

## ZENOBIE VASILESCU, THE LAST LIBERAL MAYOR OF CRAIOVA (1945–1947)

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**Abstract:** Between 1945 and 1947, the city of Craiova had as mayor Zenobie Vasilescu, a young doctor and liberal politician from Gh.Tătărescu's party. In the difficult conditions of the time, marked by the end of the war and the Soviet military occupation, the mayor struggled to solve the city's urban and supply problems. He also intervened in support of local merchants and producers as a representative of a liberal party.

**Keywords:** Craiova, mayor, Zenobie Vasilescu, National Liberal Party, Soviet military occupation.

On April 19, 1945, the installation ceremony<sup>1</sup> of the new mayor, Zenobie (Zeni) Vasilescu, a young doctor, member of the National Liberal Party Gh. Tătărescu, took place in Craiova. Aware of the critical circumstances in which he was to carry out his activity, the mayor could not make promises: *“Regarding the implementation program, it would be risky to make a clarification; now, when more unexpected concerns ask us for such difficult solutions. Absolutely aware, however, of the heavy task that is incumbent on me, I will strive to meet all the needs of this city, so that through work, honor and justice for all I can make the hopes of the citizens of Craiova to be those expected”*<sup>2</sup>.

Indeed, the end of the war found Craiova under Soviet military occupation, with the left parties in full swing, a population surplus caused by refugees from Bessarabia (about 10,000), with large shortages in the supply of the city, and urban problems.

The life of the people of Craiova, as well as of most Romanians, was not easy during this period. The lack of food of strict necessity (bread, meat, oil, sugar, etc.)

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<sup>1</sup> On April 14, 1945, the Minister of Interior, Teohari Georgescu, signed the decision to appoint the new mayors in Oltenia, and in Craiova was appointed Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu (“Situția” Newspaper, year II, no. 155 of April 19, 1945, p. 1); On June 4, 1945, Mayor Zeni Vasilescu appointed Constantin Băzăvan (Social Democrat) and Neculce Popescu (Communist) as assistant mayor (Official Bulletin of Craiova, year V, no. 1–5, 1945, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> “Situția” Newspaper, year II, no. 156 of April 20, 1945, p. 2.

on the city market, rising prices and taxes, low flow of drinking water, increasingly frequent interruptions of the electricity, sanitation and street cleaning, were frequently complained to the mayor.



**Figure no. 1.** Zenobie Vasilescu – photography from the 1940s  
(Source: Personal Collection)

Zeni Vasilescu was born in Craiova<sup>3</sup> on October 15/30, 1905, in a family from Transylvania and settled in the locality in the 19th century. His father, a tanner by profession, a diligent and thoughtful man, managed to raise large sums of money with which he bought houses and real estate in the city until after the First World War. Out of his five children (four boys and a girl), Zeni attended the courses of the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest, which he graduated in 1931, specializing in gynecology.

In 1934, he was appointed secondary doctor at the Philanthropy Hospital in Craiova (Ministerial Decision no. 38121 of July 23, 1934), and from September 1941 until September 1948, he held the position of chief physician of the Craiova Social Insurance House (Ministerial Decision no. 017472 of October 23, 1941). Between June and November 1941, he participated in the battles on the Eastern Front, with the 3rd Divisional Ambulance, having the rank of captain of the medical service. In addition to the state service, Dr. Zenobie also practiced his profession in the private medical office opened right in his home<sup>4</sup> in Calomfirescu Street no. 48 (current Câmpia Islaz street).

In 1929, he married a colleague, Maria Goșa, and shortly after, their only child was born, a little girl named Olteea.

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<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Mrs. Olteea Vasilescu, daughter of Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu, for the information, documents and photographs she provided me.

<sup>4</sup> Seriously damaged by the 1977 earthquake, the house was demolished.

A good professional, an attractive and charming man, sociable and fickle, enjoying life and people, Zeni easily made many friends in Craiova society.

Probably, his entry into politics, which he had kept away from until then, is largely due to his friendship with Emanoil (Nolică) Tătărescu, the head of the liberal organization in Dolj and the brother of Gheorghe Tătărescu, the former prime minister.



**Figure no. 2.** Zeni Vasilescu together with colleagues from the liberal party – photography from the 1940s (*Source*: Personal Collection)

Started in the autumn of 1944, the “reorganization of the National Liberal Party”<sup>5</sup> – in fact, the establishment of a new liberal political party, led by Gh. Tătărescu and willing to collaborate with left-wing parties to form a coalition government – was completed in early 1945.

A number of county liberal organizations, including the one in Dolj<sup>6</sup> (February 21, 1945), expressed their support for the new party. This accession led to the split of PNL (National Liberal Party) – Dolj: one part of the liberals, led by I. Plessia, remained faithful to the party led by Dinu Brătianu, and the other part of them, having as leader Em. Tătărescu, followed Gh. Tătărescu.

Among the members of PNL-Tătărescu from Dolj were: old liberal politicians (Alexandru B. Iliescu – former prefect of Dolj county and senator;

<sup>5</sup> In Circular no. 1 of September 1, 1944, entitled *Către Președinții Organizațiilor Partidului Național-Liberal* (“To the Presidents of the Organizations of the National-Liberal Party”), Gh. Tătărescu asked them: “We have a duty to deal quickly with the restoration of the forces through which tomorrow's reforms will be carried out, with the restoration and reorganization of our own party. Start this reorganization action without delay based on the oral instructions given to you. You will soon receive our written instructions on the *program, structure and methods* of the national-liberal party in tomorrow's political configuration of the country”.

<sup>6</sup> Narcis Dorin Ion, *Gheorghe Tătărescu și Partidul Național Liberal (1944–1948)*, București, Tritonic Publishing, 2003, p. 71.

Toma Vălureanu –former senator; Ioan F. Popescu – former deputy, former mayor of Craiova and former prefect of Dolj; Dem. Popescu – Dolj, former senator), lawyers (Eliodor Vergatti – Dean of the Dolj Bar; Ștefan G. Boțoiu – former director of the National Theater in Craiova), members of military personnel (Gheorghe Opran – medical colonel; Dan Bâtcă – major; Petre Urziceanu – general; I. Marinescu – colonel), engineers (Drăniceanu – director of Communal Enterprises; Diaconeasa – head of the Technical Service of Craiova), merchants, doctors, teachers, etc.

In the party, Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu held the position of head of the Plenița sector, and, subsequently, that of general secretary of the PNL-Tătărescu organization from Dolj.

After the establishment of the government of Dr. Petru Groza and the distribution of administrative positions between the members of the ruling coalition, including the political party of Gh. Tătărescu, the post of mayor of Craiova reverted to the Tătărescu's Liberals, who appointed Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu.

In these times, marked by the end of the war and the Soviet military presence, political and economic instability, when life was full of worries and dangers lurked everywhere, the mayor's seat, occupied by Zeni Vasilescu, had ceased to be a sinecure, as before. As mentioned by the party's press organ, "Drum Nou" newspaper: *"It would be enough to say so much, in order to realize the almost overwhelming task that Dr. Vasilescu received to carry on his shoulders, with all its risks and shortcomings. For it is a real heroism to dare to face such a bitter situation and such a confused state of general dissatisfaction, with almost non-existent means and possibilities. We live in times that are not only above us, but that are crushing us every moment. That is why we suffer and endure a lot, without being able to murmur anything. The only thing we are fighting for is being able to survive these critical moments. It would be unfair, therefore, to ask the mayor of Craiova for more than is humanly possible; and above all, to attribute to him shortages and shortcomings which lie neither in his fall, nor in his power to remedy them entirely. His presence in this watchtower is a choice. Keeping him in it, with the courage he shows, is a civic courage"*<sup>7</sup>.

With limited means<sup>8</sup>, and despite difficulties of all kinds, the young mayor struggled to do his duty. In the years 1945-1946, numerous urban works, strictly necessary, were undertaken, being repaired a series of streets, some bearing the traces of the American bombings in the summer of 1944. The tile manufacturing

<sup>7</sup> *Medalioane politice: Dr. Zeni Vasilescu*, in "Drum Nou" newspaper, year II, nr. 3 of March 30, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Services disorganized by the mass mobilizations, as well as by the lack of the necessary equipment, which had been requisitioned for military needs, or picked up by the passing troops. An overpopulation created by the wave of refugees and a depletion of food resources, caused by the obligations of the armistice, as well as by the takeovers of the occupation units. A new political climate, in which he, as an exponent of a traditional political party, was to engage, realizing the welding of a real collaboration" (*Ibidem*, year II, no. 16 of August 14, 1946, p.3).

workshop was put back into operation, and worked all the time, without interruption, in order to be able to produce the tiles necessary for the sidewalk works, directed and undertaken.

Thus, the following were executed:

– *“Repaving and repairing Calomfirescu Street, the roadway, between Madona Dudu Street and Primăverii Street.*

– *Repaving Horezului Street with cubic stone.*

– *Paving again Petre Ispirescu street with “aliciarie” stone and arocamento.*

– *Repair of Principe Nicolae Street.*

– *Repair of Aurelian Street.*

– *Repair of Carol I Boulevard, in the extension between Cuza Vodă Street and I.C. Brătianu Street.*

– *Repaving of Știrbei Boulevard in front of the Bus Station.*

– *The works for arranging the junction square between Calea Unirii and Elca Square (Glatz dead end).*

– *Asphalt paving of the sidewalk, Cuza Vodă Street.*

– *Paving the sidewalks with concrete slabs on Calomfirescu and E. Carada streets, as well as arranging a square at the intersection of E. Carada and Calomfirescu streets.*

– *Paving again with stone Fluturilor Street, Regele Ioanițiu Street, Mărășești Street, Col. Gaicu Alley, Logofătu Tăut Street, Brâncoveanu Street, etc.*

– *Repaving of Ștefan cel Mare street.*

– *Earthworks on I.G. Duca Boulevard.*

– *Repaving of Ion Hera street, etc.*

– *Paving the sidewalk with concrete slabs on I. C. Brătianu, Ghica Vodă and Elena Doamna streets.*

– *Asphalt repairs on the road and sidewalks on Bibescu, Unirii, Kogălniceanu streets, etc.*

– *Repairs to the roadway of Bucureștilor, Cuza Vodă, Caracal, Buzești, Amaradia streets, using sand brought by cars provided by the Soviet army.*

– *Repair works at the Municipal Swimming Pool, at the Obedeanu School, etc.*

– *Asphalt sidewalks on Cuza Vodă Street and the widening of this street.*

– *Construction of the reinforced concrete bridge on Știrbei Boulevard, over Serca stream, etc.*

– *Unclogging the alley between Unirii Street and Elca Square and transforming it into a modern, paved and widened passage, to become a small communication artery in a central and commercially animated neighborhood”<sup>9</sup>.*

In 1946, Craiova City Hall hired architect Duiliu Marcu<sup>10</sup>, director of the Systematization Service of the Ministry of Interior, to create a systematization plan

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem.*

for the city. Based on this, an ambitious two-year urban project was developed, which provided for:

- “paving with cubic stone and masonry of about 100,000 square meters of peripheral streets;
- paving the sidewalks with cement slabs along the peripheral streets, with an area of 40,000 square meters;
- asphaltting the sidewalks and the roadway on the central streets, with an area of 50,000 sq.m. and moving that material to peripheral streets;
- construction of a modern town hall, corresponding to the need for services and prestige of this municipality;
- centralization of all City Hall asylums in a central and modern asylum;
- arrangement of the Central Square (Marșeu), as well as of the sector markets (Elca Square, Chiriac etc.);
- modernization of the Week Fair;
- modernization and enlargement of the Stadium;
- construction of 5 barrier cantons, etc.”<sup>11</sup>.

The shortcomings of all kinds (from budgetary funds, to tools and labor), but especially, the political situation, prevented the fulfillment of the project. The communist regime could not look favorably on the achievements of a liberal mayor, and after the November 1946 elections, Tătărescu’s liberals had their days numbered in the Groza government.

However, in the autumn of 1946, at the behest of the mayor, the municipal program had begun. With the help of the army (7th Territorial Corps led by General Agricola) which made soldiers available, they began “immediately to carry out the works on the Belt Boulevard, which connects Calea Bechetului and Calea Caracalului, entering between Romanescu Park and Ungureni Cemetery”<sup>12</sup>.

Another initiative of the mayor and the liberal organization he was part of remained unfulfilled. Under the headline “**A grandiose urban work in Craiova**”, the party newspaper – a real Official Bulletin of the City Hall – informed the people of Craiova that: “*The General Institute of Insurance, Economy, Credit and Assistance of civil servants and public pensioners, following the intervention of Emanuel Tătărescu, head of the PNL Dolj organization, and Dr. Zeni Vasilescu, mayor, decided to build on the land located in Calea Bucureștilor, next to the Ice Factory, land donated by the City Hall, a grandiose palace, with several floors, which will include downstairs: shops, restaurant, bank; and upstairs: performance hall, library and pharmacy. Also in this building will be included a hotel with over 50 rooms, made available to civil servants and public pensioners at a reduced*

<sup>10</sup> The funds for the works were 285 million lei, of which 85 million from the City Hall's own income, and 200 million lei from the Ministry of Interior (“Situation” Newspaper, year II, no. 527 of August 2, 1946, p. 2).

<sup>11</sup> “Drum Nou” Newspaper, year II, nr. 23 of October 8, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

price, as well as to individuals. The works of this grandiose urban work will start on August 1 and will be finished in a year”<sup>13</sup>.



**Figure no. 3.** Craiova City Hall in Calea Brestei – postcard circulated in 1930  
(Source: Personal Collection)

The supply of food to the city, especially bread, was one of the major concerns of the City Hall. In 1946, although the wheat harvest in Dolj County, despite the drought, had been rich, the people of Craiova received, on the cards, smaller and smaller rations of bread, of poor quality and more and more expensive<sup>14</sup>. Worse than that were the days or even weeks when the bread was completely missing.

The collection of cereals from the county was in the hands of the County Economic Office<sup>15</sup> attached to the Prefecture, which regulated them according to a general distribution plan: the requirements of the Armistice, feeding the occupation troops from Craiova, helping the hungry counties in Moldova<sup>16</sup>, and supplying Bucharest. The remaining cereals, after fulfilling these obligations, were distributed to the mills in the city for consumption by the citizens.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, year II, no. 3 of March 30, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> “Today, the way bread is made by most bakers is a permanent danger to human health. There is no citizen who does not complain about poor quality bread – raw, with a bad and sour smell” (*Ibidem*, year II, no. 29 of December 2, 1946, p. 2).

<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of October 1946, the communist Marin Popescu, the general secretary of the Block of Democratic Parties in Dolj County, was appointed head of the Economic Office (*Ibidem*, year II, no. 23 of October 8, 1946, p. 4).

<sup>16</sup> Dolj County had the task of helping the deficient regions with 1100 wagons of wheat for seed and 12,500 wagons of wheat for food (“Situția” Newspaper, year II, no. 618 of November 16, 1946, p. 2).

In the given situation, in which the bread supply of Craiova was more and more deficient and difficult, the mayor took measure to establish a stock of flour, as a reserve for at least 30 days, from which to take the necessary quantities, when the supply of every day he would encounter difficulties. For this purpose, since the summer of 1946, the City Hall tried to contract a loan of at least 2 billion lei, for the purchase of the necessary wheat. However, as the loan could not be realized, Zeni Vasilescu addressed the Craiova millers who had capital, in order to purchase from the new harvest, on their own, the wheat reserve necessary for the city. The mayor's call was answered by the Schmidt<sup>17</sup> Mill, and a quantity of 200 grain wagons was soon collected, stored and processed.

It seemed that, finally, the people of Craiova would no longer be deprived of the daily bread. All the more so as one of the members of the government also approved the mayor's initiative: *"Taking advantage of the accidental presence, in our county of gen. Pârvulescu, Undersecretary of State for Supply and son of this county, originally from Cetate, obtained the following advantages for Craiova: "1. Establishing an intangible stock of flour, which is already collected at the Schmidt Mill, to form reserves for at least a month to feed the population with bread. 2. Supply of 60 wagons of potatoes from Sibiu and Făgăraș, at maximum price. 3. Supply of 1000 light bulbs for the reconstruction of the city's electric lighting network, which was disorganized by the theft of wires and light bulbs from this network. 4. Provision of 1000 m. Cloth (doc) for sanitation officials. 5. Hiring of City Hall officials, according to the new norms of the law on communal officials and the law on the status of civil servants. And other such provisions and essential materials for public needs"*<sup>18</sup>.

Despite the assurances, the flour stock of the City Hall was quickly taken over, in only one week, by the County Economic Office, which directed it to supply the Capital and the hungry regions of the country. Subsequently, based on the order of the Ministry of Supply, it was decided that the city of Craiova should have a wheat reserve for only five days<sup>19</sup>.

We should also note the mayor's attempts to stop the dizzying rise in the price of bread. Thus, a bread that in Bucharest cost 100 lei, in Craiova it was sold for 500 lei, and the local manufacturers requested a new price increase. On March 4, 1946<sup>20</sup>, the representatives of the local mills and bread factories were convened in a conference at the City Hall to establish the new price of bread. *"Invoking the miserable wages of employees, depicting the precarious state of the working world, arguing the inability of those in need and burdened by heavy families to bear a too high rise in bread prices, the mayor of Craiova, asked millers and bakers to have*

<sup>17</sup> In April 1946, the owner of the Mill, the industrialist Luca Schmidt, was arrested on charges of trying to bribe 15 million lei (*Ibidem*, year II, no. 442 of April 15, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>18</sup> "Drum Nou" Newspaper, year II, nr. 23 of October 8, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, year II, nr. 24 of October 16, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> "Situația" Newspaper, year II, nr. 408 of March 4, 1946, p. 1.

*all the understanding imposed by the harsh days we live in and to make the common sacrifice of not raising the price of bread over 500 lei*<sup>21</sup>.

The sanitation<sup>22</sup> and cleanliness of the city's streets, the lack of water<sup>23</sup> and the interruption of public lighting were strong reasons for dissatisfaction for the citizens of Craiova. Although the provision of these services was the responsibility of the Communal Plants, an autonomous organization, directly dependent on the Ministry of Interior, with its own budget and staff – the City Hall was involved in solving these problems, especially in those related to the water supply.

**The lack of water became unbearable** – headlined a local newspaper in the summer of 1946, which showed that: *“The water regime to which Craiova was subjected, reached the maximum of dissatisfaction of the population and justified protests. The gentlemen from the Water Service are either incompetent or they are simply making fun of the population. For otherwise this barbaric way of leaving citizens 20 hours out of 24 without water is not explained”*<sup>24</sup>. This situation had led to the sale of a glass of water, in the city station, for 500 lei, and the price of ice had increased excessively. According to the general manager of the Communal Plants: *“Due to the insufficiency of power supplies, the whole city is without water during the night and part of the day. Craiova, which has 110,000 inhabitants, without the Soviet army, needs approximately 20,000 cubic meters of water in 24 hours. Today, the city is supplied with only 8,500 cubic meters of water in 24 hours”*<sup>25</sup>.

Since May 1945, the City Hall has been looking for solutions to increase water flow. *“For this purpose, finding out that the Malaxa Plants were surveyed and analyzed drinking water was discovered, in agreement with the local bodies of the Communal Plant, Mr. Mayor Z. Vasilescu took the appropriate measures in Bucharest. Thus, Mr. Eng. Pârvulescu from the Regie (Water Management Center –*

<sup>21</sup> *Prețul pâinii. Un elogiu pentru primarul Municipiului Craiova*, in “Drum Nou” Newspaper, year II, nr. 5 of April 13, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> The director of the Communal Plants, Eng. Drăniceanu, admitted that: “It is very true, the city is very dirty, but – our lack of funds on the one hand and the negligence of the citizens on the other – maintain this state of dirt. In 1940–1941, the sanitation service of Craiova had 30 vans, 8 trucks and almost 100 people. The needs of the war, i.e. the requisitions made, left to this service today 9 vans, one of which has recently broken down and can no longer be used, a “Katerpillar” tractor with two trailers, and four old trucks that often do not even finish a trail due to defects in engines whose parts are old, or due to other emerging faults. There are 37 people in the service, because the salary is insufficient and no longer attracts anyone. In 1940–1941, vans and trucks picked up garbage from citizens' courtyards at least once a week, today we cannot do this once a month or once every two months” (“Situția” Newspaper, year II, no. 545 of August 24, 1946, pp. 1–2).

<sup>23</sup> “The lack of water, as well as the weakening of electricity, are due to the excessive consumption made by the overpopulation of the city and especially of the Soviet units in the garrison, which exceed the provisions of normal times” (“Drum Nou” Newspaper, year II, no. 16 of August 14, 1946, p. 3).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, year II, no. 17 of August 23, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> “Situția” Newspaper, year II, nr. 542 of August 20, 1946, pp. 1–2.

our note) went to the delegation to complete this agreement with the CFR (Romanian Railways) general management”<sup>26</sup>.

At the same time, the mayor commissioned the well-known hydrologist, Professor Pompiliu Nicolau, to carry out studies for the undertaking of new works to capture other springs in the Georoc Valley, to provide the city with the necessary flow of drinking water<sup>27</sup>.

In his capacity as mayor, but also as a representative of a liberal party, Dr. Zeni Vasilescu intervened in favor of local producers and traders crushed by the communist regime through exaggerated taxes and duties. The newspaper “Drum Nou” – whose editor in charge was Zeni Vasilescu – has pleaded, countless times, to support local employers and businesses, to normalize economic life and against injustice and abuse. For example, referring to the issue of banning the manufacture of sausages in Craiova, it was shown that: “The four factories in the locality stopped working last year, and the owners lead the same hard life as everyone else. It is a slow but sure destruction of their capital; and capitalism has always been the sure basis of a state and the key to its prosperity”<sup>28</sup>.

In 1946, huge taxes (several hundred times higher than last year) caused dissatisfaction of the Craiova merchant who asked for the mayor’s support. On his initiative, following discussions with the main financial administrator of Dolj County, a meeting<sup>29</sup> between the authorities and the leaders of Craiova’s economic life took place on August 19, 1946, at the headquarters of the Craiova Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Although they were right and it was decided that the taxes should be revised, in reality nothing has changed.

The elections of November 1946 determined a major change in the life and activity of Mayor Zeni Vasilescu. Elected deputy on the BPD (Bloc of Democratic Parties) – Dolj list<sup>30</sup>, he held the position of secretary of the Labor Commission<sup>31</sup> in parliament (until November 14, 1947).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, year II, no. 179 of May 24, 1945, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> “Drum Nou” Newspaper, year II, nr. 16 of August 14, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, year II, no. 14 of June 15, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> “Presentations were made and clarifications were requested from the Financial Administrator on the taxation criterion. After the explanations given by the Financial Administrator, and after listening to the representatives of the respective organizations, it was found that, in fact, the taxes are exaggerated and exceed the payment power of many traders and industrialists. Traders and industrialists understand to support the state in these times by their contribution to be able to meet the financial and economic needs, but they asked to find a way for a fair taxation so as not to be abolished as merchants by excessive taxes” (*Ibidem*, Year II, No. 17 of August 23, 1946, p. 3.).

<sup>30</sup> In Dolj, on the list of candidates for Parliament were: Ștefan Voitec, Emanoil Tătărescu, Mihail Roșianu, Constantin Mitroi, Petre Bălăceanu, Constantin Drăghici, Ion Deca, Zeni Vasilescu, Ion Vintilă, Ion Lungu, Dem. Popescu-Dolj, Cornel Maghețu and Ion Bică (“Situția” Newspaper, year II, no. 593 of October 18, 1946, pp. 1–2); and the official results of the elections in Dolj County were: voters – 229,537; BPD (Bloc of Democratic Parties) – 141,570; PNT (National Peasant Party) – 41,500; PNL (National Liberal Party) – 25,500; Dr. Lupu – 7,754; Titel Petrescu – 3,830; Independents – 3,873. Distribution of mandates: BPD – 10, Maniu – 2, Brătianu – 1 (*Ibidem*, year II, no. 624 of November 23, 1946, pp. 1–2).

Faced with the new obligations, Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu delegated to the management of Craiova City Hall Ștefan Gh. Boțoiu<sup>32</sup>, a controversial figure, who was not to the liking of the left parties. In the autumn of 1947, Dr. Zenobie Vasilescu was replaced by the leadership of the City Hall, the mayor's chair being occupied, for a short period, by another liberal, Dumitru Gh. Colan<sup>33</sup>.

The following year, Zeni Vasilescu continued his political career following Petre Bejan, after the retirement of Gh. Tătărescu from the party leadership. In the elections of March 28, 1948, for the Great National Assembly, he was among the seven deputies elected from the PNL - Bejan<sup>34</sup>.

On August 19, 1952, he was picked up by the Securitate from his workplace in Eforie Seaside Resort, arrested and remanded in custody for searches in various prisons and labor camps for almost two years (until June 23, 1954)<sup>35</sup>.

After his release, he worked in various health institutions in Bucharest (Brâncovenesc Hospital, Polyclinic of Constructions), having a double specialization: gynecology and balneology.

He died in April 1977, following an operation, being buried in the Ungureni Cemetery in Craiova.

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<sup>31</sup> Narcis Dorin Ion, *cit. work*, p. 219.

<sup>32</sup> Lawyer, writer, President of the Journalists' Union of Oltenia and Banat. Arrested on November 10, 1956, he died in Gherla Penitentiary (Dorin Dobrinu, *Listele Morții. Deținuți politici decedați în sistemul carceral din România potrivit documentelor Securității, 1945–1958*, Iași, Polirom Publishing, 2008, p. 190).

<sup>33</sup> Lawyer, liberal politician, after August 23, 1944, he joined the group led by Gh. Tătărescu. Member of the Interim Commission of Dolj County. Mayor of Craiova between October 15 – November 7, 1947.

<sup>34</sup> Narcis Dorin Ion, *cit. work*, p. 252.

<sup>35</sup> *Bilet de Liberare (pentru preveniți) nr. 1976/1954, eliberat de Penitenciarul Lugoj* [Release Ticket (for the prevented) no. 1976/1954, issued by the Lugoj Penitentiary] – document from Personal Archive.