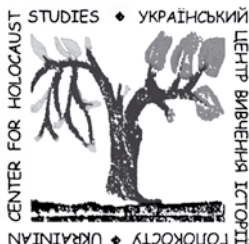


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STUDIES IN UKRAINE AND THE WORLD

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To the blessed memory
of William Rozenzweig
(1923–2008),
native of Chernivtsy,
Holocaust Survivor
and active supporter
of Jewish studies and
Holocaust research, whose
generous contribution made
this publication possible

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Розенцвайга (1923–2008),
який народився у Чернівцях,
пережив Голокост
та активно підтримував
студії з юдаїки
та вивчення Голокосту.
Публікація цього
числа відбулася завдяки
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ВІД РЕДАКЦІЇ

Шановні читачі!

Запропоноване до вашої уваги число часопису «Голокост і сучасність» є тематичним випуском, що містить матеріали Міжнародної наукової конференції «Доля євреїв Буковини і Трансністрії, 1940–1944», яку було проведено 8 жовтня 2007 р. у Чернівецькому національному університеті ім. Ю. Федьковича за підтримки Меморіального музею Голокосту США (Вашингтон, округ Колумбія, США) та Національного центру досліджень Голокосту в Румунії ім. Елі Візеля (Бухарест, Румунія). Конференція зібрала в Чернівцях провідних спеціалістів з історії Голокосту з метою обговорювання результатів сучасних досліджень з тем історії єврейської громади Буковини у передвоєнні роки та «остаточного розв’язання єврейського питання» в цьому регіоні під час Другої світової війни. Конференція стала продовженням серії присвячених історії Голокосту в Румунії наукових заходів, організованих у 2005–2006 рр. Меморіальним музеєм Голокосту в Республіці Молдова та у США.

* * *

Часопис «Голокост і сучасність» надає місце для публікації дослідникам з України та інших країн, які спеціалізуються на вивченні історії Голокосту та інших геноцидів. Виходить двічі на рік. Мова видання – українська і російська.

Часопис має на меті:

- сприяти поглибленому висвітленню різних аспектів Голокосту на українських землях; виявленню спільного та особливого в історії Голокосту на окупованій нацистами території України порівняно з іншими регіонами колишнього СРСР, Східної та Західної Європи; дослідженню специфічних рис Голокосту в різних регіонах окупованої України;

- стимулювати до використання раніше не введених до наукового обігу джерел, що зберігаються як в українських, так і в закордонних архівах, а також залучення джерел іншого характеру (свідчень, спогадів тощо);
- заохочувати використання полідисциплінарних підходів та участь у дослідницькому процесі фахівців у галузі соціології, політології, філософії та представників інших гуманітарних наук для створення комплексної та багатогранної картини історії Голокосту;
- здійснювати як реконструкції історичної послідовності подій, так і спроби інтерпретації причин та передумов Катастрофи європейського єврейства; проводити порівняльний аналіз конкретно-історичних і цивілізаційних аспектів Голокосту та інших геноцидів, місця й ролі єврейського фактора в культурно-історичних процесах в Європі, що передували Голокосту чи сталися після нього.

Матеріали, структура та рубрикація журналу

Матеріали, що приймаються до друку, мають відповідати вимогам до професійних видань, які містяться у постанові президії Вищої атестаційної комісії України № 7-0 5/1 від 15.01.2003 (див. www.vak.org.ua).

Часопис складається з таких розділів:

- **Дослідження.** Дослідницькі статті, підготовлені фахівцями в галузі історії, політології, соціології, філософії, психології та інших дисциплін, що детально розкривають заявлену авторами проблематику й висвітлюють різні аспекти Голокосту.
- **Нотатки і роздуми.** Короткі дослідження, що мають на меті постановку науково-дослідницької проблеми та аналіз шляхів її подальшої розробки.
- **Документальні джерела.** Тексти раніше не опублікованих джерел із різних архівів, а також інші матеріали (свідчення, спогади тощо), які мають джерелознавчу цінність, з тематики часопису. Документи, що публікуються, мають супроводжуватися коментарями публікатора.
- **Рецензії.** Рецензії на нещодавно опубліковані книги з тематики часопису. За необхідності передбачається також короткий розділ «Зауваження до рецензії» з боку авторів рецензованих робіт.
- **Полеміка.** Дискусії дослідників стосовно опублікованих у попередніх числах часопису матеріалів.
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- **Хроніка.** Заходи академічного характеру (наукові конференції тощо), які відбулися останнім часом як в Україні, так і за її межами.

Підготовка матеріалів до публікації та розповсюдження часопису

Первинний відбір матеріалів для публікації та їх редагування здійснюються редакційною колегією у співпраці з міжнародною редакційною радою.

Визначення тематичних пріоритетів та затвердження матеріалів до друку здійснюються Українським центром вивчення історії Голокосту у співпраці з міжнародною редакційною радою та редакційною колегією часопису.

Дослідження, що пройшли первинний відбір, направляються для анонімного рецензування спеціалістам із теми; з огляду на їх зауваження автор доробляє текст, після чого матеріал проходить наукове та літературне редагування.

Весь наклад видання надходить у науково-дослідні, освітні та культурно-просвітницькі установи, бібліотеки, котрі висловили зацікавленість в отриманні часопису. Електронна версія видання (в PDF-форматі) доступна на веб-сайті Українського центру вивчення історії Голокосту: www.holocaust.kiev.ua

Dear Reader,

This volume of the «Holocaust and Modernity» journal is a thematic issue containing the proceedings of the scholarly conference «The fate of the Jews from Bukovina and Transnistria, 1940–44» which took place on October 8, 2007 at the Yu. Fedkovich Chernivtsy National University with the support of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC, USA) and the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (Bucharest, Romania). Well-known experts on the history of Holocaust in Ukraine and Romania gathered in Chernivtsy to discuss the present-day state of research in the fields of the history of the Jewish community of Bukovina and the «Final Solution of the Jewish Question» during World War II. This conference was a part of the series of academic events organized by the USHMM in the Republic of Moldova and the United States in 2005–2006 dedicated to the history of the Holocaust in Romania.

* * *

“Holocaust and Modernity” journal is conceived as an open academic forum that promotes scholarly discussion on the implications of the Holocaust, genocide, and other instances of mass violence.

The journal is published twice a year in Ukrainian and Russian with summaries in English.

The journal's agenda is:

- to stimulate in-depth analysis of various aspects of the Holocaust on Ukrainian territory; to compare and contrast the experience of the Holocaust in Ukraine to that in other regions of the former USSR, Eastern Europe and Western Europe; to examine specific features of the Holocaust in various localities of Ukraine;
- to disseminate and advance research based on previously unavailable or little-known sources stored in Ukrainian and foreign archival repositories as well as non-conventional sources such as testimonies, memoirs, and diaries;
- to promote a multidisciplinary approach and to encourage the participation of experts in the fields of sociology, political science, psychology, and the humanities to contribute to discussion and research;
- to foster comparative and conceptual analysis of various aspects of the Holocaust and other genocides, particularly in the theory and history of nationalism and anti-Semitism, and of the role and place of the "Jewish question" in European culture and history preceding and following the Holocaust.

Organization

The journal includes the following sections:

- Research articles exploring various aspects of the Holocaust;
- Research notes discussing approaches to narrowly defined specific questions;
- Documentary sources not previously published before;
- Reviews of recently published books;
- Polemics debating the materials published in previous issues;
- Bibliography of recent works on the Holocaust, with the special emphasis on Ukraine;
- Announcements of recent and upcoming academic events in Ukraine and abroad.

Management and distribution

Publication policy is established by the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies in cooperation with an International Advisory Board and the Executive Editorial Board. Acceptance and editing carried out by the Executive Editorial Board in cooperation with the International Advisory Board.

Articles are peer-reviewed by academic experts in the field; after peer-review author may be asked for revisions.

Copies of the journal are distributed through the network of educational and research institutions and public libraries. Its electronic version in PDF-format is downloadable from the web-site of the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies at www.holocaust.kiev.ua

FAINA VYNOKUROVA

THE FATE OF BUKOVINIAN JEWS IN THE GHETTOS AND CAMPS OF TRANSNISTRIA, 1941–1944: A REVIEW OF THE SOURCE DOCUMENTS AT THE VINNYTSA OBLAST STATE ARCHIVE

The first Jewish deportees from Bukovina began arriving in the Vinnytsa region as early as the summer of 1941. The documents from collection R-1683 (Extraordinary State Commission on investigation of the crimes committed by the German-Fascist invaders) are essential for investigating the fate of this Jewish population under Nazi occupation. In one such document, an investigation commission claimed that these first deportees were killed in a mass execution on July 28, 1941, near the town Yaruga. As recorded by the Romanian occupation authorities, the deportees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina had been “transported” from Mogyliv-Podilsk to Yampil. In the evening, when most of the deportees had already arrived, a unit of SS-men on trucks entered Yaruga. They assembled over a thousand deportees in different places along the road leading out of town, shooting them on the spot and burying them in ditches along the road. Children were thrown to the ditches alive.¹ According to a September 2, 1941 Einsatzgruppe D report, the Romanians transported about 35,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina to the Vinnytsa area. On 29 July, 1941, the 11th Army ordered Sonderkommando 10b and Einsatzkommando 12,

¹ State Archives of Vinnytsa oblast’ (*hereafter* DAVO), f. R-1683, op. 1, spr. 10, ark. 319.

under the command of Einsatzgruppe D, to evacuate during the first half of August 27,000 Jews to Bessarabia over the crossings at Mogyliv-Podilsk and Yampil. Approximately 1,265 of the deportees were executed, mostly those who could not keep up on the trek from Mogyliv-Podilsk to Yampil. Because the Romanians sought by all means to prevent the Jews from crossing into their territory at the river at Mogyliv-Podilsk, the Germans had to force the Jews to the Yampil crossing.²

The first wave of deportations from Bukovina to Transnistria lasted until late autumn 1941. Oral history accounts (collections R-5333, R-6022) testify that on the way, the Jews were robbed and humiliated by the Romanians, and the sick and the weary were killed. Exhaustion, starvation, cold, and rain all aided the murderers in military uniforms. The deportees were forced to cover long distances on foot, often carrying children and the elderly. Psychological conditions were also dire. Chernivtsi resident Martin Feller was born into the family of a Chernivtsi University mathematics professor. When Bukovina was annexed by the USSR, his father, like many other members of intelligentsia, was fired as a class enemy. "You can imagine what we expected from that Obodivka," said Martin Feller. His worst fears came true: his father died of typhus in Obodivka ghetto.³ An eight-year-old girl named Madeleine Cain, a French citizen caught by the events of 1940 with her grandmother's family in Bukovina, was amongst the deportees. She was amazed by the seeming lack of feelings and emotion displayed by people on that horrible trek. When she grew older, she realized that this was the only way for the poor refugees to protect themselves from the continuous sufferings of their harsh fate. The only ones who maintained "humanity and love," in Ms. Cain's view, were the children.

The crossing at the Dniester was terrible. Many Jews were simply thrown into the water to drown. During the crossing all the documents of the deportees were destroyed: the disenfranchised humans were transformed into nearly anonymous, half-real beings against whom any crime could be perpetrated.

It was naturally beyond the ability of most to cope with such conditions. Herman Moldover, a former inmate of the Bershad camp, remembered how

² Ibid., f. R-2966, op. 2, spr. 31.

³ Ibid., f. R-5333, op. 5, spr. 59, ark. 1–27.

during a night stop on the trip from Floresta station to Bershad, a rabbi from Chernivtsi snuck into a cowshed to cut his veins open. This suicide attempt was not only an act of despair, but even more a protest against the humiliation, dehumanization, and violence suffered by his people.

The number of deportees to Vinnytsa oblast reached 97,000–98,000 people. Of these, 28,391 were deported from the Chernivtsi ghetto alone in October–November 1941. In total, 74,000 people were resettled from Bukovina to Transnistria (most of them became inmates of Vinnytsa oblast ghettos).

In all, there were 112 ghettos, colonies, and settlements for deported and local Jewish populations in Vinnytsa oblast. By district, these included sixty-seven in Mogyliv; twenty-one in Tulchyn; ten in Yampil; and twenty-four in Bershad volost in the Balta district. In June 1942, 4,094 Jews were deported from the Chernivtsi and Bukovina districts; in September, another thousand were deported. Some 500 of them were imprisoned as politically suspect in the Vapnyarka prison-camp, while the remainder, on Gendarmerie Chief General Pupor's orders, were sent across the Southern Bug into the German zone, where they were interned in a Jewish labor camp at a granite quarry in the proximity of the village Kolo-Mykhailivka, near Hitler's notorious "Wehrwolf" headquarters. In the Kolo-Mykhailivka camp, as in other camps along the IV Berlin highway, the inmates' living conditions were horrendous. Many were quartered for an extended period under the open air in a field or forest, on a plot surrounded with barbed wire. Groups of 200–300 were forced to live pigsties, cowsheds, and stalls without windows, doors, or floor. Starvation, cold, overcrowding, and a lack of even the most primitive sanitary conditions caused large-scale epidemics of spotted and typhoid fever and of dysentery, resulting in a soaring mortality rate: by November 1943 only 700 inmates were still alive out of the initial 5,000. Those who managed to evade disease were murdered by the Nazis. December 16, 1942 was the last day for young Chernivtsi poetess Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, who died of typhus in Kolo-Mykhailivka camp.

Internment in the ghettos and camps of the Romanian zone was also intolerably harsh. Recently, it has become increasingly possible to find information on and reconstruct a general picture of the living

conditions for such ghettos as Bershad, Bratslav, Zhmerinka, Mogyliv-Podilsk, Murafa, Obodivka, Pecherske, Rogyznianske, Tulchyn, Shargorod, and Shpykyv. For example, the Mogyliv Prefecture archival fund has a number of alphabetically-organized inventory lists that enumerate the money and valuables confiscated from the Jews—evidence of the robbery of the Jewish population. Correspondence among the authorities regarding food supplies for the Jewish camps reveals that nourishment was scarce and limited. The dreadful conditions of the Vapnyarka prison-camp are confirmed in correspondence between the camp's commandant with the Jugustru (Yampil) district prefect: the deportees arrived without even the most basic necessities, since they had been given no time to prepare for the trip and were forbidden to take any hand luggage. They were locked up in buildings without windows; many became ill and were dying. The guards' reports describe the Jews' starvation, and that some were seen eating grass.⁴

The files of regional administrations (Kryzhopil, Chernivtsi, Stanyslav, Yampil, Mogyliv-Podilsk, Bershad, Krasnyansk, Shpykyv, etc.) contain documents revealing various economic, social, and psychological measures against Jews. Examples include: Jewish children were barred from attending schools; all Jews were forbidden to walk the central streets of cities and towns; a national tax was levied on the residents of ghettos, both the permanent residents and the temporary (i.e., deportees) alike; in ghetto shops it was forbidden to sell goods brought from Romania; non-Jews were not allowed to buy jewelry from Jews, use the services of Jewish money-lenders, or employ Jews as officials of any kind. The documents also mention Jewish forced labor, which was used for primarily for the toughest and dirtiest jobs: repairing roads, digging quarries, draining peat swamps, and so on. In the beginning, an absolute majority of the Bukovinian Jews got by through selling their last possessions to Ukrainian peasants.

Starvation and disease took the lives of hundreds of thousands of local and deported Jews. The latter were more prone to epidemics, especially in 1941–1942. In the Bershad ghetto-camp over 13,000 died of starvation or typhus; in Obodivka, 11,000; in Pechera, 9,450; in Shargorod, 8,000; and in Mogyliv-Podilsk, 6000.

⁴ Ibid., f. R-2988, op. 3, spr. 28, ark. 153; spr. 31, ark. 132.

The Pechera ghetto-camp on the border of the two occupation zones gained the most notoriety. Imprisoned there were many Jews from Bukovina, as well as from Mogyliv-Podilsk, Rogizna, Tulchyn, Bratslav, Ladyzhyn, and Vapnyarka. Of the more than 10,000 people who passed through the camp—nicknamed “the death loop” by the inmates—only 400 survived to liberation.⁵

During 1945–1950, the funds of three district prefecture administrations, twenty-six city and regional prefecture administrations, and seventeen village primaria administrations were transferred from the State Archive of Odessa Oblast to the State Archive of Vinnytsa Oblast. They were declassified in 1993–1994. Taken together, these funds comprise the main source base for research into the fate of the Jews from Bukovina deported to the Vinnytsa environs in 1941–1942. Comparative analysis of the constituent items and content of the mentioned documental holdings suggests that the Romanian occupation authorities maintained considerable thematic groupings of documents concerning financial-economic and social issues. Namely, there are groupings regarding the use of Jewish forced labor, the organization of private businesses, manifestations of communal and traditional life, and the like. The presence of such sources reflects the Romanian occupational authorities’ desire to implement the “colonization” of the annexed territories. In reality, the Transnistria administration’s repressive policies toward Jews were not centered on mass executions, but rather envisioned the gradual dying out of the Jews by forcing them to live in nearly unlivable conditions. At the same time, it made some allowance for the fact that, as long as they were alive, the Jews would have to perform some functions to somehow make a living. For this reason, the documents mention workshops, work teams, and certain social structures still operating in the ghettos.

Relations between local Transnistrian Jews and the arriving Jewish deportees were not always amiable. They had different political and religious views, prewar social status and property holdings, and levels of education. The Romanian authorities gave “preferential” treatment to the deportees, since the latter knew Romanian and often German, and thus had better communication with the authorities; sometimes they even had some jewelry left for bribes. Bukovinian Jews preserved as best they could their

⁵ Ibid., f. P-136, op. 13, spr. 96, ark. 6–8; f. R-4422, op. 1, spr. 37, ark. 14.

communal life, which proved invaluable in helping to resist and increasing the chances for survival. The preserved tradition unveiled the hidden power of traditional Jewish life. As a rule, community leaders in the ghettos and “colonies” were appointed from the educated deportees; sometimes the local Jews and the deported Jews lived in two separate communities. For example, in Zhmerinka ghetto the appointed head of ghetto was a Bukovinian Jew, Jur. D. Adolf Gershman, and the community of local Jews was represented in the administration by Joseph Yukelis and a certain Trakhtenberg; in the Mogyliv-Podilsk ghetto the community of Jewish deportees was headed by two Bukovinians, the attorney Danylov and the engineer Siegfried Egendorf. A lawyer from Chernivtsi, Meer Teich, led the community of deportees in Shargorod. In the Jewish community administration of the Bershad ghetto, M. Farfel, M. Perelmutter, M. Shrenzel, Dr. [?] Fleishman represented 20,000 deported Jews. Despite tensions between local and deported Jews concerning social, economic, political, and religious issues, the Bukovinian Jews managed to teach the local Jews certain things: organization of everyday routine, observance and preservation of religious traditions, and even some craftsman’s skills.

Ultimately, the community was necessary for survival. A considerable part of the documents concern the community’s efforts at solving the most urgent problem in the ghettos: fighting the epidemics of typhus, tuberculosis, and dysentery. Thanks to the skills of medics—among them many from Bukovina, such as Isaac Blank, Vatelman, and Gleiser—and aid from “Joint” as well as the Romanian Jewish Center in Bucharest from May 1942 to December 1943, hospitals and pharmacies were opened in the Zhmerinka, Bershad, Shargorod, and Mogyliv-Podilsk ghettos, among others. A map of the Mogyliv district is remarkable for its level of detail: a Star of David is used to mark the location of each ghetto and labor camp, and other symbols indicate the condition of roads and whether a ghetto had medical facilities or a functioning water supply system.⁶

Thanks to community organizing, the ghettos of Zhmerinka and Bershad had a kindergarten and a school; the ghettos of Bershad, Dzhuryn, Mogyliv-Podilsk, Murafa, Sokolivka, Tyrov, and Shargorod had orphanages. In the winter of 1943–1944 Jewish orphan children (only the deportees,

⁶ Ibid., f. R-2966, op. 2, spr. 691, ark. 1.

not locals) were granted the possibility to evacuate to Romania and from there to Palestine.⁷

The documents demonstrate that if the community leaders were decent and conscious of their duties, it was possible to help at least some of the Jews to survive the horrendous conditions. The Mogyliv Jewish Community Committee attempted to secure the survival of the 60,000 Jews who had been deported to the district. They created a nursing home with 250 beds, two general hospitals, an infectious diseases hospital with 300 beds, and a public canteen serving up to 500 people daily, along with functioning public works, general statistics bureaus, and a post office. A major role in securing the relatively hospitable living conditions in the Mogyliv-Podilsk ghetto was played by Siegfried Egendorf, the head of the foundry “Turnatoria”: he struggled to employ as many people as possible (mostly former residents of Bukovina) and organized correspondence with their families. Similar authority was exercised by Meer Teich in the Shargorod ghetto and Mihael Shrenzel in the Bershad ghetto.

Jewish communal life in the ghettos was deeply connected to traditional religious life. The archival sources document the existence of synagogues in Krasne in the Tyvrov district, Yampil, Dzygivka, Zhmerinka, and Chernivtsi.⁸ Religious life in the ghettos profoundly influenced those who survived the war as teenagers or children; they mention it as the foundation for understanding and preserving *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness). It must be stated that the occupation authorities—especially the Germans—were extremely hostile towards any manifestation of Jewish religion, especially synagogues, holy books, and devotional objects. Thus, maintaining religious practices, holidays, and a Jewish national identity were forms of Jewish resistance to the Nazis.

A former inmate of Tomashpil ghetto, Y. Tsapovskiy, testifies: “Life in the ghetto caused many Jews to return to Judaism. Although not all Jews had been religious before the war, now every Jew prayed daily. By that time our rabbi had passed away, and there remained only a single shochet who knew

⁷ Ibid., f. R-6022, op. 1, spr. 4, ark. 17–19; spr. 27, ark. 28; Vidomchyi arkhiv Vinnyts’koho oblasnoho upravlinnia osvity, opys dovidskovoho kharakteru, spr. 2712, ark. 31, 36, 47, 83, 85, 102, 117, 135.

⁸ DAVO, f. R-2700, op. 7, spr. 91, ark. 64–65; spr. 182, ark. 18, 40 zv., 66.

all the prayers. He gathered men for minyan at his place (the synagogue was destroyed by the Germans immediately after they arrived in the town). We kept Sabbath and all the holidays.”

Bukovinian Jews also are known to have participated in anti-Nazi activities. For example, the Vapnyarka political prison inmates staged a “starvation” strike, winning better food rations, especially for the sick and the children. Doctors Meer Teich (Shargorod) and Mihael Shrenzel (Bershad) were connected to the underground. Dr. Teich helped families whose members were on the front, in partisan units, or in the underground, and supplied members of the underground with identity cards permitting free movement around the district. Testimonies recall how Dr. Shrenzel, from Chernivtsi in Bukovina, cured a 13-year-old boy, Danylko, who had been brutally punished by the Romanian commandant for leaving the ghetto. The commandant had bound the boy’s hands with a chain, fastened the chain to the rear wheel of a motorcycle, and dragged the boy along the ground. For over two months Danya remained in critical condition, but he survived due to the efforts of Dr. Shrenzel. Shrenzel also arranged the escape of Yakiv Talis, a captured member of the underground. Shrenzel was arrested by the gendarmes and tortured for information about Yakiv; Shrenzel refused to give his comrade away, and was murdered.⁹ Additionally, the sources document the efforts of the Chechelnyk and Olgopil ghetto community leaders—both Jews from Bukovina—to organize financial assistance for the anti-Nazi Soviet underground and the partisans.

At the same time, some Jews did collaborate with the German and Romanian occupation authorities. The fact of this collaboration is corroborated by the documents of archive collection R-6023 “Filtration, archive-investigation and supervision cases, captured documents, transferred from the departmental archive of the oblast SBU department.” The files of the Soviet investigation of Nazi collaborators contain, on the one hand, information on Jewish resistance fighters and evidence of violence against Jews, and on the other hand, information on collaborators among Jews from Bukovina. In the Pechora camp, the starosta (elder) Motl Zimmerman was responsible for much violence perpetrated against Jews; in Bershad many

⁹ DAVO, f. R-6022, op. 1, spr. 27, ark. 37–51; *Liudi ostaiutsia liud'mi: Svidetel'stva uznikov fashistskikh lagerei-getto* (Chernivtsi: 1996), 33, 104.

local and Bukovinian Jews suffered at the hands of the volunteer policemen Mark Gershkovich, Bernard Landweg, and Joseph Frenkel.¹⁰

After the Soviets reoccupied the territory, NKVD units arrested Adolf Gershman and Meer Teich on accusations of collaboration with the Nazis. Gershman was executed while Teich was pardoned thanks to the protection of the Jewish community. The personality of Dr. Teich is unveiled in another unique document—his letter to Stalin, in which he pleads for the repatriation of his countrymen and compensation for their losses. Indeed, the homecoming of Bukovinian Jews caused a great deal of trouble. A decree by the Bureau of Vinnytsa Oblast Committee CP(b)U, “On living conditions for the Jewish population re-settled from Northern Bukovina to districts of Vinnytsa oblast which suffered from the German-Romanian invaders” (June 15, 1944) demonstrates the Soviet authorities’ ambivalent attitude toward the deportees who had survived the Holocaust in the ghettos and camps of Transnistria: although the authorities seemed interested in returning them to their “birthplaces,” the phrase “provide with means of transport” (which directed local authorities to actively return the deportees) was replaced with “help with means of transport” (placing no obligation on the local authorities). Furthermore, the same document recommends sending them “to Donbass and other industrial centers,” where they would totally forget *Yiddishkeit* and merge into the “unified Soviet people.”

Out of 74,000 Bukovinian Jews, 54,000 perished in Transnistria. According to the data of the Extraordinary Commission and the Steinberg Yiddish Cultural Society in Chernivtsi, only about 9,000 of the 1941–1942 deportees who survived returned to Northern Bukovina.

*Translated from Ukrainian
by Vitalii Bobrov*

¹⁰ DAVO, f. R-6023, op. 4, spr. 595; 4949; 2806.

FLORENCE HEYMANN

ASPECTS OF JEWISH LIFE IN BUKOVINA BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

Bukovina and Transnistria, the two provinces that framed the destiny of the Jews of Czernowitz, are vanished places. A non-specialist would have difficulty locating them on a map. Bukovina vanished as a result of the Second World War; disputed by various empires and nations all claiming legitimate ownership, it was cut in two. The northern half, with Czernowitz (today Chernivtsi), is now part of Ukraine, while the southern half, with Suceava, belongs to Romania. Transnistria was created during the war, and likewise vanished at the war's end. The province existed for only two years and seven months (August 1941 to March 1944), but it had the sad privilege to be the destination of the Jews deported from Bukovina and Bessarabia and the cemetery of two-thirds of them.

Before the Shoah, Bukovina represented a crossroads between the “two Europes.” For the Jews, it was a melting pot of the *Ostjuden* (the “Eastern Jews”) and the *Westjuden* (the “Western Jews”). This intermediary position can be explained by social and familial links with Eastern Europe, as well as the profound influence of new ideas brought by German culture. Though the Russian border was quite near and Vienna more than 800 kilometers away, the cultural identity of Bukovina was oriented toward Vienna.

As with many other groups with a fractured history, Bukovina Jews could not escape a sometimes mythical image of their history, as reflected in a 1963 article in *Die Stimme*, the newspaper of Bukovina Israelis:

“If God created a new Flood and sought a new Noah, to whom would He have entrusted the role of preserving the old European traditions? Who would He place in the Ark? A Frenchman, a German, an Englishman? No, they are only partially capable of carrying on the traditions. Obviously, God would choose a Czernowitzer!”

There were two pillars to this mythical past, this lost paradise: the Jewish *shtetl* or village on the one hand, and the Golden Age of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the other. The *shtetl* is viewed today less as an historical socio-cultural reality than as the focus of collective memory. The nostalgia of childhood merges there with that of a world twice lost: first when the family moved to the city, second when this world disappeared completely. The memory receives simultaneously the mark of a “myth of origin” and that of its completion, of its final tragedy. The *shtetl* is often represented as an idealized place of a Jewishness “unified” by community life, food, and language, where one lived in the world of the *halakha* (Jewish Law). It is evoked as if, from deepest antiquity to the distant future, there had been no rupture in the tradition of the Eastern European Jewish world. The reality was different: a space torn by identity questions, economic conflicts, social antagonisms, and religious quarrels. Between the two world wars, it was rare to find a family in Czernowitz whose roots were not in one of these villages. As I often heard: “Obviously, my parents were not from Czernowitz. In a good European Jewish family, two generations were not born in the same place. A ‘real’ Jewish family would not even have two children born in the same place. My parents grew up in various villages of Galicia. It is only after their marriage that they arrived at Czernowitz.”

As the second pillar of collective identity, Austro-Hungarian and German culture remained the principal cultural reference for Czernowitz Jews. The Jews had been among the strongest supporters of the Habsburgs. In *The Homecoming of Jossel Wasserman*, Edgar Hilsenrath wrote: “The Jews were satisfied ... they hung portraits of the Emperor in their living room, painted the tobacconist’s shops in black and yellow, sang the imperial anthem..., prayed for the Emperor...in their bed, before falling asleep..., so that God and the Emperor would guard their sleep.”¹

¹ Edgar Hilsenrath, *Josel Wassermanns Heimkehr* (Munich: R. Piper, 1993). The English translation is mine from the French version, *Le Retour au pays de Jossel Was-*

During the First World War, the city, located on the front line, was thrice occupied and ransacked by Russian troops and weakened by migration towards Vienna. The year 1918 ushered in dramatic change for the region. The earlier consolidation of Central and Eastern Europe nation-states was thought to be a solution for two growing problems: revolutionary sentiment and suppression of ethnic minorities; however, the new states could turn out to be empires just as multiethnic as their predecessors. This was exactly the case in Greater Romania, where only two-thirds of the population was Romanian. The annexed territories, with their large Hungarian, Jewish, German, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romani (“Gypsy”), and Russian minorities, accentuated the non-Romanian character of the nation.²

From 1919, Jews constituted a 48% plurality of the Czernowitz population.³ In spite of their extreme diversity, the Jewish community followed a common framework and rhythm of everyday life. They represented a considerable part of the cultural, professional, social, and economic elite.

With the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German-speaking culture of the province seemed condemned to disappear, especially after a drastic program of Romanianization of administration, public offices, and universities was initiated in 1919.⁴ In 1924, Romanian was made the sole official language. The institutional network of German-speaking culture was destroyed “by the rupture of the umbilical cord with Vienna and by the inversion of the balance of power,” yet German remained the language of privileged communication, at least in the private sphere.⁵

sermann (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), 220. As regards portraits, I can add that to this day, Israel’s Bukovina Jews continue to hang the Habsburg portraits.

² For the statistics, see, for example, Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie, 1919–1938: De l’émancipation à la marginalisation. Collection de la Revue des Études juives* (Paris-Louvain: Peeters, 1996). See also *Recensământul general al populației din 29 decembrie 1930*, vol. 1–10 (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1938–1940).

³ *Recensământul general al populației din 29 decembrie 1930*, *op. cit.*, in Iancu, *op. cit.*, 51.

⁴ For the process of Romanianization, see Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina: Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen Anspruchs Großrumäniens, 1918–1944* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001).

⁵ Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, “Autour du ‘méridien’: Abrégé de la ‘civilisation de Czernowitz’ de Karl Emil Franzos à Paul Celan,” in *Les Littératures de langue allemande en Europe centrale*, ed. Jacques le Rider and Fridrun Rinner (Paris: PUF, 1998), 145.

During the interwar period, the composition of the Jewish population of Czernowitz changed. Many of those who had fled to the West did not return, and in their place arrived Jewish families from Galicia and Bessarabia. This led to an increase in the lower middle class and the proletariat, and to a reduction in the number of German speakers among Jewish community leaders. Yet the situation in Czernowitz was often paradoxical. For example, German was used by the Jewish National Council of Bukovina in its lengthy discussions regarding the language of instruction in the Community schools. The choice was between Hebrew, supported by the Zionists, and Yiddish, preferred by the social democrats. Yiddish had become relatively popular by that time—Hebrew by comparison seemed artificial.⁶

The topography of the city reflected its social diversity. The poorer sections of the population and the lower-middle classes resided in the northeast, near the railway station, in the so-called Jewish district. There, few people spoke *Hochdeutsch*; most spoke Yiddish or *Bukowinerisch* (the local German dialect, *Bukowiner Deutsch*). These languages continued to be spoken after the arrival of the Romanians. Influenced by the new official language, the local dialects were enriched by “new original words and truculent expressions,” to which the Romanian and Ukrainian languages contributed some spicy curse words.⁷

Czernowitz is a “place of memory” (“lieu de mémoire”) for Yiddish. From August 31 to September 3, 1908, a First world conference on Yiddish was held there, gathering seventy delegates.⁸ The initiator was Nathan Birnbaum.⁹ In Czernowitz, each ethnic group had its own community center building, which symbolized each group’s existence. The Jews had just completed their own building and the conference was set to take place there; however, the leaders of the *Kultusrat* were part of the conservative establishment, and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rose Ausländer, “Erinnerungen an eine Stadt,” *Neue Literatur*, 39, no. 6 (1986): 48–50; Emmanuel Turczynski, “Longue durée: Kultur und Lebensform,” unpublished paper delivered at the international conference “Czernowitz as Paradigm: Cultural Pluralism and the Nationalities Question,” Tel Aviv University, November, 21–23, 1999, p. 10.

⁸ See <http://czernowitz.org/> for details on the Yiddish Conference.

⁹ On Nathan Birnbaum, see, for example, Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 381 *et seq.*; and Joshua A. Fishman, *Ideology, Society and Language: The Odyssey of Nathan Birnbaum* (Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma, 1987).

following the opening session they decided that they were dealing with a crowd of “revolutionists speaking in jargon.” They found a pretext to curtail the debates by declaring the large hall of the *Jüdisches Haus* unfinished. Thus, the conference was forced to reconvene at the Ukrainian House, opposite the Armenian Church, and in the concert hall of the *Musikverein*.¹⁰

Despite the tumultuous debates, rambling speeches, and ineffective decisions, a final decision was passed: Yiddish would be recognized not as *the* national language of the Jewish people but as *one* of its languages. The authorities were magnanimous in allowing Hebrew—everyone could speak according to his own personal convictions!¹¹

Between the two World Wars, Yiddish cultural life reached its peak. Schools, publishers, libraries, theatrical companies, and religious organizations developed a network encompassing the great centers of Yiddish Eastern Europe.¹² Itzik Manger, Abraham Goldfaden, and Eliezer Steinberg were, among others, at the core of this intense Yiddish cultural life.¹³

The well-to-do Jewish families lived in the southern part of the town in a residential district near the *Volksgarten*, known for its impressive *fin-de-siècle* villas. The top civil servants of the Romanian administration, the well-established German families, and a large number of Jewish families, many of which employed French or English nannies, lived there.¹⁴ In this part of the city the Jews spoke *Hochdeutsch*. The mothers, in particular, jealously guarded the German language through overcorrection.¹⁵ The German language represented for the Jews a *Vaterland*, or rather a *Mutterland*, to employ the words of Rose Ausländer.¹⁶ Ultimately, if there was one language

¹⁰ Hermann Sternberg, “Zur Geschichte der Juden in Czernowitz,” in *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina*, vol. 2, ed. Hugo Gold (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1958), 34 *et seq.*, 46.

¹¹ For example, see Florence Heymann, *Le Crépuscule des lieux* (Paris: Stock, 2003), 177–183.

¹² Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, “Autour du ‘méridien,’” 147.

¹³ David Schaary, “Jewish Culture in Multinational Bukowina between the World Wars,” *Shvut*, 16: 288–289.

¹⁴ Florence Heymann, *Le Crépuscule des lieux*, 82–83.

¹⁵ It is true, in particular, for Paul Celan’s and Rose Ausländer’s mothers.

¹⁶ See the poem “Mutterland,” for example in Cilly Helfrich, “*Es ist ein Aschensommer in der Welt*”: Rose Ausländer. *Biographie* (Berlin: Quadriga Verlag, 1995), 23.

that embodies the Jewish legacy in Czernowitz, and one language that, according to Nelly Sachs in her address to Paul Celan, best reflected the spirit of that place “blessed by Bach and by Hölderlin, blessed by the has-sidim,” it was of course neither Romanian, nor Polish, nor Ukrainian, nor, in my opinion, Hebrew or Yiddish. It is the German language that remains the language of connection, of recognition, and of nostalgia—even if, far from there, the German language has been burnt by the Shoah, even if among Jews today it is an orphan and broken language that “still projects the unconsumed traces of a shade.”¹⁷

Within the various districts we find the coexistence of divergent religious currents in the community as well. On one side there were *hassidim* from Sadagura, Bojan, or Wiznitz, on the other side the assimilated Vienna Germans. Of course, there were many nuances between these two extremes. An analysis of Czernowitz using the model of a multiethnic city of *Mitteuropa* shows that the town was very different from Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Lemberg, or Cracow. Here, we cannot speak of Robert Wistrich’s phenomenon of “structural assimilation,” where the minority group combines with the majority, resulting in the consequent disappearance of its distinct culture and its ethnicity. Jewish life in Czernowitz had no model other than itself and its mirroring of the German culture. The main divide within the group ran between the semi-proletarian and the lower-middle classes of the underprivileged districts of the city and the Germanized middle class. The first spoke Yiddish and jealously preserved traditional Jewish culture and Talmudic heritage. The latter developed a new secular tradition with its own rites and its myths, which would eventually find its place beside religious traditionalism as present in various social, cultural, and political movements.

Politically the Jews were less receptive to the old liberalism, which was unable to contend with the nationalisms of the other ethnic groups. Thus, they turned to Zionism and social democracy. The alliances between Zionists and territorialists, laic and religious, form perhaps one of the most characteristic features of the region: in contrast to other Jewish communities of Eastern Europe or France (where the Consistory was opposed to Zionism until the beginning of the 1930s), in Bukovina the religious

¹⁷ Andrea Zanzotto, “Écrire dans la langue de l’ennemi,” *Le Monde*, July 31, 1992, p. 17.

authorities were cooperating with the Zionists as early as the end of the First World War.¹⁸

Between the two World Wars, some of the most important leaders of the Zionist movement visited the city, including Nahum Sokolov, Nahum Goldmann, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, and Chaïm Weizmann. In contrast to the Regat (Old Romanian Kingdom) or Bessarabia, Zionism in Bukovina was less concerned with *aliyah* to Palestine or preparations for agricultural work than with national politics and support for and improvement of the status of Jews in their homeland. The difference in priorities corresponded to the legal and social disparities between the Old Kingdom and those of Bukovina. The status of the Jews in the Old Kingdom was so precarious that emigration represented the only possible solution. For the Bukovinians, however, incorporation into Greater Romania was seen as a regression, so hope remained that the social and cultural status of the pre-war period might be restored through a concerted effort.¹⁹

Jewish political parties in Bukovina expressed their sense of identity within a civil framework, in which Jews could fulfill their civic obligations without forsaking their ethnic identity. This would have been unthinkable in Berlin or Paris and could occur only in the new states built on multiethnic former territories of the Russian or Austro-Hungarian Empires. The common program that these parties presented had three main objectives: consolidation of the emancipation and civic equality of Jews, development of their culture and education, and their recognition as a national minority, with communal autonomy and elected representatives in all state institutions.

The third point was the most ambitious, and in the 1920s it was almost realized. The rise of Romanian nationalism and antisemitism in the following decade—in tandem with Hitler's rise to power—shattered those dreams (and later, lives).

From 1922 on, antisemitism was a primary tenet of fascist and other far-right organizations. In 1926, the murder of David Fallik, a young Jewish law

¹⁸ On the "Jewish politics" in Bukovina, see David Schaary, "Une communauté juive dans un environnement hostile: La 'politique juive' entre les deux guerres mondiales," unpublished paper, International Conference "Les Juifs en Roumanie aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles," September 25–27, 2000, Montpellier, Université Paul-Valéry.

¹⁹ On the status of the Jews in Romania between the two World Wars, see Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie*.

student, further increased tensions.²⁰ In 1927, Corneliu Codreanu founded the Legion of the Archangel Michael, which became the Iron Guard in 1930. Its program was a mixture of crusading Christianity, intransigent nationalism, and virulent antisemitism. The economic crisis of 1929 highlighted the weakness of the existing economic structures and eliminated the last chances for democracy. In 1938, Octavian Goga's fascist National Christian Party came to power. The Goga-Cuza government legislated an antisemitic program very similar to that of the Iron Guard.²¹ A swastika now adorned the facade of the Czernowitz town hall. All the Jewish newspapers of the city were closed down. Speaking Yiddish or Hebrew in the streets became an offence. As in other places, many Czernowitz Jews refused to acknowledge the approaching storm: "As long as we will be able to eat cream at Friedmann, a *Gabelfrühstück* at Gabe, or *Kischke mit Farfel* at Geller, we need not complain." As Zvi Yavetz remarked, "They continued to live like onions, with their heads in the ground."

The Goga government was dissolved after a few months, when King Carol II imposed a dictatorship. Less than one year later, the Second World War broke out. Despite Romania's alignment with the Axis, Hitler dismembered the country. Bukovina was cut in two: Czernowitz and the northern part of the province were ceded to the Soviet Union.

With the arrival of the Soviets, some Ukrainians and Jews, especially those of the younger generation, initially expressed their anti-Romanian feelings and received the Red Army troops in jubilation. The older generation, however, was far from enthusiastic. The economic situation rapidly deteriorated: basic goods were lacking, individual freedom was curtailed, factories and banks were requisitioned. Most schools became Ukrainian or Russian overnight. For the Jews, two Yiddish schools were in operation, directed by commissioners sent from Moscow. The quality of the teachers and the professors was poor: most likely they had not qualified for their positions in Russia, and were sent to Bukovina on administrative exile.

In each district, once a week, an appointed propagandist of the Party gathered in the largest apartment all the inhabitants without exception.

²⁰ On the "Fallik Case", see Florence Heymann, *Le Crépuscule des lieux*, 235–238.

²¹ On nationalism and antisemitism in Romania between the two World Wars, see Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1991).

The oldest member of the listeners, decorated with the title of *starosta*, kept an attendance log. Before a heteroclite assembly composed of janitors and intellectuals seated side by side, the speaker lectured on the well-known topics of Communism. The janitors might have been bored by these homilies, but they were undoubtedly proud of their new equal status with their former social superiors.²²

On June 13, 1941, NKVD units patrolled the city's streets in search of the regime's enemies, arresting 3,800 people—80% of them Jews. They were deported to Siberia in the beginning stages of an operation that the Soviets intended to continue. The German invasion one week later interrupted their plans, at least temporarily.²³

On June 19 in Bucharest, Ion Antonescu, the new Conducator of the Legionary State, had verbally decreed "special orders" to exterminate a portion of the Jewish population of Bessarabia and Bukovina. The operation to euphemistically "clean the ground" had three goals: the extermination of all the Jews of the rural areas, the enclosure in ghettos of the urban Jews, and the arrest of suspected Soviet activists.

In rural and semi-rural areas, some of the local population took advantage of the situation and formed terrorist gangs to murder Jews. In Czernowitz, during the time between the departure of the Soviets and the entry of the Romanians, there was nothing to eat, while the stores and warehouses were plundered: "I saw barefoot women wearing fur coats stolen from luxury shops. In the street where I lived, wine barrels taken from the warehouses rolled from the bottom of the hill," testified a survivor.

On July 5, 1941, Romanian armed groups penetrated the city, plundering and setting fire to the Jewish houses. Some Jews persisted in their refusal to acknowledge the peril they faced. Upon hearing that almost all

²² Letter from J. Truelle to Admiral Darlan, September 5, 1941, in Carol Iancu, *La Shoah en Roumanie. Les Juifs sous le régime d'Antonescu (1940–1944). Documents diplomatiques français inédits* (Montpellier, France: Université Paul-Valéry, 1998), 151.

²³ For the Soviet year in Czernowitz, see Zvi Yavetz, "The Jewish Czernowitz under the Soviets, 1940–1941," *Shvut*, 5 (1977) (in Hebrew); David Schaari, *The Jews of Bukovina between the Two World Wars* (Tel Aviv: The Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2004), 277–281 (in Hebrew); and in this volume, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer.

their co-religionists who had lived in small isolated communities had been massacred by axe, pitchfork, or knife by the peasants, they continued to say: "It is only the work of the Romanians; if the Germans, more civilized, had been there, this could never have happened." The Romanians soon were followed by the first German units. And there begins the story which will be the subject of my colleagues' articles.

To evoke so briefly the destiny of the Jews of Czernowitz between the two World Wars, we have followed the arrow of time. But this period was a fugitive one, a discontinuous succession of moments, marked by courage, fear, improvisation, or chance; thus, it is unsurprising that the memories of *Czernowitzers* remain centered on the "margins of the place." Places may be eternal but the human beings are no longer there. For the Jews of Czernowitz, the place of their childhood or of their adolescence has been lost and despoiled. It is in fact a "no place."

Would it be legitimate to speak of the Jews of Czernowitz as a "people of the place," to paraphrase Mircea Eliade as he spoke about the Romanians during his legionary period? Of course not. In my eyes, however, they are irrevocably "people of the link." Rather than being linked through topography and geography, these people remained connected by history and culture.

MARIANNE HIRSCH, LEO SPITZER

«THE RUSSIAN YEAR»

**Our dilemma can best be exemplified
by a joke circulating at that time:**

“Two trains meet on June 28 in a station between Bucharest and Czernowitz, one going South with refugees from Czernowitz, the other going North with returnees to Czernowitz. Looking out of the windows, across the tracks, two brothers recognize each other. One is on the train going North toward the newly Soviet Northern Bukovina, the other joined ethnic Romanians fleeing south from territories that had been annexed by the Soviets. As the trains pull out of the station in opposite directions, the two brothers simultaneously yell to one other, gesticulating wildly: “Meshigenger!” (“You fool!”)

—Carl Hirsch

The Hitler-Stalin Pact and its Aftermath

The Hitler-Stalin Pact (or the Ribbentrop-Molotov Nonaggression Pact) had profoundly devastating effects on the inhabitants of Cernăuți and the Northern Bukovina. It was this agreement that opened the way at the end of June 1940 for the Soviet takeover from Romania of Cernăuți and the region in which it was located. The ensuing twelve-month period of

Soviet rule entailed radical political, social, and economic transformations and was capped in its concluding weeks by the deportation of thousands into the Soviet expanses—persons who, for social or security reasons, were deemed suspect by the Communist authorities. The majority of these deportees were Jews. Soviet rule here was then abruptly interrupted by the German-Romanian invasion of the Soviet Union and the re-imposition of Romanian authority in this region in late June 1941, accompanied by intense reprisals and a series of massive Romanian deportations of Jews and other “undesirables” to the area between the Dniester and Bug rivers that came to known as Transnistria. In hindsight, the Hitler-Stalin Pact also marked the moment when all hopes of “belonging,” “citizenship,” “permanence,” and “home,” that Cernăuți /Czernowitz Jews might still have held were even more drastically disappointed if not shattered. Within months of its announcement, Jews here realized that they would be marginalized, excluded, displaced, and persecuted equally on either side of this new and ultimately unstable political divide. They truly belonged nowhere.

Much, of course, has been written about the Hitler-Stalin Nonaggression Pact and about the events surrounding it that led to the outbreak of World War Two. But its specific implications for the population of Cernăuți and the Northern Bukovina were not immediately apparent—not even to its German co-signers, as it now seems clear. The Pact, negotiated and signed in Moscow by Hitler’s Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and his Soviet counterpart, V.M. Molotov, was, as George Kennan so aptly observed, “relatively innocuous in itself, although highly sensational as a political gesture.”¹ It declared the mutual renunciation of aggression by the USSR and Germany and affirmed that each would remain neutral in a conflict in which the other was attacked by a third party. Shocking as this was at the time in political terms for Great Britain and France—and for liberal and left-leaning persons throughout the world who had looked to the Soviet Union as a military counterweight to Nazi territorial expansionism during the late 1930s—it was the secret protocol that was attached to the Pact that had the most dire international consequences. Once implemented, this protocol divided Eastern Europe between Germany and the Soviet Union into

¹ George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), 332.

"spheres of influence" and defined zones in which each would take exclusive responsibility "in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement."² The Soviet sphere of influence under this agreement was to include Finland, the Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, the eastern two-fifths of Poland, and the Romanian province of Bessarabia.³ The remainder of Eastern Europe, to the west of the Soviet sphere, was to be Germany's.

The Jews living in Cernăuți and the Northern Bukovina could not immediately imagine the ominous future that the Hitler-Stalin pact heralded for them. Even after Germany's attack on Poland a week after the Pact was signed—which immediately led to the outbreak of World War Two and to the "territorial and political rearrangement" that "permitted" German and Soviet moves into their respective spheres of influence—Bukovina seemed peripheral to the main territorial interests of the leading powers. The neighboring province of Bessarabia, on the other hand, had long been an issue between the Soviet Union and Romania—and it was as an appendage to the resolution of Bessarabia's political status that Northern Bukovina and Cernăuți /Czernowitz were drawn into the fray.

Bessarabia had been part of the Russian Empire for more than a century from 1812 until 1918, until it was annexed as a province of the Kingdom of Romania in the aftermath of the Bolshevik seizure of power and the Paris Peace Conference border rearrangements that had ended World War One. Although initially too weak to contest the annexation effectively, the Soviet Union never recognized Romania's right to Bessarabia and the issue of "ownership" of Bessarabia remained a point of contention between the two countries for more than two decades. Then, at the end of June 1940, while Germany was involved in its Blitzkrieg through the Low Countries and France, the Soviet Union sent an ultimatum to Romania, demanding the immediate restoration of Bessarabia to its control, along with Bukovina—a province that had never belonged to Russia. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov justified the latter, insisting that "Bukovina [was] the last missing part of a 'unified Ukraine'; for this reason, the Soviet government must attach

² Ibid.

³ The secret protocol was modified in September 1939 to include Lithuania in the Soviet sphere. In return, the Germans received a larger portion of Poland. See Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, 332, etc.

importance to solving this question simultaneously with the Bessarabian question.”⁴ While some German pressure on Romania’s behalf forced the Soviets to limit their demands to Bessarabia and *northern* Bukovina, Molotov further justified the takeover, declaring:

The transfer of Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union could constitute in only an insignificant degree ... a means of compensation for the tremendous damage inflicted on the Soviet Union and the population of Bessarabia by twenty-two years of Romanian domination in Bessarabia.⁵

The Soviets demanded that Romania evacuate its military and civilian governmental authorities from these areas within a period of four days beginning June 28, 1940, and that the principal Bessarabian and Bukovinian cities of Kishinev, Cernăuți, and Akkerman be totally free of Romanian forces by the end of the first day. They also requested a Romanian guarantee that, in the process of troop and civilian withdrawal, the railroads, airports, telegraph installations, parks, and other important strategic and industrial installations not be damaged.⁶

Seeking a response to the Soviet ultimatum, the Romanians turned to Berlin for help. The Nazi government, however, advised the Romanian government not to resist the Soviet demands and to bow to Molotov’s ultimatum.⁷

The Romanian Crown Council then reluctantly agreed to withdraw, and began to pull out their military and civilian authorities. By two in the afternoon of June 28, Soviet troops were crossing the Romanian border into Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The ensuing take-over by the Red Army was, as David Dallin later noted,

⁴ Quoted in Nicholas Dima, *Bessarabia and Bukovina: The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982), 27.

⁵ Quoted in David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia’s Foreign Policy, 1939–1942* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 237.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 237–238; Dima, *Bessarabia and Bukovina*, 28.

⁷ Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, 339–340; Dallin, *Soviet Russia’s Foreign Policy*, 238; Dima, *Bessarabia and Bukovina*, 29–30.

executed with unusual speed and unusual methods, considering that these territories had been ceded by agreement and not as a result of war. Airplanes dropped parachutists and small tanks over the territory ceded, as a symbol of Soviet occupation, and these were soon followed by infantry paced by large tanks. Within two days the Soviet forces had reached the western boundaries of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and the occupation was a *fait accompli*.⁸

The Soviet arrival in the Romanian-ruled territories immediately set in motion the massive two-directional shift of population reflected in the joke that Carl Hirsch remembered so well, and that serves as the epigraph for this essay—*into* the Regat (Old Romanian Kingdom), the core area of the Romanian kingdom, and outward, *from* the Regat, to regions taken over by the Soviets. Within a week after June 28, some 200,000 Romanian refugees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina crossed the borders into Romania. Alternatively, masses of Romanian citizens—perhaps more than 100,000, including many Jews, Communist sympathizers and officials, and persons with family links in Bessarabia or Northern Bukovina—moved to the Soviet occupied territories. In addition, some 80,000 *Volksdeutsche*—mainly long-term German rural settlers—were evacuated from Bessarabia, and some 30,000 from Northern Bukovina.⁹

In their hasty retreat from Bukovina and Bessarabia into the Regat, Romanian military forces took with them as much equipment and moveable property as possible. But some troops and officers, angered and embittered by what agitators presented to them as a great national humiliation, sought vengeance by violently attacking the civilian population—especially Jews—in towns and villages through which they were retreating. Looking for scapegoats and stirred up by antisemitic hatemongers who accused local Jews of assaulting retreating Romanians and of facilitating and supporting the Soviets in their takeover, soldiers, aided by local peasants, plundered homes and property and beat, raped, and killed Jewish inhabitants.

⁸ Associated Press cable from Bucharest, June 30, 1940, paraphrased in Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy*, 238.

⁹ Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy*, 239; *New York Times*, June 30 and July 1, 1940.

More than at any previous moment in history, Jews in Northern Bukovina found themselves in a particularly precarious position as a consequence of all these events. Even though the Jewish population had suffered from Romanian antisemitism and initially had welcomed the Soviet takeover as a possible salvation, and although the underground communist movements counted many Jews among their members, thousands of Jews would be stripped of their material possessions and persecuted by the Soviet authorities as “capitalist enemies of the State” in the course of the ensuing “Russian Year.” And yet, at the same time, a segment of the Romanian public—especially those with civilian or military ties to Bukovina, Bessarabia, and their urban capitals—also viewed Jews living there as potential, if not active, “communist enemies of the State,” culpable for facilitating and sustaining a regime that had so ignominiously stripped Romania of its territory and national glory.

Annexation

The events of June 28, 1940 required a split-second decision by Cernăuți Jews, the choice between two “spheres of influence”—between fascism and communism, Antonescu/Hitler or Stalin. For leftists and communist sympathizers, the choice was obvious. For others, it was more difficult to make a quick choice, and the decision they ultimately made became more difficult to understand and to explain in retrospect. “It will always be a mystery to me why I preferred to stay in Cernăuți instead of fleeing to Bucharest,” writes Manfred Reifer, a Jewish politician who as a member of several Zionist organizations and as a Jewish deputy in the Romanian parliament, knew he would be targeted by the Soviet authorities. “Was it the law of lethargy, or the hope that one would be able to choose later, or the fear of the Iron Guard’s rule in Romania? May be it was the curiosity to experience a socialist state that led me to remain in my native city? I understand it as little today as I did then.”¹⁰

For Carl Hirsch, who had been working on a railway engineering project in southern Romania at the time, these days in June 1940 were among the most significant in his youth:

¹⁰ Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, ed., *Jüdisches Städtebild Czernowitz*, (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp, 1998), 243.

I was in a kind of confusion. I had left all my things behind in Silistra [on the Black Sea coast] except my documents (which I had taken along in a briefcase), I had lost contact with my brother, but I went to the Bucharest Railway Station and took the train to Czernowitz.... In all stations we met trains going the other way full of refugees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, mostly ethnic Romanians. Around noon the next day, we arrived at Adancata, around 25 km south of Czernowitz and were informed that there was no continuation to Czernowitz by train. Together with a group of other similar adventurers, I started on foot.... After staying overnight in a small town, we continued our walk the next morning. We didn't meet any remnants of the Romanian army, they had left on the 28th, and on this morning of the 30th, we met the first Soviet troops just south of Czernowitz. They probably were elite troops, blond youngsters on fine horses; we greeted them enthusiastically.

In our view, and in that of most Jews from Czernowitz, there were two positive aspects to the upcoming Soviet rule of Bukovina: one was our sympathy toward the Soviet experiment shared by most of the liberal community throughout the world, and the other was the fact that this was our salvation from the coming German rule of Europe. Even wealthy Jews who at the time did not suspect that Siberia might be their next home were carried along by fear of German rule.¹¹

Of course, neither Carl nor his friends knew at the time that their "sympathy toward the Soviet experiment" would be short-lived and that some five years later, after the Soviets had defeated the Germans and re-established themselves in control of Chernovtsy, he would cross the same border in the other, southerly, direction, and exclaim "Der Schlag soll sie treffen!" ("May they be hit by lightning!") In his memoir, Carl does address some of this profound disillusionment, contrasting what they knew about the Soviet regime before 1940 and what they permitted themselves to know with what they were to learn first hand in due time: "The pact between Hitler and Stalin should have made us think.... We read about the trials in Moscow

¹¹ Hirsch, "A Life in the Twentieth Century," 58.

in the late thirties.... I knew there was something fundamentally wrong in it, but....” This fore- and backshadowing in his and others’ narratives is interspersed with descriptions of the first days of Soviet rule and the sense of relief and hopefulness felt by so many Jews.

In witnesses’ written narratives and oral accounts of this difficult year, the authors struggle to disentangle their conflicting memories, contradictory emotions, and strained allegiances. As Florence Heymann writes: “It seemed that the Soviet year had marked their spirits even more powerfully than the following years, when Romanians and Germans invaded the city and dragged the Jewish population into the hell of the Shoah.”¹²

The radical ideological shifts citizens underwent during this period, the high stakes that were attached to being on the “right” side, and a sense of the arbitrariness of those circumstances mark the memoirs and testimonies of survivors. “The new regime began to function and the citizens were made to repent for their respect for the laws of the state to which they used to belong before the Soviet occupation,” writes Manfred Reifer. “They were put on trial and they were prosecuted.... Everyone rushed to break with the past, to abandon tradition, and to accommodate to the spirit of the new order.”¹³ But, in retrospect, even more seems to have been at stake. In the present atmosphere of disillusionment with communism in post-Soviet period, they encounter difficulty in explaining their enthusiasm, however short-lived, for the Soviet annexation. In their narratives, they must both expose and justify themselves. They must acknowledge the positive changes that were introduced by the Soviets, and they must convey their initially positive emotions towards the Soviets, their attraction to the international appeal of communist revolutionary ideals, and their empowerment as participants in a movement that promised vast social changes at a moment when fascism and vehement antisemitism were on the rise. At the same time, they must express their later skepticism and disillusionment with the Soviets, the growing fear, suspicion, and persecution. All this requires no small amount of narrative skill, combining suspense with irony and self-questioning. Pearl Fichmann, for example, describes these days in her memoir thus: “In the first week or

¹² Florence Heymann, *Le Crépuscule des Lieux: Identités juives de Czernowitz*, (Paris: Stock, 2003), 272. Our translation.

¹³ Corbea-Hoisie, ed., *Jüdisches Städtebild Czernowitz*, 244.

so they brought Moiseiev company dancers, who performed in the central square of town.... Soon after came a group of outstanding Jewish writers, who delighted us with readings of their poetry and also sang some rousing, Jewish revolutionary songs. Within the next few years all these writers were put to death."¹⁴

The Russian Year

Indeed, their disillusionment increased at a rapid pace, although it was constantly mitigated by the disturbing news of Hitler's war, which served as an unsettling counterpoint. More and more, Chernovtsy Jews came to see that, like other European Jews, they were trapped between two deadly regimes in which they were undesirable others—in one regime they were objects of persecution, deportation, and eventually annihilation; in the other, of repression and suspicion. They had to face radical changes in the fabric of their daily lives, in their sense of personal, professional, and group identity, and they had to do so in the frightening context of a rapidly expanding war.

The Soviet military regime that initially took over the city was quickly replaced by a Soviet civilian regime that worked hard to institute a policy of "Ukrainianization." The top jobs in Chernovtsy were given to officials brought in from Moscow and Kiev; local Ukrainians came to hold secondary offices. Some Jews who had lost their positions due to Romanian anti-Semitic laws were reinstated by the Soviets, but the policy of Ukrainianization generally barred Jews from most high-level jobs.¹⁵ Among the Jewish population the only ones who received visible positions of authority were those who had been activist members of the secret Communist Party—persons like Sarah Grinberg and Mikhail Doktorovich, whose deep political involvement with the Communist underground only surfaced during this time. They and a small number of other similarly rewarded people were then able to help friends and relatives find employment and to offer protection from some of the persecutions and harassments that ensued.

¹⁴Pearl Fichmann, *Before Memories Fade* (Booksurge Publishing: 2005), 61.

¹⁵ Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukovina: Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen Anspruchs Großrumäniens, 1918–1944* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 363; Dov Levin, "The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bukovina," *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 6, no. 2 (1976), 55.

Work was mandatory for anyone over eighteen, but many found it difficult if not impossible to find jobs and had to survive by selling their household goods.¹⁶ Employment became the measure of “proletarianization,” which was reinforced by a new dress code that shunned expensive-looking clothing, ties, and jewelry—all symbols of a bourgeois lifestyle that had become dangerous to display.¹⁷ Some, like Manfred Reifer could only secure the necessary employment in exchange for bribes: “I was denounced and thus could not be considered for teaching positions in primary or secondary schools. But through a Ukrainian I knew I came into contact with a school inspector ... he arranged a teaching position for me in exchange for a winter coat, a pair of shoes, and a hat. The deal worked out: I delivered the goods and he the job.”¹⁸ Soviet currency was introduced in September and because individuals were not allowed to exchange more than 1,000 lei (at a fixed rate of 40 lei per ruble), most middle-class families lost their savings overnight.¹⁹

Initially, the Soviet annexation was perhaps most difficult for older people, especially for the affluent. Pearl Fichmann describes her parents as apprehensive and distressed: Fichmann’s father had already sold his small store before the Communist takeover, and was lucky that the Soviet overseer who had been assigned to their house registered him as a “clerk” rather than an owner. Property owners, bankers, businesspeople, and merchants were issued identity cards marked “39,” and for many that number would later translate into a one-way ticket to Siberia. Bundists and members of illegal Zionist organizations alike also had “39” inscribed in their passports—in their case, a coded indication that they were considered dangerous and forbidden from residing in potentially strategically vital areas. On the other hand, professionals such as engineers, teachers, lawyers, and workers were issued an identity card marked “40” and were thus classified as “useful to the state.”²⁰

Interestingly, women from bourgeois Jewish family backgrounds fared somewhat better, in part perhaps because they had more regularly interacted with local Ukrainians employed as household employees or

¹⁶ Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukovina*, 358.

¹⁷ Levin, “The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bukovina,” 60.

¹⁸ Corbea-Hoisie, *Jüdisches Städtebild Czernowitz*, 245.

¹⁹ Carl’s last salary as an engineer in Romania was about 5000 lei per month.

²⁰ Gold, *Geschichte Der Juden in Der Bukovina*, vol. 2, 12.

in the marketplace, and had learned the Cyrillic alphabet and enough of the language to communicate with them in Ukrainian. But even they, like homemakers from less well-to-do backgrounds, were unable to manage food-shopping on their own after the Soviet takeover; they had to call on their children and elderly relatives to help them stand in the innumerable queues in the markets and stores. In the course of the year, food, even bread, grew increasingly scarce; such items as sugar and butter were rarely available. The illegal yet flourishing black market that emerged eased matters slightly for shoppers—at the risk, however, of police intimidation and arrest.²¹

Younger people seeking employment or education were required to learn Russian. Schoolchildren were given a few months to master this language in state schools. Jewish children were also allowed to attend schools in which Yiddish or Hebrew was a language of instruction (one of the exceptions to the hegemony of Russian), but there were many primarily German- and Romanian-speaking Jewish children who knew none of the authorized languages. Nevertheless, attendance at Yiddish-language schools grew considerably over the course of this year, and the quality of education in them improved, even though there were not enough Yiddish-speaking teachers in Chernovtsy to instruct all the children who required the language to qualify for continued attendance. By the end of the year, many children still spoke a Yiddish difficult to distinguish from the Bukovina German they spoke at home.²²

University students were immersed in courses taught in Russian by professors who were brought to the city for the purpose of transforming the university. As Pearl Fichmann writes: "The teacher was faced with an unusual task; namely, teaching a class at a university where practically nobody understood him or the textbook. After every few sentences he stopped to ask: 'Sie verstehen, Genossen?' (Do you understand, comrades?) This was the extent of his German."²³ But the university students were less intimidated by the linguistic challenges than by the rigid Stalinist political education to which they were subjected. As the university's positive atmosphere began to erode as a result of the first arrests and deportations,

²¹ Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukovina*, 357, 358.

²² Levin, "The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bukovina," 65.

²³ Fichmann, *Before Memories Fade*, 59.

all teachers and classmates came to be suspected as potential informants. “We feared each other,” writes Fichmann. Conversations became more codified, suspicions grew. “The student David Seidmann ... had been anonymously accused of concealing a Zionist past and continuing to engage in Zionist propaganda. When his companions learned of the accusation, Paul [Celan] spread the word that it was necessary ‘to protect their colleague at any price from deportation to Siberia,’ which was the expected punishment.”²⁴ One particular teacher appears in several narratives as especially charismatic and therefore suspicious:

He played the piano and recited poetry, to our delight. He dared recite Yesenin, a symbolist poet, a poet not accepted by the official line. Officially we were supposed to admire Mayakovsky, who glorified the Soviet Union.... Whether this Russian teacher was truly critical of the party line or whether he was trying to play a game initiated by the NKVD will forever remain a question in my mind.²⁵

Non-communist Jewish social and political organizations had to be disbanded. Some, like the Hanoar Hatzioni and the Betar, had counseled their members to flee from the Soviets into Romania, and indeed, some of the members who remained in Chernovtsy were eventually arrested and deported, as were the remaining activists of the Bund. Others, such as the Hashomer Hatzair, continued their activities underground. “Harassment, interrogations and arrests were the lot of the Zionist leaders and activists in Northern Bukovina,” writes Dov Levin.²⁶ And yet, Jewish, especially Yiddish, culture was allowed to develop, albeit in a much more limited way than the Yiddishists in the 1920s had initially hoped. Yiddish theater groups from Kiev and Kishinev gave guest performances during this year. But Yiddish newspapers were limited to the Kiev *Shtern* and Jewish writers could only publish socialist-realist works in Russian or Ukrainian. The holdings of Yiddish libraries were examined and “unsuitable” books were removed.

²⁴ Israel Chalfen, *Paul Celan: A Biography of his Youth*, trans. Maximilian Bleyleben (New York: Presea Books, 1991), 112, 113.

²⁵ Fichmann, *Before Memories Fade*, 63.

²⁶ Levin, “The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bukovina,” 58.

Most distressingly, according to Zvi Yavetz, during the early months after the Soviet takeover school children were taught not only to praise Stalin and the Revolution, but also to refrain from criticizing Hitler and Germany—in accordance to requirements stipulated in the Hitler-Stalin Nonaggression Pact. Dorothea Sella mentions a shocking detail in her novel/memoir about this period:

On November 7, 1940 we celebrated the anniversary of the October Revolution for the first time [in Chernovtsy], by participating in the required demonstration.... We were lined up, and waved energetically as we passed the main platform, when I noticed, next to Soviet generals and honorees, a group of *Wehrmacht* officers. The smiles that they exhibited struck me as unpleasant and oppressive, because of the irony that they just barely concealed.²⁷

Nonetheless, Sella's communist friend Andi refused to pass judgment on the wisdom of the Nonaggression Pact at the time, assuring her that "Stalin knows what he is doing."²⁸

Still, except for the most die-hard communists, it was not a question of *whether* one became disillusioned with the Soviet regime but of *how soon* one became aware of the extent of its corruption and deception. Class and age were factors affecting the speed of that awareness and its ensuing disillusionment. "I have to say that none of my classmates was distressed that the Russians nationalized all our goods," observed Zvi Yavetz. "On June 28, 1940, I was the son of a millionaire. On the 29th, that of a pauper, because he had nothing left."²⁹ Carl Hirsch, from a much humbler class background, noted that initially "we didn't feel the invisible hand of the KGB. Sure, there were many victims, such as the owners of expropriated factories, shops and apartment houses, but this didn't touch us directly; we saw it as social justice that these shops and industrial plants now belonged, as we were told, to the people."³⁰ The expansion of the European war,

²⁷ Sella, *Der Ring des Prometheus*, 19.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Yavetz.

³⁰ Hirsch, "A Life in the Twentieth Century," 65.

moreover, may have moderated the Jews' criticism regarding developments in the city itself: no matter how flawed, the Soviet regime still represented salvation from Hitler and the Nazis. Access to news about the war, however, was both curtailed and censored by Soviet authorities. Possession of a private radio was illegal, and listening to broadcasts was a secret and dangerous undertaking. The one available newspaper, "Radian'ska Bukovina" (Soviet Bukovina), published only official propaganda with little news about German operations in Poland and elsewhere. As long as the Hitler-Stalin Pact remained officially sanctioned, the Soviet press did not publish a single article about the persecution of Jews in the territories occupied by German troops.³¹

Still, personal freedom was increasingly curtailed in the newly-acquired Soviet territories: "Suddenly I became aware that the citizen was a kind of prisoner," Pearl Fichmann writes.³² Official identity cards featuring the label "Jew," the requirement of travel permits for even the shortest trips, arbitrary arrests and deportations, mandatory participation in public demonstrations and meetings, and the invasion of privacy made people feel more and more exposed to the pervasive surveillance of the state. Although synagogues were permitted to continue their services, Jewish students felt they could not observe religious holidays; in an act of defiance, Pearl Fichmann fasted on Yom Kippur for the first time in her life in 1940. Still, Carl Hirsch writes that "In retrospect, it was a fairly quiet time until the spring of 1941, when the invasion of Yugoslavia initiated a new period of war activity abroad. We felt secure behind the shield of the mighty Soviet army. We were not very happy with the way Communism was implemented in the Soviet Union, but still believed that the situation could improve."³³

Deportations

But then came the fateful day of June 13, 1941, less than three weeks before the Soviet retreat from the region. War between the Soviet Union and Germany was now imminent. In Chernovtsy NKVD units entered thousands

³¹ Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukovina*, 366; see also Levin, "The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bukovina."

³² Fichmann, *Before Memories Fade*, 60.

³³ Hirsch, "A Life in the Twentieth Century," 67.

of households, gave the inhabitants an hour to pack, herded them into open trucks and transported them to the city's main railway station for deportation. The next morning children and young people were gathered from schools and universities to be deported along with their parents.

Who was deported? Of the 3,800 people arrested on June 13 and in the following few days in Chernovtsy and its neighboring villages, 80% were Jewish. They were considered "enemies of the regime": holders of "passport 39," land and property owners, rich farmers, members of outlawed political parties and youth movements, and generally anyone thought to be a German sympathizer.³⁴

"From our apartment building they deported a couple with a ten-year-old daughter," Pearl Fichmann writes:

The father had owned a small furniture store that had been nationalized by the government. Across the street from us they deported a family whose son and daughter were known communists. The father, Mr. Ippen, was a socialist, and the son had been killed in Spain as a volunteer fighting on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. It was said that the entire family was non-grata because the son was supposedly a Trotskyite. The daughter and son-in-law were communists, but because they lived in her parents' apartment, they were taken away with everybody else in the house. The place was then sealed and later a commissar or an officer moved in and inherited the entire household.... Many Russians considered it a fact of life that people would disappear by the favor of their government.³⁵

Manfred Reifer describes his own near deportation:

Six armed NKVD officers stood before the door, rang the bell insistently, and demanded entry. My wife and I felt paralyzed and could not bring ourselves to go to the door.... They [eventually gained entry,] surrounded my bed, and told us to pack underwear and clothing and to accompany them. I tried to refuse, telling them I was sick and undergoing treatment, that I had just had a difficult operation and was nearly blind, thus

³⁴ Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukovina*, 363–366.

³⁵ Fichmann, *Before Memories Fade*, 66, 67.

incapable of traveling. I showed him my papers from the clinic indicating that I had a heart condition as well. However, they insisted that everyone told such stories, that we should get dressed quickly and take our things along, because in our new residence there would be good doctors who would take care of my health.

After several attempts to transport him to the railway on a stretcher in the pouring rain had failed, Reifer was brought to the hospital. When he woke up, he heard a radio news report about the “masses of people who were voluntarily seeking to resettle somewhere, away from Czernowitz.” Notes Reifer: “‘Of the thousands who wanted to relocate, only some could be accommodated,’ the announcer said. I now understood the mendacity of the Soviet propaganda machine.”³⁶

There was little time to assess the impact of these deportations and the dangers they posed for former property owners or members of groups like the Zionist Youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair. By Sunday, June 22, Germany had launched its invasion of the Soviet Union, war had broken out on a massive scale, and Chernovtsy was again on the front line. The city’s Jewish population was confronted with potentially mortal danger. Nevertheless, in retrospect many Czernowitz Jews came to judge the deportations of June 13, 1941, in Dov Levin’s terms, as “the epitome of everything that occurred under the Soviets in 1940–41” and to regard them as “the symbol of that eventful year.”³⁷

“I was deeply outraged when I passed the station on my way to a textile plant [on June 13] and saw all these people in cattle cars waiting to be shipped to Siberia,” Carl Hirsch testified. “I said to myself that I would never forget nor forgive this lack of humanity. But, you know, it’s strange. As soon as the massive Nazi deportations began in October [of the same year]—and they also left from this railroad station—I did forget. Remember, by late June the Soviets had already left the city. And we were faced with a choice, to flee with them, or to stay here, waiting for the Germans to come.”³⁸

³⁶ Corbea-Hoisie, ed., *Jüdisches Städtebild Czernowitz*, 251, 252, 254.

³⁷ Levin, “The Jews and the Inception of Soviet Rule in Bucovina,” 59.

³⁸ Hirsch, “A Life in the Twentieth Century,” 68.

PETRO RYKHLO

HISTORY AND PERSONAL FATE
IN THE GERMAN-LANGUAGE LYRICS OF BUKOVINA

Literary historians from the socialist countries have been engaged for decades in exploring the thesis that literature is the brightest expression of the many external factors—historical, social, national, etc.—influencing human life. The modern writer especially is endowed with an intensive historical consciousness. Nevertheless, for one author, history can be an abstract and blurred category, as in the example of Marcel Proust’s “subjective” novel *In Search of Lost Time*, and for another author, it can be definite and painful, as in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s document-based epic chronicles of the Stalinist period. Of concern here is not so much an aesthetical moment as a philosophical-historical dimension. The American novelist William Faulkner invented the fictional region Yoknapatawpha, where the events of most of his novels and stories take place; he finds this “miniature stamp of the native land”¹ enough to show the many decades of the American history.

The depth of historical conscience and historical thinking of an author cannot be measured by either the geographical scale or the chronological scope of their works; instead, what matters is the author’s ability to embrace the essence of historical events and to artis-

¹ Cited after Gribanov Boris, *Faulkner* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1976), 91.

tically transform them through imagination, recreating the history for the reader in an original, aesthetically complete form. Hence, in order to unveil the complex interrelations of historical events and personalities in a poem, a drama or a novel, it is not necessary to make deep historical outlines into the past of a certain literature. For this task, a small geographic region and limited time-span may be sufficient; for example, Bukovina in the period between the two World Wars.

Home until World War II to Ukrainians, Romanians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Magyars, Armenians, Roma, and other nationalities, Bukovina seemed to endure more turmoil in the twentieth century than over the whole of its previous history, including during the ancient Slavonic state, Moldavian principalities, and Ottoman rule. Nearly 150 years of peace under the Austrian Crown were interrupted by World War I, and in 1918 the province was transferred to Romanian rule under the Treaty of Versailles. Two decades later its northern part was “liberated” by the Soviet army—under the 1940 Hitler-Stalin Pact, Bukovina was divided into two parts, with the north incorporated into Soviet Ukraine and the south remaining under Romanian rule. One year later, Northern Bukovina was occupied by the Germans, who gave the land to their Romanian allies to rule. In 1944 the Red Army “liberated” Northern Bukovina for the second time and it was again incorporated into the USSR. After the fall of the Soviet Union it remained part of now-independent Ukraine. So, this is a land which seems to be a toy of history rather than its full-fledged subject.

In her poem “Czernowitz,” Rose Ausländer tries to sketch the main stages of this chaotic, tangled modern history of Bukovina as “a history in a nutshell”:

Gestufte Stadt im grünen Reifrock
Der Amsel unverfälschtes Vokabular

Der Spiegelkarpfen
in Pfeffer versulzt
schwieg in fünf Sprachen

Die Zigeunerin
las unser Schicksal
in den Karten
Schwarz-gelb
die Kinder der Monarchie
träumten deutsche Kultur

Legenden um den Baal-Schem
Aus Sadagura: die Wunder

Nach dem roten Schachspiel
wechseln die Farben

Der Walache erwacht –
schläft wieder ein
Ein Siebenmeilenstiefel
steht vor seinem Bett – flieht

Im Ghetto:
Gott hat abgedankt

Erneutes Fahnenspiel:
der Hammer schlägt die Flucht entzwei
die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu²

German-language Bukovinian poetry, which paradoxically reached the apogee of its development during the Romanian period (although it of course had been prepared by the lasting Austrian period), supplies us with numerous and astonishing facts relevant for exploring the topic of “history and personal fate,” illustrating not only the inevitable weight of history borne by all poets, but also the resistance of artists attempting to elude this yoke. My analysis is based on the personal and artistic tragedies of

² Rose Ausländer, *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu: Gedichte 1957-1965* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1985), 16.

Bukovinian poets, fatally drained by criminal ideology, totalitarian authorities, and World War II.

Rose Ausländer, whose poem is cited above, was almost a peer to the twentieth century; she was born in Chernivtsi on May 11, 1901 under the name Rosalie Beatrice Ruth Scherzer, and died in Germany in 1988. In her youth she was an ardent student of Plato, Spinoza, and the Berlin philosopher Constantine Brunner, and a member of Dr. Kettner's so-called "Ethical Seminar" in Chernivtsi. In her poem "Spinoza II," she wrote:

Mein Heiliger heißt Benedikt
Er hat das Weltall klargeschliffen³.

As a twenty-year-old girl, the young poet followed her friend—later husband—Ignaz Ausländer into emigration in the United States, where she worked as a bank clerk and an editor of German-language immigrant newspapers, in which she published her first poems. In 1931, after ten years in America, she returned to Chernivtsi, and shortly before the beginning of WWII published her first book of poems, *Rainbow* (1939). The book is opened by a short poem called "Into Life":

Nur aus der Trauer Mutterinnigkeit
strömt mir das Vollmaß des Erlebens ein.
Sie speist mich eine lange trübe Zeit
mit schwarzer Milch und schwerem Wermutwein.⁴

Here for the first time appears the outlandish oxymoron "black milk," repeated later in the first line and fatal leitmotiv of Paul Celan's *Death Fugue*.

³ Rose Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1984), S. 263.

⁴ Rose Ausländer, *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1985), S. 66.

But soon the war broke out, and the cannons spoke while the muses were silenced. Most of the German-language press dared not publish reviews on this book of poetry written by a Jewish author, though certain papers published balanced reviews of Rose's first volume; among reviews appeared in the Bukovinian press in "Czernowitzer Morgenblatt" (March 20, 1940) and "Allgemeine Zeitung" (April 20, 1940), and in Switzerland in "Der Bund" (March 17, 1940) and "National-Zeitung" (April 14, 1940).

In 1941 Chernivtsi was occupied by the Germans including Brigadenführer Otto Ohlendorf's SS units. Rosa Ausländer was imprisoned in a Jewish ghetto, where she lived with her mother and younger brother in a dark basement, hungry, scared and in the lethal danger of deportation to Transnistria. She later expressed this state of moral despair and existential dismay in a poem of from her first post-war collection, *Blind Summer*:

Sie kamen
mit scharfen Fahnen und Pistolen
schossen alle Sterne und den Mond ab
damit kein Licht uns bliebe
damit kein Licht uns liebe

Da begruben wir die Sonne
Es war eine unendliche Sonnenfinsternis⁵ –

This period is also described in her spacious essay "Everything Can Be a Motive":

„Getto, Elend, Horror, Todestransporte. In jenen Jahren trafen wir Freunde uns zuweilen heimlich, oft unter Lebensgefahr, um Gedichte zu lesen. Der unerträglichen Realität gegenüber gab es zwei Verhaltensweisen: entweder man gab sich der Verzweiflung preis, oder man übersiedelte in eine andere Wirklichkeit, die geistige. Wir zum Tode verurteilten Juden waren unsagbar trostbedürftig. Und während wir den Tod erwarteten, wohnten manche von uns

⁵ Rose Ausländer, *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit*..., 332.

in Traumworten – unser traumatisches Heim in der Heimatlosigkeit. Schreiben war Leben. Überleben“⁶.

One of the best poems depicting the Jewish fate during the time of persecutions is “Without Wine or Bread” (alluding, undoubtedly, to the works of Hölderlin and Trakl, and to biblical tradition in general):

In unserm Herzen ist die Nacht zu Haus
und will dem Lichte eines Tags nicht weichen.
An unsre Schläfe schlägt die Fledermaus
ein unentwirrbar blutiges Hakenzeichen.

An allen Enden fletschen ihre Zähne
die Wölfe, ihre Augen funkeln rot.
Es rüsten sich des greisen Volkes Söhne
zum Abendmahle ohne Wein und Brot.

Die Silberbecher rollen aus der Hand.
Die Blumen sind vergast. Die Lüfte stechen.
Was wir besitzen: eine Klagewand,
an der die Fluten unsrer Tränen brechen⁷.

When the Soviet troops liberated Bukovina in spring 1944, Rose Ausländer immigrated to America again, leaving the terrors of the war behind. She worked as a secretary in a New York trading company and wrote poetry in English. Was this a protest, a psychologically-motivated rejection of the German language? Nevertheless, she could and would not lose her native language despite forever losing her homeland. On a 1957 trip to Europe, the poet visited in Paris her fellow Bukovinian Paul Celan, whom she has known from Chernivtsi times; her fate is buoyed after several lengthy discussions with him, then already a famous author: she returns anew to her native German language as her most valuable treasure and spiritual core:

⁶ Rose Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderrufflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1984), 286.

⁷ Rose Ausländer, *Die Erde war...*, 155.

Mein Vaterland ist tot
sie haben es begraben
im Feuer

Ich lebe
in meinem Mutterland
Wort⁸.

In 1965, a quarter century after the previous edition, *Blind Summer* finally appeared in Vienna. In the same year she left the United States and moves first to Austria, then to the BRD to experience the language in a native environment. In Düsseldorf, in the Jewish pension Nelly-Sachs-Haus, the aged Ausländer, still without fame in literature, began a new life of incredibly intensive literary work resulting in over twenty new poetry collections, including *36 Gerechte* (1967), *Inventar* (1972), *Ohne Visum* (1974), *Andere Zeichen* (1975), *Noch ist Raum* (1976), *Doppelspiel* (1977), *Aschensommer* (1978), *Mutterland* (1978), *Es bleibt noch viel zu sagen* (1978), and many others—often two or three books a year! These collections ultimately established her place as one of the most prominent figures of postwar German literature.

No less tragic were the life and works—likewise determined by the times and history—of another Bukovinian poet, Moses Rosenkranz. Born in 1904 in Berhomet on the Pruth to a poor Jewish family, he perceived this event already as some sort of misunderstanding, as he revealed later in his autobiographical poem “Descend”:

Ich kam zur Welt in einem Stamme
der mich in seine Hut nicht nahm
daß ich sehr unwillkommen kam
es sagte mirs der Blick der Amme

⁸ Rose Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz...*, 98.

Ich kam zur Welt in einer Kiste
 in der kein Platz für mich bestand
 ich kam zur Welt in einem Land
 darin ich nichts zu suchen hatte
 In eine Welt verschlossener Türen
 kam ich und mußte draußen stehn:
 ich fühlte wie die Winde gehn
 und wurde ohne mich zu rühren.⁹

Growing up in a polyglot environment (Ukrainian, Romanian, German, and Yiddish were spoken in his native village, and his mother, originally from Galicia, taught him Polish), he chose German as his poetic language, and as early as 1930 published in Chernivtsi his first German-language collection, *Leben in Versen*. This was followed by two more books of poetry, *Gemalte Fensterscheiben* (*Stained-Glass Windows*, 1936) and *Die Tafeln* (*The Tablets*, 1940), which made him one of the most famous Bukovinian poets of interwar period (Swiss literature scholar Kaspar Niklaus Wildberger calls him “the father of Bukovinian poetry”).¹⁰

But soon, Rosenkranz mercilessly was pulled into the orbit of history. The whirlwind of war brought him through a Jewish ghetto and several Romanian “labor” camps, in one of which he stayed with Paul Celan. In May 1944 the poet managed to flee to Bucharest and stay underground until the Soviets came. Liberation by the Red Army brought him only new trouble and suffering. After a short period of work for the International Red Cross in Bucharest he was suddenly arrested under an alleged pretext. The poet recalls this as a horrible incomprehensible nightmare:

Laut den damaligen Bestimmungen durften die Hilfeleistungen des Internationalen Roten Kreuzes den Deutschen in Rumänien nicht zugute kommen. Ich setzte mich eigenmächtig über diese Verfügung hinweg und ließ Teile einer irländischen Schenkung (insgesamt 40

⁹ Moses Rosenkranz, *Im Untergang: Ein Jahrhundertsbuch* (München: Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1986), 10.

¹⁰ Kaspar Niklaus Wildberger, *Moses Rosenkranz – der Vater der Bukowina-Dichtung*. In: *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter*, 38. Jg., 1989, Folge 3, 177–185.

Waggons Lebensmittel und Kleidung) sächsischen Kinder- und Altersheimen zukommen. Ich wurde angezeigt. Der damalige rumänische Justizminister Lucretiu Patrascanu weigerte sich, mich zu verhaften. Auch die sowjetische Kommandatur, die meinen Fall übernahm, sprach mich zunächst frei. Das war Anfang 1947. Im April desselben Jahres wurde ich von der Straße entführt und über die rumänische Grenze – zur Täuschung der rumänischen Behörden hatte man mich in die Uniform eines russischen Majors gesteckt – nach Moskau geschafft, wo ich zunächst verhört und danach in den berüchtigten GULAG abgeschoben wurde. Dort mußte ich rund zehn Jahre unter den durch die Literatur hinlänglich bekannt gewordenen Bedingungen verbringen...¹¹

This criminal and bloody time, when the weak and disenfranchised human, stuck between two powerful totalitarian regimes, experienced life as a total hell, where death and suffering lurked at every step, engraved an additional quality in his poems. The heavy blow of history, ruthlessly shattering human fate, evokes horrific pictures in poet's mind, surpassing the visions of Hieronymus Bosch or Pieter Brueghel the Younger:

Es irrt ein Särgelein in der Luft
das fällt auf mich herab
so lieg ich bald in einer Gruft
und niemand kennt das Grab

Mein Schatz kriegt einen Fotograß
aus Genf ich lach im Schnee
und steh derweil am Lethefluß
das ist der Jenissej¹².

When the poet was already in a Soviet camp, his friends in Bucharest managed to publish his fourth collection, *Verses*, which saw light in 1947 under the pseudonym Martin Brand. The poet continued to create poetry in the camp, overcoming inhumane conditions; however, most of these poems

¹¹ Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter. No. 42. Jg. (1993), Folge 4, 283.

¹² Moses Rosenkranz, *Im Untergang*, 89.

were lost. Upon release from GULAG he was incarcerated in Romanian prisons Jilava and Gherla (eighteen years altogether), and it was not until 1958 that the poet was finally freed. In 1961 Rosenkranz emigrated to BRD, where he dwelt in Lenzkirch, a Schwarzwald village, until his death in 2003. His subsequent publications were two books of poetry under the common title *Decline: The Book of the Century* (vols. 1 (1986) and 2 (1988)), which initiated his lifetime legacy series. In a consideration of the milestones of his work one should also mention a book of poems, *Bukovina: Poems 1920–1997* (1998), and a prose book, *Childhood: Fragment of an Autobiography* (2003). Moses Rosenkranz looked on his human and literary fate not as a single event caused by an unlucky constellation of his life dates or biographic moments, but rather as evidence of the brutal character of twentieth-century political history, in which criminal rulers sentenced the Jewish people to total extermination:

So leichenweiß
ist kein Schnee wie die Not
kein Herd ist so heiß
mein Volk wie dein Tod

Liegst wie ein Schnee
und fliegst wie ein Brand
o Wolke von Weh
mein Volk in dem Land

Es sprießt kein Reis
wo mein Israel ruht
der Glanz ist zu weiß
zu rot ist die Glut¹³.

So much has been written recently about Bukovinian poet Paul Celan, and it does not seem necessary to trace his life and literary works

¹³ Idem., 88.

in detail. But Celan is another highly typical example of history's storming into human fate, leaving behind devastating after-effects.

His personal biography is also marked by experiences in the ghetto and concentration camps, the tragic deaths of his parents, revolting anti-semitic persecution, and a great deal of libel by the envious. Along with Moses Rosenkranz, Celan probably had the most direct relations with history, in comparison to other German-language poets of Bukovina.

Celan, a lyric poet par excellence, a "Hölderlin of the twentieth century," valued in history first and foremost the present moment—an immanent feature of lyrics. In contrast to other literary types, the lyrical perceives history mostly as internal, outer events mostly as psychological occurrences, and any plot (if one can apply such a term) as metamorphosis merely of personal feelings. Poetry, like any art, bears for Celan an imprint of the present, its "chronotopos" (using the term of M. Bakhtin) is "here and now."

„Man kann, ich bin mir dessen durchaus bewußt, dieses Wort so oder so lesen, man kann verschiedene Akzente setzen: den Akut des Heutigen, den Gravis des Historischen – auch Literaturhistorischen, – den Zirkumflex – ein Dehnungszeichen – des Ewigen. Ich setze – mir bleibt keine andere Wahl – ich setze den Akut“¹⁴.

Thus the poet defined his artistic motto in his October 22, 1960 Georg Büchner Literary Prize speech in Darmstadt. He never turned away from the uneasy topics of the day, from its ideological controversies. In the famous "Death Fugue" he touched upon the most painful nerve of postwar history—the degradation of modern and allegedly civilized man into a bestial monster—which none dared to touch before, and which the German philosopher Theodor Adorno, in "Negative Dialectics," his thesis on the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz, even called barbarity. But Celan managed to find a new, relevant language for these crimes. In this way he is also a political poet, whose verses open the deepest wounds of our time, whose lines weave the anxieties and fears, delusions

¹⁴ Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke in fünf Bänden, Dritter Band: Gedichte III. Prosa* (Reden. – Suhrkamp Verlag, 1992), 190.

and visions of modern man. The disparity between the world and the individual is too deep to bridge:

Die Welt, Welt
in allen Fürzen gerecht,

ich, ich
bei dir, dir, Kahl-
geschorene¹⁵.

A person is defenseless against history, Celan claims for everybody, but one is especially defenseless when born Jewish. Celan had tried to reject his Jewish fate; he suffered from it since childhood. In an early letter to his aunt Minna in Palestine, the thirteen-year-old boy wrote: "Of course, concerning antisemitism in our school I could have written a 300-page book for you."¹⁶ These antisemitic trends appeared in Chernivtsi under Romanian rule in the 1930s, culminating in the wartime deportations to Transnistria. One of his contemporary poems, named almost idyllically "A Nocturne," depicts in its surrealistic images all that defenselessness, all the despair:

Schlaf nicht. Sei auf der Hut.
Die Pappeln mit singendem Schritt
ziehn mit dem Kriegsvolk mit.
Die Teiche sind alle dein Blut.
Drin grüne Gerippe tanzen.
Eins reißt die Wolke fort, dreist:
verwittert, verstümmelt, vereist,
blutet dein Traum von den Lanzen-

Die Welt ist ein kreißendes Tier,
das kahl in die Mondnacht schlich.

¹⁵ Idem, 119.

¹⁶ Israel Chalfen, *Paul Celan. Eine Biographie seiner Jugend* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983), 51.

Gott ist sein Heulen. Ich
fürchte mich und frier¹⁷.

Much later he was still unable to flee from loneliness—in Bucharest, where many friends of his youth remained; in Vienna, where he failed in establishing a residence; in Paris, where he finally settled to work as a professor of German literature in the elite *École normale supérieure* (Higher Pedagogical School); in Germany, which he visited occasionally to perform public poetry readings or receive literary prizes:

...die Nacht
braucht keine Sterne, nirgends
fragt es nach dir¹⁸ –

Stirrings of neo-Nazism in Europe in the 1960s, the infamous “Claire Goll affair” with its absurd plagiarism accusation, the gloomy depression increasingly experienced by the poet, and the ambiguous status of Celan as a Jew and a German-language poet in the Romance-language world brought about further reticence. “You know... not once have I asked myself if it wouldn’t have been better if I had remained near the beeches of my motherland,”¹⁹ he wrote on July 30, 1960 to his old friend and mentor Alfred Margul-Sperber. In search of his Jewish identity, in 1969, half a year before his suicide, he traveled to Israel. In a short speech for the Union of Hebrew Writers he repeated the same bitter words: “I believe I understand what Jewish loneliness is....”²⁰ In late April his body was found in the Seine. According to Austrian writer Hans Weigel, it is unnecessary to seek reasons for the suicide, as the answer is most obvious: emigration.²¹

¹⁷ Paul Celan, *Das Frühwerk* / Hrsg. von Barbara Wiedemann (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), 54.

¹⁸ Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 1, 197.

¹⁹ Paul Celan, Briefe an Alfred Margul-Sperber. In: *Neue Literatur*. 26.Jg., 1975, H.7, 56.

²⁰ Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. III, 203.

²¹ Hans Weigel, *Paul Celan*. In: Hans Weigel. In Memoriam. – Graz: Styria 1979, 37.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger was Celan's second cousin (they had a common great-grandfather on mother's side). Today she would have been over eighty. But already she has not been with us for over sixty years: on December 16, 1942, barely eighteen years old, she died of typhus and malnutrition in the Mykhailivka labor camp in Transnistria. Witnesses remember her lying with fever in the barracks and singing quietly: "Her voice became thinner and weaker. Then it faded out."²²

During her short lifetime, Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger did not publish a line. She wrote her poems in steady, graceful handwriting in an album with a picture of a bouquet on the cover. This album was preserved for future generations by Selma's friends Else Schächter-Keren and Renee Abramovici-Michaeli, who both immigrated to Israel. The story of its rescue is a true odyssey, full of psychological tension and sacrifice.

The collection of Selma's poems, *Harvest of Blossoms*, first appeared privately in Israel. Its editor was a former Chernivtsi gymnasium professor Hersch Segal, Selma's school tutor. In 1980 German publicist Jürgen Serke published this thin collection with the notable publishing house Hoffmann-und-Campe-Verlag under the title *Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt: Gedichte eines jüdischen Mädchens an seinen Freund*. The book became a literary sensation; it elicited a flood of letters and invited associations with the well-known diary of Anne Frank, who perished in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The contrast between the ardent struggle for life and the inevitability of death was especially striking:

I want to live.

I want to laugh, to bear all of my burdens
and want to do battle, know love and know hate

I want to hold heaven in my embrace
and want to be free and breathe and scream.

I don't want to die. No!

No.²³

²² Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, *Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt: Gedichte eines jüdischen Mädchens an seinen Freund*. Hrsg. von Jürgen Serke (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 22.

²³ Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, *Harvest of Blossoms: Poems from a Life Cut Short*

Did Selma consider herself a poet? Today this question does not seem so important. The German poet Karl Krolow believes these poems were written by a person already well-versed in literature. Only one thing is clear: she was a girl in love, who wrote poems full of melancholy, inner turmoil, and grieving visions. Almost all of them are devoted to her beloved friend Lejser Fichman, whom she met in a Jewish youth organization in Chernivtsi and who in the summer of 1944 died tragically among Jewish refugees aboard a Turkish steamer torpedoed by a Soviet submarine:

I am the night. My veils are so much
softer than is pallid death.
I gather every burning ache
into my chilly pitch-black boat.

My lover is the lengthy road.
We are betrothed forevermore.
I love him, and I cover him
with my soft black silken hair.

My kiss is sweet as lilac scent—
the wanderer is well aware ...
When he accepts my warm embrace
all other lovers he forgets.

My hands so slender, ivory-white,
will still the fever that he feels
and every face that they caress
must softly smile, unwillingly.

I am the night. My veils are so much
softer than is pallid death.
I gather every burning ache
into my chilly pitch-black boat.²⁴

(Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 36–37.

²⁴ Idem, 49.

At times one can notice between her lines the influence of poets she intensively read (Heine, Rilke, Trakl). Nevertheless, her verses are far from feeble imitation; on the contrary, they radiate such far-reaching imagery and seductive melody that sometimes even certain poetic late-Romanticism clichés, hackneyed rhymes, or irregular meter resonate as righteous and persuasive gestures. Considering that most of these poems were written by a very young poet under extreme conditions in a ghetto under constant threat of deportation to Transnistria, the tragic aura of her lyrics becomes more sorrowful:

Oh lay, my beloved
your head in your hands
and listen, I'll sing you a song.
I'll sing about pain, about death and the end,
I'll sing about joy that we lost.

Come, now close your eyes,
I'll cradle you gently,
we both can then dream of delight.
We both can then dream the most golden of lies,
we'll dream ourselves back to the past.

And look, my beloved,
in dreams there return
the days full of light again.
Forgotten the hours, so aching and empty,
of sorrow and pain and denial.

But then—waking up,
my beloved, is horror—
then all is more empty than ever—
if only the dreams could rebuild my delight,
and banish my searing pain!²⁵

²⁵ Idem, 94.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's literary legacy consists of only fifty-seven poems, among them five translations from Yiddish (Itzik Manger), French (Paul Verlaine), and Romanian. One of her last poems, "Tragedy," has only one strophe:

This is the hardest: to give yourself away
and then to see that no one needs you,
to give all of yourself and realize
you'll fade like smoke and leave no trace.²⁶

These lines conclude with a date—"23.12.1941"—and a note scribbled in red pencil: "I had no time to finish...."

After the German poet Hilde Domin read the Chernivtsi girl's poems, she noted: "Undoubtedly, her gift is on a level with the talent of young Hofmannsthal. Despite the 'peculiarity of fate,' this is the art which makes up the heritage of all German poetry, not only the Jewish. These are the kind of lyrics read with tears in the eyes: so pure, so beautiful, so light, and so defenseless."²⁷

Four personalities, four poetic fates from Bukovina; they were so different and yet so similar with respect not only their biographies, which is often explained by common origin, experience of early years and youth, etc. Their similarity bears the imprint of history; it is connected to the Jewish fate in the twentieth century in general, to the Holocaust. Other names could be selected—Alfred Kittner or Robert Flinker, Immanuel Weißglas or Alfred Gong—yet with the same result: a ghetto, a concentration camp, expulsion or death, loneliness or forsakenness. Paul Celan speaks on behalf of all the persecuted, homeless Bukovinian poets disregarded by history in his verse "Psalm" from the book *Die Niemandrose*:

²⁶ Idem, 97.

²⁷ Cited after Jürgen Serke, *Geschichte einer Entdeckung*. In: Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger. *Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt*, 14.

Niemand knetet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehm,
niemand bespricht unsern Staub.
Niemand.

Gelobt seist du, Niemand.
Dir zulieb wollen
wir blühn.
Dir
entgegen.

Ein Nichts
waren wir, sind wir, werden
wir bleiben, blühend:
die Nichts-, die
Niemandrose.

Mit
dem Griffel seelenhell,
dem Staubbaden himmelswüst,
der Krone rot
vom Purpurwort, das wir sangen
über, o über
dem Dorn.²⁸

*Translated from Ukrainian by
Vitalii Bobrov*

²⁸Paul Celan. *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. I, S. 225.

VLADIMIR SOLONARI

THE TREATMENT OF THE JEWS OF BUKOVINA BY THE SOVIET AND ROMANIAN ADMINISTRATIONS IN 1940–1944

At the time of the 1930 Romanian census, approximately 92,400 Jews lived in Bukovina, comprising 10.8% of the total population of the province. The great majority of Bukovinian Jews (about 68,400, or 73.9%) resided in the cities, where they formed approximately 30% of the total urban population. Some 42,600 Jews lived in Cernăuți (Chernivtsi) alone, formed 37.9% of the city's population. Jews were thus by far the most heavily urbanized

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ethnic group in Bukovina. At that time, only 26.7% of all residents of the province lived in the cities; among local Romanians and Ukrainians—the two most numerous ethnic groups throughout the region as a whole—the shares of urbanites were 19.8% and 13.4%, respectively. Among Germans—the second most economically-developed group—that share was 44.3%.¹

The Jews of Bukovina played an important role in the regional economy and tended to be concentrated in relatively modern occupations: they comprised about 35% of all industrial workers and more than 17% of workers in transport businesses, and managed more than 66% of credit extension operations. Jews owned a substantial part of the lumber industry, a pillar of the Bukovinian economy. They were also strongly represented among lawyers, doctors, and other educated professionals. A great majority of these people claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue, but many, especially the educated, preferred to use German in their everyday life and generally were seen as bearers of German culture.²

According to the 1930 census, an absolute majority of Bukovinian Jews—approximately 72,000—lived in the province's northern part, which under joint Soviet and German pressure was ceded by Romania to the Soviet Union in late June to early July 1941. That population included about 2,000 Jews from the Herța *plasă* (district) which had belonged to the historical province of Moldova, not Bukovina; Herța *plasă* together with northern Bukovina was occupied by the Soviets; it now forms the Gertsavskiyi raion of the Chernivtsi oblast' in Ukraine.³

The Jewish population of Bukovina and of Greater Romania as a whole came under intense antisemitic pressure in the second half of the 1930s, in conjunction with an exponential growth in the popularity of Romanian right-wing nationalist and antisemitic movements, as well as German Nazism's increasing appeal among Romanian youth. In particular, the two most influential

¹ For an analysis of Bukovinian demography in 1930 and 1940–41, see Romanian chief statistician Sabin Manuilă's October 31, 1941 report in the RGVA, 492/1/12, pp. 19–34, esp. annexes pp. 26ff.

² See DANIC PCM-CM, 397/1940, USHMM Archives, RG-25.012M, reel 1, p. 35; and Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina: Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen Anspruchs Großrumäniens, 1918–1944* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 40–49, 187–196.

³ DANIC PCM-CM, 397/1940, p. 30.

right-wing extremist parties—Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's Iron Guard (officially called the "All for the Nation" Party, also known as the Legionaries) and Alexandru C. Cuza's National Christian Party—made antisemitism the central plank of their propaganda. For a short period in November 1937 to February 1938 when the NCP headed a (minority) government, antisemitism was an integral part of the Romanian official ideology.⁴

Visceral right-wing nationalism and antisemitism were not confined to the parties of ethnic Romanians. With the growth of influence of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists among the ethnic Ukrainians of Bukovina, especially the younger generation, ethnic nationalism and antisemitism spread in this milieu as well.⁵ According to Romanian data, Ukrainians comprised about 28% of the total population in Bukovina as a whole, and slightly more than 50% in its northern part. According to Mariana Hausleitner, the Ukrainians of northern Bukovina were the most persecuted minority in Greater Romania during the bulk of the interwar period until late 1930s, when this "privilege" was conferred upon the Jews. As a result, Ukrainian support for Romanian left-wing and left-of-center parties steadily deteriorated while they increasingly linked their hopes for a better future

⁴ Of the substantial scholarly literature on Romanian antisemitic movements and parties, some of the most important publications include: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Armin Heinen, *Die Legion "Ezenghel Michael" in Rumänien: Soziale Bewegung und politisch Organisation. Ein Beitrag zum problem des internationalen Faschismus* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986); Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, translated from the Romanian by Charles Kormos (New York: Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1991); Zigu Ornea, *Anii treizeci: Extrema dreapta românească* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației culturale române, 1995); Eugen Weber, "Romania," in *The European Right: A Historical Profile*, ed. Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1965), 501–574; and Jean Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evreească*, vol. 1, part 1 (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 2001). On the National Christian Party government see Paul Shapiro, "Prelude to Dictatorship in Romania: National Christian Party in Power, December 1937 to February 1938," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 8, no. 1 (Spring 1974), 45–88. On antisemitic movements in Bukovina, see Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001), 207–215, 250–264.

⁵ Hausleitner, 232, 254, 266–275.

to the project for an independent Ukrainian state. This movement was especially powerful among the Ukrainians of neighboring Galicia. As historian John-Paul Himka has recently argued, by the late 1930s the Ukrainian nationalist movement in Galicia had undergone a pronounced radicalization, becoming increasingly exclusivist in accordance with the dominant trend of nationalism at the time in Central Europe: "The language became more violent, the ideology more violent, the political practice more violent. Many of the same impulses that drove the Iron Guard in Romania and Ustaše in Yugoslavia also drove interwar Galicia Ukrainian nationalism."⁶

Romanian officials suspected all Jews of pro-Communist sympathies and considered them potential traitors to the Romanian state. Given the widespread antisemitism and official discrimination of minorities—particularly Jews—in all sections of society in Greater Romania, it is not surprising that some Bukovinian Jews leaned to the left, but to see them all as communists is absurd. In fact, the Communist Party of Romania was such a small and insignificant force (only about one thousand members for the whole country) that even if all its members were Jews (which they were not), they still would amount to only a negligible percentage of the Romanian Jewish minority.⁷

⁶ John-Paul Himka, *The Basic Identity Formation in Ukraine: A Typology*. The paper presented at the 37th national convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Salt Lake City, November 2005, p. 10. I thank Professor Himka for the permission to cite this paper. See also his "Ukrainian Collaboration in the Extermination of Jews During the Second World War: Sorting Out the Long-Term and Conjunctural Factors," in *The Fate of the European Jews, 1939-1945: Continuity or Contingency?*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 170–189. On the strong antisemitic stream in the Ukrainian nationalist movement during World War II see Karel C. Berkhoff and Marco Carynnyk, "The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets'ko's 1941 Zhyttepys," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 22, nos. 3–4 (December 1999), 149–184. On the same topic see also very persuasive analysis in Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 142–153; idem., *Sketches from a Civil War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 75–77, 157–158, 185–187; idem., "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing, 1943," *Past & Present*, 179 (May 2003), 203–208.

⁷ According to Vladimir Tismaneanu, the foremost historian of communism in Romania, the overall number of the Romanian Communist Party's members during the most of 1920s and 1930s was about 1,000; see idem., *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political*

The Soviet takeover of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina in June 1940 was carried out under conditions extremely humiliating to the Romanians, in particular to the army troops who were forced to relocate to the country's interior under rather chaotic conditions (no evacuation plans had been ever drawn up since the army was expected to fight for the national territory, not to abandon it) and heavy Soviet pressure. It was at this time that the Romanian press accused in the harshest and most explicit terms the Jews from the ceded territories of attacking Romanian troops from behind, looting their properties, arresting retreating troops and officials, insulting soldiers and civilians, and even firing unto army units. Most notoriously, influential historian and publicist Nicolae Iorga exclaimed in his newspaper *Neamul Românesc* in a July 6, 1940 article titled "Why such hatred?":

Documents and materials are being collected and brought together ... official statements and declarations are being taken under oath. High-ranking magistrates and brave officers who risked their lives to defend ... the withdrawal and exodus of the Romanians, saw with their own eyes innumerable acts of savagery, killings of innocents, rock-throwing, and jeering. All these infamous and criminal gestures were perpetrated by the furious Jewry, whose waves of hatred broke loose as if some unseen order had been given. Why such hatred?⁸

Significantly, as these lines were being written, the Army was collecting documents that precluded sweeping generalizations such as "the innumerable killings of innocents": according to the Romanian General Staff's report of July 1940, during the withdrawal the troops lost a total of five officers, of whom two committed suicide, two were shot by the Soviets, and one was shot dead by the (Romanians?) "while running."⁹ But press reports such as

History of Romanian Communism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 39. Hausleitner shows that social-democrats were more influential among Bukovinian Jews than communists, see idem., *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina*, 233–245.

⁸ Published in Ioan Scurtu and Constantin Hlihor, *Anul 1940: Drama românilor de peste Nistru* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, 1992), 150.

⁹ See document no. 106 in *Anul 1940: Armata română de la ultimatum la dictat. Documente*, vol. 1, ed. Florica Dobre, Vasilica Manea, and Lenuța Nicolescu (Bucharest:

Iorga's quoted were already creating a "powerful antisemitic movement" in the country.¹⁰

The stereotype of the Jew as an irreconcilable and perfidious enemy of the Romanian nation found its full-blown expression in these publications. But reality was otherwise. As documented by the army units reports collected by the Romanian General Staff, the withdrawing Romanian army was attacked and humiliated by people of all ethnicities, including ethnic Romanians, not only Jews. On the other hand, not all Jews participated in the anti-Romanian demonstrations. Besides, fewer Jews were involved in anti-Romanian incidents in Bukovina than in Bessarabia (which was part of the Russian empire in 1812-1918 and in which many Jews were Russian-speaking). Finally, while some Jews, especially younger people, did rejoice at seeing the Romanians' withdrawal—hardly a surprising development given the rising antisemitism of recent years—their demonstrations were much less violent than the media reports claimed, and no proven acts of murder of retreating Romanians were ever recorded.¹¹

Some Romanian senior officers saw the events accompanying the withdrawal as a useful opportunity to strengthen their troops' antisemitic feelings, which they considered an indispensable part of Romanian patriotism. Thus, General Mihail Racovița of the 2nd Cavalry Division reported in early July 1940 that he and other commanders were eager to "form and exploit ...

Editura Europa Nova, 2000), 265. More recent research on the fate of the alleged victims of Jewish violence corroborates these findings; see Mihail Pelin, *Legenda și adevăr* (Bucharest: Edart, 1994).

¹⁰ See, for example, the diary of Ion Hudița, an influential member of the opposition National Peasants' Party, which, though suppressed by a royal decree, in fact continued to function; idem., ed. by Dan Berindei, *Jurnal politic: Ianuarie 1940–6 septembrie 1940* (Iași: Institutul European, 1998), 231. Hudița noted conversations on the train in which he traveled during these days; his fellow travelers unquestioningly believed media reports such as this.

¹¹ These issues are analyzed in more detail in Vladimir Solonari, "'Model Province': Explaining the Holocaust of Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jewry," *Nationalities Papers*, 34, no. 4 (September 2006), 485–487. In a July 2003 interview granted to the author, one survivor from Bessarabia, Tina Grecu (Ester), explicitly mentioned that Jewish youth tended to be pro-Soviet and demonstrated their sympathies in 1940, while older people were wary of their eventual fate under the Soviets. Her parents fled west of the Pruth River; she decided to stay.

this legitimate antisemitic current in order to cultivate rage against the Soviet army, which had permitted Judaic debauchery.”¹²

With the advent of Soviet administration in Bessarabia and Bukovina, those local residents (probably a small minority) who had tied their future to the Soviet regime were quickly disabused of their illusions. Persecution began in the first months of Soviet rule and lasted until its final days in early July 1941. All political activists belonging to non-Communist parties were subject to arrest, and former Romanian state functionaries, intellectuals, and those branded as “landlords and capitalist elements” were subject to deportation. Jews alongside other ethnic groups were victims of these repressions. In particular, leading Zionists, Social Democrats from the *Arbeitbund* union of Jewish workers, and respected journalists were arrested and deported. In addition, Jewish entrepreneurs and property-owners had their businesses confiscated and nationalized. Though Jewish newspapers, theaters, and schools were allowed to remain in operation, the content of their production was heavily controlled by the Soviet state. Some of the properties of Jewish organizations were also nationalized—for example, the Jewish National House in Cernăuți became the House of Red Army Officers. Moreover, former members of the local communist underground, few though they were, were not promoted into positions of authority by the new regime; rather, cadres were imported from eastern regions of Ukraine to administer the newly-acquired province.¹³ On June 12–13, 1941, the Soviets deported to the eastern territories of the USSR (mostly to Siberia) more than 7,600 people from the Chernivtsi region of Ukraine (which included northern Bukovina, the Herța plasă, and Hotin counties of Bessarabia; from the rest of Bessarabia 17,000 to 22,000 people were deported).¹⁴ Though available sources do not indicate the ethnic composition of those deported, it is fair enough to assume that Jews were well-represented among them, since the Soviet sources mention as

¹² Dobre, et al., *Anul 1940: Armata română*, vol. 1, 159.

¹³ See Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina*, 354–356, 363–366; Arkadii Zhukovs'kyi, *Istoriia Bukovyny*, part 1 (Chernivtsi: Redaktsiino-vydavnychy viddil oblpohrafvydav, 1991–1993), 177–178.

¹⁴ See documents published in Valerii Ivanovich Pasat, ed., *Trudnye stranitsy istorii Moldovy: 1940–1950-e gg.* (Moscow: Terra, 1994), 161, 164–165.

categories of deportees “factory- [and] tradesmen,” i.e., occupations in which Jews were in fact disproportionately represented.¹⁵

The Soviet regime defined its political enemies primarily in class terms (though sometimes, especially in the final stages of World War II and in the immediate postwar period it persecuted particular nationalities branded as “enemy nations”).¹⁶ In 1940–1941, the Jews of northern Bukovina suffered at the hands of the Soviets not as Jews but as members of particular social and political groups; in this sense their fate was not very different from that of other ethnic groups in the region. But with the return of Romanian authorities the situation changed drastically. By June 22, 1941, when Romania in alliance with Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the Romanian regime had undergone a profound transformation. King Carol II (1930–1940) had been deposed, and from early September 1940 the country had been ruled by the dictator (Conducător) General Ion Antonescu, an extreme, xenophobic nationalist and Nazi sympathizer. Antonescu was committed to the idea of the complete “purification” of his country of all minorities, and in this he was supported by many a Romanian bureaucrat and nationalist intellectual. However, in practice the regime’s policy towards national minorities was subject to various constraints. In particular, Antonescu was aware that sudden “removal” of all minorities in a single stroke would cause too great a disruption to the country’s economy. Consequently, he envisioned the gradual “cleansing” of the country’s economy of all non-ethnic Romanians, of Jews above all, and their eventual expulsion from Romanian territory after the war. Some minorities would have to be “exchanged” with neighboring countries in return for the ethnic Romanians living there, for example with Hungary; others would have to be dumped in the territories of the losers of the war, such as Soviet Ukraine. Jews were to be eliminated in the most radical way by simply deporting them “across the Ural mountains.”¹⁷

¹⁵ On the categories of deportees see *ibid.*, 146, 711. The text of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee’s May 14, 1941 resolution was never found, but its content was summarized in a February 10, 1956 Ministry of Internal Affairs memorandum.

¹⁶ On the shift from class-based to ethnicity-based persecution under Stalin, see Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 138–190.

¹⁷ On Antonescu’s regime and his vision of and policy for an ethnically pure Romania, see Solonari, ““Model Province,”” 473–485 and *idem.*, “An Important New

This vision was, however, for the future and its implementation was conditioned by the favorable – from Antonescu’s perspective – outcome of the war. For the time being, Antonescu had to be content with creating from the soon-to-be-“liberated” Bessarabia and Bukovina what he called “model provinces,” i.e. ethnically “pure” regions governed directly by him via his plenipotentiary representatives, the governors of the provinces. The provinces were to be “models” in the sense that they would set an example for the transformation of rest of the country after the war. The first stage in this plan was the “cleansing” of Bessarabia and Bukovina of their Jewish populations. Part of them had to be murdered in the first weeks of the war under the cover of combat operations and the rest had to be deported “to the east,” i.e., to the rump Russian state allowed to remain after the German victory, of which he was confident at the time.¹⁸

On June 30, 1941, just two days before the German breakthrough in northern Bessarabia that caused the Soviet retreat and allowed Romanian and German penetration into Bessarabia and Bukovina, Ion Antonescu issued verbal instructions to the commanders of the “large [army] units” (regiment and up) that effectively incited the military to murder Jews:

Enemy agents working behind the frontlines are attempting to commit acts of sabotage, giving the enemy signals or supplying him with information, and even assaulting isolated soldiers. *The Jewish population participates in this activity.* General Antonescu ... gave an order that all those who act *in any way* against the army and against the interests of the nation are to be executed on the spot. [Italics added].¹⁹

Following this order, many in the Romanian military of all ranks engaged in the indiscriminate killing of Jewish civilians in the provinces. To cite just one example, on July 8, 1941, as the 13th Mountain Troops Regiment (Vânători de munte) entered the village Cupca (Kupka) in northern

Document on Romanian Policy of Ethnic Cleansing during World War II,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 20, no. 2 (Fall 2007), 268–297.

¹⁸ See Solonari, ““Model Province,”” 485–491.

¹⁹ Published in Matatias Carp, ed., *Cartea neagră*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Editura Diogene, 1996; first edition – 1946), 46.

Bukovina, its commander, Colonel Justin Marinoiu, immediately ordered that all Jews be apprehended and shot. He insisted on the same treatment for Jews in the nearby villages of Serata, Adîncata, and Chelmenţi. In a post-war trial, his subordinate, Colonel Ernest Albustin, testified that Marinoiu had received no orders for the killings and had acted on his own initiative. All over northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, Jews were accused of attacking Romanian troops from behind, but in reality it was the Jews who were being killed as Jews.²⁰

The bulk of the dirty work, however, was not performed by Army vigilantes and volunteers, but by specially created death squads (*echipe de execuţii*). Newly available archival materials allow for tracing the creation and application of this mechanism of systematic murder in one military unit, the Seventh Cavalry Regiments from the Fifth Cavalry Division, which fought in northern Bessarabia in June–July 1941.²¹ In early July 1941, immediately after crossing the Pruth river the regiment's commander, Colonel Gheorghe Carp, summoned all officers and ordered them to form death squads from among the NCOs to "cleanse the localities" through which the regiment would pass "of Jews and Communists," killing everybody "from infants in swaddling clothes to old men with white beards."²² Two death squads were formed the same day, drawn mostly from volunteers but also from the appointment of ordinary soldiers by their superiors.²³ The death squads began their murderous activity immediately, and their "achievements" were indeed impressive. In Bessarabia alone they killed hundreds, maybe thousands of civilians, mostly Jews but also those who had collaborated with the Soviets in 1940–1941, and they continued in the same vein after crossing the Dniester River. Probably the bloodiest massacre they perpetrated took place in the Bessarabian town of Edineţ, in which the army and later the gendarmerie executed at least 537 people, almost all of them Jews.²⁴ The situation was quite similar in other big Romanian units. Especially well documented are crimes perpetrated by,

²⁰ TSAFSB, 1083, 283–285, 314, USHMM Archives, RG-06.025.06.

²¹ ASRI, 64472 vols. 1–2, USHMM Archives, RG-25-004, reel 128.

²² Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 107, 114, 118, 142; vol. 2, pp. 4, 137, 154, 403.

²³ Ibid., pp. 107, 159–160; vol. 2, pp. 137, 149–150, 154, 198–199, 215, 234.

²⁴ ANRM, 1026/ 2/ 13 p. 53, USHMM Archives, RG-54-001, reel 14.

in Jean Ancel's words, a "very small group of soldiers" under the command of Major Gheorghe Vartic, second-in-command to General Olimpiu Stavrat, Commander of the 7th Infantry Division. This division was advancing in the Herța district, in northern Bukovina and the adjacent districts of northern Bessarabia. Vartic was Pretor (Prosecutor) of the 7th Division, and his responsibility included overseeing the rear services and ensuring rear safety.²⁵ In this capacity, Vartic was also subordinated to General Ion Topor, Great Pretor of the Romanian army who was one of the key figures in cleansing operations. Wherever this division went, Vartic and his death squads left behind literally piles of dead bodies, mostly Jews, including men, women, and children, randomly executed under the bogus pretense of attacking the Romanian troops from behind and sometimes without any pretense at all.²⁶

The gendarmerie played an even greater role than the Army in the mass murder of Jews. The Romanian gendarmerie was a military police entrusted with maintaining order in rural areas of the country. In wartime supplementary gendarme battalions were created as the army's rearguard. On the eve of the war against the USSR, gendarme units were reconstituted to serve in soon-to-be-"liberated" northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, staffed by the very same officers and non-commissioned officers who had served there before June 1940. During the military operations in Bessarabia and northern Bukovina they were subordinated to the Army, and namely to the Grand Pretor (Prosecutor) General Ion Topor. As soon as the provinces were "liberated" and the front advanced further east, the gendarmerie from Bessarabia and Bukovina were re-subordinated to Inspector General of Gendarmerie Constantin "Pikky" Vasiliu, who simultaneously served as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. In effect, Vasiliu exercised control over those units, although legally he was not their commander.²⁷

It was probably Vasiliu's idea to recall to the newly-liberated provinces

²⁵ See Jean Ancel, "The Romanian Way of Solving the 'Jewish Problem,'" *Yad Vashem Studies* 19 (1988), 199–207. Herța Jews shared in 1941–1944 the fate of their North Bukovinian and Bessarabian brethren.

²⁶ ASRI, 20521, vol. 4/1948 92, 293, USHMM, 25.004, reel 23.

²⁷ See the testimony of Gendarme General Constantin Tobescu, who worked directly subordinate to General Vasiliu in Bucharest, TSAFSB, H-18767, vol. 2, pp. 279–312, USHMM Archives, RG-06.025M, reel 43.

those same gendarme officers who served there before 1940 and had since been dispersed throughout the gendarme units all over the country. The explicit aim was to facilitate ethnic and political cleansing: it was believed that those men were the most knowledgeable regarding the local population and would be readily able to tell “traitors” and Jews from loyalists and Christians.²⁸ In the first days of July 1941, General Vasiliu summoned the gendarme officers who were to return to southern Bessarabia to the Danube port Galaț, those who were to head to central and northern Bessarabia to the town Roman in the Romanian province of Moldova, and those slated to return to northern Bukovina (as well as part of northern Bessarabia, which was included in the restored and enlarged province of Bukovina) and to the town Fălticeni in southern Bukovina. What happened there, especially in Galaț and Roman (about Fălticeni we know much less), can be reconstructed with a sufficient degree of certainty from numerous eyewitness accounts recorded in the dossiers of postwar trials.

In all three localities Vasiliu called on the gendarme officers to unflinchingly fulfill their patriotic duty, making it clear that their immediate task upon their return to Bessarabia and northern Bukovina was to “cleanse the terrain” from communists (“suspects”) and Jews. Either on the eve of or immediately after the more inclusive assembly, Vasiliu held meetings with high officers, among them Provincial Gendarme Inspector of Bessarabia Colonel Teodor Meculescu, during which he further elucidated his plans: all Jews in the rural areas were to be murdered, while camps and ghettos were to be set up for the internment of urban Jews; all “Communists” (or “suspects”) were to be shot on the spot.²⁹

²⁸ ASRI, 20725, vol. 9, p. 82. (Deposition of Gendarme Major Traian Drăgulescu, Commander of Hotin Gendarme Legion, Bukovina province), USHMM Archives, RG-25-004M, reel 26.

²⁹ The term “cleansing of the terrain” (“*curățirea terenului*”) was used for the first time, it seems, by Mihai Antonescu, a distant relative of the dictator and his closest collaborator (at the time he was a Minister of State, from June 21, 1941 deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers) in a June 12, 1941 telegram from Bucharest to the Governors of Bessarabia and Bukovina, General Constantin Voiculescu and Colonel Alexandru R. Rioșanu: “confirming the general principles of the regime in the provinces which had been laid down in Bucharest [on a prior occasion]: ... to secure cleansing of the terrain from communists, removal of Bolsheviks, of unreliable elements, of Jewish provocateurs, removal of Jews residing in the villages.” (ASRI, 20725, vol. 7, pp. 5–12, esp. p. 9,

The plan proceeded almost without a hitch in Bessarabia, mostly due to the uncompromising enforcement of Vasiliu's murderous orders by Province Gendarme Inspector Colonel Meculescu. Meculescu had attended the conferences at both Galați and Roman. Many of his former subordinates testified in the postwar trials to Meculescu's constant exhortations to murder, as well as his threats to severely punish—to the point of execution—anybody who dared to disobey.³⁰ Meculescu's efforts were not in vain: all over Bessarabia his men systematically killed Jews for about two months, from early July to late August.

In Bukovina, however, the plan did not proceed as "smoothly." The most obvious and crucial reason for this was the failure of Meculescu's counterpart in that province, Colonel Ioan Mănecuța, to enforce the "cleansing order" as relentlessly as Meculescu had in Bessarabia. Mănecuța, who did not participate in the Fălticeni conference, received the order from General Topor and then transmitted it to his subordinates, commanders of county Gendarme Legions.³¹ However, Mănecuța did not display any zeal in ensuring its implementation and even distanced himself from it.³²

USHMM Archives, RG-25-004M, reel 25; and file 40010, vol. 1, 92 reel 31). Many witnesses testify that this term was later used by Vasiliu, as well as Meculescu and his subordinates, while instructing the lower ranks, often with reference to the "orders from above." Whether the term was actually used or not, witnesses tended to agree that the meaning of the order was quite clear; see *ibid.*, 18424, vol. 2, pp. 182, 192, reel 17; 20521, vol. 2, p. 443, vol. 10, p. 249, reel 23; 20725, vol. 1, p. 13; 40015, vol. 3, p. 266v., 18209, vol. 2, p. 485v., reel 78; 582, vol. 2, pp. 234–234v., 257, reel 119; 18621 vol. 1, pp. 4–5, reel 120; 64472, vol. 1, pp. 20, 107, vol. 2, pp. 414–15, reel 128.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22539, vol. 12, pp. 228–230, 358–361, 391, USHMM Archives, RG-25.004, reel 16; 22539, vol. 45, pp. 14, 57–58, reel 17; 20725, vol. 4, p. 247, vol. 5, p. 154, 243–244, 249, 256v, reel 24; 18209, vol. 2, pp. 485–485v, reel 78.

³¹ In the 1946 trial, Meculescu was sentenced to fifteen years' maximum-security imprisonment (*temnița grea*) plus ten years' deprivation of civil rights, while Mănecuța was sentenced to five years' correctional imprisonment and five years' deprivation of civil rights; *ibid.*, 22539 vol. 12, pp. 456, 459. Their divergent records, as will be shown below, fully justify this difference in punishment.

³² As Hotin county Gendarme Legion chief Major Traian Drăgulescu testified, Mănecuța made Drăgulescu convey the order to his subordinates, the chiefs of gendarme sections, in July or early August 1941, while conspicuously remaining outside the meeting room. Gendarmes, who were well-versed in "reading" the behavior of their bosses, could hardly fail to get the message. See *ibid.*, 20725 vol. 9, p. 82, reel 25, and vol. 14, p. 1, reel 26.

This situation opened the door for all kinds of arbitrary decisions on the part of the gendarmes. As Mănecuța himself put it, “every gendarme proceeded as his conscience dictated.”³³ Thus, the actions of the two Gendarme Legion commanders Majors Traian Drăgulescu and Gheorghe Berzescu (overseeing operations in Hotin and Storojineț counties, respectively) were very different. Drăgulescu was not an antisemite: he was happily married to a Jewish woman. But Drăgulescu was also an opportunist and a hypocrite, tormented by the fear of losing his job, of not being promoted, or—still worse—being sent to the front. Hence, he resolved to follow Mănecuța’s lead: he transmitted the order further down the chain of command, but then abstained from enforcing it, leaving it to the conscience of his men to determine whether and how precisely to implement the order.³⁴ As a result, the record of the gendarmerie in Hotin county was uneven: while in some villages Jews were shot, in others they were “merely” detained and deported.³⁵

Major Gheorghe Berzescu also received General Topor’s order to “cleanse the territory” via Colonel Mănecuța as Drăgulescu had, but unlike

³³ Ibid., vol. 9, reel 25, p. 199.

³⁴ See his surprisingly eloquent and informative ten-page-long deposition in *ibid.*, 20725, vol. 9, p. 82, reel 25. Drăgulescu died in prison under investigation, but posthumously in 1941 his wife was able to bring many Jewish witnesses from Hotin to testify to his help and support (*ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 252–299; vol. 10, pp. 65, 67, 320, reel 23).

³⁵ According to Soviet sources, in late July 1941, approximately 540 (!) people, mostly Jews, were shot at the village of Climăuți by Romanian soldiers and the chief of gendarme post Ion Darângă. Smaller massacres organized by the chiefs of gendarme posts took place at the town Otaci (Ataki, chief of post Dumitrievici), at the villages Berlinți and Medecăuți, as well as nine other villages. (On Climăuți, Otaci, and Berlinți see ANRM, 1026/2/ 27, pp. 19–21, USHMM Archives, RG-54.002 M, reel 5; Medecăuți Soviet Extraordinary Commission, Chernivtsy region of Ukraine, GARF, 7021/79 Sokirianskii raion, pp. 103-103v., USHMM Archives, RG-25.002, reel 16. On other villages, see *ibid.*, p. 15; File 17, p. 172.) In Lipcani township and in the villages Tețcani and Trânca the Jews were rounded up and deported by the gendarmes to the concentration camps, but not shot—in stark contrast to neighboring Bessarabia, where Jews from the rural areas almost never escaped death once they were caught by the gendarmes. (On Lipcani see ANRM, 2084, especially p. 17; on Tețcani, see *ibid.*, File 5201, especially pp. 127v. –128; on Trânca, see *ibid.*, file 2877, especially p. 23, USHMM Archives, RG-54.003M. Copies of the files from this archive are on microfiches, to be located by file number).

Drăgulescu, he refused to transmit it down the line and it had no effect in the territory under his supervision. Indeed, it appears that none of the gendarmes under his command participated in the killing operations in July–August 1941, although they did participate in the arrest and beatings of Soviet activists.³⁶

The behavior of Berzescu's gendarmes contrasts favorably not only with those of Drăgulescu, but also with those of Legion Commander Major Constantin Cichendel, in charge of the neighboring Cernăuți county. Records of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission for Investigation Wartime Crimes by the Fascists and their Accomplices testify that in July and August 1941 Cichendel's men killed dozens, probably hundreds of Jews, although the major massacres there were perpetrated, as in the Storojineț county, by the Romanian and German armies.³⁷

The most difficult mission of Berzescu's gendarmes was to secure control and maintain order in the northernmost Storojineț county, which bordered with Galicia, a stronghold of Ukrainian nationalism. Here the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) established its densest network of operatives, who managed to seize power at the time of the Soviet withdrawal. Acting under the direct command of the Ukrainian National Committee in Lublin they created Ukrainian National Guard detachments and formed organs of local power, effectively controlling the situation during the period between the departure of the Soviets and the arrival of the Romanians. As the Governor of Bukovina in the provincial capital Cernăuți related to Ion Antonescu in September and October 1941, the first flag that was hoisted in many localities of Cernăuți and Storojineț counties was the Ukrainian one, and in village of Ștăneștii de Jos and in some other places the local population even had honored that flag in public ceremonies. The OUN militia also engaged retreating Red Army troops in numerous skirmishes.³⁸

³⁶ In one such case, namely in the village Lucovăț de Sus, several people reportedly died from the gendarme's beatings. See GARF 7021/ 79 Vyzhnitskii raion, pp. 14–16, USHMM Archives, RG-25.002M, reel 15.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, Gertsaevskii, Zastavnianskii, Kitsmanskii, Sadgorskii, and Chernovitskii raiony, reels 14–15.

³⁸ Arkadii Zhukov'skyi, *Istoriia Bukovyny*, part 2, 145–146; Vasyl' Veriga, "Bukovyn'skyi kuryn' 1941–1944," in *Na zov Kyeva: Ukrain's'kyi natsionalizm y II svitovii viiny. Zbirnik stattei, spogadiv i dokumentiv* (New York: Novyi Shliakh, 1985), 109–110;

According to all available Soviet, Romanian, and Jewish sources, simultaneously with establishing their control in these localities the OUN militia proceeded to cleanse them of Jews. In particular, the events in the village of Ștănești de Jos (Stanivtsy Dolishnye in Russian and Ukrainian) can be reconstructed with unusual precision due to the abundance of sources.³⁹ In early July 1941, between the Soviet withdrawal and the arrival of Romanian troops, a Ukrainian nationalist committee formed the village and effectively took control of the situation. One of its first acts was to begin arresting local Jews and detaining them in the mayor's office (*primaria* in Romanian, *sel'skii sovet* in Russian) and on the premises of the local sawmill. In a postwar trial one of the accused recounted that members of the committee had been given the order to arrest all Jews and to turn them over to the Romanian troops once the latter arrived.⁴⁰ Whether that order involved the actual killing of Jews or not,

Andrii Duda and Volodymyr Staryk, *Bukovyns'kii kuryr' v boiakh za ukrains'ku derzhavnist', 1918, 1941, 1944* (Chernivtsi: Ukrainskyi Narodnyi Dim v Chernivtsah, 1955), 55–59, 182–184; and Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung in der Bukowina*, 313–318. See also Bukovina Governor Corneliu Calotescu's September 20 and October 29, 1941 memoranda to Ion Antonescu in OA, 492/1/12, pp. 100–105 and 120–129, as well as a October 31, 1941 secret police note in *ibid.*, 492/1/10, no pagination, USHMM Archives, RG-25.007M, reel 1.

³⁹ See GDASBU, 2615, USHMM Archives, RG-31.018M, reel 21; GARF, 7021/79/125, pp. 5, 40–42v, USHMM Archives, RG-22.002M, reel 14; ASRI, 18621, vol. 2, pp. 36–44v, USHMM Archives, RG-25.004M; Marius Mircu, *Ce s-a întâmplat cu evreii în și din România*, vol. 2 (Bat Yam, Israel: Editura GLOB, 1996), 71–76 (first published in 1945 as *Pogromurile din Bukovina și Dorohoi*). The full title of the Soviet Extraordinary Commission was: “Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Crimes of the Fascist German Invaders and Their Accomplices, and of the Damage they caused to Citizens, Collective Farms, Public Organizations, State Enterprises, and Institutions of the USSR.” On the history and operation of the Extraordinary Commission, see Marina Sorokina, “People and Procedures: Toward a history of the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the USSR,” *Kritika* 6, no. 4 (Fall 2005), 797–831.

⁴⁰ GDASBU, 2615, p. 180, USHMM Archives, RG-31, reel 21. I believe that the order originated in Lublin in Nazi-occupied Poland or in L'viv in Galicia from the Ukrainian Committee with which Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina had close ties. Many Ukrainian historians, while acknowledging that OUN underground organizations resurfaced in the last days of the Soviet withdrawal, deny OUN responsibility for the persecution of Jews. Instead, these historians claim that it was Romanians who

such killings began to occur even before contact with the Romanian army was established. The arrival of Romanian troops commenced a full-scale pogrom. Killings continued until the arrival of the Romanian gendarmes under Major Berzescu, who immediately ordered the killings to be stopped.⁴¹ In the end, between 80 and 130 local Jews were killed, most from Stăneștii de Jos and the remainder from nearby villages. Some of the killings were perpetrated with exceptional cruelty. Ukrainian nationalist militias also arrested, mistreated, and killed Jews at Milie (Milia in Romanian, Milievo in Russian and Ukrainian) and Răstioace (Rostoki in Russian and Ukrainian), and possibly at other places as well. In many localities Ukrainian nationalists were at this time rounding up and imprisoning Jews, in many cases either killing them or transferring them to the Romanian army and gendarmerie for execution.⁴²

Also acting as a systematic murderous force against the Jews of northern Bukovina in July 1941 was one of the four Einsatzgruppen (SS extermination brigades); Einsatzgruppe D was assigned to the Romanian sector of the front. While later in the war the Einsatzgruppen would be tasked with the systematic extermination of all Jews, in July 1941 their target was limited to the Jews seen as potentially the most dangerous, such as male

were arresting and killing Jews; one of those historians goes as far as to claim that Ukrainians were “upset” by the Romanian policy to persecute Jews. See Andrii Duda, *Bukovyns'kyi kuryn' v boiah za ukrains'ku derzhavnist'.* 1918–1941–1944, 61.

⁴¹ Marius Mircu, *Ce s-a întâmplat cu evreii în și din România*, vol. 2, 73–75. Mircu even claims that the gendarmes attempted to free some of those detained, but the Ukrainians would not let them do it.

⁴² See Mircu, *Ce s-a întâmplat*, vol. 2, 46–48; GARF, 7021/79 Vyzhnitskii raion, pp. 1, 109, RG-22- 002M, reel 14. See Andrej Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord: Die Einsatzgruppe D in der südlichen Sowjetunion 1941–1943* (Hamburg: Hamburg Edition, 2003), 157. Angrick cites post-war testimonies of Jewish survivors. In some cases existing sources are not sufficient for establishing whether the anti-Jewish violence of local Ukrainians was organized by the underground nationalist organization or whether it was “spontaneous.” This is why, for example, Angrick refers to the massacres in Rostoki as carried out by the Romanian army units together with “local rabble” but then suggests that it was Ukrainian nationalist militia units who carried out the killings (Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord*, 155, 157). Angrick again mentions the “local rabble” in his discussion about massacres in Banilov (*ibid.*, 155), but Soviet Extraordinary State Commission documents clearly show that 197 Jews were massacred there by a “band”—a term reserved for nationalist armed formations led by a certain Ivan Kolotilo (GARF, 7021-79-125, pp. 4, 57).

members of the Jewish intelligentsia and community and religious leaders. However, any sign of “suspicious” activity, even if not directly traceable to “the Jews,” could lead to mass executions of detained Jews. One of the companies of the Einsatzgruppe D, Einsatzkommando 10b (under Commander Alois Persterer), arrived in Cernăuți on July 6 and immediately proceeded to fulfill its murderous task. The next day they selected and interrogated male Jewish intellectuals, and although they found no “politically damnable” evidence, executed 101 of them. Together with the Romanian army and police, the Einsatzkommando arrested and interned in the former Palace of Culture about 2,000 “suspicious” Jews, of whom more than 500 were machine-gunned by the Romanians on July 9. The remainder, who ostensibly had been released, were then shot while exiting from the Palace and later along the streets of the city. The total number of Jewish victims of the first days of terror is estimated at approximately 2,000.⁴³

Jews from the rural areas who had survived the first wave of mass murder were interned in transit camps and eventually deported across the Dniester River, “to the east.” The Romanian authorities’ original intention was to completely “cleanse” both provinces of Jews in the first weeks of the war, dumping the survivors across the Dniester into the rump Russian state, and eventually sending them beyond the Volga or even the Urals.⁴⁴ The deportees would thus be destined to die en route of hunger, exhaustion, and inevitable epidemics. However, the war was not developing exactly to Antonescu’s liking: instead of ending in a rapid German victory, it was dragging on. The German army command did not like the Romanian idea of massing Romanian Jews in the rear of their frontline troops, and consequently ordered them back to the west, across the Dniester. After some wrangling the Romanians finally succumbed, delaying their plans for cleansing the provinces of Jews. Though the Romanians stubbornly refused to accept the Jews back, the Germans forced some, probably the majority,

⁴³ Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord*, 148–155, 159.

⁴⁴ Cf. Antonescu’s October 6, 1941 disclosure to the Council of Ministers that he intended to “cast [the Jews] across the Ural mountains” in Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, Aurelian Teodorescu, Bogdan Florin Popovici, eds., *Stenogramele sedintelor Consiliului de Miniștri: Guvernarea Ion Antonescu*, vol. 5, 5 (hereinafter referred to as Ciucă, ed., *Stenogramele*).

of the deportee columns back across the Dniester. Consequently, the Jews were even more exhausted, with a countless number of them dying or barely able to move. Some Jewish deportees whom Romanians categorically refused to accept back in their territory were shot by German and Romanian soldiers. International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania estimates that number as anywhere between eight and ten thousand.⁴⁵

Despite this setback, Antonescu was determined to see through to the end his plan for the “purification” of the two provinces. On August 30 in the Bessarabian town of Tighina (Bender), Romanian General Tătăranu and German General Hauffe signed an agreement transferring the territory between the Dniester and Southern Bug Rivers to Romanian jurisdiction until the end of the war. The 7th and final article of this document provided for the deportation of Romanian Jews into that region (Romanians called it Transnistria, literally “across the Dniester”) until the termination of hostilities, at which point their deportation further “to the east” would become possible.⁴⁶

In anticipation of this deportation, Romanian authorities began gathering Jews from Bessarabia and northern Bukovina in concentration camps and ghettos. Some of those were purely transit camps and rather small; Jews were kept there a few days before being sent to the larger camps. Jews from northern Bukovina were concentrated in the camps located in northern Bessarabia, Hotin county (under wartime Romanian rule this Bessarabian county was included in the reconstituted province of Bukovina). The largest camps were at Secureni and Edineț, each holding more than ten thousand inmates in late August and early September 1941. Conditions in the camps were awful and the death rate was appalling. In the Edineț camp, according to the eyewitnesses whose testimonies were recorded by the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission, ten to fifteen people died every day, bringing the overall number to 304; corpses were interred in mass graves

⁴⁵ See International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, Final Report (Iași: Polirom, 2005), p. 136. More on failed deportations see *ibid.*, p. 134-136; Jean Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evreească*, vol. 1, part 2, 146–158; and Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord*, 198–205.

⁴⁶ The German and Romanian versions of the document are published in *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust*, vol. 5, ed. Jean Ancel (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), 59–63; and *ibid.*, vol. 9, 188–189 (hereinafter referred to as Ancel, *Documents*).

400 meters from the camp.⁴⁷ In Sochireni the mortality rate was in all probability even higher: one survivor claimed that hundreds of Jews died every day.⁴⁸ To receive meager rations, Jews were required to perform hard labor. There was a lack of basic sanitation, with the simplest medications and even soap not available. When the inevitable typhus epidemic flared up, the authorities, rather than improving the Jews' conditions, concentrated their efforts on limiting the inmates' contacts with the local Christians in order to prevent the disease from spreading outside the camp.⁴⁹

In the fall of 1941, deportations to Transnistria were carried out in the most barbaric manner (the Jews from both northern and southern Bukovina were deported together with those from Herța plasa and Dorohoi county, as Herța, part of the historical province of Moldavia, had been included in the 1941 reconstruction and enlargement of the province of Bukovina). On September 7, General Topor had issued instructions stating that evacuation from the Vertujeni camp would begin on September 10.⁵⁰ The order contained, among others, the following elliptic phrase: "10. Method of treatment of those who do not obey? (Alexianu)." The meaning of this code was disclosed by Commander of the 60th Police Company Lieutenant Augustin Roșca in his declaration to the Commission of Inquiry into the Irregularities of Chișinău Ghetto in December 1941 (Nicolaescu commission, after the name of its chair General Nicolaescu).⁵¹ Simply put, it meant that all those

⁴⁷ See GARF, 1026/1/2, pp. 2–2v., reel 2.

⁴⁸ GARF, 7021/79 Sokiriansky raion, p. 64–65.

⁴⁹ More on these camps see in Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evreească*, vol. 1, part 2, 186–199.

⁵⁰ The bill of indictment of Voiculescu contains a reference to Voiculescu's mentioning this oral order; see ASRI, 22539/12, p. 209, USHMM Archives, RG-25.004M, reel 16. One can gauge the sensitivity of the issue at the time from the fact that Voiculescu's activities report to Antonescu from the end of 1941 did not mention this order at all as the basis of deportation. See ANRM, 706/1/22, p. 6 USHMM Archives, RG-54.001M, reel 1. General Topor's instructions see *ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵¹ The full text is available in ASRI 21227/2, pp. 6–7, excerpt published as document 145 in Comisia internațională pentru studierea Holocaustului din România, *Documente*, ed. Lya Benjamin (Iași: Polirom, 2005), 320 (hereinafter referred to as ICFR, *Documente*). This treatment was called the "Alexianu method" because the governor of Transnistria wanted to receive as few Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina as pos-

Jews who could not keep up with the column “due to their weakness or illness” were to be shot. Two to three days prior to the departure of the convoy, Roșca was to send one of his subordinates to the localities along the route to prepare the terrain for executions. Graves for approximately 100 bodies each were to be dug at ten-kilometer intervals at a sufficient distance from the villages to keep the “screams and shots inaudible” to the inhabitants. The authorities were instructed to mobilize the local population, especially youth of pre-military age (*premilitarii*), for the tasks of digging graves and interring the corpses after the executions.

The gendarmes and policemen assigned to the operation strictly adhered to these instructions. Thus, Roșca declared that this order was in toto, and as a result about 500 Jews were shot en route from Securenii to Atachi, a town on the Dniester from whence they crossed the river into Transnistria. This was most certainly an understatement, because the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission later discovered two kilometers from the camp four graves where 1,650 corpses were buried; these were, according to eye-witnesses, bodies of Jews from the camp shot during their deportation to Transnistria.⁵² The same “treatment” was accorded to Jews deported from the Edineț camp (the operation was carried out under the command of Roșca’s deputy Lieutenant Victor Popovici).⁵³ Before crossing to Transnistria, representatives of the National Bank of Romania confiscated any valuables the Jews carried with them, such as gold, jewelry, Romanian *lei*, and foreign currency; in exchange the Jews were given Soviet rubles or *Reichskassenschein* (Reich credit certificates), a quasi-currency issued by the Germans for use in the occupied Soviet territories. This exchange took place at fixed rates of

sible. See his activities report of November 1941 in DACHO 307/3/4, pp. 65–66 USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 37.

⁵² GARF, 7021/79/number of file illegible Sokiriansky raion, p. 5.

⁵³ See ICHR, *Documente*, 320. During the 1953 investigation and trial, Popovici claimed that though he received this order he ignored it, and as a result the Jews were not shot. Though the court accepted his version and absolved him, while sentencing Roșca to six years’ imprisonment in a special treatment institution, the supporting evidence appears to have been slim. See ASRI, 21227 vol. 1. In assessing these trials and sentences one should bear in mind that it took place during a period of growing antisemitism in the Soviet block. For more on these deportations, see Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evrească*, vol. 2, part 2, 191–194, 199.

forty times (for *lei*) to one hundred times (for gold) lower than the true rate. This “exchange,” in essence a robbery, was carried out with great brutality.⁵⁴

Throughout the summer and fall of 1941, as most Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina were detained in the concentration camps, the city of Cernăuți remained the only place in those provinces where survivors of the first wave of murder lived in relative security. Until October 12, no ghetto had yet been established there and Jews were free to move about the city—an exception made possible by the courageous resistance of the municipal administration headed by Mayor Traian Popovici, who sabotaged antisemitic orders from above. However, following Antonescu’s October 10 decree to immediately create a ghetto and to begin deportations of all Jews from the city on October 14, Governor Calotescu was finally able to crush the resistance of Popovici and his group. The ghetto was erected and preparations for deportations ensued.⁵⁵

Still, on October 15 Antonescu issued an order to allow 15,000 “economically useful” Jews to remain in the city of Cernăuți. This surprise reversal of the initial order is usually attributed to Traian Popovici’s influence, but it seems that the real answer to this mystery lies elsewhere. Without detracting from the noble memory of Traian Popovici—a great humanist and Romanian patriot, a man of remarkable modesty and honesty, whom Yad Vashem granted, in 1989, the honorable title “Righteous among the Nations,” and after whom a street in Bucharest was named in 2002—it appears that this traditional view needs reconsideration. It is almost certain that the real impetus for Antonescu’s change of position came from the German consul in the city, Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn. At an October 15 meeting with Bukovina Governor General Calotescu, Schellhorn protested the decision to deport all of the city’s Jews on the grounds that they were absolutely indispensable to the “economic reconstruction of the province,” particularly in such vital local industries as lumber, and that indiscriminate deportation could impede the German war effort.

⁵⁴ See relevant documents in ANRM, 706/1/22, pp. 97–105, USHMM Archives, RG-54-001M, reel 1, and the undated note of the Minister of Finance in *ibid.*, 586 vol. 1, RG-54.002M, reel 13.

⁵⁵ See Traian Popovici’s memoir, *Spevedania/Testimony*, English translation by Viviane Prager ([N.p.]: Fundația Dr. W. Filderman, [n.d.]) (first published, 1945), 10–38. For a more detailed description of the events in Cernăuți, see Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evrească*, vol. 1, part 2, 230–277.

Schellhorn's solution was to select those Jews who were "absolutely necessary for economic reconstruction" and to spare them from deportation. The selected Jews, however, were to be kept in the city only on a temporary basis until their replacements could be found from among local non-Jews.⁵⁶

Schellhorn summarized his arguments in an October 16 memorandum to Governor Calotescu:

As the situation now stands, the best teacher [of a given profession or craft occupied by a Jew] is the Jew himself, and I am certain that the best possible result will be achieved under a system whereby every Jew will be paired with a non-Jewish apprentice, whom the Jew will be obligated to introduce [to his craft] and to teach his specialty as thoroughly as he can. The Jew will become removable from the economy at the moment his replacement is capable, according to the experts' opinion, of taking over completely the Jew's business. But this system will have to be implemented thoroughly and without exceptions. In this way successors will be cultivated, who with certainty and according to their abilities, sooner or later, will be able to replace all Jews who participate in the economic life of Cernăuți, and to make them dispensable.⁵⁷

In two October 15 despatches to Berlin, Schellhorn reiterated his doubts concerning the economic repercussions of the deportation of all Jews from Cernăuți, mentioning that day's meeting with Calotescu, but he presented

⁵⁶ See Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn, *Aufzeichnung über die Ereignisse während meiner Tätigkeit als Leiter des Deutschen Konsulats in Chernowitz, in Jassy, wieder in Czernowitz und der Konsulaabteilung der Gesandtschaft in Bukarest* (hereinafter referred to as Schellhorn, *Aufzeichnung*) in AAPA, Anlass Schellhorns, 59–60. Ion Antonescu's telephone order to Calotescu to let 15,000–20,000 "economically useful" Jews stay in Cernăuți is expressly mentioned in the February 2, 1942 Commission of Investigation (chairman Lieutenant Colonel Victor Siminel) report on the irregularities that took place in the Cernăuți ghetto (hereinafter referred to as Siminel Commission). ASRI 2868 vol. 207, p. 86, USHMM Archives, RG-25.004M, reel 135.

⁵⁷ DACHO, 307/1/10, p. 213, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 5. The document is published in Otmămar Trașca and Dennis Deletant, eds., *Al III-lea Reich și Holocaustul din România: 1940–1944. Documente din arhivele germane* (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România, 2007), 320–323

the arguments he used to convince the governor as targeting only those Jews who were employed in German firms.⁵⁸ This was done in an obvious attempt to shield himself from possible accusations of “philosemitism.”

What was the motive behind Schellhorn’s intervention? In his memoir he claimed that he was driven by humanitarian considerations and an aversion to the persecution of innocent people, but the evidence is somewhat mixed. It was indeed the case, as the Romanian secret police reported at the end of 1941, that the German consul used his official position to exempt from deportation all Cernăuți Jews of German and Austrian citizenship, and this fact seems to confirm his material disinterest in the affair.⁵⁹ But Schellhorn’s credibility is undermined by the omission in his memoir of the fact that the selected Jews were to be spared deportation only temporarily, until their replacements had been trained. Still, whether or not this member of the NSDAP since 1933 was another Schindler, and regardless of his personal motives, one thing is clear: it was his intervention and his argumentation for temporarily exempting “economically useful” Jews from deportation that swayed Antonescu’s opinion.

In October–November 1941 Popovici, who was entrusted with selecting “economically useful Jews,” managed to exempt from deportation 19,000 Jews (4,000 more than 15,000 exemptions provided for in Antonescu’s order), sometimes issuing his own authorizations (referred to as Mayor’s permits), thus breaching the limits imposed on his authority. On November 13, 1941, the “surplus” 4,000 people received permission to remain in the city temporarily thanks to Antonescu’s suspension of further deportations until the following spring.⁶⁰ A very limited number of “economically useful” Jews were allowed to remain, once again on a temporary basis, in other towns of the province.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ibid., 316–319.

⁵⁹ See ASRI, 2868 vol. 207, p. 36, USHMM Archives, 25-004M, reel 135.

⁶⁰ See Ion Antonescu’s order to suspend deportations in Ciucă, ed., *Stenogramele*, vol. 5, 154. On the selection process, see Popovic, *Spovedania/Testimony*, 38–46; for documents of Siminel Commission, see ASRI 2868 vol. 207, USHMM Archives, RG-25.004M, reel 135, and Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României: Problema evreească*, vol. 1, part 2, 256–265.

⁶¹ For reasons that remain obscure, while Schellhorn pleaded for Cernăuți Jews only, Antonescu extended Schellhorn’s reasoning to smaller Bukovian towns, where very few “economically useful Jews” were allowed to stay temporarily. The overall number—15,000 to 20,000—thus referred to the whole province.

Once Jews were designated as “non-useful,” they were slated for deportation. Unlike Jews from other localities of Bessarabia and Bukovina, who were forced to traverse all distances on foot, the Jews of Cernăuți were deported by train in cattle-cars to Mogilev-Podil’sk on the west bank of the Dniester; before the deportation they were searched for valuables by representatives of the National Bank, which were then “exchanged” according to the same derisory rate as elsewhere in the provinces.⁶²

Deportations resumed in early June 1942, by which point the authorities had compiled a list of 4,471 of Jews from Cernăuți who had escaped deportation in the fall of 1941 due to its suspension by the Conducător; the only exception allowed by the governor was for Jews seventy years of age and older. The first train departed to Transnistria on June 8, 1942, when 1,781 Jews from Cernăuți and seventy-six from other prefectures of the province were sent to Transnistria. On June 11, the second transport with 308 Jews from Dorohoi county was sent to the same destination (Dorohoi county was part of the historical province of Moldavia, but in 1941–1944 it was included in the province of Bukovina and its Jewish residents slated for deportation, together with those from Bukovina as a whole). The third transport departed on June 15 with 1,139 Jews from Cernăuți and twelve from other prefectures of the province. The fourth transport, which departed on June 26, theoretically was intended for Jews who had hidden from the previous deportations, along with new categories: those deemed politically suspect, those who shirked their forced labor for the army, and those who “were removed as useless from enterprises and civil service by the [provincial] Directorate of Labor”; on this date, 11,110 Jews from Cernăuți and 52 from Dorohoi county were deported.⁶³ The Governorship report containing this data does not specify how many Jews belonged to each category, but whatever the number of Jews deemed “economically useless” included in the last transport, the very fact that they were targeted meant that from the point of view of the authorities the transitional period envisaged in Schellhorn’s memorandum was over and that the time for complete “purification” finally had arrived.

⁶² See Mircu, *Ce s-a întâmplat*, vol. 2, 105–106.

⁶³ See July 1, 1942 governorship report, in DACHO, 307/1/244; citation is from p. 3, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 9.

On October 13, 1942, however, Mihai Antonescu announced to the Council of Ministers the decision to suspend (in fact, terminate) deportations to Transnistria; the announcement took the authorities completely by surprise, coming at a time when they were preparing to begin the last phase of “purification.”⁶⁴ This decision was due to the political considerations stemming from the growing realization that Germany would not win the war. Ion and Mihai Antonescu were gradually apprehending the necessity of improving relations with the Western Allies, namely Britain and the USA. Henceforth until the very end of their hold on power, these leaders sought to disengage Romania from its alliance with Hitler under the proviso that the British and the Americans would guarantee them advantageous armistice terms and protection against imminent Soviet invasion. Both leaders tended to ascribe enormous political influence to British and American Jewry and hoped that moderating their Jewish policy would facilitate an agreement with the Western powers. Purely humanitarian considerations had no bearing on the shift in policy towards Jews.⁶⁵

Movable and immovable assets left behind by the Jews deported to Transnistria were considered “abandoned” and thus became the state’s property.⁶⁶ This formerly Jewish property was subject to “Romanianization,” i.e., allocation to ethnic Romanians. As beneficiaries of Romanianization, newly-minted ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs were required to employ only ethnic Romanians in their formerly Jewish businesses. Romanianization policy was pursued throughout Romania, although at a slow pace in the Old Kingdom since the Conducător and Mihai Antonescu were concerned that too rapid

⁶⁴ For Mihai Antonescu’s announcement of the indefinite suspension of all deportations, see Ciucă, *Stenogramele*, vol. 8, 382.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the Antonescu government’s changing foreign policy orientation, see Sebastian Balta, *Rumänien und die Grossmächte in der Ära Antonescu, 1940–1944* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2005), 240–298.

⁶⁶ See Law-Decree N 2 507 from September 3, 1941, published in Lya Benjamin and Sergiu Stanciu, eds., *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944: Izvoare și mărturisiri referitoare la evreii din România*, vol. 1: *Legislația antievrească* (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 1993), 164–166. Article 2 provided for “the Romanian State entering into possession (stăpanire)” of these goods. Later Mihai Antonescu defined the legal status of these goods as being in the “apparent ownership” of the state; see Ciucă, ed., *Stenogramele*, vol. 6, 551, April 30, 1942.

an expulsion of Jews and other ethnic non-Romanians from all spheres of national economy might inflict an unacceptably high level of damage to the economy, especially in wartime.⁶⁷ In the two eastern “model” provinces, however, Romanianization was believed to be achievable in a speedy and complete manner. Indeed, the basic premise of “model-ness” presupposed speedy and complete Romanianization.

Bukovina was one of the richest and most developed provinces of Greater Romania and, due to the rapidity of the German advance in 1941, had not suffered much from Soviet scorched-earth policy. The province, and especially Cernăuți, became a magnet for all sorts of fortune-seekers from all over Romania, earning the nickname “Romanian California,” as Romanian Jewish journalist Marius Mircu wrote in 1945:

Sensible people would leave their honest but not effortless occupations, professions, or profitable rents (army officers resigned from the army) and depart to Cernăuți to enrich themselves by plunder. [For a nominal fee, any ethnic Romanian could lease a formerly Jewish factory or shop] Like the gold-seekers in California, who arrived, gathered a quantity of gold, and departed from the state leaving behind no interest, so too the “Californians” from Cernăuți, after processing all the raw materials to be found in the factory, or after selling the entire stock of merchandise in the shop, would leave everything in the lurch and return home, to the town from whence they came.⁶⁸

Romanianization was a corrupt business all over Romania, particularly so in Bukovina. Professor Eugen Pavlescu, the first head of the Bukovina Romanianization department, was notorious for his massive waste of funds: he distributed former Jewish properties to his friends and relatives for derisory prices without even bothering to register stocks of raw materials held at those enterprises. In February 1942 Antonescu ordered the removal of Pavlescu from his post and an investigation into his corrupt dealings; however,

⁶⁷ On Romanianization see Vladimir Solonari, *Purifying the Nation: Population Exchange and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 237–263.

⁶⁸ Mircu, *Ce s-a întâmplat*, vol. 2, 115.

it was stalled together with the cases of other officials from the province accused of corruption.⁶⁹ By March 1942, sixty-nine cases had been opened against various officials in Cernăuți alone, to which afterwards two more were added, but as late as April 1943 only four of the cases were brought to court while fourteen were dismissed under various pretexts. Even when some officials were found guilty, they received ludicrously minor sentences, usually a month or two of imprisonment.

Under the circumstances, many non-Jews in Bukovina—particularly in Cernăuți—stood to gain economically as a result of the expedient removal of all Jews from the province. During the summer of 1942 antisemitic pressure from below on the governor's office grew steadily. Enterprises and institutions competed for Jewish labor and the right to employ Jews was seen as an important privilege. Inevitably, resentment grew among those entrepreneurs that failed to obtain relevant authorization. On July 15 and August 8, 1942, the Cernăuți Chamber of Labor together with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry each submitted to the governor their reports on the role of Jews in the city's commerce and industry. According to the Chamber of Labor, of 1,891 Jewish employees of the industrial enterprises, handicraft workshops, and local civil service, 888 were unskilled or otherwise "useless" persons; consequently, the Chamber requested their deportation. According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, of 580 Jewish employees in the commercial firms, 323 were "parasites of the local economy." Furthermore, this Chamber opined that allowing the use of Jewish labor at some firms while denying this privilege to others created "a situation of unfair and dangerous competition for firms ... led by real Romanian merchants dedicated to the pure nationalist ideal." Consequently, this body proposed not only that the 323 unskilled Jews be deported, but also that the rest of the Jews be verified and only in rare cases be allowed to stay an additional three months, during which they would prepare their replacements prior to deportation. The Chamber insisted that the "supreme national ideal" of the Romanianization of commerce could be achieved only after the city was completely cleansed of Jews, without exception.⁷⁰

In November 1941 the deportations were halted temporarily, over

⁶⁹ See Pavelescu's file in DANIC-V, 106/942, USHMM Archives, RG-25.019M, reel 59.

⁷⁰ DACHO, 307/3/16, pp. 3–5, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 28.

the protests of some local public servants to whom former Jewish houses were commonly allotted. Individual non-Jewish employees resented what they considered the “privileged situation” of their Jewish colleagues, and self-styled “patriots” even organized (illegal) committees demanding the prompt and full “liberation” of the country from the Jews, whom they called “the most dangerous beings, the most important factors in this war.”⁷¹

On August 15, 1942 the governor issued an ordinance introducing tighter restrictions on the employment of Jews: it limited the number of Jews a firm could employ in accordance with its size, established that employment of a Jew could not last longer than three months for commercial firms, and announced that on November 1, 1942, “all authorizations for the employment of Jewish personnel [would] automatically expire.” In industrial enterprises the maximum term of employment was four to six months, depending on an individual’s skills. All firms employing Jewish labor had to have their Jewish employees “doubled” by non-Jewish ethnic Romanians who would take the Jews’ places following their removal.⁷²

Even after the suspension of deportation on October 13, 1942, and despite several extensions of the “final term” for the release of Jewish employees, the pressure on Bukovinian enterprises to release Jewish personnel and replace them with ethnic Romanians continued. True, the Jews fired in this way were no longer deported to Transnistria; instead they were transferred to the jurisdiction of the army, which “made use” of their forced labor at various sites. They could also be deported for various violations to the Sadagura, Edineț, Vlașca, and Hotin concentration camps in Bukovina province. The justification for punishment of Jews had shifted from collective to individual guilt, i.e., there had to be a particular reason for internment (such as

⁷¹ See a leaflet of “a group of Romanian invalids from the country.” (Ibid., 38/ 6/ 193, p. 743), July 1942; “information report,” Cernăuți police (28 October, 1941), *ibid.*, page illegible, approx. 15, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 37, and various documents (complaints, requests, etc.) in DACHO, 38/4/18.

⁷² See *ibid.*, 307/3/illegible, pp. 367–370, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 29. Such rules were first laid down in the December 15 1941 ordinance Nr. 5000/1941 and then amplified in the March 1942 instructions for its implementation. Enterprises requesting those authorizations had to present a list of Jews to be employed as well as documents certifying their qualification indicating the date ending the period for which permission for employment was requested.

not wearing the Star of David, cursing Hitler, etc.). Rather than being held indefinitely, sentences for offenders usually lasted for a specific period of time; generally, though conditions were harsh, they would not necessarily lead to death.⁷³

In late 1942 and early 1943 the continued presence of Jews in Bukovina was still considered a temporary state of affairs, and the deportations were expected to resume. The army—which, as a major beneficiary of “free” Jewish labor, retained a stake in continuing the Romanianization of the economy—grew increasingly suspicious of the perceived slowness of “purification” in Bukovina. On November 2, 1942, responding to accusations of “philosemitism,” the governor assured the General Staff in Bucharest that he had been working hard for more than a year to replace Jews in the local enterprises and had already “evacuated” 90,000 Jews from Bukovina to Transnistria; he, more than anybody else, was thus interested in seeing “the complete success of the operation.” But the situation of the province was “absolutely special” and recognized by Marshal Antonescu as such; if the Jews were still employed in some enterprises, it was done “not in their interests but in the interest of the national economy.”⁷⁴

The change in the policy came only in the spring of 1943. As late as December 29, 1942 Governor Calotescu approved a request from the Directorate of Romanianization, ironically enough, to employ 11 Jewish specialists for two months only, during which ethnic Romanian replacements would be prepared. On March 18, 1943, in a request for an extension on the right to employ a Jew, one Romanian merchant referred to a “final deadline” of April 1, 1943.⁷⁵ But in March or April 1943 Calotescu was demoted from his position as governor, and the new governor, Corneliu Dragalina, relaxed the persecution of Jews; from then on all requests for extensions were approved without further ado.⁷⁶ At this point, Cernăuți’s remaining

⁷³ See the representative of the General Staff’s report on the situation in Edineț concentration camp in August 1942, in *ibid.*, 307/3/246.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 307/3/17 pp. 293–295, USHMM Archives, 31.006M, reel 28.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 307/3/16, p. 894, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 29; and *ibid.*, 307/3/ number of file illegible, p. 651, USHMM Archives, RG-31.006M, reel 32.

⁷⁶ On the changing policy towards Jewish employment, see subsequent materials in the same file. On the demotion of Calotescu and Voiculescu, see Ciucă, ed., *Stenogramele*, vol. 9, 222. Mircu believed that Dragalina was an exception among Romanian mili-

Jews had a fairly good chance of surviving until the city's liberation by the Red Army on March 29, 1944.

The Jews deported from the provinces to Transnistria (rather, the few still alive there) had a very limited chance to return to their homes until the reconquest of the provinces by the Red Army (Transnistria, northern Bukovina, and Bessarabia were in Soviet hands by mid-April, the rest of Bessarabia by August 1944). On July 8, 1943, Ion Antonescu approved the return from Transnistria to Romania of certain categories of Jews, such as war invalids, widows, orphans whose "parents of had been killed in the field of honor" during former active military in the Romanian army, Jews baptized before 1920, and those older than 70 years old. On November 12 of the same year he ordered the repatriation of all Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina, beginning with the aforementioned categories as well as "specialists necessary to Romania."⁷⁷ In December 1943 approximately 7,000 Jews entered Romanian territory from Transnistria, mostly natives of Dorohoi county; later efforts were confined to facilitating the emigration of 5,000 Jewish orphaned children to Palestine.⁷⁸ Very few able-bodied Jews managed to return to Romania during Antonescu's time and even fewer to Bessarabia and Bukovina.⁷⁹

The human cost of the murderous Romanian policy of "purification" of Bukovina from Jews was appalling. While the number of Jews killed is impossible to assess with any degree of certainty, it is clear that it was in

tary officers since he was not an antisemite and in fact was receptive to Jewish needs and complaints (see "Oameni de omenie," 93–95); this view is supported by Schellhorn's characterization of Dragalina (see Schellhorn, 65–66). One Jewish survivor from Cernăuți noted that the general easing of the atmosphere in the city occurred after the defeat at Stalingrad, "when the Romanians realized that the end was coming," and that change was evident at all levels of administration (Tsviling Matiss, USHMM Archives, Acc. 1029 # 252).

⁷⁷ The decisions are published in Benjamin, ed., *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, vol. 4; and documents 270 and 274 in Șerbănescu, Ion, ed., *Bilanțul tragediei—renașterea speranței* (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 1998), 303, 309–310.

⁷⁸ See Balta, *Rumänien und Grossmächte*, 343–345; and Carp, *Cartea neagră*, vol. 3, 422–425, 473–478.

⁷⁹ A June 1944 police report from the town Bolgrad in southern Bessarabia mentions 108 Jews who were deported to Transnistria and received permits to return to southern Bessarabia, "where a permanent residency was fixed for them." (ANRM, 680/1/4766 vol. 1, pp. 154–155, USHMM Archives, RG-54.002M, reel 17).

the thousands, possibly approaching ten thousand (the overall number of victims of this murderous campaign in the two provinces is assessed by the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania as anywhere between 45,000 and 60,000, most of them in Bessarabia). Many more died in concentration camps and during death marches in Bukovina, Bessarabia, and Transnistria. According to Romanian data—which is incomplete and probably inaccurate—some 86,000 Jews were deported to Transnistria from Bukovina and 56,000 from Bessarabia. The death rate among deportees in Transnistria was very high; according to the assessment of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, between 105,000 and 120,000 of the deportees died.⁸⁰

Such was the terrible price paid by the Jews of the two provinces in for the sake of an ethnically pure Romania. Even so, Ion Antonescu and his supporters believed that only a small part of what they called “the national ideal” had been achieved. Their overall aim was much more radical and ambitious: the insane vision of the complete ethnic purification of all Romania, not “merely” of its two eastern provinces, and of all minorities, not “merely” of Jews. There can be no doubt that, had the war turned out as they hoped, this plan would have been carried through to the end, with a simply unimaginable toll of death and destruction.

⁸⁰ For the latest and most authoritative assessments of the numbers of victims, see ICHR, *Final Report*, 382. On the fate of Jews deported to Transnistria, see *ibid.*, 141–168, and Jean Ancel, *Transnistria, 1941–1942: The Romanian Mass Murder Campaigns*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2003), translated from Hebrew into English (vols. 2–3 contain documents in Romanian).

**CREATION AND FUNCTIONING OF CHERNIVTSI GHETTO IN
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1941**

Over the past few years Holocaust Studies in Ukraine have gained the features of significant academic issue. However, certain regional peculiarities still remain out of historical scope. Among these are the reasons and circumstances of creation and functioning of Chernivtsi ghetto in October–November 1941.

The Romanian WWII leadership headed by I. Antonescu was directly involved in the Holocaust. Romania was the only ally of Germany, which had its own plan of the extermination of Jews. In the research by Romanian scholars one can come across claims that every two minutes of 1213 days of Romanian occupation in Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Transnistria one Jew was killed and that every square meter of these territories has bones of ten murdered Jews.¹ The act of genocide against Jewish population was I. Antonescu's order of 8 June 1941 on deportation of the Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jews to Transnistria, where 240 ghettos and camps were founded.

Since 1 September 1941 Transnistria ("territory beyond the Dniester" as translated from Romanian), which embraced the territory between the Dniester and the Southern Bug, came under the Romanian rule, which allowed the new authorities to implement the plan which failed in the summer, namely deportation beyond the Dniester of all Bukovinian Jews.

¹ *Shafran A. Soprotivleniye natsistskomu uraganu 1940–1944: memuary* / Ed., comment by J. Ancel; short., transl. from English, foreword, afterword by D. Rosenfeld. – Odessa, 2003. – P. 14.

Following this aim, on 11 October 1941 the largest temporary ghetto in Northern Bukovina and Khotyn region was created in Chernivtsi.

The primar (mayor) of Chernivtsi in 1941–1942, who in 1967 was posthumously honoured in Israel by the title of the Righteous among the Nations, recalled, “Shortly after being appointed the primar I had an audience with Governor Riosanu and could discuss with him the Jewish problem. The late governor (died of unsuccessful surgery on 30 August 1941) asked me to allocate a part of the city for a ghetto. I explained and tried to point out for the governor that such actions, taking into account the cultural level of Chernivtsi Jews and the technical side of implementation, are impossible, i.e. surrounding a part of the city with barbed wire and barricades.” Riosanu replied, “I admit you are right, but what can I do if the prime-minister is pushing me, he calls every day and demands the ghetto”.²

Primar T. Popovici created a commission which had to travel to Poland and Germany (Lublin, Krakow, Frankfurt-am-Main) to learn the experience of these cities concerning ghettoisation (an article on this was published in the *Bukovina* newspaper on 27 August 1941.).³ But this project was not implemented. “It was only due to this, not taking into account the period 11 October – 15 November when the ghetto was a tool of deportation, that no ghetto was created in Chernivtsi”.⁴

But in late September 1941 the new governor of Bukovina C. Calotescu held a meeting with the representatives of military and civil authorities, where the projects of ghetto organization were discussed and where primar T. Popovici spoke up in defence of the Chernivtsi Jews.⁵

On 4 October 1941 the headquarters of Romanian army passed on to the Chernivtsi commandant I. Antonescu’s order to deport within 10 days all Bukovinian Jews to the “region east of the Dniester”.⁶ The short period allowed

² Documente / Comisia Internationala pentru Studiarea Holocaustului in Romania; ed. ingrij. de Lya Benjamin. – Iasi, 2005 (*hereafter* – Documente). – P. 576.

³ *Bukovina*. – 1941. – 27.08 (Derzhavnyi Archiv Chernivetskoi Oblasti (*hereafter* – DACHO)).

⁴ Documente. – P. 577.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Sbornik dokumentov i materialov ob unichtozhenii natsistami evreev Ukrainy v 1941–1944 godah / Ed. A. Kruglov. – K., 2002. – P. 451.

for the deportations was stipulated in the plan under which 2 trains of 50 cattle carriages each holding 50–70 people⁷ had to be sent from Chernivtsi to Transnistria daily. On October 9, 1941 the governor of Bukovina General C. Calotescu received an order from Bucharest and the same day notified the primar of Chernivtsi and on October 10 the military command of Chernivtsi that “on October 11, 1941 all Jewish population of the Chernivtsi municipality is to be moved to the special sector of the city, which is being turned into a ghetto”.⁸

Based on this order was a decree by C. Calotescu dated October 10, 1941 on the creation of a temporary ghetto in Chernivtsi and the deportation of Chernivtsi Jews, which started the next day. The creation of the ghetto and the ensuing deportation of the Jewish population from Chernivtsi was headed by General I. Topor. At the same time the “Commission on evacuation of Jews” was founded.⁹

In T. Popovici's words, the military (Military department at the Governor's office) did not consult him on any issues concerning the fate of Jews and only on October 10, 1941 he was called to the governor, where he could familiarize himself with the details of ghetto creation and where he received an order urgently to find resources for baking bread to supply the Jewish population in the ghetto. Later, during deportations from Chernivtsi in October–November 1941, before boarding railway carriages every person received 4 loaves of bread. In the governor's office the city primar once again tried to persuade C. Calotescu to make the conditions for Jews better. He said, “Mr. Governor, the French revolution which gave the humankind the right of freedom cost 11 800 human lives, whereas you are sending to death in the early winter 50 thousand people. What a trace you want to leave in history?” On returning to his office T. Popovici met representatives of Chernivtsi Jews. At this crucial moment, T. Popovici even intended to resign.¹⁰

On October 10, 1941 the Bureau in Jewish Affairs was ordered to tell the Jews of Chernivtsi that they should move to the ghetto that was created

⁷ *Carp M. Carte neagra. Suferintele evreilor din Romania. 1940–1944. – Bucuresti, 1946–1948. – P. 190.*

⁸ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 224.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ark. 225.

¹⁰ *Documente. – P. 578.*

within the limits of the Jewish quarter which had been the home for the poorest strata of Jewish population. The quarter included Yevreyska str. (current Sahaidachnoho Str.), the Jewish market and all the side streets and lanes from the current Holovna Str. to the current Ruska Str..¹¹

Saturday morning (the day was purposefully chosen for humiliation) October 11, 1941 large crowds of people started moving around the city. The people carried sacks with clothing, linens, valuables. Some pulled their property in carts or prams. To intimidate the people a few tanks appeared on the streets. In the evening of the same day the ghetto was hidden behind the high wooden fence and the whole territory, guarded by the military and gendarmes, was surrounded with barbed wire.¹² On 9 October 1941, the heads of battalion No 430 received an order to reinforce the cordons along the city limits to prevent the flight of Jews while the ghetto was being formed. The direct guard and safety of Chernivtsi ghetto was ensured by battalion No 780 and the 1st gendarme battalion. The latter also took the responsibility for the deportation of the Jewish population from the Chernivtsi railway terminal.¹³ T. Popovici recalled, “Under the threat of death penalty the Jews had to move to the ghetto before 6 p.m. The ghetto was created with unbelievable speed, shut in by the wooden fence with barbed wire and military guard on entrances and exits”.¹⁴

The authorities allocated for the ghetto the territory which normally housed 5 000 people. But General I. Topor mentioned in a report that it “was possible to house no more than 15 000 people”.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the number of people was to rise to 47 000–50 000 people. Any shed became a shelter. Some 5–8 Jewish families (30–40 people) were put into each looted and ruined flat. Many rooms did not have even flooring, not to mention

¹¹ Chernovitskoie obshchestvo evreiskoi kultury im. E. Steinbarga. Vestnik. Liudi ostaiutsa liudmi. Svidetelstva ochevidtsev / Ed. G.L. Shabashkevich. – Chernovtsy, 1992. – Vol. 2. – P. 6.

¹² Chernovitskoie obshchestvo evreiskoi kultury im. E. Steinbarga. Vestnik. Liudi ostaiutsa liudmi. Svidetelstva ochevidtsev / Ed. G.L. Shabashkevich. – Chernovtsy, 1992. – Vol. 4 (hereafter – Vestnik CHOIEK. Vol. 4). – P. 30.

¹³ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 224.

¹⁴ Documente. – P. 580.

¹⁵ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 225.

windows or doors. Witnesses recall that people in the ghetto laid on the ground, at entrance doors and corridors, without food or water or minimal living conditions.¹⁶ Exit of the Jews from the temporary ghetto was forbidden. Entrance or exit of other people who had to pass through the ghetto was allowed only on producing special paper or personal identification.¹⁷ The city primar said, “The ghetto constantly lacked drinking water, two of three water supply networks were ruined. It was stinking and the threat of epidemics was looming”.¹⁸

The Jews had a miserable look: overgrown beards, torn and patched clothing, ripped boots or just rags on the feet or sometimes nothing at all. After the resettlement, big cooking pots were brought into the ghetto. People cooked borsch, hominy, porridges. There was no bread at all; many could not remember when they ate it for the last time. They cooked hominy, poured it on the big wooden doors and pressed it with another doors to make the meal even. Then the above doors were taken away and the hominy was shared into pieces.¹⁹

From the first days of creation it became increasingly harder to control the life of the large Chernivtsi ghetto, since its territory embraced various municipal institutions, schools, workshops and companies that continued to work. Non-Jews had to pass though the ghetto every day on their way to work and back home. But the urgent problem was that the main city transport arteria, from the railway station to the center, passed through the ghetto, namely the streets Reg. Ferdinanda – Bratianu. The city authorities reacted immediately, deporting the residents of these streets on 13 October, 1941, clearing the passage to the railway station.²⁰

The actual situation concerning the Chernivtsi ghetto is described by T. Popovici, “Despite the fact that points 3 and 4 of order No 38 on creation of the ghetto in Chernivtsi prohibited entrance from and exit to the ghetto without a special permission issued by the governor, on the second day the

¹⁶ Vestnik CHOIEK. Vol. 4. – P. 116.

¹⁷ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 72.

¹⁸ Documente. – P. 581.

¹⁹ *Snigur. I. Ievreiske ghetto in Chernivtsi 1942–1943 rr. // Chas. – 1997. – 31 October.*

²⁰ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 225.

massive movement to the ghetto began. In fact that meant massive robbery of the Jews or exchanging any valuables for food: jewelry, gold or silver, carpets, fur, cloth, food items (tea, coffee, chocolate) etc.”²¹

On the meeting of October 12, 1941 C. Calotescu told 18 senior officials from his office that the ghetto in Chernivtsi was created exclusively for the deportation of Jews to Transnistria. The only person to protest was Traian Popovici; as a result, at the end of the meeting he was openly called “a Jew” and later the local newspaper *Bukovina* labelled the Jews of Chernivtsi “the Traian people”. At first the governor agreed to leave in the city about 2 000 Jews, but owing to the efforts of T. Popovici and negotiations with I. Antonescu, on October 15, Wednesday afternoon, the primar of Chernivtsi got a eprmission during a telephone talk with the head of state to leave in the city about 20 000 Jews, mainly professionals for the army and national economy.

In the evening of October 15, 1941 the primar of Chernivtsi Traian Popovici arrived to the premises of the Jewish Committee and said that Bucharest granted a permission to leave a part of the Jews in Chernivtsi. This decision was motivated first and foremost by the need to restore municipal trades and industry. For this puspouse a decree was issued, releaving all ethnic Romanians in charge of industrial and trading enterprises from military service. In a short time many shops and businesses opened all over Chernivtsi; most of them were previously owned by Jews and now were pronounced the property of the Romanian state and rented to the Romanians at minimal prices. But the new owners shortly felt the lack of specialists and qualified workers who could be found mostly among the Jewish population. Primar T. Popovici requested that lists of Chernivtsi Jews be created by profession and age. This resulted in the final number of over 16 569 people remaining in the city. The number included representatives of various professions, elderly people (aged 60), pregnant women (over 6 months into pregnancy), mothers with newborns, state pensionnaires and reserve army officers.²²

In fact, permissions to stay in Chernivtsi, the so-called “authorizations”, in many cases were sold for considerable amounts of money. The people

²¹ Documente. – P. 582

²² DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 219.

who did not have enough money could not get a permission even if they qualified by profession or any other criteria. The people who got permissions had to part with their families, children, parents since the permission included only one person. Most of the family members were gradually deported by mid-November 1941, but then the deportations were postponed because of transport issues. Over 5 000 Chernivtsi Jews who did not have permissions were hiding in the city, at attics, in basements or pits. Those having the authorization could leave the ghetto and return to their own, completely looted and ruined flats.

At the same time a control commission was created in order to check the permissions issued. The commission that met in the largest room of the town hall was headed by Governor C. Calotescu. It included representatives of civil and military authorities and Siguranta (Romanian secret police). The commission annulled many permissions, deporting their owners to Transnistria.

Later new registration was announced for all the Jews who remained in the city without an official permission. They were issued a different type of papers that allowed staying in the city but were signed not by the governor but by the primar T. Popovici and were therefore called “Popovici papers”.

During the second half of October – first half of November 1941 crowds of physically and morally exhausted people were moving along the streets to a cargo railway station. In the ghetto a special directive was issued. According to it, residents of a certain street were to be deported on a certain day.²³ It was allowed to take only the most necessary possessions: personal belongings, jewelry. It was autumn, so it was cold and raining. The victims describe the events, “When we were deported from the Chernivtsi ghetto to Transnistria there were many crying children at the railway station, tears in the eyes of the adults, but the worst were soldiers with bayonets. The wives of Romanian offices, who were not city residents, walked around the station and laughed at us. They suddenly started treating us not like humans, but like animals. We turned into cattle which were sent to Transnistria.”²⁴

²³ Kolys Chernivtsi buly gerbreiskym mistom...Svidchennya ochevydtsiv / Tr. by Petro Rykhlo. – Chernivtsi, 1998. – P. 36.

²⁴ Ibid. – P. 96–100.

As the ghetto was created, on October 11–13, 1941, the first transport left Chernivtsi with 7 053 Jews in three trains 50 carriages each²⁵. The deportations of Jews from Chernivtsi and the existence of the ghetto continued until November 15, 1941. The 1st gendarme battalion managed to deport to Transnistria 33 891 people in 14 trains.²⁶ The Romanian and German newspapers mentioned these events as “a wise solution to the Jewish question in Bukovina.”²⁷

Therefore, the local authorities, gendarmerie and the military failed to deport all Jews of Chernivtsi to Transnistria in 10 days in October as demanded by the order by I. Antonescu, even despite the creation of the ghetto. Such failure could be explained by the following reasons: first of all, the order on creation of the ghetto was inspired by anti-Semitic ideology, Romania’s desire to present oneself as a reliable ally of Germany, rather than by the real situation in Northern Bukovina; secondly, a need to keep a stable economic situation in the governorship, the Romanian leadership allowed for leaving about 20 000 Jews in Chernivtsi.

*Translated from Ukrainian
by Vitalii Bobrov*

²⁵ DACHO, f. 307, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 226.

²⁶ Ibid., ark. 230.

²⁷ Vestnik CHOIEK. Vol. 4. – P. 94.

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

Between January 1938 and August 1944 over eighty antisemitic laws, decrees, and ministerial decisions were issued in Romania. The wave of antisemitism surged, shifting from the symbolic violence in the public discourse of the 1930s towards an overtly aggressive antisemitic policy that culminated in pogroms, deportations, and extermination.

The first step towards genocide came after the Romanian parliamentary elections of December 1937, when King Carol II appointed Octavian Goga, leader of the National Christian Party (Partidul Național Creștin), as Prime Minister. Under Goga, Romanian political life became increasingly undemocratic, beginning with the January 1938 anti-democratic laws designed by Goga with the support of Minister of State Alexandru C. Cuza.¹ The regime's policy pursued two chief

¹ Partidului Național Creștin (The National Christian Party) was the result of the 1935 merger between Partidul Național Agrar (The National Agrarian Party), led by the antisemitic ultranationalist Octavian Goga, and Liga Apărării Național Creștine (The National Christian Defense League), led by Alexandru C. Cuza. The latter was a fascist party with a prominently antisemitic doctrine: “*Cuzism* comes before us with its own complete, unitary, and scientific system of Christian nationalist doctrine, proving by the totality of its own biological, theological, economical, sociological, histori-

aims: suppression of the democratic press and social and economic discrimination against Jews.

In a speech announcing his government program, Goga unequivocally voiced his support for anti-democratic and antisemitic policies:

From bottom to top, from the depths of the reservoir of our national strength, a wave of protests cries out against foreign domination from one end of the country to the other with the demand: We want a Romania for the Romanians!... The Government has undertaken urgent measures: we have suppressed the newspapers *Adevărul*, *Dimineața*, and *Lupta*, encouraged by faith that our country's public spirit demands that the native-born be raised with a threefold duty: national, moral and intellectual. The aforementioned newspapers were foreign intruders in the intellectual heritage of the people, which must not be hindered in its creative struggle by subversive or dubious interference.... We have immediately revoked all alcohol licenses held by Jews in the rural communes in order to replace them with disabled soldiers. In order to effect a prompt solution, we implemented re-examinations of citizenship acquired after the war by the Semitic element, which had invaded Romania by the hundreds after the war and has stayed here out of greed for profit, corruption, and fraud.²

Moreover, suppression of the press and persecution of the Jews often went hand in hand: some left-wing newspapers were suspended due to the very presence of Jews on the editorial staff. Thus, from the very beginning were present the ideological themes later identified as the pillars of fascist totalitarianism: anti-democratic nationalism,

cal events, and from each one separately, that the only possible solution for the Jewish problem is the annihilation of the Jews, calling for immediate action on all plans and at any time, based on a clear program and aiming at this necessary and feasible elimination," A.C. Cuza, "Doctrina naționalistă creștină—cuzismul" (The National Christian Doctrine—Cuzism) in *Apărarea Națională* [*National Defense*], 6, no. 15/8 (April 1928).

² Octavian Goga, extract from a speech as President of the Cabinet Council regarding the Government Program, December 31, 1937.

antisemitism, and the myth of the “Judeo-Bolshevik” enemy.

While the Romanian political system still maintained a façade of democratic institutions, the *Decree-Law No. 169/21 from January 1938, for revising citizenship* established the legal basis for removing the Jews from political life, and was in fact the first antisemitic law to come into force in the country.³ Under the pretext of revising Citizenship Registers entries for the inhabitants of Basarabia, Northern Bukovina, Transylvania, and other territories which had united with the Kingdom of Romania in 1918 to form Greater Romania, the law was aimed primarily at revoking the citizenship of Jews from those new territories. Two years from the law’s inception, 36.5% of individuals to whom it applied had lost their Romanian citizenship:

In consequence 225,222 Romanian Jews lost their citizenship and became persons without rights, in addition to the 44,848 Jews who were not registered in any record and had so far been tolerated. In other words, out of the 728,115 Jews registered during the 1930 census, by November 1939 270,170 (37%) had an uncertain juridical status that would subsequently cause them serious problems regarding their economic and social status.⁴

Although the measures passed in January 1938 constituted a crucial first step in the destruction of Romania’s Jews, the Goga government was merely a transition from the ruins of Romania’s fragile democracy. After only one month, Carol II dismissed the Goga government and instituted a regime of monarchical authority, under which the state continued to institutionalize an authoritarian power system. The new Constitution from February 1938 instituted a corporatist political regime and banned political parties, curtailed civil rights and other liberties. The king wielded the only real power, and antisemitic legislation served to legitimize racist

³ Lya Benjamin, ed., *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, vol. 1: *Legislația antievreiască* [*The Romanian Jews between 1940–1944*, vol. 1: *Antisemitic Legislation*] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1993), 25–31.

⁴ A. Florian, Lya Benjamin, and Anca Ciuciu, eds., *Cum a fost posibil? [How was It Possible?]* (Bucharest: INSHR-EW, 2007), 54.

ideology. In June 1940, when Bessarabia and Bukovina were ceded to Soviet control, the Romanian withdrawal from those territories was accompanied by pogroms (Dorohoi, Galați) perpetrated by soldiers and officers of the withdrawing Romanian Army. The Decree-Law no. 2650 from August 8, 1940 established for the first time a separate political status and legal category for Jews.⁵

In September 1940, internal political pressures created by Romania's territorial losses caused by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Vienna Dictate resulted in Carol II's abdication. Four years of totalitarian rule followed, under two successive political regimes: the National Legionary State (from September 14, 1940 to January 23, 1941), with General Ion Antonescu as "the leader of the Legionary State and the head of the Legionary Regime" and Horia Sima as "the Leader of the Iron-Guardist Movement," and Marshal Antonescu's discretionary government without a party (from January 24, 1941 to August 23, 1944).⁶

During the National Legionary State, antisemitism erupted in the streets. In defiance of the law, the Iron-Guardists physically assaulted the Jews, committed robberies, ransacked Jewish shops, etc.⁷ In January 1941 the struggle for power between the Iron-Guardists and Antonescu escalated. During the decisive confrontation between the army and Iron-Guardists, the Iron-Guardists carried out a pogrom in Bucharest, while the army did not intervene⁸.

⁵ Lya Benjamin, ed., *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, 37–50. A Ministry of Justice report advocating the necessity of this law defined the blood law, which differentiated Romanians by blood versus Romanian citizens, as the basis of the totalitarian ethnocratic state. The law stipulated that juridically the Jews be divided into three categories, listing the restrictions specific to each category.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 61–62, Royal Decree, September 14, 1940.

⁷ For an inventory of Iron-Guardist robberies and violent assaults all around the country, see Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră* [*The Black Book*], vol. 1, second edition, (Bucharest: Diogene Publishing House, 1996).

⁸ Anca Ciuciu and Alexandru Florian, "Pogromul de la București. Oameni și locuri" [The Pogrom from Bucharest. People and Places] in INSHR-EW, *Violență și teroare în istoria recentă a României* [*Violence and Terror in Recent Romanian History*], ed. Universitară Publishing House (Bucharest, 2006): 86–113. During the Bucharest Pogrom, 123 Jews were killed.

Romania's participation in the Second World War as Nazi Germany's ally opened a new chapter in the "Jewish problem." From this moment on, any organized actions followed a logic that could only lead to extermination. Identified as "Judeo-Communists," any Jews in the vicinity of the front line and in combat zones became targets of extermination. The signal was announced by the Iași Pogrom, in which over 13,000 Jews were killed between June 28 and July 6, 1941. After the Iași Pogrom, the war became a vehicle for "cleaning the land" of Jews.⁹ Paradoxically, in Bessarabia and Bukovina—territories where the Romanian Army had a liberation mandate—the Jewish communities were submitted to a quick process of deportation and extermination. The "great liberation" of Bessarabia and Bukovina from Soviet occupation signified ethnic cleansing through the mass destruction of the Jews. "In 1941, German and Romanian troops in Bessarabia and Bukovina killed between 45,000 and 60,000 Jews. Between 105,000 and 120,000 Romanian Jews were deported and died as a result of deportations to Transnistria. In the region of Transnistria, between 115,000 and 180,000 local Jews were eliminated (especially in Odessa and the districts of Golta and Berezovca)."¹⁰

The extermination actions were organized and carried out by the Antonescu Government. They were based on an ideological and emotional antisemitism raised to the rank of policy or state doctrine. Bessarabia and Bukovina were on the frontlines, where brutal and violent criminal policies against the Jewish population were favored; hence, the number of Jewish Holocaust victims from those territories was larger than that of those from the Old Kingdom. As documented in the stenographs of the Cabinet Council at the time, the themes of ideological antisemitism that mobilized the destructive policies against Jews could be found likewise in the State's political discourse regarding

⁹ For a socio-historical analysis of the extermination of the Jews from Basarabia and Bukovina during the Second World War, see J. Ancel, *Transnistria* (Bucharest: Atlas Publishing House, 1998); J. Ancel, *Contribuții la istoria României. Problema evreiască 1933–1944* [*Contributions to Romanian History. The Jewish Problem 1933–1944*], vol. 2 (Bucharest: Hasefer Publishing House, 2001, 2003); and R. Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* [*The Jews under the Antonescu Regime*], second edition (Bucharest: Hasefer Publishing House, 2006).

¹⁰ CISHR, *Report final* [*Final Report*] (Iași: Polirom Publishing House), 388.

the fate of the Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina. The only difference between policy in the Old Kingdom and that in Bessarabia and Bukovina was that in the latter territories these policies were given higher priority and applied at a faster rate so that the end of the war would coincide with “solving the Jewish problem” in the regained territories. In this way, they could become an example for “solving the Jewish problem” in the Old Kingdom.

Ethnic cleansing was the obsessively occurring theme in the meetings of the Cabinet Council during the Second World War. On June 17, 1941, a few days before the launching of Operation Barbarossa against the USSR, Cabinet Council Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu characterized the ethnic homogenization of the population of Bessarabia and Bukovina as “the biggest” issue of reconstruction in those territories, which he desired be reincorporated as soon as possible. To this end, he proposed the violent expulsion of the foreign populations, especially the Jews:

The Romanian nation is meeting this historical moment, the likes of which I don't know in how many centuries we shall meet again, and we have to use this moment to purify the population.... I assure you that not only in regard to the Jews, but to all the nationalities—we have the chance to carry out a policy of total and violent elimination of the foreign element.... In consequence, regarding Bessarabia and Bukovina as well as the Transnistrian territories to be incorporated under Romanian sovereignty, we will have to carry out a policy of purification and unification of the race through expulsion.¹¹

The first days of war would prove that the hostility was not only against the USSR and had as its aim not only the recovery of the Romanian territories lost in 1940. It was also a war against the Jews, against a civilian community of Romanian citizens. On June 25, M. Antonescu informed his government colleagues that “General [Ion] Antonescu made the decision—being in Moldova—to remove the Jews from all the rural

¹¹ Lya Benjamin, ed., *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniștri*, vol. 2 [*The Jewish Problem in the Stenographs of the Cabinet Council*], 1996: 234, 235.

communes—and from Moldova, Basarabia, and Bukovina. This measure has already been applied in Moldova.”¹²

Even though the status of Transnistria as a Romania-administered territory was not decided until August 30, 1941, after Germany and Romania signed the *Agreement for the security, administration and economical exploitation of the territories between Nistru and Bug and Bug and Nipru*, M. Antonescu had sealed the fate of the Transnistrian Jews two and a half months earlier. With the signing of the agreement with Germany at the end of August, their fate was confirmed and legalized. Paragraph 7 stipulated the confinement of the Jews in ghettos until their deportation over the river Bug. “The deportation of the Jews over the river Bug is for the moment not possible. Thus, they have to be gathered and exploited for labor until their deportation eastwards becomes possible, after the completion of operations.”¹³

In fact, ethnic cleansing and the elimination of Communist influence were the two targets of the Romanian policy for Basarabia and Bukovina. The proceedings from a July 2 meeting between M. Antonescu and the future governors of Basarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria clearly show that the deportation of the Jews was a Romanian political strategy. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Cabinet Council informed his colleagues that phase one of this policy and the reorganization was to be the purification of those provinces:

Those have to be and stay Romanian provinces not only in the conventional sense with large and abstract proportions, but through a healthy biology, which we should not only feel, but verify daily through the social and ethnic reality of the population inhabiting those provinces. In consequence, the first phase marks a radical purification. The second phase marks the establishment of certain institutions. The third phase marks the beginning of reconstruction.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., 242.

¹³ CISHR, *Raport final*, 137.

¹⁴ Lya Benjamin, ed., *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniștri* vol. 2, 259.

In a short time, in a world of armed violence mixed with the symbolic violence of antisemitism, the governors would declare a principle of physical aggression and crime against Jews. In the stenographs of a July 8, 1941 Cabinet Council meeting, the political discourse displays a mixture of crude antisemitic prejudice and invectives to kill Jews. In under a month, the Romanian Government seemed on the verge of completing the elimination of the Jews through deportation and incitement to mass murder. During the above-mentioned meeting, the Minister of Agriculture and Land declared that, regarding the Jews from Bukovina, “there is only one remedy to get rid of those bed bugs: burn them until the land is bare”; the Minister of Internal Affairs announced that “this remedy [was] being put into practice.” During the same meeting, M. Antonescu brought the criminal discussion presented by his colleagues to its logical conclusion, begging the Government members to be merciless in order to purify the nation:

Please be implacable. Saccharine, vapid, philosophical amiability has no place here ... behind the disguise of humanitarian philosophy hides the most acute race interest, that of a race who wanted to master all, and of certain abstract principles behind which was hiding a religion taking advantage of a nation overwhelmed by needs, and many nations were like us.... If necessary fire the machine gun.

As indicated by the Cabinet Council’s vice president, the Jews were the first-priority target and the communists were second. The implication here is that the Jews were a more dangerous enemy than the communists; certain antisemites believed that Communism was synonymous with “Judeo-Bolshevism.” In their logic, M. Antonescu’s demand to kill the Jews first, with the same fate applying to the “lost Romanians” who had embraced Communism, made perfect sense. The stenographs of the Cabinet Council meeting prove that the policy of racial purification by deportation and extermination was supported by the members of the Government, while there is no mention of any opposition to the purification policy and the construction of an ethnocratic state.

Confident in victory, M. Antonescu recommended that the ministers use all means necessary to purify the nation. According to totalitarian

discursive logic, in the project of creating an ethnocratic state—the ideal political model for asserting the Romanian spirit in the world—the ends justified the means: “Therefore, I desire with all my heart that you stumble over as few formal issues as possible.”¹⁵ We have here an example of the manner in which political totalitarianism combines violence and the arbitrariness of the leader’s decisions as instruments of government.

The Leader of the State, Marshal Ion Antonescu, on every occasion returned to the issue of purification. Sometimes his speech was more aggressive and crude than vice president’s. During a September 5 meeting, the leader initiated a new message: Romania was fighting on the side of Hitler’s Germany in a war against the Jews: “If we do not lead this war to clean the race of those people draining our economical, national, and physical life, we will be in danger of losing Basarabia forever...” In other words, the Jewish danger to Romania had three dimensions: economic, ethnic, and physical—in short, the Jew destroys the existential basis of the Romanian as individual. Once the motivation for the destruction of the Jews of Basarabia and Bukovina had been established, the image of the fight against them became more important than the anti-Soviet war. Given the high stakes involved, the priority assigned to the “Romanian Renaissance” led I. Antonescu to assume responsibility from the very beginning for all necessary errors and costs. For the Leader, the destruction of a civilian population—the Holocaust—was conceived as a total, life and death struggle for Romania:

There are going to be also mistakes, of course. Don’t think that I am not aware. Don’t think that when I have decided to rid the life of the Romanian nation of all the Jews, I didn’t realize I would cause an economic crisis. But I have told myself that this is my war to lead ... if we miss this historical moment now, we have missed it forever. And if the Jews win the war, we don’t exist anymore. We are completely damned.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., 267.

¹⁶ Ibid., 298, 299.

Since all these antisemitic messages were put forth within a closed environment (the Government) and were not intended for the public, they expressed the regime's credo and political conscience, rather than propaganda used to mobilize the masses.

Also, in his fight against the Jews, the Marshal declared himself on the side of the Nazis. He supported the creation within Ukraine of the Galitian State as a political entity through which Germany intended to ethnically purify Eastern Europe: "Our purpose must be the formation of a Galitian State, which would solidify the union between us and the Germans, and this Galitia must be cleansed of Jews and Slavs, as I myself fight to cleanse Basarabia and Bukovina of Jews and Slavs."¹⁷ Thus, Antonescu admitted his own policy for the destruction of the Jews, enabled by the circumstances of the European War. Therefore, the fate of the Jews of the Romania-administered territories depended on Romanian state policy. While this policy relied on collaboration with Hitler, it was not subordinated to German policy, as some historians have tried to present it in order to mitigate Romania's responsibility for the Holocaust.

Under the circumstances caused by difficulties at the front, Antonescu's antisemitism exploded in even more violent forms and expressions. For example, the prolongation of the siege of Odessa compelled I. Antonescu to openly incite the extermination of the city's Jews. During a December 16, 1941 government session, he called for death to the Jews: "Please immediately remove the Jews from Odessa," he asked the Governor of Transnistria, in contrast to earlier antisemitic policies in which the border between spatial distance and physical extermination had been unclear. In the following exchange, informed by the Governor that the Jews had been prepared for deportation and requested a ship for their transportation, Antonescu demonstrates his reckless attitude toward Jewish lives: "*Alexianu, Governor of Transnistria*: I have issued a deadline, so please provide me with a ship. *Marshal Antonescu*: To sink them. *Alexianu*: To take them to Oceacov. *Antonescu*: You know that we have lost another ship, Cavarna. I don't care for the Jews, but for the ship."¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., 302.

¹⁸ Ibid., 364.

Besides the Marshal's crude, lifelong antisemitism, the Holocaust of the Jews of the Old Kingdom, Bukovina, Basarabia, and Transnistria was fuelled by ethnocratic state doctrine. In each of the government sessions, Jewish life was measured against the principle of "Romanianization" of the economy as the basis for developing the country, since racial purification was regarded as a condition necessary to allow the development of cultural values and institutions affirming the identity and power of Romanian society, internally and in relation to other nations. The third theme of antisemitism was the myth of "Judeo-Bolshevism" that equated Jews with Communism; a society without Jews would be safe from the danger of Communism. Thus, government sessions frequently discussed subjects such as the confiscation of Jewish rural property in Bukovina and Basarabia and its colonization by Romanians.

At the same time, the governors realized during the first days of the war that, while the deportations and exterminations would accelerate, the implementation of the Romanianization policy in the regained territories would be much delayed by bureaucracy. During a July 8, 1941 Cabinet Council meeting, M. Antonescu went so far as to recommend that, in order to reorganize Basarabia quickly and efficiently, Romanian administrators abandon the legal system as too dense and difficult to implement:

All the prefects, magistrates, engineers, agronomists going there [i.e., to Basarabia and Bukovina] should know that if they are going to behave according to the old spirit and work according to the old methods, we are not going to accomplish anything. I take full formal responsibility saying that there is no law. For centuries this nation didn't have a law, but there was a law against it; last year, in 1940, there was no law for the Romanian nation to surrender its lands to foreign domination, to have its property, religion, and life destroyed under Bolshevik rule. Therefore, today there is no law to hinder the Romanian nation in its holy right to incarnate and rebuild its national body. No law at all. For two or three weeks I will suspend the law in Basarabia and Bukovina.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., 268.

The only law that functioned with maximum efficiency was the racist legislation against Jews, which had been developed since 1938 on the ideological basis of ethnic purification. Analysis of the stenographs suggests that in Basarabia and Bukovina, policy and action for the deportation and extermination of the Jews functioned independently of other strategies, taking precedence over the economic and institutional Romanianization policy. The Holocaust was fed by the state antisemitism and facilitated by the contingency of war, when anything seemed possible.



БІБЛІОГРАФІЯ

ВИБРАНІ ОСТАННІ ВИДАННЯ З ІСТОРІЇ ГОЛОКОСТУ ТА ГЕНОЦИДІВ

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