restriction on foodstuffs was added. The wares deliveries were taken with big delays because of the bombing and the railways circulation being interrupted. Among the workers and public servants there was "an acute anxiety about the too reduced salaries and the expensive prices"⁶⁵.

The manifestos dropped by the Anglo-American aircraft deepened the population's worries. In those dropped on the territory of Dolj county on 7 May it was said that "in this stage of a lost battle, the Germans can plan nothing but the irrational destruction of your property. Eventually, the assistance given by Germany to Romania will mean abandoning Romania at the same time with devastating it"⁶⁶. The manifesto went on by mentioning that breaking the alliance with Germany was "the only hope for Romania", while "silence and passivity meant disaster"⁶⁷.

The Germans were also spreading leaflets in which they pronounced for continuing the war, "mentioning that there is not the slightest reason for panic" and asking the population "not to trust London radio, which is now the loud speaker of the Red Army, of the world revolution"⁶⁸.

In July 1944, the population was growing more and more hostile to Germany, hoping that the Anglo-American troops would arrive in the locality before the Soviet ones. On Romania's joining the Allied Forces, the mission of liberating Oltenia's territory was the responsibility of battalion general Marin Manafu, the Commander of the Army Corps I seated in Craiova. The presence of Romanian military in Craiova was going to maintain order in the town, the Germans' retreat not causing important damages to the population. Starting with 4 September 1944, the Russian military forces arrived in Craiova, a fact which started a long series of abuses and incidents with the population of the town⁶⁹.

⁶³ The number of bombs dropped on the town: 186, and in the suburban areas: 1,500 (*Ibidem*, f. 139).

⁶⁴ SJAN Dolj, Dolj Prefectura fund, file no. 39/1944, f. 242.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 253.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Istoria Craiovei*, Scrisul Românesc Publishing, Craiova, 1977, p. 105.

⁶⁹ SJAN Dolj, Dolj Prefecture fund, file no. 32/1944, ff. 555, 559, 560; *Ibidem*, file no. 118/1944, f. 106.

