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DOCTORATE THESIS
THE CONSTANTA PORT BETWEEN
THE WAR AND THE REVOLUTION
(1945-1989)
- SUMMARY -

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INTRODUCTION

The modern evolution of Romania was in indissoluble bond with the Black Sea which started to have a direct exit, immediately after Dobrogea became part of Romania. Constanta Port has become the main connection with the world and the importance of the maritime gate properly amplified with the lapse of time. The prevalence of the Romanian foreign trade developed here, has increased- even if there were some turning points and discrepancies, it is true- while developing the national economy, the port of Constanta being a crucial element in the structure of the latter at the end of the period 1945-1989.

The evolution of Romania's current largest port on the Black Sea caught the eyes of many researchers from various fields, from historians and economists to engineers and journalists. However, their research focuses especially on the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, for understandable reasons. The end of the Second World War hit the Romanian state and the Constanta port reflected the situation. But the years that followed this moment which coincide with the

evolution of the communist regime in Romania, have aroused less interest from a historiography perspective.

The thesis comprises three chapters, based on the development stages that the infrastructure port and the goods traffic experienced during 1945-1989 and how the operation port was organized and its working conditions.

Of particular importance in achieving this thesis proved to be the archival documents made available by the National Archives branch in Constanta. Sources rich in information on life port are: the Harbor Master Constanta and Constanta Maritime Navigation Directorate that were very used by all historians concerned with the past of Constanta port. The documents from these two sources have proved to be very useful for understanding the impact that the war and later the Soviet occupation, had upon the Romanian port.

Since 1950, files belonging to P.C.R. Constanta have started to appear. A favorable aspect is that the port has always been –after 1953- to the forefront of the party. P.C.R. fund Constanta, the Regional Committee, prepared the materials we used in the Economic Section of the Branch of the party for the years 1950-1967. Documents belonging to this fund reflect a mutual but steady advance, of the place it occupies in the hierarchy

of port issues in the focus of the local leadership of the party.

The documents belonging to the enterprise of Constanta port operations provided data for each tier of port life up to the upper limit of the fund -1976. The fund includes statistics on port traffic, the government decisions that triggered the southward extension of the port and several volumes of correspondence classified as secret.

The documents of the Hydro Construction Enterprise of the Constanta PMR County Committee, the Regional Committee P.C.R. "Dobrogea" and Dezrobirea completed the image of the port with technical details and information about the working conditions.

The CC files from P.C.R., the Economic Section-National Archives Centre- were very important for understanding how and under which conditions the port was operating in the 70s-80s and for assessing the privileged position the Constanta port occupied in the Romanian economy mechanism during those years. The files include transcripts of meetings with leaders of various sectors of the port coordinated by Nicolae Ceausescu.

Many irregularities occurred in conjunction with the limits of a port still underdeveloped because there were very unmanageable situations, such as those created by the foreign ships stationing in port for months, aspects that were mentioned in several files called Issue 212 belonging to M.A.E. Archive.

To understand the development of the port infrastructure, I particularly used in certain segments of work, the documents made available by the Constanta Maritime Ports Administration Archive. An example would be *The Study of the Enlargement of the Constanta port* conducted in 1942 by engineer Cotovu Ovid, whose merit is greater than that of containing a concise description of the port infrastructure as it was presented in the composition study. Among the documents quoted, there is an important book entitled *Exposition of the sketch plan for developing the port of Constanta*, Bucharest, 1961 which was found in the Constanta Maritime Ports Administration Archive and which constitutes one of the first studies dedicated to the southward extension of the port, being composed for the Minister of Transport from then-Ion Baicu.

Memoirs have provided us information and impressions from the Romanian sailors that participated

to the events in the port of Constanta after 23 August 1944, contained in the work of Nicholas Koslinski and Raymond Stanesco “*The Romanian Navy in World War II* (1939-1945), IIIrd volume (1944-1945), Bucharest, Modelism International Publishing, 1998, the characterization of the operating activities in the port of Constanta in 1945 by the famous general C.V.R. Schuyler- *Difficult mission. Diary (January 28th 1945 to 1920 September 20th 1946)*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1997, and reviews regarding the importance of the port for the Soviet Union and its army offered by the American journalist Reuben H. Markham, *Romania under the Soviet oppression*, Bucharest, Civic Academy Foundation and technical details given by engineer Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *A life*, National Company Maritime Ports Administration Constanta Publisher, 2000.

Press articles whose subject can be any part of Constanta harbor life, are less frequent until the end of the first stage of the systematization work, which faithfully reflects the penumbra in which the port of Constanta was situated in the national economy in the first two postwar decades.

Given the nature of this thesis preoccupied with the economic objective of developing the permanent infrastructure to align with the constant demands of the global economy, there were used three categories of studies and works for its drafting: technical, composed by engineers, economic presentations and historical analysis.

The studies of engineers like M. Ulubeanu and the craftsman of the expanded moles, Romeo Ciortan-the team leader who designed the port of Constanta, South Agigea-, and also C. Avădanei involved in building the Channel, as well as the historical perspective on infrastructure development until the Second World War offered by engineer Petre Covacef in the two volumes dedicated to the port: *The Port of Saligny*, National Company Maritime Ports Administration Constanta Publisher, 2004 and *The Constanta Port – The port of Laurențiu Erbiceanu*, Constanța, Ex Ponto Publisher, 2011 had an important contribution to the systematization, then to the lifting of the expanded new port of Constanta South Agigea, and to the difficulties they have assumed even from its early stage of construction.

The works of the economist Nicolae Sută, O. Botez, Oana Mihaela Văsioiu and the historian Liviu Țăranu contributed to the understanding of economic mechanisms or how the Romanian operation within C.A.E.R has had effects on the national economy and thus on the Constanta port.

The historians' perspective on the port balanced the three major components: infrastructure, traffic and organization or operation. A special work that we use particularly for data and conclusions provided on the precise role played by the port infrastructure in the development of commercial activities undertaken in the Romanian port, belongs to the Lecturer Mariana Cojoc – *Constanta- international port. Romania's Foreign Trade Through the Port of Constanta. 1878-1939*, published by University Book in Bucharest, 2006. The monograph dedicated to the port by Mihai Lupu – *The Evolution of the Constanta port during 1896-1948. Social and economic aspects*, Constanta, Muntenia Publisher, 2006, managed to capture history facets of the port that they have not been insisted on until then, as well as its passage from the state of military entrepreneurship after Romania having entered the war or the hard working conditions of port workers.

The establishment of Soviet occupation with its avatars, the working conditions in the port of Constanta and also the union activity represent elements of port life after August 23th 1944 mentioned in special studies and well documented by the historians Marian Cojoc, Mariana Cojoc, Marian Moşneagu and Vasile Bâţlan.

An important component for the history of the Constanta port that we didn't find in the monographs dedicated to the port, was the emigration of Jews to Palestine during 1939-1948. The issue was carefully studied by historian Florin Stan, who managed to create a balanced perspective through his studies on a sensitive issue as the Hebrew.

Through this thesis we propose an analysis that doesn't have to be exhaustive, but it tries to illustrate a more objective approach on the port development which consists of a period in which PCR and the state structures were the factotum of the development.

CHAPTER I

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVOLUTION FROM THE TOMIS PORT TO CONSTANTA (SIXTH CENTURY BC TO 1945)

The natural conditions for the ship mooring have made Tomis a shopping centre by mid third century BC; this matter was attested by subsequent historical sources, but together with the existence of numerous stamps and amphora from that period they support the idea mentioned above. Even before the Hellenistic period, Tomis had lasting trade links with the Aegean Islands and other Greek colonies on the Black Sea¹. New ports were raised in the latter half of the fourth century, when buildings were rebuilt and new warehouses were put up². Three centuries later Tomis was affected by Slavs attacks, which destroyed a significant part of port facilities³.

¹ Valentin Ciorbea *Portul Constanța. 1896-1996*, Constanța, Fundația Andrei Șaguna Publishing, 1996, pp.13-15

² *Ibidem*, p.23

³ *Ibidem*, p.25

The historian and geographer Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu⁴ speaks about “the importance of Constanta in the Middle Ages”, specifically during the Genoese domination. Evlia Celebi’s travels in Dobrogea in the second half of the seventeenth century are a source of information about Constanta port during the Ottoman occupation.

The Crimean War turned Dobrogea into a theater of operations and made the port suffer significant damage. The penultimate year of the war brought the port into the attention of two representatives of two French missions arrived in Constanta to participate in military operations.

During 1857-1878 the English company which has been leased building the port, lifted 290 m of the breakwater, a lighthouse, 170 m of stone piers and wooden piers, a workshop for repairing wagons and locomotives, houses for the staff and administration offices for the port⁵. These were the first modern port

⁴ Marin Ionescu Dobrogeanu, *Cercetări asupra oraşului Constanţa. Geografie şi istorie*, Bucureşti, 1897, pp.33-34

⁵ Mihai Lupu, *Evoluţia portului Constanţa între 1896 şi 1948. Aspecte economice şi sociale*, Constanţa, Muntenia Publishing, 2006, p.21

development projects that still belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

The entry of Dobrogea in the Romanian state was a new beginning in the history of Constanta and its port. The aggregation of Dobrogea with Romania occurred in a sensitive context for Romania, as the Romanians were losing at the same time the southern Bessarabia. The Romanian diplomats considered that they were consciously and deliberately abandoned Bessarabia. They also skillfully avoided that situation, by eliciting the “aggregation” of Dobrogea with Romania that is the return under the Romanian dominion⁶.

After studying several foreign projects on the development of the port, the Romanian government opted for a project by engineer I. B. Cantacuzino. The construction began after Cantacuzino’s plan, and Gheorghe Duca subsequently modified the heading silos and oil basin. When Anghel Saligny came after in 1899, the project was modified due to the insurmountable problems arising from the old pond blasting and the construction of quays⁷.

⁶ Academia Română, *Istoria românilor. De la independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)*, coordinator Gheorghe Platon, vol.VII, tom II, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003, pp.36-44

⁷ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.60

From the beginning of the construction and modernization of the port in the second half of the last decade of the nineteenth century until Romania entered the war in 1916, 2.250.933.642 lei were spent at the end of the specified period, Constanta benefiting a port equipped with a basin of 60 ha, 36 oil tanks of 5,000 cubic meters each, 2993 m embankments, 4312 m quay, four silos with a capacity of 140,000 t, which allowed a double line loading and unloading⁸.

After the port was occupied by enemies in the fall of 1916⁹, there followed the loss of the existing goods in warehouses and oil tanks, their destruction by bombing along with the existing ships, floating rail network and rolling stock. The total value of damage and losses caused by the occupation regime over the port was 14.186.000 lei¹⁰.

⁸ Mariana Cojoc, *Constanța – port internațional. Comerțul exterior al României prin portul Constanța. 1878-1939*, București, Cartea Universitară, 2006, p.90

⁹ Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Portul Constanța și interesele Puterilor Centrale (1916-1918)*, in "Dunărea și Marea Neagră în spațiul euroasiatic. Istorie, relații politice și diplomatie" (coordinators Andreea Atanasiu Croitoru, Florin Stan), Craiova, Sitech Publishing, 2014, pp.184-193

¹⁰ Dumitru Corduneanu, *Sistemul de transport naval din România în secolul XX*, București, Centrul Tehnic – Editorial al Armatei Publishing, București, 2010, p.73

The economic policy of Romania wanted to reconstruct and develop the sea port infrastructure in the interwar period, because most of the quantities of commodities traded on seaways in Romania were trafficked to Constanta port¹¹.

In 1934 the port of Constanta was the holder of 39 berths, three of which belonged to the Royal Navy, a general pool with an area of 56 ha and an average depth of 8 m and a 42,000 sq. m pool of oil with a depth of 9m. All these were protected by four embankments. The platforms had an area of 142 ha. Of this area, 200,000 square meters accounted for quays, 720,000 sq. m. were for buildings and workshops, 140,000 sq. m. belonged to the resort of the oil, 270.000sqm were the platform backup and 90,000sqm represented the outdoor platform which was receiving the petroleum products¹². The latter benefitted from 59 tanks of 200,000 t capacity, of a pumping petroleum products by 14 oil tank and a plant to supply fresh water to ships. There were three grain storage silos with a capacity of 44,000 cubic meters each, in an open metal hangar of 2500sqm and four warehouses, two concrete – with a capacity of 12740

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.81

¹² Mariana Cojoc, *op.cit*, p.376

each – and two of corrugated metal totaling 2140sqm. There were also wooden huts of 6546sqm¹³.

The Constanta Shipyard barely appeared as a project in 1932, and the idea would not have occurred soon unless they hadn't talked about the problem of repairing ships heavier than 2500t in Galati, an issue that harmed the Romanian economy by making costly revisions in foreign shipyards.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Austria- Hungary had the lead role in Romania's trade links¹⁴; England followed with small fluctuations in the same period¹⁵, and in the early twentieth century Germany became one of the most important trading partners of Romania¹⁶.

The Washington Commerce Department developed and published in 1924 a list of the most important ports in the world, and on that list the Romanian port on the Black Sea was not specified. On the other hand, Constanta had in the same period a total

¹³ *Ibidem*

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.78

¹⁵ Andrei Căpușan, , p.15 *Comerțul britanic cu România derulat în porturile Dunării și ale Mării Negre, în perioada 1880-1885*, in A.M.M.R, vol.IV, 2001, p.7

¹⁶ Mariana Cojoc, *op.cit*, p.80

traffic that exceeded that of the Bulgarian ports¹⁷. The main categories of goods exported remained cereals and vegetables along with oil products, only wood disappeared from that list of main commodities sold by Romania. An important feature of the import in the interwar period was that it remained in a lower stage many years after the war¹⁸.

The poor evolution of the port operating activities was added years of war that caused destruction and theft of goods or exaggerated charges that removed honest operators in the early 20s¹⁹. One of the features of the evolution of the Constanta port under the Romanian jurisdiction until the outbreak of World War II was the rivalry with the traditional Romanian ports – Galati and Braila. Inevitably, the development of the three ports could not have been equal, even if the state had managed the situation more efficiently than it did. The advantages of Constanta were obvious from the beginning: the port activity was permanent because the port did not freeze and its location allowed the expansion

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp.229-230

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp.231-237

¹⁹ Ion Râșnoveanu, *Situația portului Constanța în anii `20 ai secolului al XX-lea, prezentată într-un memoriu al comandorului Pavel Popovăț*, in A.M.M.R, tom XV, 2012, p.34

of infrastructure and its maintenance in good condition without huge investments²⁰.

The situation at the end of the nineteenth century was one of the most difficult, their work and conditions being minimally changed, so “Workers enthralled and vătăfii took advantages”²¹. There were no skilled workers, patrons were deprived of any obligation to the workers and the working day was 14 to 15 hours. The conditions in which people worked in the first decade after the World War I caused frequent labor disputes, such as the one in 1923²².

Another perspective that we should address to the Constanta harbor, next to the most important – infrastructure, traffic and commercial activity, shipyard, organization and operation of port and port workers situation- is the center of Hebrew emigration over a period whose debut was placed in 1938 and it ends a decade later. The historical evolution of the port comprises this main component, through which the Romanian maritime gate is connected to the dramatic events that marked the history of Europe and world

²⁰ Virgil Cotovu, , *Le port de Constantza*, București, 1936, p.69

²¹ Lazăr Maglășu, *Munca în porturi*, București, 1938, p.9

²² Mihai Lupu, *op.cit* , pp.92-93

before and during the World War II. The Romanian policy in the issue of Hebrew is also reflected in the emigration that has found an important center in Constanta.

Studies dedicated to the issue of Jewish emigration through the Constanta port²³ indicates that the Romanian state, beyond legislative measures that had to take against the Jews, preserved even in the difficult years of the war, a balanced attitude towards their tragedy.

²³ Florin Stan, *Portul Constanța – poartă deschisă evreilor spre "Țara Promisă"*. Studii privind "Problema evreiască" în România. 1938-1944, Constanța, Muzeul Marinei Române Publishing, 2007, pp.37-80; Idem, *Considerații privind emigrarea evreilor din România prin portul Constanța între anii 1940-1944*, în "AMMR", vol. IX, 2006; Ioan Damaschin, *S.O.S. Pe drumul speranței: salvarea evreilor pe Dunăre și pe Marea Neagră 1938-1944*, București, Ștefan Publishing, 2009, pp.54-68; Andrei Șiperco, *Crucea Roșie Internațională și România în perioada celui de-al doilea război mondial. 1 septembrie 1939- 23 august 1944*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1997, pp.142-143

CHAPTER II

THE RECOVERY OF THE CONSTANTA PORT (1945-1957)

The illusions of the collective security policy upon which the Romanian government based its entire political interwar were gradually swept away after 1936, but they have not disappeared entirely, leaving the Romanian people in a turmoil that intensified in the summer of 1940. Without direction, a small state as Romania had no alternative from the beginning until the final world conflict. The return of the weapons in August 23, 1944 did nothing but to upset the collective mind so that a sort of bewilderment on the acts and measures that the Soviet Army applied to Romania were illustrated and perpetuated in the documents of the period from then until today. The archival record is replete with testimonies of people surprised by the situation they were in, heads of institutions or ordinary citizens were confused by the army's abuses, being wrongly considered as allies. Romanian schools today further accredit the idea that the participation of the military army in the western war placed Romania among the winners of the May 9th. If it had been said and accepted

from the beginning, August 23rd 1944 as the day on which Romania capitulated and the defeat would have been internalized, all kind of human reactions would have been rectified and the recovery might become faster and more efficient.

The withdrawal of the German Army and the fact that the Constanta port was subordinated to the Red Army visibly captivated the historians interested in the evolution of the port²⁴, which is why the historiography receives contributions that create an image closer to reality of the evolution of the Constanta port during the

²⁴ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit.*, pp.125-128; Marian Cojoc, *Portul Constanța și Marina Română în documente de arhivă (1944-1947)*, in “România de la Mare”, 5 year, nr.7, 1996, pp.33-36; Idem, *Evoluția portului Constanța după 23 August 1944. Impactul Convenției de Armistițiu din 12/13 septembrie 1944 cu Națiunile Unite*, in „Portul Constanța între tradiție, actualitate și perspective” (coordinator prof. univ. dr. Valentin Ciorbea), Editura Companiei Naționale Administrația Porturilor Maritime Constanța, 2007, pp.187-208; Nicolae Koslinski, Raymond Stănescu, *Marina Română în al II-lea război mondial (1939-1945)*, vol. III (1944-1945), București, Editura Modelism Internațional, 1998, pp.119-130; 201-214; Mariana Cojoc, *Din viața portuară a Constanței (1944-1947)*, în „Analele Dobrogei”, s.n, an 5, nr.2, 1999, pp.212-217; Alesandru Duțu, *Între Wehrmacht și Armata Roșie. Relații de comandament româno-germane și româno-sovietice*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2000, pp.230-244; Mihai Lupu, *op.cit.*, pp.108-125; Vasile Bătlan, *Contribuții la cunoașterea portului Constanța și a vieții oamenilor săi (1945-1950)*, in „Portul Constanța între tradiție, actualitate și perspective”, pp. 167-177; Marian Moșneagu, *Portul Constanța sub ocupație sovietică (1944-1958)*, in „Portul Constanța între tradiție, actualitate și perspective”, pp.179-185

critical period that followed the “illusion of August 23, 1944”- as well noted the French Commercial Counsellor Henri Prost in his memoirs²⁵.

The chance or its creators – it is mostly about the Admiral Horia Măcellariu- made the port of Constanta to remain “the only port from which Germans withdrew without destroying” after Romania returned the weapons²⁶. On the afternoon of August 25, 1944 German troops and ships left the port city of Constanta without destroying anything except their own weapons and fortifications.

The Red Army which entered Romania was meant to occupy the territory and acted accordingly: it confiscated and robbed everything that got in its way, regardless the measures taken by the Romanian state to demonstrate loyalty (for example, the lack of response to the bombing port after 23 August 1944). The Romanian fleet destiny was sealed, like that of the Romania’s most important sea port, and in fact the whole of the Romanian state. The attempts of the Romanian authorities to rescue all of it were doomed from the start.

²⁵ Henri Prost, *Destinul României (1918-1954)*, București, Compania Publishing, 2006, p.237

²⁶ Horia Măcellariu, *În plin uragan. Amintirile mele*, București, Sagittarius Publishing, 1998, p.35

Since the end of August to October 24th 1944, the port of Constanta has been under the exclusive control of the Soviet command, and after that date, the Romanian authorities received the right to control the berths 13-20 and the petroleum basin²⁷. On May 8th Agreements²⁸ were signed and were the legal basis for the establishment of the Sovroms- Constanta port came to be exploited by the Sovromtransport for the benefit of USSR. The use of the Romanian ports by the great friend of East cost the Romanian state over 12 billion lei between August 23, 1944- March 31, 1947²⁹.

In 1974, CC of RCP has required an analysis of the Romanian economy after the war, an act that was named "Documentary on socio-economic development of Romania in the 30 years since the liberation"³⁰. The research had as its starting point the condition of Romania in 1945, the state was paying debts and the assets were blocked since the beginning of the war. It is interesting to note that the total assets amounted to 56 million dollars, of which 27 million were the gold

²⁷ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.128

²⁸ Gheorghe Onișoru, *România în anii 1944-1948. Transformări economice și realități sociale*, București, Fundația Academia Civică, 1998, pp.46-47

²⁹ Marian Cojoc, *Evoluția...*, p.194

³⁰ SANIC, Fond CC al PCR, Secția economică, File nr.63/1974, f.1

deposits in various banks, 22 million were exchange availabilities and 7 million were other account receivables. Regarding their distribution by country, the situation was: 22, 4 million went to England, 22 million to USA, 7 million to Switzerland and 2,7 million to France. Thus, the Romania's economy in 1945 was made not only from the clear data- territorial losses, the war effort and the official compensation along with the less formal robberies- but also from details similar to the one stated above³¹.

In 1945, the powerful functionality of port infrastructure was diminished as a consequence to the bombardments of Soviet aviation, then the Anglo-American. The breakwater has been equally affected by bombing and lack of maintenance³², thus, "the biggest storm could break it, and the whole traffic system of the port could be interrupted".³³

In the autumn of 1946, the repairs to piers 0-5 and quays 0-10 ended and only in 1948 the port would receive an allocation of 189 million lei, which was enough for all the above works and to build 5

³¹ *Ibidem*, f.4

³² Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.128

³³ S.J.A.N.C, fond D.N.M, file no. 21/1947, f.8

warehouses for storing goods³⁴ and the start to continue the construction of the port again. The existing lockers were completely overcrowded for the agglomerated traffic.

The port traffic increasingly congested determined to continue the construction of the new port which started in 1993 and abandoned because of the war. 1950 was to provide half of the platform to the port traffic³⁵. All the actions to restore infrastructure which was damaged by the bombing ports and lack of maintenance came to an end by 1949. The cease of work on the Danube - Black Sea allowed to spend the money on priorities. The port of Constanta has been from the beginning a priority of the communist regime.

The traces of war were also deep for the dockyard whose development is undoubtedly linked to the port. The S.N.C was “badly damaged” by the bombs launched by the two alliances until August 23rd 1944, when it was occupied by the Soviet Union that “housed the horses in the building site”³⁶. At the end of the war SNC began to transform the warships in merchant ships

³⁴ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.129

³⁵ *Ibidem*, f.90

³⁶ S.J.A.N.C, fond Căpitănia Portului Constanța, dosar 177/1944, f.130

and to repair a number of machine guns and ships for the Soviet Army³⁷.

The traffic of goods through the port of Constanta in the first postwar decade, as expected, failed to meet the level of 1936 when the tonnage of goods traffic increased more than 6.5 million tones. The highest value of the period to which we refer is recorded in 1955, when the total goods amounted to more than 5 million. Of course, the 1955 value is three times higher than in 1945, but the growth is not spectacular.

An important element that stopped the increase of the traffic goods through the port of Constanta in the first postwar decade was the Soviet determination to impose its Central and South-East Europeans not only the political control but also the economy. Thus, the Romanian foreign trade oriented to France, England and then Germany in the interwar period, has been modified and restricted and the Soviet Russia forced the Romanian state to accept its “own block (the Soviet one n.n.) in terms of economic exchange”, something which

³⁷ Marian Moşneagu, *Viaţa portuară românească între 1944-1958*, in „A.M.M.R”, 2003, nr.3; pp.558-559; idem, *Politica navală postbelică a României. 1944-1958*, Bucureşti, Mica Valahie Publishing, 2005, p.278;

“required to fundamentally change the economic policy of countries within this side of the Iron Curtain”³⁸.

The element that has determined the motion characteristics of the port services after August 23rd, 1944, was the Soviet occupation and the confiscation of most of the Romanian fleet by the Red Army. At that time, all the commercial sea and river vessels amounted to 613 and there were 49³⁹ technical ships. All these vessels were available to the Soviet command for an extremely short period.

The administrative organization of the Constanta port has experienced some significant changes in the period to which we refer, given the new situation created by the imposition of the communist regime and the Soviet occupation. The main institutions of the port of Constanta at the end of 1945 were: the Directorate of Maritime Ports, the Harbor Captaincy, the Armistice Commission and Shipyard, there were also active the Customs Administration, the Border Guard Company, the railway station C.F.R. and the companies and

³⁸ Liviu Țăranu, *România în Consiliul de Ajutor Economic Reciproc 1949-1965*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2007, pp.31-32

³⁹ Carmen Atanasiu, Andreea Atanasiu, Mariana Cojoc, *Navigație și... politică*, Constanța, Muntenia&Leda Publishing, 2001, p.110

agencies operating in the port, and the Sovromtransport is situated the first in the top⁴⁰.

The difficulties that hindered the port specific operational activities were different: caused by the failure of infrastructure and port facilities maintenance, generated by the faulty organization of the operating activities or due to the interference of the Soviet army. A serious problem that the Romanian authorities faced for a few years after the war completion was the lack of dredging. The latter operations have not been carried out since the beginning of the war, a situation in which the alluvial deposits affected the port entrance channel and the harbor basin. The unexploded mines from war or the sunken vessels were obstacles for the natural port activities⁴¹. The lack of equipment, wagons and labor and the efficient discordance both led to extreme situations in the port operation.

At the end of the Second World War, people were working in very difficult circumstances in the port of Constanta. The difficulties were given by the lack of the protective equipment, the port facilities and

⁴⁰ SJANC, fond Căpitănia Portului, dosar 201/1946, f.21; Vasile Bâtlan, *op.cit*, p.169

⁴¹ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *O viață*, Editura Companiei Naționale Administrația Porturilor Maritime Constanța, 2000 , p.50

maintenance, and high demands of the Soviet army's representatives, reported to the number of workers and the possibilities to achieve the requests. Because the work in port had a "high degree of danger"⁴², the Captaincy institution required the Hall of Constanta at the end of 1944 to offer insurance. The Dockers were working in shifts 24 hours with a 2-3 hours break to unload the ships⁴³. People who were doing the trimming had to face environmental toxicity because "the gas masks are old and endanger their life and health" as a mechanic that was working on the silo said⁴⁴.

The presence of the German army and its replacing with the Soviet port of Constanta failed to change the Romanian port feature of "open door"⁴⁵ for Hebrew immigrants first and later for Armenians. After 23 August 1944 until mid-January 1945, the Hebrew immigration issue has been managed by the Hebrew National Red Cross Society in Romania⁴⁶. The following two years until the Israel's independence were

⁴² S.J.A.N.C, fond Căpitănia Portului, file no. 177/1944, f.138

⁴³ Vasile Bâtlan, *op.cit*, p.171

⁴⁴ S.J.A.N.C, fond D.N.M, file 20/1949-1955, f.12

⁴⁵ Florin Stan, *Portul Constanța...*, passim

⁴⁶ Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Emigrația prin portul Constanța în anii 1935-1946*, in „România de la Mare”, 5th year, nr.7, 1996, p.32; Marian Cojoc, *Evoluția...*, p.198

dominated by Britain restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Romanian state policy towards the Jews exodus “Holy Land” was dictated by the famous radical change of the Soviet Union. Therefore, since 1949 the emigration to Israel has had powerful brakes, requiring the intervention of the Israeli foreign ministry⁴⁷ and diplomatic persuasion, in order to resume the route Constanta- Israel for the Jews.

After August 23, 1944 the Romanian Black Sea port is largely lacking the opportunity to fulfill its role as the main actor of the Romanian foreign trade, and it still has remained the emigration centre for Hebrews since 1939 and it has become the starting point of the Armenian lured by the Soviet Armenia.

The plan of the national economy has extremely reduced the role of Constanta after the Soviet occupation which strangled the foreign trade of the Romanian state through the most important port. In 1945, the port connections were reduced to 12⁴⁸ states with which

⁴⁷ Florin Mihai, *Troc cu emigranții evrei*, <http://www.jurnalul.ro/sc-nteia/jurnalul-national/troc-cu-emigranti-evrei-120588.html>, “Jurnalul national”, March 26th 2008

⁴⁸ Valentin Ciorbea, Nicoleta Stanca, *Portul Constanța - tradiție, actualitate și perspective*, in the vol. ”Portul Constanța între tradiție, actualitate și perspective” p.228

Romania had trade relations, as their number does not exceed the number 29 in 1950.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THE PORT DEVELOPMENT DURING 1958-1972: SYSTEMATIZATION AND EXPANSION

The Constanta port systematization represented an objective whose completion would lead the projects Anghel Saligny to an end. From this perspective, we can share the view according to which “the measures taken by the communists for the Romanian economy modernization plan (...) have been theorized and supported since the interwar period by eminent Romanian politicians and economists (...) who had nothing to do with Stalinism and no links with the Soviet Union”⁴⁹. In 1958 the communist regime resumed to ideas from half a century ago and that were completed successfully.

During this period the port was systemized – between 1958-1968- and it was expanded over the first two stages: 1964-1969 and 1969-1972, actions that have led to radical changes of port infrastructure. This is why the latter component will occupy a larger space in the thesis.

⁴⁹ Liviu Țăranu, *op.cit*, p.54

The strong growth in traffic, fishing and capacity of commercial vessels as well as the development of the national economy are the main causes that led to the first projects regarding the Constanta port systematization and expansion. The import and transit traffic grew at the same time with the Romania's exports of industrial products. There appeared different issues on the railroads, mechanized machinery of wharf warehouses for goods, energy network or drinking water supply. The mechanized cargo-handling machines were enough for the grain silos. So were the storage rooms. Both the power grid and the water were inadequate and insufficient at the same time for the new equipment and the new berths⁵⁰.

The ships were waiting many days at sea, at anchor, to liberate the berths in the port operations. On February 23, 1961 there were operated 24 ships while another 12 vessels were waiting outside the port; later that year, on December 26, there were 25 vessels in port and as many were waiting their turn at sea. The average

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p.7

of the offshore vessels between December 1961 and March 15, 1962 was 10 vessels⁵¹.

The port infrastructure development was necessary. Therefore, in 1957 there was initiated the first project for the port systematization according to its limits. The project was designed based on the traffic import-export and on the transit from then. The completing and equipping of the port worth 380 million and the works were to be accomplished in two phases: 1965 and 1975. But Romania has experienced a strong industrial development after 1957, which led to a radical increase of products and import of raw materials through the port of Constanta and the traffic prescribed in 1957 was exceeded⁵².

The studying of the Constanta port expansion issues began early in 1960 and in the summer of 1961 the extension of port and shipyard was approved. Regarding this project, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej visited the port in the late summer of 1961 and it was decided that before starting to design the objectives of the

⁵¹ S.J.A.N.C, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, file 6/1962, f.4

⁵²S.J.A.N.C, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, file 6/1962, f.1

project, “a team of specialists has to go abroad for research”⁵³.

The south extension of the port Constanta actually meant building a new port⁵⁴ and many studies and research were developed in this regard. The sketch plan for the port development, elaborated in 1961 by I.P.T.A.N.A. team for the Transport Minister, Ion Baicu, provided a depth of 13.5 m to enter the new port, the construction of two new dams with a total length of 3680 m and thus obtaining a 405 ha area of which 175 ha represented the aquatorium, a new oil pool with six berths of 200 m each and 6 fennels whose piers were to form 38 berths⁵⁵.

The building of the two dams of the extended port encountered many difficulties, as expected from a project that had ordered work 200 days per year with waves of 2.5 m height⁵⁶. There were many storms that the builders have experienced but it seems that one of them was “exceptional”. The sea was destroying the stone blocks and people were trying to put them back

⁵³ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *op.cit*, p.73

⁵⁴ Valentin Ciorbea, *Portul Constanța: 1896-1996*, p.136

⁵⁵ Arhiva A.P.M, *Expunere a schiței de plan pentru dezvoltarea portului Constanța*, București, 1961 , pp.9-11

⁵⁶ S.J.A.N.C, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, inventar 5, dosar 7/1962-1963, f.28

with dumpers. “We were getting to the dumper on huge waves that were covering us. (...). At one time the waves broke a portion of the breakwater and there remained blocked a crawler crane of 60 t and a dumper. There were others within our company that struggled with the storm”⁵⁷. Obviously, after the storm had ended, the damage done by water had to be repaired. So they built dikes through a constant battle with the sea, with poverty and lack of training and experience.

The extension of the Constanta port to the south was a long and very complicated process that left behind an entirely different port from that of 1964.

In 1961, Constanta Shipyard was foreseen in the project concerning the extension of the port S.N.C. expanding as a complicated process. In one of the directions of the port that would develop S.N.C. there was still from 1903 an oil export deposit and close to aquatorium the site had to overtake the basin and quay pier again. Work began toward the end of 1971, when the oil activity moved from the old port to the new one. The image of the work site at this stage was somewhat desolate: “concrete walls in demolition, digging and disheveled earth full of oil, destroyed pipelines, cut and

⁵⁷ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *op.cit.*, p.102

scattered pieces of metal tank, the bottom of the pool dried up having mud and a water quay in demolition.”⁵⁸

The site has hardly resumed its shipbuilding activities, but in 1960 it managed to complete the maritime research vessel “Emil Racovita” achieved by its own project⁵⁹. On March 3, 1967 S.N.C. received a second floating dock, whose capacity was 15.000 t. lifting capacity. The acquisition was very important.

The Shipyard from Constanta has been since the early 70s an important economic objective for Romania, an aspect that detaches easily from the “Minutes from the working meeting with the central of the shipbuilding in the Ministry of Machine-Building Industry” dated on the first of March, 1971⁶⁰. Representatives of all ministries, the shipyards’ directors and designers attended the meeting coordinated by the state leadership. One of the recommendations made by the head of the state was that “every central site director to depart from the conclusion (sic!) that he is the owner who has to import and pay the money” because there was a general

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p.133

⁵⁹ Valentin Ciorbea, *Portul Constanța. 1896-1996*, p.138; Aurel Daraban, *Șantierul Naval: un secol de existență*, in „Marea Noastră”, the 6th year, nr.20, 1996, p.22

⁶⁰ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, Secția Economică, file no. 19/1971, ff.1-48

tendency of the industries to not assume their direct responsibilities⁶¹.

The general cargo traffic during 1958-1972⁶² is on a continuous upward slope corresponding to the development of the port infrastructure mentioned above⁶³ and to the evolution of the Romania's foreign trade at the time. The increase in value of the foreign trade – in which Romania occupied an important place - was strong: from 8.189 million lei currency in 1960 to 22.866 million lei currency in 1970⁶⁴.

Of the total traffic at the end of World War I, 98% represented the export and only 2% consisted of import and transit⁶⁵. Ten years later, the percentage of the value of export traffic was still very high: 94%. In

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, f.44

⁶² S.J.A.N.C, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, the files 18/1955-1959, 21/1958, 22/1959, 23-24/1960, 25/1961, 26/1962, 27/1963, 28/1964, 29-30/1965, 31/1966, 32/1967, 33/1968, 34/1969, 35/1970, 36/1971, 37/1972 have grids, situations and labels monthly realized and centralized each year in order to see the traffic;

⁶³ Dumitru Iordănescu, Constantin Georgescu, *Construcții pentru transporturi în România. Monografie*, vol.II, București, Editura C.C.C.F, 1986, p.116

⁶⁴ Oana Mihaela Văsioiu, *Evoluții ale comerțului exterior românesc în perioada 1950-2000. România de la C.A.E.R. la U.E*, București, 2007, a PhD thesis , p.117

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p.391

1968 the export represented 84.5% of overall traffic⁶⁶. The steps made forward led to an increase up to 40% of import and transit traffic - this was a goal for 1970-through the sea berths Constanta⁶⁷.

The maritime movement through the port of Constanta, as regards the presence of Romania, was closely related to the degree of endowment of its fleet and remained at low levels until the second half of the eighth decade. At the end of 1970 the fleet had 53 vessels with a total capacity of 500 thousand tones. The Romanian fleet contribution to the carriage of goods by 1970 was 18%⁶⁸.

The organization and operation of the port changed at the same time with the systematizing and expansion processes. In 1959, the Ministry of Transports joined the Ministry of Railways and the result was the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications. Then there were built the Regional Directorates of Civil

⁶⁶ Alexandra Ghenovici, *Aspecte geografice asupra traficului maritim românesc de mărfuri prin portul Constanța*, in „Studii geografice asupra Dobrogei. Lucrările primului simpozion de geografie a Dobrogei”, București, 1969, p.251

⁶⁷ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit.*, p.155

⁶⁸ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, The economic section, file 19/1971, f.22

Navigation⁶⁹. D.R.N.C. was driving the entire port activity and in 1965 was recognized as a legal entity under the name of Navigation Maritime Directorate Navrom⁷⁰.

Along D.R.N.C. there were other institutions that had activities such as the Captaincy, the third Base Oil and other 7 units belonging to the Ministry of Commerce. It was noticed many times that the activity of this large number of units coordinated through the Ministry of Commerce but which depended on each of the other enterprise ministry, had many overlaps. How strong was affected the port activity because of her faulty organization and the period of time in which it perpetuated, can be seen from the discussions in December 1971 of G. Bibicescu, the DNM representative who visited the Yugoslav navigation company Atlanska Plovidba. "Both the Director-General (...) and all those with whom I have discussed communicated me with all possible prevention and embarrassment that their vessels do not encounter so

⁶⁹ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *op.cit*, p.65

⁷⁰ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.149

many difficulties anywhere in the world as in Constanta”⁷¹.

In the period covered by this chapter, they have improved the working conditions and living standards of workers in ports by increasing the mechanization on the one hand and creating the conditions for a decent living (construction of dormitories, canteens, dispensaries) on the other hand. In other words, Romania’s labor force was poorly paid during the communist period. Work accidents were very common, given the specific port activities. The causes of accidents were numerous. Handling heavy loads (tin, ingots) at very low temperatures during 1956-1960 caused 35% of all accidents. In the same period accidents occurred among drillers and repairers due to the lack of equipment. An important cause was hiring workers in a large number, who are less familiar with the tools and the equipment of Constanta port.

In 1970 Constanta was bound through its port by more than 100 ports in 55 countries⁷². In 1973 there were written in the document entitled: “Information on the

⁷¹ SJANC, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, dosar 27/1973, f.56

⁷² Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.156

improvement of the activity in the port of Constanta and more efficient use of maritime transport fleet” the 110 countries with whom Romania had trade relations⁷³.

During a visit to Romania in the early 70s, the Italian state corporation for hydrocarbons, Enrico Mattei, said he was “delighted by the constructions on the Black Sea” as Gheorghe Gaston Marin reported in his memoirs⁷⁴. It was the moment when the Constanta port became the Anghel Saligny port⁷⁵.

The entire port changes in recent years were not sufficient to cope with the traffic foreseen in the studies carried out during 1971-1972. It required the construction of a second sea port. However, the overall development of port infrastructure in the years of systematization and the first stages of expansion managed to create the port imagined by Anghel Saligny more than half a century before.

⁷³ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, Secția economică, dosar 57/1973, f.47

⁷⁴ Gheorghe Gaston Marin, *În serviciul României lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej. Însemnări din viață*, București, Editura Evenimentul Românesc, 2000, p.210

⁷⁵ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.156

CHAPTER IV

THE OLD AND THE NEW PORT OF CONSTANTA (1972-1989)

The idea of building a new seaport has appeared since 1970 and in the early following year there was already composed a “Preliminary study for a new seaport on the Romanian seaside”⁷⁶. After completing a study forecasting the evolution of freight traffic compared to the port infrastructure, the State Committee of Planning proposed in 1973 to build a new seaport –in Constanta– as the only solution to cover the inferiority of the port towards the traffic requirements⁷⁷.

The construction of the new port Constanta South Agigea would have debuted three years later and would have occurred in parallel with the last two rounds of enlargement. The third stage ranged during 1972-1978 when there were put into service 2060 quays, 30.000sq.m. storage rooms and terminal transcontainers⁷⁸. In the early third stage of expansion, in

⁷⁶ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, The economic section, file 22/1971, f.1

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, dosar 67/1973, f.77

⁷⁸ Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.137

1972 I.C.H. started the work for “Moving the oil activity from the old port to the new one”⁷⁹.

Made exclusively by winning field on the sea, the expansion of the Romanian seaport lasted over 18 years and during 10 years people have worked concurrently with the expansion to systematize the old port area and the port of Constanta South-Agigea. Completed two years later than the initial deadline set for the execution of the extended port, it had a capacity four times bigger than the old port and had sufficient depths to receive vessels up to 85,000 dwt, while inside they could not enter more than 25,000 dwt vessel maximum⁸⁰.

In the “Additional program of production growth in the period 1971-1975 and the creation of necessary vessel capacity needed by 1980” elaborated by the Ministry of Machine-Building Industry and the Ministry of Transport at the end of 1970, the construction of a new port was absolutely necessary for the development of the Romanian economy, given the particular evolution observed externally. The Suez Canal was redesigned to receive ships up to 100,000 dwt, the Panama Canal would be able to accept up to 150,000dwt tonnage, while

⁷⁹ Dumitru Iordănescu, Constantin Georgescu, *op.cit*, p.111

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p.116

in Central America there was expected the building of a canal for ships up to 250,000 dwt.

The tonnages accepted regionally were high: ships up to 150.000 dwt could sail through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. In this context, Constanta port recorded a maximum of 100.000 dwt for tankers and 60.000 dwt for miners. The conclusion of the study admitted no interpretation: it was necessary to build a port with depths of 20m berth for mooring ships of sizes mentioned above⁸¹.

The study written in the first half of 1973 supported the execution of a new seaport in the south of the port expanded with the clear provision to link the future port construction with the “the navigation system Danube-Black Sea” that was to be found “on Cernavoda-Medgidia- Poarta Alba- Constanta Sud” site⁸².

The project Port of Constanta South was conducted by a team of I.P.T.A.N.A specialists under the leadership of Romeo Ciortan. Getting a new aquatorium and port areas through massive and complex hydraulic structures were other problems that had to be solved. On

⁸¹ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, Secția economică, dosar 21/1971, f.28

⁸² *Ibidem*, f.76

a coastal front of over 6 km, there should be considered simultaneously the connection between the sea and river basins, new goods handling systems (containerization, RoRo, Lash, ferry-boats⁸³) and the progressive entry into service of the new port capacity. Tanks and operational maneuver had to be designed according to the sector specific vessels. It was necessary to create a landing front as high as possible, to organize right the aquatorium navigation and to put together all the conditions for the maritime transit-river⁸⁴.

Work on the Port of Constanta South started in 1976 “alongside the quays, platforms and installations in the port expanded” by raising two new dams: one

⁸³ *Container* = a means of transport (frame, portable tank or other similar) that constitute a compartment closed entirely or in part, intended to contain goods, having a permanent character and thereby sufficiently strong to be reused; it is specifically designed to facilitate the transport of goods by one or more modes of transport without downloads and go for easy handling, particularly when being transferred from one mode of transport to another; term container includes accessories and equipment of the container according to its category: *Documentar „Relații economice internațională”*, vol. I, p.127; Ro-Ro = system allowing direct introduction of vehicle platforms in cargo spaces of the ship; Lash = Lighter aboard ship Lash, ships carrying barges; ferry- boats = method for transporting freight trains on the railway brought to berths and specialized vessels, apud Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.140

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p.140

offshore and the other one in the south⁸⁵. To execute the two dams they have taken steps, on the one hand to open the quarry from Sitorman and on the other hand to build a working harbor necessary for builders.

Eventually the port was arranged by creating two major areas, north and south, their separation being achieved by the channel of the river and the sea. They created special sectors for ore, coke and coal then chemicals, cement and oil. In the south of the junction point between the Canal and port there were located the “Free Zone” and the working harbor. There was organized a transshipment port ore carried by heavy ships, whose traffic capacity was not less than 4.8 million t. /year. It was arranged a mineral deposit on an area of 350.000 sq. m.

The new seaport was bound by another important design whose progress has worked in parallel with the work of port. Danube- Black Sea Canal was connected with the port in 1982⁸⁶, fact that gave the port a special

⁸⁵ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *op.cit*, p.154

⁸⁶ *O nouă și importantă realizare pe șantierele Canalului Dunăre – Marea Neagră*, în „Dobrogea Nouă”, an XXXV, nr.10582, September 15th 1982, p.1; *Pe șantierele din zona Agigea, constructorii Canalului Dunăre – Marea Neagră raportează noi succese*, in „Dobrogea Nouă”, an XXXV, nr.10571, September 2nd 1982, p.1

position in the navigation way of the North Sea – Black Sea.

The reopening of works “for Danube – Black Sea navigation system” was also mentioned in 1973 – after the huge failure of attempts in 1949-1953 – when it is noted in the agenda of the plenary session of the C.C of P.C.R. from 18 to 19 June 1973⁸⁷. Works on the Danube- Black Sea started in 1976 according to the new Central Danube-Black Sea. As the complex technical chief witnessed the press the connection with the Black Sea was achieved in 1982 by builders submitting land and sea, “day and night without interruption”⁸⁸.

The beginning of the third stage of port enlargement to the south, found SNC at the beginning of the program entitled “The development and systematization of Constanta Shipyard” approved to

⁸⁷ S.A.N.I.C, file 67/1973, f.16; Valentin Ciorbea, *op.cit*, p.145; Idem, Marius Cojocaru, *Ceaușescu și Canalul Dunăre- Marea Neagră: de la decizia politică la inaugurare*, în ”Canalul Dunăre – Marea Neagră între istorie, actualitate și perspective” (coordinators Valentin Ciorbea and Ovidiu Sorin Cupșa), Constanța, Ex Ponto, 2008, pp.132-145

⁸⁸ *O nouă și importantă realizare pe șantierele Canalului Dunăre – Marea Neagră. La km. 64,3, constructorii acestui grandios obiectiv au încheiat lucrările de excavații, făcând joncțiunea cu marea*, în „Dobrogea nouă”, an XXXV, nr.10.582, September 15th 1982, p.1; Valentin Ciorbea, *Canalul Dunăre – Marea Neagră o construcție realizată în ”ritm militar”*, în ”Canalul Dunăre – Marea Neagră între istorie, actualitate și perspective”, pp.215-227

achieve through several decisions of the Council of Ministers: no.509/1971, no.483/1972 and no.1634/1973⁸⁹. The builders of the S.N.C. dry docks had a real struggle with leakages caused by the “thin” field studies⁹⁰. The insufficient knowledge of the land foundation that would run two docks was determined by the fact that the ground had been occupied by a warehouse of oil products found in operation⁹¹. The new situation forced the state leadership to decide at the end of 1973 to support further investment for the development program S.N.C. The total investment increased from 1.447.800 lei to 1.917.200 lei⁹².

Reported to itself, the evolution of the Constanta S.N.C. in 45 years after the Second World War was fast. If in the 1950's it was able only to various repairs required to Soviet vessels, in 1973 they started to work at the first 55.000 dwt ore carrier. During 1975-1995 there were executed 11 ore carriers of 55.000dwt, 13 ore carriers of 65.000 dwt, 5 ore carriers of 150.000 dwt, 4

⁸⁹ S.A.N.I.C, fond CC al PCR, The economic section, file 18/1974, f.49

⁹⁰ Laurențiu Țoringhibel, *op.cit*, p.148

⁹¹ S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, The economic section, file 58/1973, f.175

⁹² *Ibidem*, f.170

oil tanks of 85.000 dwt, 6 oil tanks of 150.000 dwt, two ferries of 12.000 dwt, two floating docks of 10.000 t., a floating dock of 20.000 t, 15 barges of 3000 dwt, 6 Europe barges, 2 barges of 1720 dwt, 20 absorbent dredges, 2 derocators and the floodgates of the Danube-Black Sea⁹³.

The tonnage of goods entered under charge and discharge operations in the port of Constanta increased significantly during 1972-1989. At the end of the first two stages of expansion, the Romanian port traffic recorded a total of a little over 16 million tones, significantly lower than that of the port of Hamburg - 46 million t⁹⁴. A statistics for 1980 showed that a strong reduction of the difference between the two ports: the German port had preceded 52.420 tones⁹⁵ and Constanta reached 47.561 trafficked tones. However, the Constanta freight traffic could not be compared with that of the great ports of the world.

The evolutionary leap of the main Romanian port was major, being classified in the top 15 ports around the

⁹³ Aurel Daraban, *op.cit.* p.23

⁹⁴ S.J.A.N.C, fond Întreprinderea de Exploatare Portuară, file 27/1973, f.17

⁹⁵ A.P.M Archive, *Diagnoza potențialului productiv al portului Constanța*, București, 1983, p.23

world in the early ninth decade. *The maritime movement* which is very important in the port activities and related to the traffic experienced a strong growth in the period to which we refer. The presence of the national flags – the most important in this context- was enhanced by the constant equipping of the fleet, both with ships bought abroad and ships built in the Romanian shipyards.

During the time covered by this chapter, the number of vessels which entered the fleet has seen the biggest increase –more than four times- in the history of Romanian fleet. In 1971, the fleet capacity was of 500.000 dwt and two years later it reached 607.310 dwt with a total of 69 vessels. The extraordinary leap was made between 1973 and 1978 when the Romanian total tonnage of vessels reached 2.3 million dwt at 153 ships⁹⁶.

Most problems in the operating activities of the port during 1972-1978 were originally caused by the lack of the administrative reorganization and of the port capacity. The coordination of the activities related to the management and commercial exploitation of the port, the operation of the vessels and the international maritime

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*; S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, The economic section, file 18/1974, f.17

expedition has been the attribution of the Directorate of Maritime Navigation Navrom since 1950. In the new circumstances created by the expansion of the infrastructure and the exponential increase in tonnage of goods, it was really hard as a single unit –D.N.M. Navrom- to carry out three different types of specific activities in the port operations⁹⁷. In turn the port capacities were not used rationally due to the missing dividing of the port into sectors and specialization by type of cargo and transport links⁹⁸.

1977 was probably the most difficult period in terms of operating activities. This is proven by the numerous warnings, notes and information that can be found as archival documents⁹⁹. There were various factors that led to the growth of the stationing period of the ships in the port of Constanta. The lack of coordination of operations of ships with the rail port device entailed disruptions, both because of the small

⁹⁷ Valentin Ciorbea, Carmen Atanasiu, *Flota maritimă comercială. Un secol de istorie modernă(1895-1995)*, Constanța, Editura Fundației ”Andrei Șaguna”, 1995, p.149; S.A.N.I.C, fond C.C. al P.C.R, Secția economică, dosar 57/1973, f.32

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, f.28

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, dosar 131/1977, f.73

number of cars needed, and of too many others that were waiting the ships¹⁰⁰.

The state leadership knew the difficulties that strike the normal functioning of the Constanta port, so that at the meeting on July 29, 1977 of C.C. P.C.R there was taken the decision to take a series of measures to improve the port activity. Until September 30, 1977, M.T.Tc. should prepare a draft of the operational rules and operation of ports through which the ministry became “the sole coordinator of activities in ports (subl.txt)” a quality that would bear full responsibility for the organization and operation of ports¹⁰¹.

1978 was the year of reorganizing the entire operation of the Constanta port. By promulgating the decrees no. 206, 293 and 309, the measures taken in July 1978 were implemented. There was also taken the decision of considering “the organization of the ports according to the militarization principles”¹⁰² which resulted in the following year with the post of the Single Commander of the port. This post belonged to one of the senior officers of the Navy and coordinated the activity

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, f.29

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, f.6

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, f.7

of a collective management composed of the heads of all port businesses – the Unified Command of the Constanta port¹⁰³.

The condition of the port of Constanta in 1978 was exasperating for Nicolae Ceaușescu, whose constant concern for an efficient organization of port hadn't had the expected results. Within the three meetings in the summer of 1978, the overall attitude of dissatisfaction towards the way they operated the Constanta port is clear from the transcripts of working meetings with M.T.T.C.

At the request of Nicolae Ceausescu, the State Security Department compiled a report in the spring of 1986 in order to know “the operative situation in the ports of Constanta and Galati”. In the document there were raised a number of irregularities in the organization of the port activities that affected not only the exploitation efficiency but also the export contracts¹⁰⁴.

The strong development of the port infrastructure has entailed changes in the life port. The *workforce* in Constanta experienced a proportional increase with the enlargement of the port areas and the exploitation activities. Thus, if in 1972 there were a total of 2914

¹⁰³ Arhiva A.P.M, *Diagnoza...*, p.9; Valentin Ciorbea, *Portul Constanța. 1896-1996*, p.150

¹⁰⁴ SANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția economică, dosar 30/1986

work dockers in the ports¹⁰⁵, ten years later their number amounted to 6,300, while in 1989 it reached to almost 7000. It is noted that the number of employees has doubled in the first decade of the study period according to the completion of the port expansion, but it increased less until 1989. Not the same thing can be said about the total number of the employees on Constanta port platform which in 1982 was 27,700 people and in 1989 it reached 40.000.

In 1989, the Romanian port Black Sea was equipped with an infrastructure compatible with the freight traffic and connected to all existing transport railways, roads and airport. Therefore, the port is directly related to the main markets of the worlds and consumption. The port which seemed unable to recover from its 1945 status interwar period, became at the end of the 44 years of communism one of the most important ports in the region.

The hesitant evolution of the Romanian port in the years following the events of 1989 reflected mainly the sharp decrease of traffic, but also the functioning of all the other sections. It took time for the pace of

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, dosar 57/1973, f.51

activities in Constanta port to be taken even in the last years of the ninth decade.

CONCLUSIONS

If for the winners the end of war meant reconstruction and economic recovery, for the Romanian state and its economy it was the beginning of a long period of decay. Constanta port developments reflect the microeconomic situation of Romania long time after 1945. Romania's foreign trade was like it didn't exist until after 1948, and the Constanta port activity has not decreased at all, on the contrary, it only served the needs of the army and the Soviet Union. All the port infrastructure reconstruction works carried out between 23 august 1844 and 1948 were made at the request of the Soviet leadership.

The war left the stage of goal projects regarding the extending of the main port of Romania for no less than 20 years and stopped the work of a new mole, 8 berths and a pool of 10m¹⁰⁶ depth begun in 1933. The whole situation did not change after 1945 or suddenly. Only after 1953, when the work on the Canal was abandoned, the port has reached the forefront of the Romanian communist leadership, and very soon the first

¹⁰⁶ Mariana Cojoc, *Constanța...* p.377

projects were designed on the systematizing and expanding the south of Constanta port.

The systematization of the old port during 1958-1963, with its extension until 1968 due to the continuation of arrangements proved to be totally insufficient for the traffic expected. Thus the first studies on extending the south of Constanta port have appeared since 1960 and in the final project the Shipyard was also mentioned. At the end of the extension works in 1982, Romania was in reality another port, incomparable in size and facilities with the one from the beginning of the seventh decade, to which the new port of Constanta South Agigea was added, being connected to the Danube via the Danube – Black Sea Canal.

The port of Constanta represented a main component in the Romanian foreign trade in the seventh decade, the export and import activities undertaken reflecting the Romania's economic policy at the time.

The supplementation of the Romanian fleet was a priority in the 70s, thus the shipbuilder received the lead role.

All these huge achievements for those years, for Romania and its possibilities should help us see the people behind who contributed to everything. We should

learn to appreciate their qualities and their fair values:
responsibility, courage, enthusiasm, and desire to work,
but not necessarily in this order.

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