"Californian" Colonists versus Local Profiteers? The Competition for Jewish Property During the Economic Colonization of Bukovina, 1941–1943[1]

Ştefan Cristian Ionescu

The history of Gentile-Jewish relations during World War II in Bukovina, especially in the city of Czernowitz/Cernăuți, has triggered much academic interest over the last several decades. Numerous scholars, such as Jean Ancel, Andrej Angrick, Dennis Deletant, Alexandru Florian, Mariana Hausleitner, Marianne Hirsch, Radu Ioanid, Natalya Lazar, Pavel Moraru, Vladimir Solonari, and Leo Spitzer have examined various aspects of this topic, including antisemitism, ghettoization, robbery, deportation, mass murder, and memorialization.[2] While the general framework of

1 I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Claims Conference (Saul Kagan Fellowship for Advanced Shoah Studies) and Duke University's Council for European Studies (European Studies Research Scholarship), which enabled the research and writing of this article, and the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest, whose postdoctoral grant facilitated the revisions.

2 See, for instance, Jean Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania* (Jerusalem and Lincoln: Yad Vashem and University of Nebraska Press, 2011); idem, *The Economic Destruction of Romanian Jewry* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007); Andrej Angrick, "Power Games: the German Nationality Policy (*Volkstumspolitik*) in Czernowitz before and during the Barbarossa Campaign," *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah*, vol. 24 (2010), pp. 89–135; Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and his Regime, Romania 1940–44* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Alexandru Florian, "The Fate of the Jews from Northern Bukovina under the Antonescu Regime: Evidence of the Evolution of Antisemitic Policies in the Stenographs of Cabinet Council Meetings," *Holocaust and Modernity*, no. 2–8 (2010), pp. 207–218; Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina: Die Durchsetzung des national-staatlichen Anspruchs Grossrumäniens 1918–1944* (Oldenbourg: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000); Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1998); Natalya Lazar, "The Fate of Czernowitz Jews: Genocide and Memory in Bukovina," *New Europe College Black Sea Link Program Yearbook* (2010–2012), pp. 55–76; Pavel Moraru, *Bucovina sub regimul Antonescu, 1941–44* (Iași: Tipo Moldova, 2013);

the dispossession of local Jews by the Antonescu regime has been investigated extensively, little is known about the people who came or were brought to Bukovina (Romania's "New California") in order to Romanianize its economy and society, and about their competition with local would-be profiteers in seeking to acquire Jewish wealth.[3] Based on untapped Romanian archival documents (from the Ministry of National Economy and the Secret Police) and Gentile and Jewish eyewitness accounts, the aim of this article is to enrich the current scholarship on World War II Bukovina by investigating the beneficiaries of the process of redistribution of Jewish real estate and businesses (Romanianization) and the relations between the incoming colonists and the local profiteers. Extending over more than two years, the Romanianization of Bukovina triggered great interest among the Gentile public. This led to conflicts among various groups of would-be beneficiaries, especially between local ethnic Romanians and the colonists — such as *Olteni*[4] entrepreneurs and economics graduates — who came from other parts of Romania.

A borderland area with a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional population, in the modern era Bukovina had belonged to various

Vladimir Solonari, *Purifying the Nation: Population Exchange and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania* (Baltimore and Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University Press and the Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

3 The terms "New California" and "Californians" were used by Gentiles and Jews during that period in order to designate the province of Bukovina, especially the city of Czernowitz, and the incoming would-be profiteers who rushed to Bukovina to enrich themselves. See Ancel, *The Economic Destruction*, p. 216; Constantin Sănătescu, *Jurnal* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), p. 34; Fred Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează* (Bucurest: Holicom, 1946), pp. 7–11. Modern Romania had another "California" — Northern Dobrogea (Dobruja), acquired from the Ottoman Empire in the Treaty of Berlin (1878) — that it successfully colonized with ethnic Romanians for several decades before World War I. See Constantin Iordachi, *Citizenship, Nation- and State-Building: The Integration of Dobrogea into Romania*, 1878–1913 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), pp. 32–38; idem, "'The California of the Romanians': The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878–1913," in Balász Trencsényi, Dragoş Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi, and Zoltán Kántor, eds., *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies* (Budapest and Iaşi: Regio Books, Polirom, 2001), pp. 121–152.

4 *Olteni* were people who originated from Oltenia, which was a poor region in the south of Romania, with the highest percentage of ethnic Romanians. It had a high population density, and many migrated to other regions during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

states, such as Moldova, the Ottoman Empire, and the Habsburg Empire. The collapse of Austria-Hungary, in 1918, brought this province under the control of Romania. The country's successive inter-war regimes fostered ethno-nationalism and attempted to integrate Bukovina into an enlarged state by Romanianizing its inhabitants and its socio-cultural and economic life. This proto-Romanianization was not very successful and triggered the radicalization of the youth in all local ethnic communities.[5]

Within Bukovina and Romania the city of Czernowitz occupied a special place. As the capital of Bukovina and the third largest city in inter-war Romania — with a population of 112,427 inhabitants in 1930 — Czernowitz was a dynamic urban area with a flourishing economic, social, and cultural life. Preserving a strong Jewish identity, rooted in German and Yiddish cultures, including Zionism, Jews constituted 37.9 percent of Czernowitz's population (42,509 people in 1930) and were overrepresented in local industry, commerce, education, and culture.[6] Due to border changes and population movements, the Jewish community constituted about 58 percent of Czernowitz's inhabitants by September 1941.[7]

The rise of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the USSR in the 1930s, and the defeat of France (Romania's main continental ally) in 1940, complicated the geopolitical situation and contributed to the international isolation of Romania. Following a Soviet ultimatum, in the summer of 1940, Northern Bukovina (and Bessarabia) changed hands from Romania to the Soviet Union.[8] The attitude of the local population toward this border and regime change was diverse, cutting across ethnic, social, and generational lines. While some Bukovinian Jews, especially the workers and youngsters, initially rejoiced at the sudden change of rule and the disappearance of Romanian antisemitism, others — especially the well-off and more mature generations — worried about the future policies of the Soviet authorities. For example, most of the youngsters and the poor did not have much to lose as a result

5 Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukovina,* pp. 29–346.

6 Sabin Manuilă, ed., *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 Decembrie 1930* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, 1938), vol. II, p. LV; see also Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 64–110.

7 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, p. 270.

8 Due to space limitations this article will focus only on Czernowitz and Bukovina.

of Soviet nationalization of private property and even benefited from some of the Communist equalitarian measures. However, others were concerned with the legal and practical implications of Soviet policies, such as the loss of their businesses, real estate, and freedoms.[9]

Before and immediately after the Soviet invasion, some Bukovinians, especially the prominent ethnic Romanians and bureaucrats, fled to Romania, and a few months later Nazi leaders "repatriated" their ethnic German "brothers" from Bukovina.[10]

The majority of the local population, including most of the Jews, were able to remain in their homes. However, the negative effect on peoples' daily lives soon emerged, and many inhabitants of Northern Bukovina grew disillusioned by the harsh Soviet reality. These included various shortages, nationalization of property, dismantling of organizations, travel restrictions, denunciations, arrests, and deportations to Siberia.[11]

During the 1940 Soviet takeover of Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, groups of local inhabitants, including some Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Russians, Romanians, and Jews, had welcomed the Red Army; they rejoiced at the hasty retreat of the Romanian administration and army, and sometimes insulted and attacked them. Aiming to find a scapegoat for the national humiliation associated with relinquishing Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia without a fight and the consequent shameful retreat, Romanian authorities blamed the Jews for these incidents. Soon, the leitmotif of the pro-Communist Jewish treason became the most widespread stereotype about the Jews and increased the antisemitic discourse and violence in Romania.[12]

9 See, for instance, the testimonies of Jewish survivors Arnold Buxbaum, "The Miracle of our Survival," and Leizer Hoffer, "Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times," in Felicia Steigman Carmelly, ed., *Shattered! 50 Years of Silence: History and Voices of the Tragedy in Romania and Transnistria* (Scarborough, Ontario: Abbeyfield Publishers, 1997), pp. 205, 271; Edith Elefant Sommerfeld, *Too Small to Matter* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2006), p. 89; Zvi Yavetz, "Youth Movements in Czernowitz," in Gerd Korman, ed., *Hunter and Hunted: Human History of the Holocaust* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 138.

10 Pearl Fichman, *Before Memories Fade: Memoirs* (Fresh Meadows, NY: Privately published, 2005), p. 61; Sommerfeld, *Too Small to Matter*, pp. 90–91, 95; Angrick, *Power Games,* pp. 106–110.

11 Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina,* pp. 354–365; Angrick, *Power Games*, pp. 111–112; Lazar, *The Fate of Czernowitz Jews*, p. 62; Fichman, *Before Memories Fade,* pp. 61–70; Yavetz, *Youth Movements in Czernowitz*, p. 138.

12 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, pp. 71–75; Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally*,

While Romania's official antisemitic policy was initiated by King Carol II, who hoped to gain the sympathy of Nazi Germany and marginalize his domestic competitors from the Iron Guard fascist party, it was the successor regime of General Ion Antonescu that extended and sharpened the laws against the Jews. Obsessed with the Communist threat and distrust of the Jews, particularly those from Bukovina and Bessarabia, Antonescu shaped his antisemitic policy according to the alleged (dis)loyalty of the Jews: deportation and mass death for those of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and Transnistria; and special taxes, forced labor, and Romanianization of real estate, businesses, and jobs for those residing in the Old Kingdom.

Romanianization was a major "economic nationalism" project of the Antonescu regime, which aimed to transfer Jewish property to state patrimony and subsequently to "deserving" ethnic Romanian beneficiaries. Antonescu, who implemented Romanianization in the rest of the country from September 1940, extended and sharpened the policy in Bukovina (and Bessarabia) soon after the conquest of the area by means of Decree no. 2,956 (on August 29, 1941) and Law 2,507 (on September 3, 1941).[13] Before 1940, the Jews owned the majority of local industrial and commercial enterprises, despite the proto-Romanianization implemented during the last years of King Carol II's regime.[14] The situation was partially different in Southern Bukovina. While, in June 1940, the Red Army targeted only the northern part of the province and, thus, Southern Bukovina remained within Romania, its inhabitants still faced many antisemitic measures and violence, especially from the autumn of 1940 onward. Among these discriminatory policies the Romanianization of Jewish properties, jobs,

pp. 15–19; Armin Heinen, *România, Holocaustul și logica violenței* (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 2011), pp. 121–123; Ștefan Ionescu, "Myths, Narratives, and Patterns of Rumors: The Construction of 'Jewish Subversion' and Retributive Violence in 1940–41 Romania," *Culture and Psychology*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2009), pp. 327–336.

13 Ancel, *The Economic Destruction,* pp. 210–211.

14 As historians Jean Ancel and Ion Popa have shown in their studies on the Romanian chapter of the Holocaust, local authorities, including high clergy, adopted various measures for the Romanianization of employment and business during the last years of King Carol II's regime: Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, pp. 25–50; Ion Popa, "Miron Cristea, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch: His Political and Religious Influence in Deciding the Fate of the Romanian Jews (February 1938–March 1939)," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 40:2 (2012), pp. 11–34.

and businesses played a major role in the process of excluding Jews from the local economy and society. As was the case in the rest of the country, Romanianization of Southern Bukovina triggered great interest among Gentiles. Often they did not even wait to benefit from the dispossession of the Jews through legal channels and adopted faster but illegal enrichment methods.[15]

In Northern Bukovina most people were not yet aware that, for the local Jews, the worst was still to come. The Axis attacked the USSR in June 1941, and after several days the Soviet authorities retreated hastily, but not before destroying the infrastructure.[16] The war forced many local citizens to make difficult choices: to stay in their city, or to retreat toward the Soviet interior. Part of Czernowitz's inhabitants, including some Jews, left the city with the Soviet officials, but many chose to stay home together with their elderly family members.[17] The arrival of Romanian and German troops triggered harsh antisemitic violence: many Czernowitz Jews were immediately robbed, beaten, or killed, and the new authorities imposed numerous interdictions, such as forced labor, curfew, and wearing the yellow star, on the surviving community.[18]

Following the Axis invasion of the USSR, the Romanian administration arrived in Northern Bukovina in July 1941, and began

15 For more details on the Romanianization of Southern Bukovina, see Ancel, *The Economic Destruction*, pp. 217–224; Moraru, *Bucovina sub regimul Antonescu*, pp. 167–169, 179–181.

16 Liviu Cărare, "Consideraţii privind procesul de ghetoizare al evreilor din Cernăuţi," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie G. Barițiu din Cluj-Napoca*, volume XLIX (2010), pp. 2–3.

17 Fichman, *Before Memories Fade,* pp. 72–73; Ancel, *The Economic Destruction*, pp. 201–202.

18 See Ancel, *The Economic Destruction,* pp. 201–204; Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust,* pp. 270–279; Solonari, *Purifying the Nation*, pp. 180–182; Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează,* pp. 39–47; Simon Geissbühler, "'He spoke Yiddish like a Jew': Neighbors' Contribution to the Mass Killing of Jews in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, July 1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 28:3 (2014), pp. 430–449; the Romanian administration also targeted local Ukrainian nationalists belonging to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). This measure upset the Germans, who wanted to use OUN for their own anti-Soviet purposes without awarding them autonomy or independence. See the July 14, 1941, report of the commander of German Security Police and SD to Berlin, in Ottmar Traşcă and Dennis Deletant, eds., *Al III-lea Reich şi Holocaustul din România, 1940–1944. Documente din arhivele germane* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2007), pp. 198–200; Solonari, *Purifying the Nation*, pp. 180–183; Angrick, *Power Games*, pp. 114–128.

establishing a new civil service. These public employees were recruited mostly from Old Kingdom bureaucrats, who were considered more reliable.[19] The Romanian decision-makers hoped that the newcomers would have no friends or relatives in the area and thus would prove more impartial and honest. Local ethnic Romanians strongly resented this approach. However, not all the new bureaucrats were outsiders. Some prominent local ethnic Romanians, such as Ştefan Romaşcanu and Şerban Flondor, had been appointed to crucial posts in the new administration, including in the main Romanianization agency (established in August 1941, as the Department for Romanianization and Administration of Public Assets, which became, in September 1941, the Romanianization, Colonization, and Inventory Directorate).[20] Sometimes their interests and decisions conflicted with the newly arrived Old Kingdom bureaucrats, who wanted to have more control over the lucrative Romanianization.[21]

Overall, Romanian decision-makers had grandiose plans for Bukovina: after the deportation and robbery of the Jews, they planned to expel all other minorities, seize their assets, and colonize the area with ethnic Romanians.[22] First the Romanian authorities expropriated Jewish assets by taking over "abandoned" property, including the industrial and commercial businesses that had been nationalized by the Soviet regime, and regulated and controlled Jewish labor. In the next stage the new officials wanted to restore the economic life of Czernowitz and Bukovina by encouraging ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs to reopen

19 According to the July 26, 1941, report sent to Berlin by Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, the German consul in Iasi (and later Czernowitz), he was informed by Tudor I. Popescu, the deputy-prefect of Czernowitz, that the Romanian authorities brought the majority (two-thirds) of the newly appointed civil servants from the Old Kingdom. Trașcă and Deletant, eds., *Al III-lea Reich și Holocaustul din România,* pp. 210–213.

20 See Moraru, *Bucovina sub regimul Antonescu*, pp. 161–236. In addition to the Romanianization Directorate, the local branch of the Ministry of National Economy (MEN) played an important role in the Romanianization of Bukovina. From October 1941 on, the MEN Directorate was in charge of the Romanianization of commerce and industry.

21 See the July 26, 1941, report of the German consul in Iași, Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, to Berlin, in Trașcă and Deletant, eds., *Al III-lea Reich și Holocaustul din România*, pp. 210–213.

22 See Viorel Achim, "Schimbul de populație in viziunea lui Sabin Manuilă," *Revista Istorică*, vol. XIII, no. 5–6 (2002), pp. 133–150; Hausleitner, *Rumänisierung der Bukowina,* pp. 382–426; Solonari, *Purifying the Nation*, pp. 142–263.

the abandoned businesses. Some ethnic Romanian businessmen, who had fled from the Soviets in 1940, now returned to their homes, repossessed their former properties, and, sometimes, acquired Jewish assets. Other Gentile would-be beneficiaries would follow.

One of the harshest antisemitic measures adopted by the Romanian authorities was to establish a ghetto in Czernowitz (in October 1941) in order to isolate the local Jews and facilitate their surveillance, dispossession, and deportation.[23] According to historian Jean Ancel, 51,681 Jews were forced to live in the crowded Czernowitz ghetto; from there 33,891 were deported to Transnistria between October 12 and November 15, 1941.[24] Following the interventions of various notables, including the German consul, Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, and Mayor Traian Popovici, the authorities decided that several thousand economically useful Jews (and their families) — who were issued "Popovici permits," and later "Calotescu permits" — could remain in the ghetto in order to prevent the collapse of industry and commerce.[25] While the Romanian officials ceased the deportations in November 1941, and allowed the remaining Jews to return to their homes, more deportations took place in May-June 1942. About 15,000 Jews remained in Czernowitz after the second wave of deportation.[26]

As various historians of the Romanian chapter of the Holocaust have pointed out, the ghetto and the deportations enabled a massive transfer of property from Jews to Gentiles.[27] After the authorities forced

23 Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează*, pp. 33–36.

24 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, pp. 270–288; for more details on Antonescu's policy of deportation that targeted Czernowitz Jews, see also Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally*, pp. 156–165; Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina,* pp. 382–416; Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu*, pp. 191–233; Solonari, *Purifying the Nation*, pp. 210–221.

25 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, pp. 275–280; recent research has shown that the German consul in Czernowitz played a crucial role in convincing Antonescu to stop the deportation of Jews from Czernowitz. According to historian Vladimir Solonari, Schellhorn protested vigorously to Governor Calotescu against such plans, arguing that some Jews were indispensable for the reconstruction of Bukovina and for the German war effort. See Vladimir Solonari, "The Treatment of the Jews of Bukovina by the Soviet and Romanian Administrations in 1940–1944," in *Holocaust and Modernity*, no. 2–8 (2010), p. 170.

26 Ancel, *The Economic Destruction*, pp. 205–210; idem, *The History of the Holocaust*, pp. 270–288, 612.

27 Idem, *The Economic Destruction,* pp. 205–216; Cărare, *Considerații privind procesul de ghetoizare,* pp. 99–107.

the Jews to move out of their homes, many ethnic Romanians "visited" the ghetto in order to profit from the antisemitic policy and acquire various assets at bargain prices (sometimes even stealing them), as the survivor Scherzer recorded in his memoirs:

> In the following days, feeling that the time was right to take advantage of those in despair, Romanian civilians descended in droves into the ghetto. They came like vultures ready for a feast. They came *en masse*....They picked and scavenged and devoured everything they could get their hands on. They "bought" valuables and household goods for ridiculously low prices. Often they walked away with the acquired objects without bothering to pay even those minimal prices. They helped themselves to people's possessions, stole whatever they liked, grabbed whatever they could. They walked away with the goods, knowing well that the Jews were too intimidated to complain. After all, to whom could we complain?.…Stealing from Jews had become legal. I discovered that in the absence of law of fear of punishment, even well-mannered, well dressed middle class people could turn into rapacious predators. They discard the laws of civilized behavior and replace them with wanton, unscrupulous greed. They steal, they rob, and trampled the dignity of defenseless people, who until yesterday had been their neighbors. I was depressed to see such crude lawlessness perpetrated against my family.[28]

Other greedy Gentiles "bought" or stole numerous assets from Jewish homes during or after the owners' relocation to the ghetto.[29] In addition to the Jews' houses, Jewish businesses also attracted the interest of many local and incoming Gentile entrepreneurs who needed the backing of Romanianization and local bureaucracy in order to acquire such properties. Divided as it was, the Romanianization bureaucracy and local civil servants seemed to have reached a modus vivendi that favored self-enrichment and helping would-be Romanianizers — especially Bukovinian ones — to acquire Jewish companies. Numerous cases illustrate the crucial role and biases of the Czernowitz bureaucracy

28 Julius Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Silent: Growing Up under Fascists and Communists* (Frederick, MD: Publish America, 2006), pp. 185–186; see also Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează*, pp. 55–56.

29 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, p. 281; Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează*, pp. 18, 30, 38.

in the sharp competition for Jewish assets between local would-be profiteers and Old Kingdom colonists.[30]

In the summer of 1941, Iosif Măciuceanu, a Bucharest lawyer who was the head of the Association of Bucharest's *Olteni* (AOB) and a collaborator with the Ministry of National Economy (MEN), decided to devote himself to the economic Romanianization of the newly liberated cities of Czernowitz and Kishinev/Chişinău (Bessarabia).[31] He therefore organized several expeditions of would-be profiteers to this new *El Dorado*.[32]

During a meeting of the Antonescu government on July 14, 1941, there was a discussion about Romanizing the commerce in Bukovina and Bessarabia after the liberation of those provinces from the Soviets. Ion C. Marinescu, the minister of the National Economy, informed his colleagues that he had initially prepared a delegation of 100 tradesmen recruited from AOB to go to Bukovina and Bessarabia, and depicted them as "the most dynamic and trade inclined part of the [Romanian] nation."[33] Mihai Antonescu, the regime's second-in-command and the driving force behind the Romanianization project, endorsed the initiative.

30 Bukovinian ethnic Romanians resented the competition for Romanianized assets from both Old Kingdom newcomers and local minorities who had acquired Jewish properties. For example, historian Pavel Moraru has shown that discontented would-be profiteers accused Romaşcanu, who worked for the Romanianization Directorate, of distributing forty Jewish land estates mostly to Gentile minorities: thirty-seven went to Armenians and Ukrainians, and only three of them went to ethnic Romanians. Romaşcanu, who was married to an Armenian woman, was accused of awarding land estates comprising 4,960 hectares not only to Armenians and Ukrainians, but also to Jews. Moraru, *Bucovina sub regimul Antonescu*, pp. 161–236; see also Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust*, p. 284; Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează,* p. 38.

31 Măciuceanu collaborated with the MEN in the project of Romanianizing the economy of Bucharest — not just Czernowitz and Kishinev. In September 1941, the MEN appointed Măciuceanu as a Special Commissar for the surveillance of Prahova, a former Bucharest factory, following denunciations about camouflaged Jews still working for that company; Arhivele Naţionale ale României (ANR), MEN-Direcţia Secretariat (DS) 67/11941, p. 39.

32 ANR, MEN-Direcţia Organizării Profesionale şi Comerţ Interior (DOPCI), 78/1941, pp. 24–100.

33 Marcel Dumitru-Ciucă and Maria Ignat, eds., *Stenogramele şedinţelor consiliului de ministri: guvernarea Ion Antonescu*, vol. IV (Bucharest: Arhivele Naţionale ale României, 2000), p. 144.

Măciuceanu's project, which developed from July 1941 to mid-1942, led to the relocation of hundreds of ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs (owners of stores, restaurants, workshops) and skilled laborers (plumbers, house painters, decorators, technicians, bricklayers) from Romania, especially from Bucharest. These people responded to the government's public appeal (issued by the MEN in the summer of 1941) to go to Bessarabia and Bukovina, to Romanianize and restore the local economy, and, especially, to eliminate Jewish influence. Described in the official documents as entrepreneurs and tradesmen, even though their social and economic background was much more diverse, these adventurers were ethnic Romanians recruited from all over the country, particularly from Bucharest's association of *Olteni.*

As the leader of AOB Romanianizers shuttled between Bucharest, Czernowitz, and Kishinev, he was in constant correspondence with the MEN. He emphasized the importance of their mission and his personal sacrifice, requested money or exemptions from mobilization, and complained about the attitude of the local authorities in Czernowitz and Kishinev. According to his reports, far from welcoming them, the Czernowitz municipal authorities and Chamber of Commerce met the newcomers with enmity, reminding them that they already had local ethnic Romanian tradesmen living and working there.

Măciuceanu informed the MEN that after the *Olteni* Romanianizers had identified promising Jewish businesses and had obtained provisional authorizations from Czernowitz officials, they had tried to move in the following day but were faced with an unexpected and unwelcome development. Overnight most of those same business locations had been occupied by local entrepreneurs — ethnic Romanians and Ukrainians — suspected of acting as middlemen for the Jews.[34] A month after their arrival in Czernowitz, the first wave of *Olteni* had not yet taken possession of their stores. City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce refused to help them.[35] After several waves of such Romanianizers, Măciuceanu complained, the local officials openly displayed

34 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 78/1941, pp. 29–30; historian Pavel Moraru has shown that, despite his ethno-nationalist beliefs and anti-Ukrainian policy, Antonescu eventually allowed some local non-ethnic Romanian Gentiles, such as Ukrainians and Hutsuls, to engage in commerce and industry if they fulfilled certain conditions; Moraru, *Bucovina sub regimul Antonescu*, pp. 177–178.

35 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 78/1941, pp. 62–63.

their hostility, declaring that, "by now, too many *Olteni* tradesmen have arrived in Czernowitz."[36]

The MEN representative in Czernowitz confirmed the complaints of AOB entrepreneurs, emphasizing that the Commission for Trade Authorization had approved their applications only after several weeks (perhaps because there were some 600 requests). In addition, most of the local entrepreneurs competing with the newcomers were retired bureaucrats and wives of civil servants who requested commercial licenses, "only to camouflage some people who cannot operate legally."[37]

One of the intriguing aspects of *Olteni* and other colonists' journeys in Bukovina is that so many entrepreneurs from Bucharest and the Old Kingdom — hundreds at least — did not participate in the Romanianization of Jewish businesses in their familiar city of residence but hundreds of miles away, in unfamiliar provinces still plagued by security problems and material shortages. On the one hand, in their petitions, they claimed that they were responding to the call of the Fatherland and were trying to fulfill their patriotic duty. In this way their narratives reflected the official rhetoric. On the other hand, sources such as memoirs and diaries, and recent studies by historians such as Jean Ancel suggest that, from the summer of 1941, Bukovina (and partially Bessarabia) became Romania's California-like *El Dorado*, the new frontier where people could enrich themselves easily.[38]

In addition to claiming that they had responded to the government's appeal to Romanianize the liberated provinces, involvement in Romanianization allowed many of these entrepreneurs to request — and sometimes to obtain — postponement of mobilization, or mobilization for work. Key companies producing for the war effort could spare their indispensable employees from military service by mobilizing them for work, thus allowing them to avoid the dangerous Soviet front.[39] Their requests were often supported by the MEN bureaucrats,

36 Ibid., pp. 77–78.

37 Ibid., pp. 72–73.

38 Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, pp. 270–288; idem, *The Economic Destruction*, pp. 210–216; Sănătescu, *Jurnal*, p. 34; Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează,* pp. 7–11; "Spovedania fostului primar al Municipiului Cernăuți, Dr. Traian Popovici," in Matatias Carp, ed., *Cartea Neagră: Suferințele evreilor din România: 1940–1944*, vol. III (Bucharesti: Diogene, 1996), pp. 164–189; see also Traian Popovici, *Spovedania/ Testimony* (Bucharest: Fundația Dr. W. Filderman, no date), pp. 21, 32–35, 69, 83.

39 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 91/1941, pp. 1–2 and 52/1941, p. 2; MEN-DS 50/1940, pp. 14–15.

who emphasized the crucial role played by these Romanianizers for the national economy.[40]

In their petitions these entrepreneurs claimed that if they served in the army they would risk losing their economic investments, because they would not be able to find adequate replacements to run their businesses. Moreover, the government would then also break its promise to exempt them from mobilization. Ethnic Romanians still in the Old Kingdom but planning to move to Bukovina and Bessarabia also requested postponement of mobilization. In general, however, the army draft office rejected these petitions. The army also rejected the requests of those Romanianizers who were already mobilized into army units — if they were already on the front, or preparing to be sent. After a few months of several interchanges by correspondence, tensions emerged between the MEN, the promoter of Romanianization expeditions, and the army draft office as to when such Romanianizers should apply for a postponement of mobilization and the proper procedure to do so.[41]

Some local inhabitants and independent observers had different perspectives on the Romanianization of Czernowitz than the incoming *Olteni* and other colonists. According to their testimonies, their cold reception of the incoming Romanianizers was justified by the latter's greed and brutality. "Cernăuți had been invaded by a swarm of dubious characters hoping to enrich themselves in a city expected to be Romanianized," explained, in his postwar (1945) testimony, Traian Popovici, the mayor of Czernowitz between 1941 and 1942, and one of the few local Romanians who protested Antonescu's radical antisemitic policies.

> Every newcomer claimed a central residence, lush furniture, and all….I warned the general [Calotescu, the governor of Bukovina] about the difficulties caused by these newcomers, their reckless demands, and their provocative attitude of giving us lessons on Romanianness….People no one had seen before in Cernăuți kept flowing in from all over the country to take advantage of that human tragedy....It was the vilest degradation of human morals. That greed could lower human beings so deeply into the mire seemed

40 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 80/1941, p. 269; MEN-DOPCI 89/1941, pp. 1–446.
41 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 89/1941, pp. 1–446; MEN-DPOCI 90/1941, pp. 1–96.

> incredible….these improvised colonists who turned Bukovina into a place very hard to govern.[42]

Popovici's observations on the incoming Romanianizers echo the diary entries of General Constantin Sănătescu, who visited the city in August 1942, on his way to the Soviet front:

> I found a flourishing Czernowitz: the abandoned Jewish stores have been reopened by [ethnic] Romanians; all the factories function. There is only one sad thing: people are doing business and even barbarities at the expense of the Jews that had to be evicted from Bukovina. Additionally, numerous adventurers came here, seized the factories and made big profits. I met many loafers who came here to get rich and who told me, shamelessly, that they came to Romania's California to enrich themselves.[43]

The arrival of the colonists brought to Romanianize the "abandoned" Jewish (and German) properties triggered tensions with local would-be profiteers not only in Czernowitz and the surrounding area but also in other parts of Bukovina. According to General Police Department (DGP) reports, some of the profiteers of the Romanianization of houses and businesses in Bukovina — the Macedonian-Romanian (Aromanians) refugees from Southern Dobrogea, who, after the Romanian-Bulgarian population exchange, were colonized mostly in Northern Dobrogea and partially in Southern Bukovina[44] — resented

42 Popovici, *Spovedania*, pp. 21, 35.

43 Sănătescu, *Jurnal*, p. 34.

44 During World War II (and even today), there was controversy as to the real ethnicity of *macedo-români/aromâni* (Macedonian-Romanians/Aromanians). Since the nineteenth century, mainstream Romanian intellectuals and politicians considered Macedonians as "brothers" from the Balkans, who had been separated from their Romanian brothers north of the Danube by the barbarian invasions and geopolitics in the Middle Ages. As a result, Romania "repatriated" some of them in the 1920s and 1930s, and colonized them in the newly acquired province of Southern Dobrogea, and, after the 1940 population exchange with Bulgaria, in Northern Dobrogea as well. During the inter-war period, a significant number of Macedonian-Romanians joined the Iron Guard party. See Solonari, *Purifying the Nation*, pp. 39–43; Roland Clark, "Claiming Ethnic Privilege: Aromanian Immigrants and Romanian Fascist Politics," *Contemporary European History*, vol. 24, issue 1 (2015), pp. 37–58. In spite of public support, during World War II, leading officials doubted the Macedonians' connection to ethnic Romanians. On Ion Antonescu's hostility and distrust of the Romanianness ("the Macedonians who came here have no connection with this Romanian Nation") and reliability of the

the location and the conditions of the colonization sites.[45] As a result, they did not care about the properties they had acquired so easily and neglected to take proper care of those assets, to the chagrin of local ethnic Romanians:

> The Macedonian [Romanian] settlers brought into Suceava are not happy with their situation. They lack food, firewood, and so on. Some settlers say that if their requests to be relocated won't be met, they will have to sell the [Jewish] assets entrusted to them and burn their fences. In reality, many settlers live in misery not so much because of insufficient material conditions, but rather because of their lack of education. Everything in their houses is thrown about in disorder; it is dirty; they chop wood on the floor in the middle of the rooms, and thus, the real estate will soon deteriorate. When the locals urge them to be tidier and take care of the property entrusted by the state, the settlers seem indifferent, saying that these are only some kikish junk properties.[46]

The police reports emphasized that the Macedonian settlers' behavior outraged local ethnic Romanians, who resented the distribution of the houses and businesses of deported Jews to the newcomers.

> The inhabitants of Rădăuți complain that they also applied to receive the stores and houses left behind by the Jews, but that the

Macedonian "brothers," see the minutes of the government meetings of December 16, 1941, and September 4, 1943, in Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă and Maria Ignat, eds., *Stenogramele,* vol. V (București: Arhivele Naționale ale României, 2001), pp. 466–467; vol. IX (București: Arhivele Naționale ale României, 2006), p. 411. Ironically, Antonescu declared that he also had some Macedonian ancestry on his mother's side, but considered himself Romanian and advocated for harsher measures against Macedonians. See the October 8, 1940, minutes of the government meeting in Dumitru-Ciucă, et al., eds., *Stenogramele*, vol. I, p. 173.

45 As historian Vladimir Solonari has shown, Antonescu did not pursue a massive and consistent policy of colonization of Macedonian-Romanians from Southern Dobrogea in Southern Bukovina and Bessarabia, because he planned to award the "vacant" land and houses to decorated soldiers at the end of the war, as part of a broader redistribution of property and population policies. For more details on the colonization of Macedonian-Romanians in Northern Dobrogea and Southern Bukovina, see Solonari, *Purifying the Nation,* pp. 95–114, 259–261.

46 ANR, MEN-DS 63/1941, pp. 195–196; another reason for the Macedonian settlers' behavior toward Romanianized properties could have been their social background as shepherds and agriculturalists who found themselves resettled into urban areas.

> local commission in charge of these assets ignored their requests and awarded all the best stores, located in the center, to the colonists coming from Dobrogea and from other counties.[47]

The local inhabitants naturally expected that the government should have awarded the Romanianized assets to them, and not to newly arrived unreliable "brothers," especially when, instead of being grateful for receiving CNR (Centrul Național de Românizare; the National Romanianization Center) real estate, they devalued the properties.

Declaring the property and assets of people who had been deported by Antonescu's regime to Transnistria as "ownerless" was one of the government's legal devices to take over these assets. Such "ownerless" Jewish properties were in high demand among various categories of would-be beneficiaries in Bukovina.[48] For example, in the same town of Rădăuți during the Romanianization of real estate belonging to deported Jews, judges requested a particular Jewish house in order to transform it into the local tribunal headquarters. They believed that they deserved a better working environment than their current building provided. The Rădăuți magistrates were unlucky. The local mayor decided that the Jewish house was "too luxurious for a court building," and that he would save it for deserving officers returning from the front.[49] The judges of Rădăuți then struggled to obtain several other valuable buildings for their personal use, but were rather unsuccessful. SSI (Serviciul Special de Informații; Special Intelligence Service) agents reported that CNR gave them only some houses "that were inappropriate for their status."[50]

In addition to AOB, the highly advertised prospect of participating in a lucrative Romanianization expedition into the country's frontier attracted other organizations from Bucharest. For example, immediately after the return of the Romanian administration to Bukovina and Bessarabia, the leadership of the Association of Graduates of Schools of Economics (ALACI) answered the authorities' call for participants in the Romanianization of the newly acquired provinces

47 ANR, MEN-DS 63/1941, pp. 195–196.

48 In order to take over the assets of deported Jews, Roma, and others, the Antonescu government adopted law no. 315 of January 30, 1942. See Ştefan Cristian Ionescu, *Jewish Resistance to Romanianization, 1940–1944* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 138.

49 ANR, PCM-SSI 90/1941, pp. 35–36.

50 ANR, PCM-SSI 90/1941, pp. 38–39.

and petitioned to the MEN (in August 1941) in favor of its young and patriotic members:

> We would be honored to be the pioneers of this national reconstruction project. Now is the time to transfer our country's industry and commerce from the hands of dubious and greedy foreigners to honest and skilled elements….This offers the opportunity of fulfilling one of our most wanted goals, namely the Romanianization of commerce and industry.[51]

The ALACI did not only lobby the central authorities in Bucharest (such as the MEN) but also Bukovinian officials. For instance, in late 1941, ALACI leaders recommended Gheorghe Penea, "a hardworking Romanian and Christian," who had graduated from the Bucharest Commercial Academy, to the governor of Bukovina, asking the high official, "to give him full support for taking over an industrial company."[52] Guaranteeing their member's honesty and morality, the ALACI informed the governor of Bukovina that their protégé had already secured a bank loan for the necessary capital for the new factory. While Antonescu's bureaucrats — aiming to promote Romanianization, but lacking sufficient numbers of educated and experienced ethnic Romanians to run the economy — usually supported such initiatives, some uninvolved observers objected. For example, former Prime Minister Constantin Argetoianu, a senior experienced politician, considered (in his diary entry of May 18, 1942) the government's decision to allow members of the ALACI to participate in the Romanianization of Jewish companies based only on their economic degrees, and without practical experience, to be a "demagogic and completely crazy measure."[53]

One of the main organizations that benefited from the dispossession of the Czernowitz Jews deported to Transnistria was Consiliul de Patronaj al Operelor Sociale (CPOS), which was a welfare organization headed by Maria Antonescu, the wife of the Romanian dictator.[54] Aiming to help wounded soldiers, widows, orphans, children, and other poor Romanians, and benefiting from influential leadership,

51 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 65/1941, pp. 35–36.

52 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 65/1941, p. 56.

53 Constantin Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice* (Bucureşti: Machiavelli, 2009), vol. X, p. 340.

54 For more details on CPOS, see ANR, Consiliul de Patronaj al Operelor Sociale, 1/1941.

CPOS acquired significant funds and property "donated" by Jewish organizations or by Romanian authorities that had confiscated them from Jewish communities all over the country.[55] Not all of this wealth reached the designated needy citizens. Often individual profiteers connected with CPOS acquired various assets, as Czernowitz Jewish survivor Julius Scherzer recorded in his memoirs:

> The assets left behind by those deported were seized by the state and turned over to an organization called *Patronaj*….In reality, most of these assets ended up in the hands of key leaders of the organization and their friends. During auctioning of confiscated goods, family members of the *Patronaj* bosses and the wives of leading politicians, high-level civil servants and high-ranking officers acquired most of these goods at ridiculously low prices. They filled their homes with exquisite furniture, fine draperies, Persian rugs, oil paintings, crystal, and other valuables, most of them acquired at *Patronaj* auctions. Some of the items were also acquired in the ghetto, directly from well to do Jews, at similar ridiculous prices.[56]

In addition to the acquisition of deportees' assets, CPOS profited in another way from the persecution of local Jews. According to the memoirs of Jewish survivor Pearl Fichman, CPOS used 200 women, including herself, as unpaid workers in its tailor workshop. There they cleaned and recycled the clothes confiscated from the Jewish deportees to Transnistria before distributing them to Gentile beneficiaries.[57]

Not only regional, professional, and welfare organizations joined the Romanianization project in Bukovina, but also individual businessmen who aspired to make a fortune in the newly-opened frontier. This was the case of Fl. Drăghicescu, who was an engineer and owner of a soap company in Bucharest. Emphasizing that his company was the sixth-largest national producer of soap and the army's seventh-largest soap supplier, Drăghicescu asked the MEN (on September 11, 1941) to recommend him to the governor of Bukovina in order to take over the Czernowitz soap factory *Lehr*. In his petition Drăghicescu pledged that he would operate the factory for the long-term and in a fair manner.

55 Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează,* pp. 4, 8.
56 Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Silent*, p. 193.
57 Fichman, *Before Memories Fade*, pp. 88, 90, 124.

The head of the MEN agreed with the request and decided to issue a favorable recommendation for Drăghicescu.[58]

While some members of the expeditionary group of Old Kingdom Romanianizers originated from Bucharest, others came from various parts of the country. For example, a businessman from the city of Piteşti petitioned the MEN in the summer of 1941. He claimed that, as an ethnic Romanian tradesman with more than twenty-two years of commercial experience, he answered the government's public call to go to Bukovina and Bessarabia and "take over the commercial and industrial Jewish companies that had been abandoned [*sic*] by their owners."[59]

While trying to survive the Romanian and German persecutions, Czernowitz Jews also observed the arrival of Old Kingdom Romanianizers to their city and their competition with local Gentile entrepreneurs to acquire businesses and enrich themselves. Not particularly interested in who would prevail in the struggle for seizing Jewish wealth — local ethnic Romanians or Old Kingdom colonizers — the Czernowitz Jews were determined to cooperate with all these entrepreneurs in order to remain in their city as "productive" workers and thus increase their chances of survival. For example, Carl Hirsch, a construction engineer who studied at the Bucharest Polytechnic Institute in the 1930s, recalled in his memoirs the arrival of ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs with both its negative and positive consequences. On the one hand, the newcomers enriched themselves by taking over former industrial and commercial businesses that had belonged to Jews and repatriated Germans and by exploiting local cheap labor. On the other hand, Hirsch observed that, gradually, their arrival had the unintended side effect of helping local Jews. As they were the main pool of skilled workers, they managed to avoid recruitment into forced-labor battalions and thus deportation to Transnistria as indispensable employees:

> Romanian entrepreneurs came from the old provinces and got licenses from the Government to reopen the plants and stores formerly belonging to Jews who had been expropriated by the Soviet administration (also those of the Germans who had left [to] Germany) and also former Gentile owners returned to their

58 ANR. MEN-DOPCI 65/1941, p. 57.
59 ANR, MEN-DS 65/1941, pp. 215–216.

> properties, and they all needed Jewish labor and technical help and within a few months a more normal situation came into being. Not many questions about pay were asked in the beginning, the Jews were satisfied to be shielded from hard manual labor and the owners to get cheap labor.[60]

Other Jewish survivors from Czernowitz also mentioned in their postwar testimonies some of the positive and ambivalent side effects of economic Romanianization that, coupled with other factors, helped them survive the genocidal policies promoted by the Romanian authorities. For instance, Julius Scherzer related that, even though the ethnic Romanian who took over his family's store — Mr. Nistor — was an unskilled and inexperienced businessman, he behaved decently toward the former Jewish owners. He kept them employed as indispensable workers, paid them fairly, and supported their application for a residence permit (issued by Mayor Popovici), thereby helping them avoid deportation to Transnistria:

> The Stationery and office supply store that used to belong to my uncle and Grandfather was also "Romanianized." It became the property of a Mr. Nistor. Since he had no experience in this field and had no idea how to manage the enterprise, he kept my uncle and Grandfather to run the business. Mr. Nistor just showed up in the store by the end of the day, collected the receipts, chatted for a few minutes with my uncle and left. Since he was completely dependent on my uncle and Grandfather, he treated them fairly well and gave them a decent compensation….Uncle Joseph, his wife Ruchel, and child Elli, who were known by the Mayor [Popovici], also received such [residence] permits. The written statement given by Mr. Nistor to my uncle, stressing his importance to the business, was helpful.[61]

As survivors Hirsch and Scherzer noted, some local and outside Romanianization profiteers treated former Jewish owners decently, because they needed them to run their businesses smoothly, in what seems to

60 Carl Hirsch, *A Life in the Twentieth Century: A Memoir* (unpublished manuscript, www.ghostsofhome.com, viewed on October 15, 2014), pp. 66–67; see also the testimony of Jewish survivor Anna Koppelman quoted in Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, p. 281.

61 Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Silent*, pp. 178, 197.

have been a symbiotic relationship. Jews needed Gentile Romanianizers to provide them with jobs, salaries, and thus avoid deportation, and the Romanianizers needed skilled Jewish employees to manage their new companies profitably. Scherzer, however, also noted the limitations of the symbiotic partnership between Romanianizers and Jewish employees: "the former Jewish owners and Jewish workers were allowed to work, provided they trained the assigned Romanian replacements. Once the training was completed, the Jews were dismissed, and many ended up on the deportation lists."[62]

This mutually beneficial cooperation during the Romanianization of the local economy had other limitations: it mainly helped well-off, middle-class, skilled, and well-connected Jews. Poor, unskilled, unconnected, or simply "unlucky" Jews usually had less chance to survive the Holocaust in Bukovina.[63]

This type of economic cooperation between Jews and ethnic Romanians — who sometimes aimed to breach the laws — was helped by the authorities' widespread corruption, which had precedents in interwar Romania. This also provided a model for later wartime resistance strategies. For example, survivor Zvi Yavetz testified in his postwar interview to the corruption of the Romanian authorities. In the case of his grandfather, who owned a business in which King Carol II was also a shareholder, and who never paid income taxes due to his influential connections:

> [The Romanian government] was very democratic from one point of view – every minister had his price. The minister of justice could be bought for so much money, the minister of commerce and industry for so and so much, and so on. And the Jews had the money. My grandfather never paid a penny of income tax because the king was a silent partner in our factory though he had never seen it.[64]

62 Ibid., p. 178; historian Natalya Lazar has argued that the use of skilled Jewish workers triggered tensions between the ethnic Romanian owners and managers who wanted to keep their Jewish specialists and Christian workers who resented this approach and complained to the authorities; Lazar, *The Fate of Czernowitz Jews*, p. 65.

63 See Yavetz, *Youth Movements in Czernowitz*, p. 144; Sommerfeld, *Too Small to Matter*, p. 202; Ancel, *The Economic Destruction,* p. 208; Hirsch and Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home*.

64 Yavetz, *Youth Movements in Czernowitz*, p. 137.

All in all the Romanianization of Jewish businesses in Czernowitz was a highly controversial process, and the employees of the local Romanianization Directorate quickly acquired a reputation for corruption.[65] For example, during the October 1, 1941, meeting of the Commission for the Organization of Bessarabia and Bukovina, Professor Toruțiu, the representative of the Bukovinians, complained to Antonescu about the behavior of Eugen Pavelescu, the head of the Czernowitz Romanianization Directorate. He claimed that the latter had delayed solving the requests for Jewish businesses, had failed to redistribute iron agricultural tools seized from Jewish stores, despite the acute shortage among local farmers, and had facilitated various abuses of his subordinates. In addition, Toruțiu accused Pavelescu of acting in a detrimental way in regard to the interests of the local ethnic Romanians, because Romanianization bureaucrats had dismantled the equipment of the only Romanian cinema in Czernowitz and had assigned it to the German cinema Scala.[66] Obviously this was not the desired Romanianization, but rather Aryanization in favor of ethnic Germans, who were the main competitors of ethnic Romanians during the process of dispossessing the Jews.[67]

Following other complaints the authorities fired Pavelescu, placed him under house arrest, and indicted him for corruption.[68] One of the most serious accusations he faced was that he was an Iron Guard sympathizer.[69] According to the Czernowitz security police, Pavelescu awarded most of the local industrial and commercial companies to former legionnaires. In spite of the delayed judicial procedures, the court sentenced Pavelescu to five years in prison, but he never served that sentence due to the war and political changes. The collapse of the Antonescu regime, in August 1944, removed the immediate threat of imprisonment.[70]

65 Gerbel, *Sâmbătă se deportează*, p. 10.

66 ANR, MEN-DS 65/1941, p. 301.

67 For more details on the tensions between Romanianization and Germanization in Antonescu's Romania, see Ionescu, *Jewish Resistance to Romanianization*, pp. 110–123.

68 See the minutes of July 16, 1942, of the Press and Propaganda Section of the Peace Bureau, in Petre Otu, *Pacea de mâine* (București: Editura Militară, 2006), p. 204.

69 After the defeat of their January 1941 rebellion, the legionnaires, especially Horia Sima's associates, were no longer in Antonescu's favor.

70 See the reports from June 27, 1942, and August 17, 1943, of the Czernowitz Regional Police Inspectorate — *Siguranță* Bureau — to the Bucharest General Police

Even when some Gentiles failed to acquire Jewish real estate or businesses because of sharp competition or Jewish resistance, they found other ways to enrich themselves at the expense of the Jews or to exact revenge on them. This was the case of Dr. Alexander Fraenkel, a Jewish dentist from Czernowitz, who complained in the postwar period (1945) that, in 1943, he had been denounced by a local lawyer, Ion Vertan, for false declarations about his birthplace. The implication was that he had something to hide. Vertan was frustrated, because he was failing to Romanianize Fraenkel's house; the doctor held Polish citizenship, which exempted him from expropriation. After holding the doctor in custody and threatening his family with deportation to Transnistria, the two policemen who searched his home stole his valuable dental gold (450 grams) and gold watches.[71] In another case the Spiegel family fell victim to a false claim that they had hidden a radio and had listened to banned foreign stations. The informer was an ethnic Romanian whom the Spiegels suspected of wanting to acquire their apartment. Luckily for them the secret police commissar who investigated the denunciation proved to be a decent person and did not believe the accusation.[72]

Gradually, due to the unfavorable evolution of the war, which brought the front line closer to Romania and crippled the business environment, more and more Romanianizers lost interest in the economic colonization of Bukovina. After two years of Romanianization, the Czernowitz secret police reported (in August 1943) to Bucharest that many Old Kingdom entrepreneurs had become increasingly dissatisfied with the local economic environment. There were difficulties with the supply of raw materials; the new taxes had been hiked; and the Red Army was advancing toward Romania's borders. According to the secret report, these reasons determined the Romanianizing businessmen, "to be more cautious about taking new orders and resupplying with raw materials."[73]

In spite of these worrying signs, secret police officials remained optimistic; they did not believe that the industrialists would abandon

Department — *Siguranță* Police [Headquarters]. See Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (CNSAS), Eugen Pavelescu I-655291, pp. 3–232.

71 ANR, MJ-DJ 3/1944, vol. III, pp. 244–249.

72 Fichman, *Before Memories Fade*, pp. 85–86.

73 CNSAS, Eugen Pavelescu, I-655291, p. 232.

their Bukovinian companies and return to their native venues.[74] However, reality proved them wrong. A few months later, in the fall and winter of 1943, the advancing Red Army spread panic among Romanianizers, bureaucrats, and local middle classes in Bukovina and Bessarabia, and many people fled toward the southern and western parts of Romania.

Conclusion

For several years during the Antonescu regime — mainly between the summer of 1941 and the autumn of 1943 — Bukovina (especially Czernowitz) became Romania's California, a new frontier where ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs could enrich themselves easily at the expense of local minorities, particularly Jews.[75] Hoping to colonize the area with more reliable members of the national community — *Olteni*, Macedonian-Romanians, and other groups of ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs — and to Romanianize the economy of Bukovina, the Antonescu government encouraged and supported this exodus.

Ironically, not all members of the economic expeditions to the new California were ethnic Romanians. For instance, at the recommendation of Mihai Antonescu, in September 1941, the MEN added the name of three Bucharest businessmen to the list of the Romanianization missionaries sent to Czernowitz and Kishinev. The name of one of these would-be Romanianizers, Kassargian, suggests his Armenian origin. This is but one of the paradoxes of Romanianization, perhaps due to nepotism and corruption.[76]

The arrival of Old Kingdom entrepreneurs and other colonists in Bukovina created a great deal of tensions with local ethnic Romanians and other Gentiles. They resented the idea of sharing the profits of the

74 Ibid.

75 See Fichman, *Before Memories Fade*, p. 74; Hirsch and Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home;* Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Silent*, pp. 162, 177–178, 180, 185, 193; not only Bucharest and Old Kingdom newcomers tried to enrich themselves at the expense of the Jews but also local inhabitants. See Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "The Czernowitz Ghetto and the Decent Mayor," in Valentina Glajar and Jeanine Teodorescu, eds., *Local History and Transnational Memory in the Romanian Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 70; Florence Heyman, "Bottles in the Sea: Letters of Deported Jews in Moghilev (Transnistria): November-December 1941," in idem, p. 82; Gerbel, *Sâmbată se deportează,* pp. 7–11.

76 ANR, MEN-DOPCI 78/1941, p. 90.

Romanianization of Jewish wealth with the newcomers. Economic Romanianization also fostered corruption and theft among bureaucrats and would-be profiteers.

Hoping to survive the war, Czernowitz Jews cooperated with both local and colonizing Romanianizers, as well as with public servants. Their aim was to stay in their city as indispensable workers and thus avoid deportation to Transnistria. In this way some Czernowitz Jews, mostly skilled professionals, well-off, well-connected, or just lucky, managed at great risk and high cost to survive the Holocaust.

The way in which some of the incoming Romanianizers of the Czernowitz economy saw themselves going to Romania's California in order to enrich themselves indicates how fully they had internalized the pattern of settler colonization as spread by popular literature, films, and newspapers.[77] In their rush to acquire wealth at the frontier, most of these colonists were determined to use any means — theft, denunciation, and murder, but also collaboration with the local victimized group (the Jews) — in order to achieve their goals. However, due to the defeat of the Axis, their "adventure" in Romania's California was short-lived and failed to fulfill their initial expectations.

77 For the relation between colonialism and genocide, see the special issue "Colonial Genocide" of *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39:2 (2005), edited by Dirk A. Moses and Dan Stone. For a critical review of the theories connecting colonialism and the Holocaust, see Thomas Kühne, "Colonialism and the Holocaust: Continuities, Causations, and Complexities," *Journal of Genocide Research,* vol. 15, no. 3 (2013), pp. 339–362.