

This essay is a slightly extended version of an essay that first appeared in „Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik“ 23 (1-2, Autumn 2011). This journal aims at reviewing the historical, economic, social, cultural and political developments in Middle, Eastern and South Eastern Europe in an objective and authentic way. It annually deals with a wide range of topics on about 250 pages. The authors of the "Halbjahresschrift" reject nationalism, revisionism and political extremism of any form.

**Consul general Dr. Dr. Fritz Gebhard Schellhorn**

**(At the same time an essay on the history of the Jews in Czernowitz 1940-1943)**

By Hartwig Cremers

Translated from the German by Carolin Roder

It is, above all, Fritz Schellhorn's resolute, brave, wise and successful actions as a consul in Czernowitz and at some times in Jassy which saved many thousand lives and thus deserve to be mentioned even today.<sup>1</sup>

Most notably, on 15 October 1941, he saved 20.000 people from being deported, something that meant certain death for most of the people. His later life – he became over 90 years old – centred on this incident. After having returned from Russian captivity, he extensively described the time at Czernowitz in several writings.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mentions of his commitment are to be found especially in works by Mariana HAUSLEITNER, last-mentioned in „Rettungsaktionen für verfolgte Juden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bukowina 1941-1944“, in Wolfgang BENZ, Brigitte MIHOK „Holocaust an der Peripherie“ „Judenpolitik und Judenmord in Rumänien und Transnistrien 1940– 1944), Berlin 2009 p.113 ff. It was Ms Hausleitner who encouraged this biographical sketch. All possible shortcomings are, of course, the author's sole responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Unless indicated differently, the following text is based on these writings. In addition to this, personal knowledge and notes to the author of this article by Gertrud Bindewald, Schellhorn's secretary 1938-1944, have been my key sources. Moreover, I rely on documents from Schellhorn's legacy which now belong to the political archive of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The majority of Schellhorn's documents from the time before 1944 are no longer available. The following notes by Schellhorn are the most important source:

"Aufzeichnung über die Ereignisse während meiner Tätigkeit als Leiter des Deutschen Konsulats in Czernowitz ..." [Notes on the events during my work as head of the German consulate at Czernowitz]. This writing (86 p. with six enclosed affidavits, dated 30 June 1966, quoted as "Aufzeichnung") was obviously meant as a kind of final official report. Two prints of this text are to be found in the political archive of the Department of Foreign Affairs (legacy of Schellhorn). An enclosed judgement of the writing (signed Hetzer ?) is dated 3 June 1962.

Furthermore, I rely on a text "Von Bratianu dem Älteren zu Codreanu und Antonescu – Beitrag zur Geschichte der Judenverfolgung in Rumänien" ("treatise on the history of the persecution of Jews in Romania"). This text (158 p., quoted as "Beitrag"), is to be dated after 1970 which is the last year of quoted literature. The text is based on literary studies and Schellhorn's own knowledge and experience. It is obviously a draft which was meant to be published but not considered finished by Schellhorn. It is now also available in the archive of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

I met him in 1955 after my then widowed father had married a sister of Schellhorn's wife: Dainty and rather small, upright, walking in a way that made his past as an officer visible, with a walking stick he did not yet need as such but rather to point or sketch something in the sand. He was white haired, with a parting, had a slightly reddened skin, spoke clearly, with a Swabian accent that was especially recognizable in vowels, and always listened genially to his interlocutors. You could not tell that he had just been in Russian captivity for eleven years, and neither did he complain about it. I still see him in front of low, long bookshelves filled with classic literature, but also historical literature and few novels, mainly French.

There were a lot of different elements that interacted and, in the end, determined Schellhorn's actions:

He grew up in Rottweil in Swabia, in a home marked by Christian ethics, where he was born as the oldest of ten children in 1888. His family was part of the national bourgeoisie; his father owned and managed a lawyer's office. At that time, it was part of such a middle-class life to serve voluntarily in the military for one year and follow an academic career. Schellhorn chose medicine, studied at the universities of Tübingen, Berlin, Munich and, for two terms, abroad at the university of Lausanne.

He joined a non-fencing students' fraternity dedicated to equestrianism – something that aroused his love for riding.

Like many young people of his generation, Schellhorn was attracted by science, in this case by pathology. He was made assistant to his teacher and PhD supervisor Paul von Baumgarten in Tübingen in 1912. Everything seemed set out for his career as a scholar and professor.

However, everything about this straightforward plan for his career changed with the outbreak of war in 1914. He was drafted into the army as medical assistant in the reserve from 1 August 1914 until 3 November 1918 and was a medical officer of the reserve in the end, in the "defensive battle of Flanders". His personnel record card in the Bavarian military archives

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The most important events which are treated here are most extensive in both writings and are described concurrently there.

Furthermore, I would like to refer to Schellhorn's text "Das Auswärtige Amt und die Judenpolitik des Nationalsozialismus" ([The Department of Foreign Affairs and the policy on Jews in National Socialism] (137 pages, dated February 14, 1966, quoted as "Judenpolitik"). This text extensively deals with the involvement of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the policy on Jews. On the one hand, it is based on knowledge available at the time of the text being written, on the other hand, it describes details and contexts from the point of view of the contemporary and immediate witness. It is especially the details about Romania that are important as historical source (p. 11 ff., 66-76, 130). This text was composed by order of the Department of Foreign Affairs and is to be found in its political archive (Legacy Schellhorn).

Moreover, I used the files PAAAB German Consulate Czernowitz, Package 4, Pol, Political Situation 1931-1943, quoted as "Akten des Konsulats", mainly edited by Ottmar Trasca, Dennis Deletant „Al III-lea Reich și Holocaustul din România, 1940-1944 documente din arhivele germane“, București, 2007.

describes this activity, as the last of 24 entries in the category "campaigns, battles, sieges, combats" which describes the war on the Western front, – in Nancy, Arras, Somme, Artois...

So he was, almost without any interruption, part of the homicidal scene of war and proved himself, like in his later life, to be brave and cold-blooded. A lot of decorations acknowledge his commitment, among them the Bavarian medal for military ambulance service (1<sup>st</sup> class) that was only awarded eleven times. And he did not kill, but tried to save lives.

But this left marks: "... had to try and save lives, and when this failed, I again and again witnessed the shattering last words of dying people. These emotional torments did not, however, make me emotionally blunt but more and more emotionally available to human suffering. Towards the end of the war, all my willpower was necessary to persevere, but after the catastrophe, I was no longer capable of pursuing my once cherished profession of pathologist, and I was forced to look for a new one."<sup>3</sup>

So, as a medical officer of 30 years, he could "no longer stand the sight of blood", as he once told me – during the catastrophe for his country which he thought of as the worst possible. However, there was a new beginning: he tried to serve his country in Foreign Service. "Back then, I kept my nose to the grindstone"<sup>4</sup> and completed another academic degree in four terms, i.e. a PhD in political science supervised by Carl Friedrich Sartorius at Tübingen.

A new stage of life began when Schellhorn was employed on a permanent basis in the Foreign Service on 2 November 1920. The following years were some of the happiest of his life, especially the foreign assignments, first in Brussels for about four years, then in Reykjavik for about one year, in Vienna for about two and a half year and subsequently as an attaché (Gesandtschaftsrat) in Paris for two years, until October 1933.

What is unusual about this is that Schellhorn worked, beginning in 1921, in the embassy of exactly that country which, few years before, had been an enemy and the one which suffered from a war that Schellhorn had experienced predominantly in this country, from March 1931 onwards in the embassy in Paris which had been one of the politically most important diplomatic representations.

It is also important that he had been abroad in a francophone country, for almost six years. Consequently, French became his second language, which he mastered almost as perfectly as a native speaker. His whole life was characterised by his love for the French culture. Moreover, his encounter with foreign cultures and people of different origin influenced his life and created an open-mindedness that his profession both promoted and prompted. This open-mindedness was quite rare in Germans of his age.

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<sup>3</sup> Notes from Schellhorn's legacy.

<sup>4</sup> A literal expression.

During his time in Paris, the takeover of National Socialism in Germany happened. Schellhorn decided to join the NSDAP (location group in Paris). After having been recalled to Berlin in July 1933, he was part of an SS Cavalry Corps (Reitersturm) for a short time – a step that was mainly due to his love for equitation. Yet, he never got further than an "aspirant" in this field.<sup>5</sup> He did not know from his own experience about the demeanour of National Socialism and the violence used before the takeover, but only from the point of view of foreign countries as he had permanently been abroad since 1928.<sup>6</sup>

He often asserted that it was particularly the contempt for the entire human race and the disrespect for law and justice shown in the "Röhm-Putsch" (June/July 1934) and murders of persons he highly respected, that induced his complete rejection of National Socialism.

This rejection of the cult of violence, of contempt for the law and of the ideology of race and the inferiority of other peoples has often been witnessed.<sup>7</sup> He was frequently faced with open hostility because of this attitude<sup>8</sup> but, thanks to his diplomatic talent, he was always able to get away – something that may have been made possible by his membership in the Nazi Party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Without it, none of his actions would have been possible.

### **Czernowitz**

In 1934, Schellhorn was ordered to run the consulate at Czernowitz. He remained in this position, in the end with the title of consul general, until his arrest in 1944.

Bukovina became his fate. He intensely concerned himself with this country whose original nature, particularly the Carpathians, he loved. Yet, he did not learn Romanian. The diversity of the country's inhabitants - Ukrainians ("Ruthenians"), Romanians, Jews, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Hutsuls) ...- and the Cisleithanian atmosphere let him grow very fond of this country. Schellhorn made friends and partners in most of the groups. His duties, especially the mediation between the conflicting German groups but also the moderation of

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<sup>5</sup> This incident rightly is not mentioned by Hans-Jürgen DÖSCHER in: "SS und Auswärtiges Amt im Dritten Reich", Frankfurt 1991.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed description see Aufzeichnung p. 17 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Later official statements, however, are often formulated in the terms of the then government. Even so, it is in no way discernible that this has worked in the interest of a criminal politics. For instance, achievements of Jews are regretted; on the other hand, this is used as a reason for sparing them (memorandum from 17 October 1941, to be found in the records of the consulate.). He "would even insist on the last Jew being removed" – if "the early breakdown of the province was to be achieved."(Of course, this was not intended. Schellhorn's notes from 15 October 1941 about his meeting with Pflaumer and Ellgering, to be found in the files of the consulate) etc.

<sup>8</sup> Confidential reports about Schellhorn in the legacy, about 14 January 1936(!) "... that within 5-6 weeks, it will be possible to put the reactionary Foreign Institute, the German Consul at Czernowitz as well as Father Goebel into the concentration camp as these people strive for the fall of today's Hitler-Germany ..."

disastrous effects of public appearances of high representatives of the Reich, often were exhausting.

His love for hunting made him acquainted with many huntsmen in the hunting club "Dragos Voda"<sup>9</sup> and with a forest superintendent in the religious fund who became his father-in-law in 1942.

What became important was his encounter with general Ion Antonescu, who was sidelined at that time and whom he got to know in March 1939 in a family he was friendly with.<sup>10</sup> Both shared the love for the French language and culture. Schellhorn described Antonescu's great love for his country as his "most noticeable character trait".<sup>11</sup> Antonescu doubtlessly was responsible for mass murders later. It was Schellhorn's later and most influential achievement to alleviate at least one of Antonescu's decisions – something that this acquaintance was a prerequisite for.

What was also decisive for this success was what Schellhorn did to save Romanians. The Soviet Union occupied Northern Bukovina at, even for Germany, a very short notice in June 1940. Schellhorn mentions in detail his attempts to assist not only Germans in their resettlement, but also Romanians who were declared as Germans and whom he stood up for quite often. He called on the Head of the Committee for Resettlement in Moscow, Lorenz,<sup>12</sup> to point out the advantages for Germany that a generous treatment of how German origin was to be determined would entail.<sup>13</sup> It is plausible that his efforts and further commitment finally enabled over 10,000 Romanians to leave the country<sup>14</sup> – something that made Antonescu thank him most profusely.<sup>15</sup>

His attempts at helping Jews who had been accepted for resettlement were, however, futile, even if those Jews also had German citizenship as former Austrians. After the Soviet invasion in Czernowitz Schellhorn managed to be assigned to the German embassy in Moscow and tried to get via this embassy visa for Jews from Bukovina which were supposed to help them

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<sup>9</sup> According to wikipedia, the name of the Romanian sports club at Czernowitz.

<sup>10</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 29. On further encounters with Antonescu, see Aufzeichnung p. 43, 45, 48, 73.

<sup>11</sup> Aufzeichnung, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup> Werner Lorenz, SS-Commander in Chief (Obergruppenführer) and Head of the Main Welfare Office for Ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle [VOMI]), a main office of the SS that fetched Germans from Eastern Europe "back to the Reich", very often to Warthegau.

<sup>13</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 36 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See Emanuel TURCZYNSKI „Die Bukowina“ in Isabel RÖSKAU-RYDEL „Galizien, Bukowina, Moldau“, Berlin 1999, p. 213 ff. (321 f.), Mariana Hausleitner „Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina“ Munich 2001, p. 369 f. About 14,000 people more were resettled than had claimed to be Germans during the census of 1939. For an in-detail discussion of the resettlement of Germans see Andrej Angrick „Das Wechselspiel der Kräfte ...“ in Alfred GOTTWALD, Norbert KAMPE, Peter KLEIN „NS-Gewaltherrschaft“ Berlin 2005. p. 332 ff.

<sup>15</sup> In February 1941, Antonescu also expressed his thanks by a "grand Romanian medal", which, as Schellhorn wrote, "far exceeded the rank I then had." Aufzeichnung p. 45. (He refers to the medal for officers of high rank from the order of the crown in Romania, i.e. the second-highest rank of the highest Romanian medal).

leave the country. This failed as the Romanians declined Schellhorn's attempt. Even so, he could at least distribute the German passports which had specifically been created without the discriminatory "J". In the end, he convinced the Soviet governor to protect these Jews as "Reich Germans". However, most of them were deported to Siberia – something that can possibly be linked to Germany's aggression against the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

The Soviet occupation brought serious pain and suffering upon Bukovina which, of course, was only a prelude to all the pain after the recapture in 1941.

### **The pogrom of Jassy**

In December 1940, the consulate was moved to Jassy. It was here that Schellhorn witnessed for the first time a mass murder of Jews, the pogrom of Jassy on the 28 June 1941 which claimed the lives of thousands of people. Schellhorn in detail describes his attempts at bringing Romanian and German authorities to intervene in this matter.<sup>17</sup> These attempts had but little success. Nevertheless, Schellhorn saved some lives. His experiences and insights can help us understand today how it was possible for this pogrom to occur. The secretary who was with him at that time was never able to relate these experiences without bursting into tears after a few sentences.

### **The task force 10b of the group D at Czernowitz**

A few days later the murders of the task force 10b (group D Ohlendorf) at Czernowitz began. Schellhorn's account of this is as follows:

An officer known to Schellhorn acquainted him with the facts. He helped in travelling from Jassy to Czernowitz which lay then outside the consulate's district and where nothing had been done against the commandership. Schellhorn invited the commander of the commandership and his officers and made it very clear that they were infringing the sovereign power of this area which belonged to Romania and that this might cause diplomatic complications. He also thought of tipping the scales in his favour by emphasising his

<sup>16</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 16 ff. More detailed in Beitrag, p. 119 f. See also TURCZYNSKI l. c. p. 324, who reported a deportation of 3,800 people, four fifths of them Jews, nine days **before** the German attack. See as well Manfred REIFER „Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina“ in Hugo Gold „Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina“ Vol. 2 p. 1 ff. (13): „In der Nacht auf den 13. Juni“. According to Schellhorn's report to the embassy from 28 August 1941 (TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 287), 150 Jews were left in 1941. They were deprived of their German citizenship on 26 November 1941 (TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 287).

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed description, see especially Beitrag p. 121 ff. An official report, dated from 9 July 1941 can be found in the files of the consulate (as well in TRASCA/ DELETANT, p. 184). Further notes of Schellhorn on the pogrom of Jassy in TRASCA/ DELETANT, p. 162, 168, 175, 181, 184.

membership in the Nazi party, and he further supported his claims by his former membership in the SS Cavalry Corps.<sup>18</sup> Schellhorn countered the claim that the Romanian government had agreed on these procedures by pointing out that, on the one hand, Ion Antonescu was quite touchy when it came to questions of political sovereignty and, on the other hand, by explaining the resentment of the local authorities of which he had assured himself beforehand with governor Riosanu. After further efforts of Schellhorn, the assault unit leader (Sturmbannführer) Persterer some days later acquainted him with the fact that the commandership had stopped the executions immediately after this discussion. This was indeed the case, and some weeks later, the commandership retreated. According to the report that Schellhorn had asked for and had given the German envoy Manfred baron Killinger<sup>19</sup> in person, the commandership had killed 524 people in and around Czernowitz.<sup>20</sup>

It is likely that it has been Schellhorn's speech in front of the leaders of the commandership that led to an end of the murders.<sup>21</sup> To begin with, the consulate remained at Jassy and only returned to Czernowitz in November 1941.

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<sup>18</sup> Beitrag p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> Manfred Baron Killinger, „Obergruppenführer“ in the SA.

<sup>20</sup> Other figures can be found in Th. LÖWENSTEIN-LAWI, "Deutsche Dokumente über die Ausrottung der Bukowiner Juden" in Hugo GOLD, "Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina", Vol. 2, p. 70f. (71). Again other figures in Ralf OGORREK "Die Einsatzgruppen und die Genesis der Endlösung", Berlin 1996 p. 145f.

<sup>21</sup> Description in Beitrag p. 124ff and Aufzeichnung p. 54 ff. Schellhorn obviously didn't remember the exact date of his initiative and thus gave different dates. Beitrag "middle of July", Aufzeichnung: "in the first days of August" – which cannot be true.

According to LÖWENSTEIN-LAVI (l. c. p. 71, see also TURCZYNSKI l. c., p. 325) the activities of the taskforce were said to be planned but for "three to five days". The event information number 22 (TRASCA/ DELETANT, l. c. p. 198) reads: "The achievement of the tasks of commandership Xb is planned in three to five days." The event information is dated 14 July 1941 and reports a discussion from 12 July 1941 when the murders had already been committed. "Achievement" of the tasks obviously refers to the completion of this. Why "achievement" of the (murderous) tasks (on the tasks see Andrej ANGRICK "Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord", Hamburg 2003, p. 149 and 161), after 1 to 2 percent of the Jews in Czernowitz had been killed and several weeks before the commandership retreated? The same event information gives an explanation: A statement from Czernowitz (not Bucharest!) reads: "Romanians declare Northern Bukovina as Romanian territory". The reason for this "declaration" can only have been to account for the "accomplishment" of the tasks. This was exactly Schellhorn's argument. It was not the declaration about the territory that was to be reported from Czernowitz – this had long since happened in Bucharest -, but the commandership was notified about this fact and its impact, which can only have been done by Schellhorn. Romanian local authorities probably have not criticised the infringement of their sovereignty in order to bring the task force to end the murders, even against their consent. There obviously wasn't such an ending in Bessarabia in the equally Romanian territory.

ANGRICK doesn't furnish evidence for his assumption that "the task force was allowed to act in the country for a short period" (Andrej ANGRICK „Die Einsatzgruppe D und die Kollaboration“ in Wolfgang Kaiser "Täter im Vernichtungskrieg" Berlin 2002 p. 71 ff. (73). The permission of the "government" (Mihai Antonescu?) probably was not temporary or revoked, but was invalidated because of Schellhorn's allusion to Ion Antonescu's attitude, i.e. the Romanian leader in person. It might have been this hint that was the reason for Persterer to stop the murders. It was also suitable to move Persterer's superiors up to Himmler. In "Im Wechselspiel der Kräfte ..." (l. c. p. 337 ff) ANGRICK doesn't explain the end of the murders. In "Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord" ANGRICK attributes the end of the murders to the Romanians' wish to first take stock of the Czernowitz Jews' assets (p. 158) and that the commandership first had to attend to thefts of German troops (p. 161). If sources became known which prove, against Schellhorn's declaration, that Romanian authorities took action against the task force for reasons of political sovereignty ("sovereign

## Deportations from Czernowitz

On the now following action – perhaps the most important in the life of Fritz Schellhorn -, I refer to his own account:<sup>22</sup>

"On the 12 October<sup>23</sup>, i.e. one day after the movement of the Czernowitz Jews to the ghetto, I got<sup>24</sup> a call from Czernowitz, from the director of the local Romanian credit bank, a gentleman von Tabora I had been friendly with for years and who implored me to come to Czernowitz at once. Terrible things were happening in the city ... I went to Czernowitz with two employees on 14 October. I arrived in the city in the early afternoon and immediately contacted the gentleman von Tabora ... I was deeply perturbed to hear that all Bukovinian Jews would be deported; in the province, this procedure had already been completed and had been done abruptly; now it was Czernowitz' turn as the last city. All Jews had been brought to a ghetto to be deported from there ...

How should I take action against measures decided by the Romanian government which could be sure of the approval of the German authorities that were equally concerned with a solution to the Jewish question? Especially in an anti-Semitic country with the sinister background of bloody excesses against Jews only a short time ago? My actions also were my own responsibility; had I beforehand tried to get clearance from the German envoy von Killinger, this would, given his attitude on the Jewish question, certainly have meant failure of the attempt. After all, I also had to think on the very serious consequences that unauthorised acting for the rescue of Jews could have for my own life in the circumstances at that time... it seemed to me that the only feasible way to save as many Jews as possible from Czernowitz from being

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territory") and with the aim to stop the actions of the task force, it would be necessary to verify if this really was the cause for the end of the murders. The testimony of members of the task force in post-war trials is, however, worthless as they probably adopted their views either from their commander or directly from Schellhorn and did not experience a possible Romanian charge. Until now, Schellhorn's initiative is the only explanation for the end of the murders which is completely consistent with the available sources and works without additional assumptions.

<sup>22</sup> Beitrag p. 79 ff, 128 f. For an account which mainly is literally concurrent, see Aufzeichnung p. 58 ff. An account of Schellhorn's report to the embassy and attacks of the RSHA on Schellhorn that were defeated can also be found there.

Schellhorn did not fashion his initiative retrospectively when an account of such an initiative seemed opportune, but made an official note about it on 15 October 1941. He described it openly to German authorities and accounted for it with economic needs and thus with German interests. There is also a note on it (dated 17 October 1941) in the report of the advisor at the German embassy, mayor ELLGERING. (All documents in PAAAB German consulate Czernowitz, package 4, Pol, Vol. 2 political condition 1931-1943, published by TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 316ff).

<sup>23</sup> 12 October 1941

<sup>24</sup> At Jassy.



deported was to emphasize the economic and especially military benefits for Germany if the Jews were to remain in the city.<sup>25</sup> ... I let Dr. Lupu,<sup>26</sup> a traditional Austrian civil servant, who I knew very well, know about this issue and asked him to act as an interpreter with Calotescu. Calotescu<sup>27</sup> was not able to understand German, and I would have had to converse with him in French. To avoid any kind of misunderstanding in this important affair, I preferred to work with an interpreter in the form of a senior Romanian government official. Dr. Lupu, whose opinion concerning questions of deportation was similar to mine, readily agreed. It may have been about 11 o'clock<sup>28</sup> when we entered the room of the governor. I explained everything that could be seen as fatal consequence of the deportations to Calotescu; I showed the future of Bukovina in the blackest dye and pointed out that with its economic collapse, which could certainly be expected, German interests would also be harmed gravely. I especially pointed out the strategical necessity for smooth supply from Bukovina to the Reich and the front lines. Finally, I protested, as advocate of the interests of the Reich, against further deportations of Jews.

The governor listened to my explanations with growing astonishment; obviously, he hadn't expected something like this from a German official. However, he didn't repudiate my protest; he only said that he could not make a decision right then; at first, I was to hand in, by 6 p.m., a list of those Jews who were important to protect the German interests I had mentioned... after the meeting, the governor would certainly check with Antonescu ... .

I met the mayor Dr. Popovici and other gentlemen in the antechamber of the governor, at the time in the afternoon he had determined. As they told me, they had been asked by the governor to be present at 6 o'clock in the evening; they did not, however, know for which reasons ... I went to the governor to give him my list, but he waved me aside and addressed himself to me in French: He had informed marshal Antonescu, who knew me in person – *il vous connaît!* –, about my protest and the reasons for it. The marshal consequently ordered, the evacuation of the Czernowitz Jews to be stopped for the time being. 20,000 should not at all be affected by this

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<sup>25</sup> Here, the identical *Aufzeichnung* (p. 59) read: "First I tried to move the two German administration advisors Pflaumer and Ellgering to protest together against the deportation of the Jews. The two gentlemen expressed some comprehension for my arguments but declined any participation in the steps I had had in mind." About this attempt, notes by Schellhorn from 15 October 1941 can also be found in the *Akten des Konsulats*.

<sup>26</sup> On Nicolae Lupu (1884-1972) see TRASCA/ DELETANT I. c. p. 212 annotation 3. According to ANGRICK ("*Im Wechselspiel der Kräfte ...*" p. 347), Lupu was "inspector general for Bukovina".

<sup>27</sup> Corneliu Colotescu, Romanian general, governor of Bukovina 1941 – 1943. According to REIFER (I. c. p. 20), he only came to be governor when October had begun, i. e. only few days before.

<sup>28</sup> On 15 October, 1941.

evacuation, but rather be sorted; after this had been done, the evacuation could be recommenced. He then said I could take back my list and complete it ... Subsequently, the governor addressed the other gentlemen and told them what had happened ... They complimented me on my success..."

The accounts of Antonescu's decisions given by the mayor of Czernowitz, Popovici,<sup>29</sup> and perhaps by Fildermann<sup>30</sup> differ. Popovici and Schellhorn agree on the following: The decision on the deferment of the expulsion was personally made by Ion Antonescu and disclosed to Calotescu in a telephone call on 15 October. It was then disclosed by Calotescu in a meeting in the afternoon of 15 October.

Apart from Popovici, he himself, general Jonescu and Schellhorn took part in this meeting. Schellhorn doesn't mention general Jonescu, but other participants.<sup>31</sup> It is undisputed that Ion Antonescu had been influenced beforehand. As the plan of the evacuation got known in Czernowitz no sooner than 9 October,<sup>32</sup> this exertion of influence must have happened in the days between 9 October and 15 October.

Schellhorn's note that he had travelled from his office at Jassy to Czernowitz because of an urgent call and probable persecutions of Jews is verisimilar. Other reasons for his presence at Czernowitz are not apparent. He immediately recorded at that time that he had called on Calotescu on 15 October in the morning and brought forward economic reasons and German interests to refrain from the expulsion.<sup>33</sup> This talk in the morning is the only possible explanation for Schellhorn being consulted in the discussion in the afternoon.<sup>34</sup> The other participants were responsible for executing Antonescu's order. The initiative of the German consul is the most probable explanation for Calotescu calling Antonescu. It is unlikely that other critical voices brought him to act completely contrary to Antonescu's non-ambiguous

<sup>29</sup> A detailed and in-depth analysis of the account of Dr. Trajan POPOVICI, mayor of Czernowitz 1941/42: "Mein Bekenntnis" (translated extract of the Romanian version) in Hugo GOLD, "Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina", Vol. 2, Tel Aviv 1961, p. 62-70 (quoted: "Bekenntnis") and an account of Fildermann (see the following note) can be found in Schellhorn's "Beitrag" (cf. Note 2) p. 70-91, 127-130. When he wrote the "Aufzeichnung", Schellhorn did not know the "Bekenntnis". The volume by Gold appeared in 1962, i.e. after the "Aufzeichnung" had been written. Schellhorn only got to know the volume in 1966. Popovici died in 1946 (TRASCA/DELETANT l. c. p. 331)

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Wilhelm Fildermann (1882-1963), president of the federation of Jewish parishes in Greater Romania. Fildermann incessantly spoke up for the Jews, partly successful and often directly to Antonescu whose schoolfellow he once was.

<sup>31</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 60, Beitrag p. 81. Apart from Schellhorn, administrators were obviously invited who were responsible for executing Antonescu's order. POPOVICI. l. c. p. 66, who only mentions general Jonescu, Schellhorn and himself as being present, differs on that.

<sup>32</sup> POPOVICI, l. c. p. 63 f.

<sup>33</sup> Annotation, dated 15 October 1941 in the files of the consulate.

<sup>34</sup> STERNBERG'S assumption in his comment on Popovici's "Bekenntnis" (l. c. p. 70, annotation 11) that Calotescu "had obviously been ordered by Antonescu to let all measures of annihilation of Jews be supervised by Germans" (supervision by the consulate at Jassy of all institutions and, ironically, a step for sparing Jews!) is totally unfounded. This would neither be in accordance with German nor with Romanian policy.

decision. Furthermore, it is convincing that Calotescu in person told Antonescu on the phone about Schellhorn's reasons and that these reasons, as the attitude of the German partner, together with the allusion to Schellhorn, whom Antonescu esteemed very highly and who had originated those reasons, moved Antonescu to make that decision. Antonescu remembered Schellhorn quite well for having saved thousands of Romanians from the Soviet occupation<sup>35</sup> – something he had decorated Schellhorn highly for only few months before. Popovici quotes Calotescu's statement<sup>36</sup> that "the consul, with regard to the interests of the Reich in the economy of the province" also had been authorised to hand in "lists of those who are to remain". So, according to Popovici's account, these interests played a decisive role in the disclosure of Antonescu's decision. It's hardly possible that someone else, apart from Schellhorn, had brought forward, before the talks, such interests of the Reich in sparing the Jews, e.g. that such interests had been asserted with Antonescu by German representatives.<sup>37</sup>

That a German office-holder and, in addition to this, a person that was esteemed highly by Antonescu and had rendered outstanding services to Romania, made such an advance is a unique situation. One can agree with Heinen<sup>38</sup> who writes that Schellhorn "achieved" the authorisation for the Jews to remain in the city. As Ellgering<sup>39</sup> wrote, on 17 October 1941, to the envoy von Killinger: "Because of the appeal of the German consulate, the number of Jews who may temporarily remain here shall be set on 15,000 – 20,000 ...". "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."<sup>40</sup> For the majority of these people, this meant that their lives were saved.<sup>41</sup>

Popovici claims to have effected this decision of Antonescu by his initiative.<sup>42</sup> The possible note of Fildermann that it was him who effected this saving raises questions.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The completely unexplained number of 20,000 (Jews to be spared) could be a chivalrous gesture of Antonescu towards Schellhorn, remembering the Romanians Schellhorn had saved from Soviet occupation the year before.

<sup>36</sup> I. c. p. 66

<sup>37</sup> However, the thought that economic and military considerations might suggest restraint in the expulsion of Jews was put down before by Schellhorn (Note from 26 July 1941, TRASCA/ DELETANT I. c. p. 210 f) Mentioned as well by von Killinger in a telegram from 6 August 1941 (TRASCA/ DELETANT I. c. p. 249): "I ... advised the deputy prime minister to carry out the elimination of Jewish elements only ... slowly."

<sup>38</sup> Armin HEINEN, "Rumänien, der Holocaust und die Logik der Gewalt", Munich 2007, p. 134.

<sup>39</sup> I. c.

<sup>40</sup> Vladimir SOLONARI "The treatment of the Jews of Bukovina by the Soviet and Romanian administrations 1940-1944" in *Holocaust and Modernity I* No. 2 (8) 2010 p. 170, 172: SOLONARI: "This member of the NSDAP since 1933 was another Schindler."

<sup>41</sup> Note of the "Jews' advisor" Richter dated 17 October 1941: "As the director general Lecca told us today, 110,000 Jews will be evacuated from Bukovina and Bessarabia ... This action was meant to annihilate the Jews." (TRASCA/ DELETANT I. c. p. 339). At least 90,000, i.e. about two thirds of the 147,000 Jews deported from Bukovina and Bessarabia, perished (DELETANT in TRASCA/ DELETANT p. 17).

<sup>42</sup> In his "Bekanntnis" (I. c. p. 66), POPOVICI writes. "Meanwhile, the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October passed. ... It is not opportune to present the means by which I indirectly tried to influence the will of the marshal, whom I

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did not know and who lived so far from Czernowitz; but my attempts were successful. On the phone, in a discussion with the governor on Wednesday, 15 October, the marshal agreed to relieve the mass-deportation by exempting 20,000 people of the categories I had pointed out in the conference on Saturday (mistranslation, correctly: "Sunday") and for which factors to be taken absolutely seriously were to be taken into account."

Popovici correctly remarks that this success required influencing the marshal's will. He also truly emphasises the difficulties on the way from himself to Antonescu: The short time which was available. He did not know Antonescu – the distance was wide.

Popovici does not give details on his "means" for success. The mentioning was "not opportune". Moreover, according to Popovici, "factors to be taken absolutely seriously had to be taken into account" for the 20,000 people. So, any actual hint on how the marshal's will could be manipulated is missing. Popovici doesn't mention an initiative of Schellhorn.

It is obvious that Antonescu made the decision to save 20,000 Jews from being deported. Even today, another person that might have approached Antonescu has not been found. According to all accounts available, Calotescu talking to Antonescu was decisive; however, Popovici leaves open the question who had initiated this discussion. In any case, it was in this discussion that Antonescu finally disclosed his positive decision.

It is hardly probable that Calotescu called Antonescu of his own accord.

It is also improbable that Popovici contributed with means whose mention he declared to be "not opportune" in motivating Calotescu's initiative with Antonescu. Popovici obviously was not politically important enough for Calotescu to make a stand against clear decisions of Antonescu. According to Ellgering's report (l. c.), Popovici was the third mayor of Czernowitz since July 1941 and to Ellgering (already on 17 October!) "his days seemed numbered". An urgent intervention of the German consul that had external implications would have prompted Calotescu to immediately report to Antonescu.

It is very improbable that a possible hint of Calotescu about a possible initiative of Popovici and his arguments might have moved Antonescu.

The special circumstances that applied for Schellhorn were not applicable for Popovici: According to his own statement, Popovici didn't know Antonescu – consequently, Antonescu didn't know Popovici either. Antonescu had known Schellhorn, however, for a long time, appreciated him highly and remembered him well because of his recent commitment for Romania. Popovici, on the other hand, was no German representative and could not bring its "interests" – and, consequently, the interests of common front lines to bear on this.

When Schellhorn talks about Germany's interests, he obviously wanted to demonstrate to act strictly within the limits of his responsibilities. For Antonescu, it was rather Romanian interests which were important. Schellhorn mentions these in his "memorandum" to Calotescu which is dated 16 October 1941 (copy in the files of the consulate).

Popovici's considerations which he formulated in "Bekanntnis" (l. c. p. 66: "protection of the Jewish representatives of high education and fine arts ... out of respect for intelligence and civilisation I implored the judges and advocates ...") might not really have moved Antonescu. Popovici writes that Antonescu "exempted 20,000 people of the categories I had pointed out in the conference on Saturday from being deported". The repetition of Popovici's categories in the success is obviously supposed to prove the causality of his attempts. A few lines later, however, he "literally" quotes Calotescu that it was rather "the degree to which they were indispensable" which mattered and not so much Popovici's categories. It can hardly be imagined that something other than the use of these people for the – especially economic – Romanian interests and the common warfare of Romania and Germany, which Schellhorn had brought forward, mattered.

Schellhorn's account is predominantly probable. This would mean that Popovici repressed Schellhorn's commitment. Popovici's share in changing Antonescu's mind remains opaque. One can only speculate about Popovici's reasons for this account. They may result from the time (which one cannot be exactly sure about) when he wrote the "Bekanntnis". It must remain unanswered whether Popovici pursued special interests or other aims.

What seems most obvious: 1941/ 1942, Popovici had let himself be celebrated as the saviour of Jews – as he reports in detail in his "Bekanntnis", i.e. at a time when public mentioning of Schellhorn as the saviour of Jews would have been dangerous for him as a German civil servant and would also have been dangerous for the success of this. In his later written report, Popovici could not or would not entirely disavow this, so he did not make up the course of events, which would have been verifiable, but he left the facts opaque and incomplete. His early death (1946, TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 331) prevented further clarification of the matter.

After the number of the Jews to be spared was settled, Schellhorn completed his lists of those to be spared who where, in some kind, related to German interests<sup>44</sup> and presented it to Calotescu but, as Popovici correctly remarks, he did not take part in the selection of those who were – and consequently, also of those who were not – to be spared.<sup>45</sup>

The number of 20,000<sup>46</sup> to be spared remained final.<sup>47</sup> But the deferment of the deportation of the remaining Jews until the selection was ended. In June 1924, there were still 3 transports

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It can certainly also be explained by tactic reasons that Popovici wrote in a negative tone about Schellhorn, who then was in Russian captivity – something that Popovici might have known. Popovici doesn't relate any actions by Schellhorn that should have been judged negatively.

Schellhorn was quite affected by Popovici's account, which he got to know in 1966, particularly because he remembered a good relationship with Popovici. He knew about Popovici's attitude towards the question of deportations and always respected it, despite this disappointment.

<sup>43</sup> Fildermann's affidavit on 13 March 1956 in front of the German consul in New York, von Saucken (copy in Schellhorn's legacy) states under (4) that he had succeeded in preventing the deportation of 20,000 Jews from the Southern Bukovina. The assumption that Fildermann had meant Czernowitz is supported but by the number of 20,000. The Southern Bukovina was an area with clear frontiers of which Czernowitz was not part. Such a saving from Southern Bukovina is, however, unheard of. Fildermann had related this to a conference in Berlin which, however, is also unheard of at this time and which, according to the result which was communicated, i.e. that the deportation of all Jews had been decided, might rather have happened in September 1942. This relation shows that one cannot deduce from Fildermann's affidavit that his attempts have been the cause of the saving of the Czernowitz Jews in 1941. In this affidavit, he also states: "(4) ... but I could not avoid the deportations of the Jews from the Northern Bukovina."

Fildermann says, though, that Mihai (!) Antonescu (Attorney general and deputy prime minister) had guaranteed, on 14 October 1941, that different groups would be spared. Fildermann thought then (1941) that this guarantee had been immediately put into practice as an order from Mihai Antonescu for Bukovina (Letter to Ion Antonescu in Jean Ancel, "Documents concerning the fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust Jerusalem 1986, Vol. 3, p. 342). Fildermann could not know then about the talks at Czernowitz. All testimonies of the discussion with Calotescu on 15 October 1941 – the one by Popovici as well – state that Calotescu had presented the saving as Ion Antonescu's decision, which is the only possible statement. According to Fildermann, Mihai Antonescu's guarantee referred to Bessarabia and Bukovina. That this decision was put into practice was, however, limited to Bukovina, even though there were only deferments for Czernowitz. Consequently, it would remain unexplained for Fildermann's initiative why the expulsion from Czernowitz was postponed. It is more probable that there had been an initiative from Czernowitz. Antonescu's aggressive letter to Fildermann dated 19 October 1941 (Carp, Matias "Carta Neagra" Bukarest 1996 Vol. 3 p. 191 for the document Number 103) which justified the expulsion and which unequivocally is the direct answer to Fildermann's petitions from 9 and 11 October 1941 (Carp l. c. p. 189 for document Number 101) rules out that Antonescu might have complied between these dates with an appeal by Fildermann. This suggests that the saving of the Czernowitz Jews cannot be attributed to Fildermann, despite his many bids for the Jews in Romania.

<sup>44</sup> See Aufzeichnung p. 63.

<sup>45</sup> Popovici's diction (l. c.) that one "got rid" of Schellhorn was part of the then prevailing negative formulations. Schellhorn was not invited by Calotescu to be part of together putting into practice Antonescu's orders, but to find out about the results of his attempts and to specify, by completing his own lists, the "German interests" he had brought forward towards the government of the province

<sup>46</sup> However, Deletant quotes a report (TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 30) that only 16391 "authorisations" to remain had been issued by January 1942. Why the number of 20,000 to be spared, which is given both by Schellhorn and Popovici, was not fully utilised remains in need of explanation. Moreover, about 5,000 Jews had according to this report "illegally" remained in the city – something made possible or at least facilitated by the temporary stop to the deportations on 18 October, i.e. something that can also be ascribed to Schellhorn's initiative.

Obviously the authorisations were signed in part by Popovici. Such a "Popovici-authorisation", i.e. one that had not been signed by Calotescu, is printed in "Bekanntnis" (l. c. p. 67). See also Popovici's account in "Bekanntnis" (l. c., p. 66): Calotescu: "I ... will personally sign the authorisations...".

Popovici specifies the total number of those deported from Czernowitz as "exactly 28,391" (l. c. p. 69). On the numbers of victims see in detail Schellhorn ("Beitrag" p. 89 ff), Deletant (TRASCA/ DELETANT p. 30).

with several thousand Jews from Czernowitz to Transdnistria.<sup>48</sup> Schellhorn also tried here to save Jews from this fate.<sup>49</sup>

After this, Romanian policy changed, supposedly because of the development of the war situation.<sup>50</sup> Schellhorn knew, from a lot of conversations, that he agreed with general Dragalina, governor of Bukovina as of April 1943, on the rejecting of the expulsion and murder of Jews. Towards him, who still strongly believed in the German victory, Schellhorn no longer gave mainly economic and military reasons. The Jews in Bukovina had become of little importance in this respect. He primarily pointed to the animosity that those murders must cause with the enemy nations.<sup>51</sup>

### **Captivity and Epilogue**

In March 1944, the consulate left Czernowitz when the Red Army advanced. The personnel were integrated into the embassy in Bucharest.

On 2 September 1944 the personnel of the embassy were first captured by Romanians, and then handed over to the Russians. Captivity for Schellhorn only ended in 1955. Schellhorn left an account<sup>52</sup> of it that reports the circumstances quite matter-of-factly: conditions of the arrest, hunger and coldness, very little space, prison cells for a multitude of

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<sup>47</sup> Schellhorn indeed demanded that the deportations be postponed only temporarily. There is a "memorandum" dated 16 October 1941 in the files of the consulate, without any doubt the "longer exposé on the necessity of the Jews remaining in Bukovina" mentioned in the "Aufzeichnung" (p. 61) which Schellhorn gave to Calotescu who in turn might have handed it on to Antonescu. Schellhorn explains there that it was possible to do without the Jews when the Jews had passed on their knowledge and abilities to Romanian unskilled workers assigned to them. However, he presented this knowledge and these abilities as being very extensive. Probably this idea results from a Romanian decision from 25 July 1941 to re-integrate Jews in the economic process until adequate Romanian replacements came which, according to Schellhorn, "would fail to appear" (Schellhorn's notes from 26 July 1941, TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c. p. 210 f). All the explanations describe an insurmountable obstacle for restarting the deportations – and they are meant that way. Angrick rightly describes this suggestion as "hardly manageable" (ANGRICK "Das Wechselspiel der Kräfte ..." p. 350), while SOLONARI argues less convincingly: "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." Schellhorn's account allowed the addressees to talk themselves into believing that, despite sparing Jews, they were still not deviating from their aim to expel all Jews.

<sup>48</sup> Schellhorn's reports and notes on this matter from 1942 in TRASCA/ DELETANT l. c., p. 422, 428, 433, 434, 445, 446). Schellhorn estimated the number of victims of these deportations at, all in all, 5,000. Deletant (TRASCA/ DELETANT p. 30) quotes the number 4094 from a report of Calotescu. A lot of the authorisations signed by Popovici were not accepted in the deportations (REIFER l. c. p. 23)

<sup>49</sup> Schellhorn writes ("Judenpolitik" p. 130): "Even when these (the deportations) ... were resumed in 1942, the consulate could exempt hundreds of Jews from these measures." See also "Beitrag" p. 129 f. Aufzeichnung p. 63 f.

<sup>50</sup> After June 1942, there were no more deportations from Bukovina.

<sup>51</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> 15 pages of typescript undated in the legacy.

people, questioning ... A sentence of 25 years arrest<sup>53</sup> without any actual foundation because of "espionage". No word from his wife and his daughter, whom, as a child only few months old, he had seen off into flight to an uncertain future. Notes on the time in the Lefortovo District in Moscow and Vladimir mention the fact of an exchange of ideas with fellow prisoners, but they do not contain any names and no mention of what these talks were about. This most certainly is disappointing for historians, but a distinguishing mark of Schellhorn: diplomatic confidentiality as long as no reasons that were more important prevented this. Other notes suggest that Gustav Richter, the German "Jews' agent" with the Romanian government, shared his prison cell for some time,<sup>54</sup> and general Gerstenberg<sup>55</sup> also did so for two years. Or he reported the testimony of colonel Rodler, head of the German defence in Romania, which an interrogator read to him: He – Schellhorn – had, already in 1943, talked about the necessity to get rid of National Socialism in order to avert a catastrophe for the German people.<sup>56</sup> This talk had happened in a café in Bucharest. Many death sentences at that time were issued because of such statements.

After Schellhorn's return to Germany – he was now 67 years old – the time at Czernowitz concerned him in a surprising way. The letter from the lawyer Dr. M. from Vienna (previously Czernowitz) dated 28 February 1957 – whose original can be found in Schellhorn's legacy – is characteristic of this and is quoted here in extracts:

Dear Sir,

All those who remember your activities as consul think gratefully of the fact that you upheld humanity for the persecuted Jews in darkest times and supported those at risk if it was possible for you in any way. As I said, you can, even today, rest assured of the gratitude of all those who vividly remember those days.

Considering this and assuming that the man who was brave enough for and interested in humanity at that time can, even today, not be indifferent to historic truth, I am appealing to you as lawyer for the Jews of Bukovina ...

The German authorities responsible for compensation are all too willing to consider the persecution of Jews in Bukovina, with all its by-products, as a laborious task of Romanian authorities while in fact, the violence against Jews ... was executed due to

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<sup>53</sup> This was the standard punishment for Germans (Andreas HILGER "Die Gerechtigkeit nehme ihren Lauf" in Norbert Frei, "Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik" Göttingen 2006 p. 180 ff (237f): "In the absolute majority of cases, the SMT (Soviet Military Tribunals) pronounced a sentence of 25 years arrest or respectively a life sentence ... After the death penalty had been abolished, (this) was the only sentence which, according to Ukas 43, was actually admissible for Germans."

<sup>54</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 20, 82.

<sup>55</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 62, 80.

<sup>56</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 68.

orders of German headquarters, mostly due to orders directly from the German Protection Squadron (SS), the Security Service (SD) and German soldiers.

You know from your own experience and, as you may boast about, partly from having hampered the cruelties, about the real facts, i.e. that the persecutions happened on the territory of a foreign state but that they were effected by German government agencies or by a German office-holder.

For the sake of historic truth ..."

It was this historic truth, i.e. the responsibility of Germans and Romanians, which Schellhorn tried to present in a nuanced way in his accounts, which he was prompted to give in several trials. Schellhorn regretted that this sometimes led to Jewish claims against Germany being turned down and then to public assaults and false statements on Schellhorn's comportment at Czernowitz.<sup>57</sup>

It is not possible here to contribute to the discussion of German and Romanian responsibility. Schellhorn's view on these matters has become common knowledge today.

Schellhorn once more acted in public life. At the age of 72, he became the first president of the German-French society, the Cercle franco-allemand, at Tübingen in 1961. Also because of his efforts, it became, with 1,200 members (one third of them French), the largest and "probably the liveliest" association of this kind in Germany. A last and beautiful encounter with France as his most cherished country. After 4 years, he retired from business in the front row. He was awarded the Grand Cross of Merit for his work.

In the last years of his life, he was confined indoors because of the after-effects of his captivity. He had to put up with the death of his wife and died two years later, in 1982.

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<sup>57</sup> Aufzeichnung p. 84 f.