

MIRON CRISTEA'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AS PRIME MINISTER (11 FEBRUARY 1938 – MARCH 6, 1939)

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Abstract:

The authoritarian monarchy represented the antechamber of the dictatorships of the 20th century Romania. King Charles II had destroyed the basis of the democratic regime justifying a coup d'état against the legionnaire movement that had been rapidly developed at the end of the fourth decade of the last century and represented a threat to the national statehood, in the context of international frailty around the triggering World War II. The sovereign has used the first patriarch of Romania in order to justify the regime and to distract youth and clergy from legionarism ideas. As an original fact that took place on the political scene, the patriarch has left himself out in the draft of the King, apparently being a proponent of nationalism and a critic of the democratic system, as he had been in the interwar period. The image of the patriarch, becoming president of the Council of Ministers, was shadowed by the mechanisms of the Carlist repression and by the position he took in the problem of nationalities. He led three cabinets, with several changes in personnel, which were necessary given the political changes from 1938. His anti-Semite speech, though not an exclusivistic one, put him in a delicate position. Nevertheless, Miron Cristea's subordinates have had positive results in the administrative reform, in the modernization of the educational system, in the implementation of social and legal policies and also, the economic policies, which continued the previous legislation, have made 1938, one of the most important years from the economic history.

Key words: Prime Minister, patriarch, unique party, nationalism, anti-Semitism, reform, administration

JEL classification: H76, H83

INTRODUCTION

The regime of the authoritarian monarchy was the expression of the authoritarian tendencies of the king joint in a general european context which knew similar political formulas. The first of the series of the Romanian dictatorships, the authoritarian carlist regime came into conflict with both the Romanian interwar democracy and with the legionnaire extremism. But there were few political leaders of democratic parties who have made opposition to the sovereign. Instead, the extreme right was the one against which have been taken the toughest measures. The king has initiated a number of political, economic and legislative reforms in order to strengthen the authority and hit the legionnaire movement. The rise of the Legion of Codreanu, that resulted after the vote from December 1937, have worried the power circles which gravitated around Charles II. He left democracy to reduce itself, by preferring the solution of an authoritarian regime, in which he became the initiator of the political actions and the ultimate source of policy makers. The Romanian sovereign enjoyed also the support from outside. The Western Governments have pressured Bucharest, to force the sovereign to give a shot through which to exclude the far right. He proved to be a weak man and he did play the king in relation to the legionnaire movement. Under these auspices started the activity of Miron Cristea. The governance between February 1938 and February 1939 comprises actually three reshuffles chronologically divided, as follows: 10 February - 29 March 1938; 30 March 1938 – 31 January 1939 and February 1 - March 6 1939, was initially regarded as a necessary solution by the most prominent politicians of the time. By asking Goga, who, on the occasion of the audience he had with the king on February 9, had assured him that if the elections would be organized he would win, to resign, because there will be no new elections, the sovereign undertook consultations with party leaders and former Prime Ministers. Constantin Argentoianu, for instance, said he was glad that the king wanted an authoritarian regime led by a "national unity" government made up of personalities; Nicolae Iorga, scholar and politician, also

appreciated that, under those circumstances, their duty was to listen to what the sovereign said; Constantin I.C. Brătianu agreed that from the National Liberal Party, some former Ministers such as, for example: Gh. Tatarescu, Dr. Constantin Anghelescu, Artur Vaitoianu to enter into the government that was being prepared. But Iuliu Maniu, being revolted and cheated on the way in which Charles had promised, when coming into the country, to take into account his proposals, but had broken and ignored them from the next day, saying that only the national peasant party members can assume the governance of the country and that the parliamentary system must be maintained at all costs; he forbade, however, for any national-peasant personalities to enter in the new national unity government (The History of the Romanians, 2003, p.385). In the evening of 10 February 1938, the king signed the decree appointing the new cabinet led by Miron Cristea. Quitting the elections and appointing the government through a decree-law marked the passage from the democratic regime- as it was, with all its lights and shadows- to the system of monarchical authority. Unlike the formula used for decades, for naming and defining the new regime, "the royal dictatorship", over the past decades it has been admitted and is currently used the term authoritarian regime, because, as it will be noticed along the way, the king kept some elements of the democratic system.

The historical moment of appointing the new regime was a special and abnormal one. On the one hand, internally could notice an all-round wear of the traditional political parties, factions and divisions of the political front and an ascent of some extremist forces, as was the case with the Iron Guard, now under the new name "Everything for the Country", the third largest political force in the elections of 1937; while externally the affirmation of the Third Reich, the initiator and promoter of the recension of the treaties of peace, from the years 1919-1920, reviewing that threatened the territorial status-quo, including that of Romania.

THE MIRON CRISTEA GOVERNMENTS

The first government led by Miron Cristea (10 February- 29 March 1938), can be characterized at the first sight, as one starting with an impressive group of political personalities, in the position of ministers secretaries of state: Nicolae Iorga, Marshal Alexandru Averescu, General Artur Vaitoianu, Gh. Gh. Mironescu, Dr. Al. Vaida-Voevod, Dr. Constantin Anghelescu and Gh. Tatarescu, the latter was also Minister Secretary of State and Foreign Minister ad interim. All these, with extremely sound names, were once, after the Great War, also Prime Ministers. Some of them, like the AL. Averescu, Iorga, were also party leaders. Gh. Gh. Mironescu and Dr. Al. Vaida-Voevod were or had been prominent members of the National Peasant Party, hisolating or dissociating themselves from Iuliu Maniu, who was the main opponent of the king. They had refused the initiative to come and receive functions in the government Iuliu Maniu and Octavian Goga. In addition to the seven secretaries of state in which Gh. Tatarescu was Minister of Foreign Affairs- the other ministries were occupied by: Armand Calinescu- at Internal Affairs, Mircea Canticov- at Justice and Finance; Victor Iamandi- at Religions, Arts and National Education; General Ion Antonescu-at National Defense, Air and Navy; Gh. Ionescu-Sisesti- at Agriculture and Co-operatives; Constantin Argentoianu- at Industry and Commerce; Dr. Constantin Anghelescu-Public Works and Communications; Dr. I. Costinescu-Labour, Health and Social Insurrance; Voicu Nitescu-Labour; General Paul Teodorescu-Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Defense (Scurtu, 1982, 504-505). Once with the new government, it was also introduced the state of siege in the whole country. The military authorities were given the right to do wherever and whenever they believed searches, as they considered necessary. The military could "censor the press and any other publication", could "prevent the occurrence of any newspaper or publication, or stop by the appearance of news or articles", could "dissolve any gathering, irrespective of the number of participants and wherever they met". In the same night, of 10 to 11 February, they have appointed the new counties of districts, from among the senior officers. They have also convened to revoke the electoral body to undo that resulted of the elections from December 1937. The patriarch was "pro-forma", a simple and important firewall, so that, through him, the king won the adhesion

of the most popular body, honoured by the citizens, the Church, that is, with over 83% of the country's population.

A first measure for the establishment of an authoritarian regime was the introduction of a new constitution, which changed the legislative-executive report in favour of the latter. Based on corporate principles, the fundamental text granted full powers to the sovereign and amended the entire hierarchy of the Romanian society. "On the day of 19 or 20 February, noted Vaida Voievod, at noon, I received the invitation to the palace, for 6 o'clock. Having patriarch Cristea as our leader, before 6, we were all gathered in the throne room. The king arrived punctually. He was sitting, as usual, at the middle of the table, in front of the prime minister... to communicate us the purpose of the meeting: we would have to discuss and agree on the text of the new constitution. He asked each of us to express our views freely and our observations sincerely. The country, he said, can no longer be run without a constitution, which would continue to be the case, if the constitution of 1923 remained in force any further. The methods and the constitutional possibilities must be adapted to the requirements of the time, in the interest of the country".

Another decision taken at that time was the introduction of the death penalty for the attacks against royalties. The patriarch said he was against that regulation, his position as the head of the Orthodox Church not allowing him to accept the proposal. On the contrary, Miron Cristea supported the necessity of emphasizing the primacy of the Romanian element, falling on the path of the anti-Semitism. "The World Alliance" magazine from the USA, wrote that "most of the Jews, stated the patriarch, had a comfortable life, monopolizing all the riches of the country, the commerce, the industry, the houses, the cities etc.; moreover, claimed Cristea, the Jews had also acquired the press monopoly, which, obviously, with foreign aid, have led a strange campaign against the Romanian soul itself". On 20 February 1938, the Council of Ministers, at the request of the king, approved the draft of the new constitution, which is subjected to the citizens, for the plebiscite, "to the good will and knowledge"; most of the national-peasant members opposed, and the majority of the population "did not have enough time to find out the content of the constitution". Radu Rosetti wrote: "the so-called plebiscite is an immense hoax. Clergymen were brought on divisions, with nominal lists. All those who need the government and who doesn't, are threatened in one way or another" (Rosetti, 1993, 42). Of those voting, 4.297.588 have said "yes", and they have approved the new constitution and only 5.843 had the courage to say "no", representing only 0.13 per cent (The History of the Romanians, 2003, 392). The decisive moment in the development of the undemocratic regime in Romania was represented by the dissolution of the political parties. The patriarch has supported the king in not being an advocate of democracy, especially in the conditions in which it had been working during the interwar period. He stated, on this occasion, for the international press that "today we destroyed the hydra with 29 electoral heads, who set us against one another, without any benefit to all, to the detriment of all and of the country. Today it was broken the cobweb from the eyes of the citizens of the reunited Romania, so they can see more clearly where the salvation comes from: from the heroic decision taken by His Majesty and from the understanding the true points and interests of the country. Today they destroyed the riot, the quarrels, the electoral beatings and even the murders and, instead of them, we will have silence, work, peace and love, sealed on the fraternal hugs of the people, as in the legendary times" (O. G., March 1938). If the first government had seven ministers secretaries of state as a sumptuous facade, consisting of the most important political personalities, on 29 March 1938, the prime minister, at the suggestion of the king, of course, has formally presented his resignation, under colour of, as "being given the finished construction of the state, to pass on the way to a new, statehood life, in a more normal framework, there is no absolute necessity of having a government in the current form" (The Universe, 1 April 1938, p. 1). The king has delegated the formation of the government again to Miron Cristea. But he gave up to the so called ministers and State secretaries. Armand Calinescu, the king's man, kept holding the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and another ministry, of Labour, Health and Social Insurance, until 3 April 1938 and that of National Education until December 4, 1938. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was originally held by N. Petrescu-Comnea and then, on 21 December 1938, by Grigore Gafencu. Mircea Cancicov passed to Finance and Victor

Iamandi- to Justice. Bishop N. Colan took Religions and Arts and the National Education until 5 December 1938. General Argesanu- the Ministry of National Defense until October 13, 1938, then the general. N.Ciuperca took over. Ion Antonescu was removed. General Joseph Iacobici became Minister of Dowering the Army, from October 14, 1938, as a newly established ministry. Gh. Ionescu-Sisesti was kept at the Ministry of Agriculture and Farming Areas. But, there were also some new ministers, such as: Mitita Constantinescu- at Industry and Commerce, Mihail Ghelmegeanu- at Public Works and Communications; general Mihail Marinescu- at Labour; and as vice- State secretaries: Eugen Titeanu, D.V. Toni, general Al. Glatz and the priest Nae Popescu (Scurtu, 1982, 505-506). One should mention, in the new Miron Cristea government, the presence of these 6 generals, which was relatively too much. Regarding Miron Cristea's pro-forma role, we have as testimony a confession from that time which said: The king, who was presiding the Council of Ministers of the Government Cristea II, had decided to appoint 10 Royal Controllers. When asking Cristea, whom did the king propose, and showing him the uselessness of his attempt, he answered: "As if I didn't know! But what do I do? I wrote a list and I presented it to him. Then the king took a small piece of paper from underneath the table and gave it to me, so I can prepare, for those proposed by him, decrees of appointment. With great difficulty I could convince him to give up one of these men- being compromised and altogether inappropriate - regarding skillfulness, instruction and reputation. I put him on the list only because he was iorghist. He failed, however, to find 10 guys and that's why there were appointed only 7" (Vaida-Voievod, 2006, 207-210).

Miron Cristea's entry in the governments of the authoritarian carlist regime, as Prime Minister and not as a simple member, should be appreciated not only as a clever gesture made by the sovereign, in order to have as firewall the head of the mostly approved and popular institution, but also as an option of Cristea himself. Miron Cristea has harbored for a long time close political approaches. He was a real monarchist. He rejected the statecraft. His being a nationalist and an anti-communist were sufficient reasons to accept the position of President of the Council of Ministers. Together with the formation of the second Government Miron Cristea, on March 30, 1938, it was also created the Crown Council. It was made up of members appointed by the king. They met at the request of the king and had an advisory role, for "all the problems of the state of an exceptional importance". There followed some other measures such as: the passing of bills for the protection of law and order in the state; the dissolution of groups and associations; the shutting down of the clubs and other premises of assembly thereof; the development and the application of a new administrative-territorial reform, on which occasion the country was divided in 10 regions: Olt, Arges, the Sea, the Danube, Prut, Suceava, Alba-Iulia, Crisurile, Timis and Nistru, led by royal residents, appointed by the king. The unions have been also dissolved, being replaced by the guilds of workers, civil servants, private sellers and artisans; it was also founded the State's Jackstay, and in October 1939, the unique party- The National Renaissance Front.

Miron Cristea, together with Alex. Averescu, Constantin Prezan, Artur Vaitoianu, Ernest Balif, Gh. Gh. Marinescu, Nicolae Iorga, Gh. Tatarescu, Constantin Argentoianu was considered to be a founding member of the National Renaissance Front. And it's not accidental the fact that the first government of the National Renaissance Front, appointed on 1 February 1939 and maintained till the death of Miron Cristea, 6 March 1939, was also led by the patriarch of the country. The policy of the National Revival Front was grounded also on the doctrine of the Christian morality. By appointing and maintaining Cristea in this high political position, it was given "a tonality of biblical prophecy", regarded as "a traditional-type imagery meant to disguise political calculation" (Bruja, 2006, 103). The new Miron Cristea government (1 February 6 March 1939), the third and last, kept Armand Calinescu at Internal Affairs, Grigore Gafencu at the Foreign Affairs, Mitita Constantinescu at Finance and Victor Iamandi at Justice, as in the previous cabinet. Petre Andrei led the National Education, Victor Slavescu, Dowering the Army, 4 generals, Paul Teodorescu, Minister of Air and Navy, Dr. Nicolae Marinescu- Health and Social Insurance, Gabriel Marinescu, the king's man was Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Gheorghe Mihail- at the Minister of National Defense. Other new ministers were: Prof. N. D. Cornateanu- at

Agriculture and Farming Areas, ing. Ion Bujoiu- at the National Economy, Mihail Ghelmegeanu – for Public Works and Communications, Ralea remained at the Ministry of Labour, Silviu Dragomir led the new established Ministry of the National Minorities. Traian Pop became Minister of the Inventory of the Public wealths; Mihail Magureanu- Undersecretary of State at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers; Eugen Titeanu- Undersecretary of State Propaganda, besides the Ministry of the Internal Affairs; general Gabriel Marinescu- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of the Internal Affairs; Coriolan Bârsan- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of the Internal Affairs; D.V. Toni- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Education; priest Nae Popescu- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Religions and Arts; Ion Marin Sadoveanu- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Religions and Arts; general Gheorghe Mihail- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Defense; Mihail Serban- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry for Agriculture and Farming Areas ; Victor Jinga- Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Economy (Scurtu, 1982, 506-507). Numerically speaking, the three Miron Cristea cabinets grew constantly: from 18 Ministers and Secretaries of State, wich had the first one, to the 22 Ministers and Secretaries of State, in the second, arriving to the 28 Ministers and State Secretaries in the third and last one, led by His Beatitude, the Romanian patriarch. In terms of composition and stability of Ministers, it can be noticed that Armand Calinescu was maintained in all the three governments- and one can guess by now the king's increasing sympathy for the Minister of the Internal Affairs, which, if in the second Cristea government, Calinescu has changed three ministries- from the Internal Affairs, Labour, Health and Social Insurance, to the National Education - in the last government, he became: the Vice President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Internal Affairs and Minister of National Defense ad interim. As regards the share of the militaries, in the first government were a marshal and three generals, in the second government 6 generals, and in the third government 4 generals; of whom remain set in all three governments, general Paul Teodorescu- who is either Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Defense, in the first government, or the Minister of Air and Navy, being maintained in the same position in the last two governments. There is a certain instability at the Ministry of National Defense- which in the first government is led by Ion Antonescu; in the second government the same position is held either by general Ghe. Argesanu, or by general N. Ciuperca, because, in the third government led by Miron Cristea, it was brought to the forefront of this Ministry Armand Calinescu, which received general Gheorghe Mihail as Undersecretary of State and, in addition, Victor Slavescu, a prominent economist, at the new Ministry of Endowering the Army.

An analysis of the members of the governments led by Miron Cristea leads me to conclude that the king was supported by two categories: a "patronage committee" present in the first government, made up of party leaders such as: marshal Al. Averescu, advocate and leader of the Popular Party; Al. Vaida-Voevod- the Romanian Front Representative, Nicolae Iorga- National-Democratic Party leader, Dr. Constantin Anghelescu and Gh. Tatarescu, leaders of the National Liberal Party; Gh. Gh. Marinescu was the leader of the National Peasant Party, but retired from this party, Artur Vaitoianu- advocate of the leading circles of the army. In the second group - which held the duties of the ministries- there were enlisted especially "technicians" and representatives of the political groups closely related to the king and the camarilla. As regards the social basis of the new political, authoritarian regime, it was supported by the financial capital and gentrymen; the members of the government were represented by over 40 major companies, among which: "The Small one", "the Mining Loan", "Dermata", Companies as, "American-Romanian", "Romanian Astra", "Emil Costinescu", "Resita", "Titan-Nadrag-Calan", "Colombia", "Romanian Star", "Banboc", "Ripiceni", etc. The main Romanian banks such as, "Romanian Credit Bank", "Romanian Bank", "Romanian Bank of Credit", "Urban Bank" and many others supported then regime (Savu, 1970, 156).

By appointing Miron Cristea at the head of the government and keeping him until his death on 6/7 March 1939, it was desired to attract large masses of believers on the side of the new authoritarian regime. This intention is looming also in the speech of the Too Blessed Patriarch Miron Cristea, on the occasion of the assembly of the new government.

Miron Cristea, thanking from the bottom of his heart for the confidence that has been entrusted to him, expressed "his love and completely loyal allegiance" to the king of the country; he also stated "our love, of so many aged men and former old advisers of the throne, of the nation and the country"; he submitted himself to answer to the call of the king, starting with him, as head of the Church, and "with so many former Prime Ministers and with all the members of the government". What did he promise, as head of the government? "To bring the order and the tranquility back to our country, so rummaged by the unrest, sometimes too prejudicial, of so many political parties". He believed- and applied to- especially to "the mob of our hardworking peasants", who were also dreaming about "due peace so they can work the field, and enhance the fertility of the earth". Then, he added, "besides the serenity and fruitful career in the Romanian work, the confidence that we need must be increased inside, as well as on the part of our allies and all the neighboring powers with which we must live in peace" ("Courier Apostle", 1938, 376-377).

THE MINISTERIAL ACTIVITY OF THE MIRON CRISTEA CABINETS

Miron Cristea has, in short time, made a new reference "to the sole of the country" that is the peasants, being certain of the fact that under the new scheme "all the sons of the nation and its leaders must scale-here-before giving diligence to cease, as soon as possible", the quarrels, battles, misunderstandings ("Courier Apostle", 1938, 183).

An increased attention is given by the Prime Minister exactly to the real situation, this crisis and misery, by which the peasants were affected, despite the agrarian reform and other measures of recovery and social emancipation. In a pastoral of the patriarch, elaborated and broadcasted on the occasion of the holiday of spring, in 1938, the Resurrection of the Saviour, he did not hesitate to cite from the statistics of social scientists, that after two decades after the Great Union of 1918, there were, in 1938, over two million peasant households in which there isn't a milk cow, about 1.5 million peasant families where there was not a pig, and in other 250,000 farm yards there was no chicken - which pictured the dire poverty in which the peasants were still struggling (Savu, 1970, 242).

Without doing wonders, during the three governments he has led, Miron Cristea leaned his ear, listened to and resolved some abuses of the administration in favour of the peasants. Miron Cristea and focused his attention to the young generation because- he explained during a public meeting in the summer of 1938, with missions of the "Romanian Youth" organization - "never more like during those years have they asked us, the leaders of the nation, with insistence, to fulfill the vision", because "a large proportion of youth has been misled, not knowing that their masters were placed in the foreign services, in the service of some forbidden forces, that only now were discovered by the State". What did he realize? He realized the fact that many young men "have begun to practice violence, to the point of murder". Or, he advised young people: "you should spend the diligence, the obedience, the energy in school, gloat it from your teachers' mouth" and finally "gather all the knowledge necessary for life". In his entire conception, regarding training and educating youth, Miron Cristea remains committed to traditionalism in general and of education in the spirit of Christian morals, in particular: "our nation's entire life is intimately tied to our entire national-religious tradition". He expressed the connection between religion and ethnicity in so that the Romanian soul is like a canvas: the culture, the religion, represent the barnyard, and all the other, the ethnic, with its qualities, are the warp; if something breaks from them, then everything will fall apart, since they are closely related, as in all our past (Courier Apostle, 1938, 185). He has been pursuing in reality to distract the attention of the youth from the si-guardism ideas which have proven force of attraction in the last years of the fourth decade of the century and which threatened the regime governed by Charles II.

His activity during the year 1938 was summed up during the new year's eve speech, on 1 January 1939, at the Royal Palace. In his speech, on the occasion of the new year's outfit, he tried to "briefly" summarize the results obtained and to indicate, however, the tasks that knock at the gate of the new year. Among the achievements, Miron Cristea sat on the new constitution "at the

foundation of our political life the aloud principle of authority, not only moral, but also legal, performed by the king of the country". The authoritarian regime, kept some important elements of the traditional constitutional system from the interwar age, such as the national sovereignty, the separation of powers, the ministerial responsibility, the freedom of conscience, the freedom of education, labour, of the press, of assembly, of association, the individual freedom, the inviolability of residence, the equality before the law, etc. Miron Cristea poited out the fact that, if we took into account "the Romanian nature, the morals entered in especially in the years after the war, the the definite authority of the Crown is the only cure for shifting the citizens on the ways of positive, quiet, productive work and decidedly rewarded by much more effective results, than those from the past" (Cristea, 1939, 193).

Starting from "this authoritarian principle, which has become for us the saving of the Country", Miron Cristea considered that a first chapter, at the achievements, was "the legislative work". More specifically, *the Administrative Law* which reduced the administrative formalities and put emphasis on the development of the positive and effective work, decentralising and giving competency to the royal residents of the 10 regions; the educational laws, "that give youth a better practical guidance, putting an end to the increase of purely theoretical schools, that increased, up to the endangering of the political and social life, the number of those which tended only to budgetary functions and not to productive work". To this chapter, Cristea has also added: the transformation of many theoretical schools in "practical occupations schools", the rationing and the reduction of the academic personnel, in this way putting an end to some "sinecures, abuses and superfluous expenses", the simplification the subjects to be taught, the placement of young graduates into the job market. Other achievements were those in reforming the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Communications, Health and Justice. Then Cristea mentioned "the laws for workers" that favour especially the productive work, the creation of new furnaces for apprentices in order to increase the number of Romanian craftsmen, the establishment of more 12 placement offices, especially for orphans, widows, disabled people etc., the organization of guilds and professional corporations.

A second direction, regarding accomplishments, was considred by Miron Cristea to be "the reorganizing the judiciary"- where the compromised elements have been removed; the magistrates "have received their prestige, independence, but also the due liability back"; the national minorities "were assured , the Prime Minister appreciated, the free development, in the Church, on the basis of a full autonomy" and culturally speaking "they are growing, thriving more than before the war". In the foreign policy, Miron Cristea mentioned the Czechoslovak crisis, from the last year, 1938, describing it as "the most serious crisis since the war"; nevertheless, he believed that "Romania came out of this crisis with an increased prestige", giving as evidence the king's visit to England, Belgium, France and Germany, the Thessaloniki agreement of 31 July 1938 between Bulgaria and the understanding of the Balkan States, as well as the Bled agreement, on august 13, 1938, with Hungary. He believed that the conference from Sinaia as well, 18 august 1938, by the document concluded with France and the United Kingdom, in the issue of the reconsideration of the Danube Shipping Status, would give "full satisfaction to our legitimate claims".

The government has provided for the increased production. It revived the commercial conventions. It maintained the balance between export and import, so that "the trade balance is in surplus". There have been purchased large loans for public works. The baking life has been invigorated, in all the regions. The popular banks are usefully working together. He, Miron Cristea, also thought that "for the vital interests of the peasants" they would move more quickly to "the organization of the new regime of oil, gas, mines" and "would boost the benefits of the national economy for stakeholders". In the context of the growth of the revisionist and revanchiste movement, the war, the Prime Minister also insisted in his speech on the dowering of the army. They were "in full development of material endowment" with aeronautical, river and maritime navy, both civilian and military; they have multiplied the planes, the parachuted vehicles, the masks for defense; Most of the materials needed for the endowment of the army were ordered abroad, but there were some made in the Romanian industry. The works in the Taşaul port began- 25 km of railway and road, protected by a few hundred yards from the pier. The reorganization of post offices

and of the beigraph brought , besides a better activity, also a more obvious and more timely budget of over 34 millions lei.

In presenting the accomplishments of the Miron Cristea governments in 1938 and the tasks of the future, the Prime Minister also revealed the nationalist character of the new regime: "the national idea has been and remains in the future the guiding star of the government". The policy of the Miron Cristea government continued the one started by Octavian Goga. Although it had stopped the rise of the extreme right to the power, the cabinets of the royal dictatorship continued to be biased against Jews. On august 4, 1938 it was adopted the *Regulation for the Operation of the general Commissariat for minorities* in which it was specified that all the citizens of the minority had the right to create organizations, having the right of the general representation. This statute was enjoyed by most of the minority communities, with the exception of the Jews who have faced a series of setbacks.

In the Jewish question, the government- appreciated Miron Cristea- "took steps in order to prevent the entry into Romania, of a new invasion, in the masses, as in the wake of recent events from the Central Europe. The government has begun "reviewing the citizenship" and is ready "to cooperate with the international action in order to mediate, according to a certain plan, a civilized means emigration and the settlement of Jews in the available regions, that the great powers, with the colonies, could provide". That - concluded the Prime Minister- "for the Romanian people, the national idea and the Christian one complete each other" and "they are a guarantee for the future" (Cristea, 1939, 193-199). Even the Italian press regarded the cabinet headed by patriarch Miron Cristea as the guarantor of "a rigorous policy towards Jews" and it continued the nationalist trends begun by the Goga government. (Iancu, 2000, 262). The head of the German diplomacy in Bucharest, Wilhelm Fabricius wrote in Germany that the patriarch was an admirer of Hitler and that he wanted Romania to apply the German anti-Semitic policy, even though he was an opponent of the Iron Guard (Ancel, 2001, 167).

He took a similar position with other personalities regarding the Jewish problem based on nationalism, traditionalism, but lacking A. I. Cuza's exlussivistic extremism. He repeated the old anti-Semitic speeches according to which the Jew was a foreign body in the body of the country, there weren't patriots, they were merchants, they were prejudicial to the Romanians' economic development. However, he has validated the concepts of anti-Semitism that dominated Romanian society. Jews were found to be in antithesis with the ideology of the system, being accused to sympathise with the communist ideas, in a period of the growing external threat from the Soviet Union. The large number of Jews in the communist organization from Romania has channeled the the communist antisemitism of the regime to the equation communist- Jew. The anti-semitism of the National Renaissance Front was one of the setting; it was supposed to attract the great mass of former party Everything for the Country; it was not racist but it regarded the Jews as a foreign body in the body of the country, of which he had to escape. By identifying the Jew with the Bolshevik agent, the authoritarian carlist regime has imposed its own anti-Semitic conduct, in "a revised version and purified of some excessive attitudes" (Volovici, 1995, 69). In reality, there is no exact idea that the Jews would have been a communist orientation. The far left in Romania was less numerous, while the percentage of Jews in the Romanian state was quite significant. And not all the communists were Jews. He also criticised France which he was blaming of secularization, considering that the French influence in the Romanian space was prejudicial.

In the end of his new year's Eve 1939 speech, the Prime Minister makes brief references to the Church- stressing the revival of the bishopric of Maramures and of pointing out that "the endowing of monasteries will raise again the monastery life of both piety, Romanian spirit, culture, art and philanthropy". Regarding the budget he appreciated that it was "a balanced budget", from which they have spent \$ 30.550 million to cover the expenses of the state; the revenues were increased with over \$ 3 billion, by paying loans to the departments; 1,200 million was allocated "for urgent needs"; there were created the conditions that "allowed large and costly public works, of over 9 billion lei"; the army's equipment "is provided"; there are watched and sanctioned "the tax dodgers, customs- trespassers, smugglers"; as, for instance, of the 160 customs offenses, most, 94,

are of firms run by foreigners, etc. (Cristea, 1939, 199-202). Miron Cristea, as a founding member of the National Renaissance Front, has been pursuing a close relationship between the Monarchy and the Church, and gave the new regime "a tonality of biblical prophecy", since the royalty has given to the churches and priests important funds from the state, propaganda materials, many profitable positions for clergymen, as the National Renaissance Front- in its desire to become a mass party- has followed the path of the official orthodoxy, of the Christian morals and religious tolerance (Bruja, 2006, 103-104). Precisely in this spirit, on January 21, 1939, in the Romanian Senate, Miron Cristea uttered, from his position of Prime Minister, a speech, on the occasion of the opening of the first meeting of the Superior Council of the National Renaissance Front. He explained, in the introduction, that the new authoritarian regime "has eliminated the parties from the political life" although "it is imperative for the crown to have a natural and organic relationship with the masses" and "for this purpose it was created the" (Cristea, 1939, 203).

Referring to the officials elected in the Superior Council and the National Renaissance Front leadership- who "on the one hand aimed to educate the masses, thus creating the belief in the superiority of this unique front, reviving them to jump at any moment, with enthusiasm- each in his own position- in the throng for the homeland and the throne work, and on the other hand the gentlemen, counsellors, managers and leaders of the Front who- by living among common people- are supposed to know their problems, shortages, hardships and all their life conditions, and to seek to find and recommend to the qualified ones the means of redressing the evils, of eliminating the difficulties and making their life easier and to find the means of increasing the production and earn more, according to their work". Being inspired and enthusiastic, the Prime Minister did not hesitate to mention "the glory days of the Romanian kingdom", when that "civis romanus was able to put all the powers in its service, in order to earn merits and even Roman glory for the services to the Fatherland", citing art. 4 of the new constitution of 1938, which gave Romanians citizens similar grounds. Concerned about mentioning especially the intentions and certain accomplishments, Miron Cristea admitted, however, that "one can't change everything overnight", as "the old mentality still continues to master the soul of many", and that "there is still great number of those who see the state as a source of undesired enrichment". He therefore urged the Church and the school, as well as all the institutions of the country to intensify the training and the production activity, so as "to give everyone a healthy education and a corporate citizenship guidance" under the motto "Everything for the Nation!" (Cristea, 1939, 203-209). In reality, the National Renaissance Front could not become a party of the masses, as it was intended, but, on the contrary, it was a tool of enrichment for a minority of politicians and it marked the end of the interwar democracy (Bruja, 2006, 261). In January 1939, Miron Cristea caught a cold, which complicated his breathing system and some diseases of the heart and liver. Respecting the doctors' advice, he took his leave and went to the French resort of Cannes on 26 February 1939. At Cannes he was bedridden, feeling increasingly worse. In spite of existing medical care, his body has not resisted and on 6 March 1939, he died.

CONCLUSIONS

In this historical context, internally, of increasing the threat of the extremist right-wing, legionnaire, and externally, of increasing the war preparations, the multiplying demands for the revision of borders and redrawing of the world held at Versailles, Charles II referred to the establishment of the authoritarian regime and asked the patriarch to become Prime Minister. The alliance between the authoritarian king and the patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church expressed the attempt of Charles II to show the people, political parties and their leaders that, in order to exercise his full authority, he had as his ally the most important and the most popular institution of the country, the church, and its prestigious hierarchy. With the help of Miron Cristea, Charles wanted to attract on the side of the new authoritarian regime also the priests who had been lured in the past by the legionnaire movement. Miron Cristea entered on 10 February 1938 and remained in the office of Prime Minister in the first three governments of the authoritarian political

regime, slightly modified over the years, as follows: between 10 February- 29 March 1938, in the first government it was introduced the state of martial law, the censorship, the new prefects of the counties were appointed from among the senior officers, the new constitution was adopted, by which the powers of the sovereign were increased. Between 30 March 1938-January 31, 1939 the Council of the Crown was created, from the important members of the political life, appointed by the king to solve "all the problems of the state, of an exceptional importance"; the political parties were dissolved, it was operated a new administrative-territorial division in 10 regions, led by the royal residents; the unions were dissolved and, in their place, the guilds were established; the Guard of the Country appeared and, in October 1939, the National Renaissance Front, was created as an unique party. In the last cabinet, led by Miron Cristea, between 1 February 6 March 1939, it was created the unique party, the National Renaissance Front, and a great number of Ministers and Secretaries of State (the first government had 18 ministers, the second one 22 and the third 28 Ministers and Secretaries of State), from which 24 were civilians and four generals. Miron Cristea himself thought that an authoritarian regime was really necessary. He was a monarchist, a nationalist and an anticommunist. When king Charles II was finally proven to be "a cropper-hero", if the three governments led by Miron Cristea, even "pro-formally", as well as the governments that followed, have not been able to prevent the disaster that led to the collapse of the reunited Romania, in June and August 1940, the causes, both internal and especially those international, were very complex. And Miron Cristea's fault to have accepted this high position must be divided between the entire generation of politicians in which he had entered without even suspecting, someday, the contrast that would turn out between the intentions and the disaster that followed.

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