



Beyond aspects strictly related to political or territorial issues, the Soviet-German non-aggression pact signed on August 23, 1939 generated important demographic mutations in Eastern Europe, hard to foresee prior to the outbreak of the war. After the delineation of the spheres of

## The Repatriation of the Germans from the Romanian Territories in 1940 Identity Searches.

**Tema individuală de cercetare:** Căutări identitare. Repatrierea germanilor din teritoriile românești în 1940 (Identity Searches. The Repatriation of the Germans from the Romanian Territories in 1940)

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**Tematica:** Discurs literar-artistic și construcție identitară în secolele XVI-XX (Literary-Artistic Discourses and Identity Construction in the 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

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It must be emphasized the fact that in the Romanian historiography there are relatively few works that studied this topic of the repatriation of the Germans in 1940. More often than not, we can talk about various articles, scattered in different publications. Although in the archives in

animated by promises, hopes and dreams of a better life. more accurate image on an uprooted ethnic group seeking a new identity in the old homeland, Estonia or Lithuania can emphasize both similarities and distinctions which, together, can form a similar phenomena in the Baltic countries. The repatriation of the German ethnics from Latvia, much larger process which cannot be fully understood if we do not compare it, for example, to repatriation of the Germans from Bukovina, Bessarabia or Dobruđa represented only a part of a developed in the Romanian territories. But, obviously, we never lose sight of the fact that the Our project thus aims to analyze this complex phenomenon, studying the way it was

the German and Soviet authorities. consideration of the repatriation of the Germans in these territories, as it was regulated, bilaterally, by German ethnics, as was the case of Bukovina or Bessarabia. In our research we will also take into Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Hungary, territories also inhabited by significant communities of incidental, since 1940 is the year when Romania was forced to renounce territories in favour of the of the Germans in Romania," choosing the formula "the Romanian territories." The choice is not First, as we have emphasized in the title, we avoided a formulation such as "the repatriation 1940, but we must take into consideration a few distinct elements.

Romania. In the particular case of Romania, which we have in view, the program was developed in ample program for the repatriation of the German ethnics from the Baltic States, former Galicia or choose to return to Germany, considered the true homeland. This decision was the basis for an German ethnics in Eastern Europe, including from territories obtained by the Soviet Union, to influence and the new possessions of Germany and Soviet Union, Berlin tried to determine the



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<sup>1</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941. Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, (hereinafter, Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941) Edited by Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie, Washington, Department of State, 1948, Department of State Publication 3023, p. 33*  
<sup>2</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, p. 78.*

It is well known that the difficulties and, finally, the failure of the tripartite negotiations between the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain in the summer of 1939 made a Soviet-German agreement even more likely. Since early August, the contacts between Berlin and Moscow had become increasingly close. Unlike the British and the French, the Germans were ready to take into account the "vital interests" of the Kremlin in Eastern Europe and the Baltic area.<sup>1</sup> The actual demarcation of spheres of influence would be made upon conclusion of the Secret Additional Protocol to the German-Soviet non-aggression pact on August 23, 1939<sup>2</sup>. However, the military defeat of Poland and its disappearance as a political entity in September 1939 required the conclusion of a new agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union. The border between the


### The Repatriation of the Germans from Romania and Baltic States in 1939-1941

Bucharest, Suceava and even Iași there are many corpora that contain documents referring to this process, the information remained unpublished in most cases. A few volumes of documents were edited in Germany, Lithuania or Republic of Moldova, but the documents in the Romanian archives remain relatively scarcely researched, they are only partially quoted in a few articles or doctoral theses. There lacks a consistent, ample analysis to bring forward this complex process, with complicated and profound mechanisms and consequences, at least in regard to its Romanian perspective. The more important appears to us a comparative analysis which would take into account the similar phenomenon in other geopolitical spaces, among which the most relevant we deem that of the Baltic States.


two great powers was thus defined by the Treaty concluded on September 28, 1939, following a second visit of Ribbentrop to Moscow.<sup>3</sup> This was the situation the Soviets took advantage of in order to get Lithuania in return for Warsaw and Lublin regions, which were ceded to Germany<sup>4</sup>. It seems that this time Stalin was satisfied with the new territorial gains, declaring to Khrushchev himself that the Soviet Union had *de facto* right over the Baltic countries and Finland.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviets had already begun to apply a new policy towards the three Baltic States. Under these circumstances, the Estonian Foreign Minister, Karl Selter, was invited to Moscow on September 24, 1939, to sign a commercial treaty. Instead of such a document, the Soviets demanded the approval for military bases – ground, naval and air – of the Red Army and the Red Fleet on the territory of Estonia and the conclusion of a Mutual Assistance Pact.<sup>6</sup> Estonia accepted Moscow's requests by signing on September 28 that Mutual Assistance Pact, supplemented by a Secret Protocol. Upon the conclusion of this document, the Soviets seemed to have overcome a psychological threshold in their policy towards their western neighbours.<sup>7</sup> The Estonian example speaks for itself. The Soviet Union was prepared to threaten and use force to impose its "protection" and "assistance." The mutual assistance treaties concluded later with Latvia, on October 5, 1939 and with Lithuania on October, 10 were obtained without resorting to force.<sup>8</sup> These treaties contained, largely, provisions similar to the document signed by Estonia and they

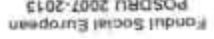
<sup>3</sup> Emilian I. Bold, *Războiul de iarnă sovieto-finlandez (30 noiembrie 1939-12 martie 1940)*, [The Russo-Finnish Winter War (November 30, 1939-March 12, 1940)], Iași, Universitas XXI, 2001, p. 59.  
<sup>4</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 107.  
<sup>5</sup> Cf. Emilian I. Bold, *op. cit.*, p. 60.  
<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.  
<sup>7</sup> Saulius Suziedelis, *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Baltic States: An Introduction and Interpretations*, in "Lituanius", Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences, Volume 35, No. 1, Spring 1989, internet page: [http://www.lituanius.org/1989/89\\_1\\_02.htm](http://www.lituanius.org/1989/89_1_02.htm)  
<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.



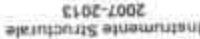
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provided, as clear as possible, that the sovereignty of the three Baltic States will not be affected, and their political and economic systems will not undergo changes.<sup>9</sup>


On the other hand, Adolf Hitler, in a speech held before the *Reichstag* on October 6, 1939,

talked about the repatriation of the Germans residents abroad, especially those in Eastern Europe and the Baltic area, but also those of South Tyrol.<sup>10</sup> Even more, the German state secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Ernst von Weizsäcker, wrote on 14 October 1939 that leaving Finland and the Baltic States to their fates, as well as the Hitler's decision to urgently repatriate the Germans from these territories, was nothing that a gift for Russia, already presented by the German diplomacy on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>11</sup> A further proof was *The Agreement on the Transfer of Latvian citizens of German Origin to Germany*, concluded on October 30, 1939 between Germany and Latvia, through which 49,885 Latvian citizens of German origin were "repatriated" to Germany.<sup>12</sup> The German authorities wanted this transfer to be made as a single operation, the agreement itself, supplemented by an *Additional Protocol*, regulating the situation of the movable and immovable property that emigrants left behind and, as much as possible, the damages that the departure of the citizens of German origin would produce to the Latvian economy.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Edgar Anderson, *The Pact of Mutual Assistance between the U.S.S.R. and the Baltic States*, in *Baltic History*, Editors Arvids Ziedonis Jr., William L. Winter, Mardi Valgemäe, Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, The Ohio State University, 1974, p. 242.  
<sup>10</sup> The Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest (Hereinafter A.M.F.A.), Stock 71, E9, Year 1939-1940, Vol. 129, f. 231.  
<sup>11</sup> The University of Latvia, Maksims Duhonovs, Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga, 1939. *Latvia and the Year of Fateful Decisions*, Riga, The Latvian University, 1994, p. 80.  
<sup>12</sup> Later, an agreement on the same subject was concluded by the Germans with the occupying Soviet forces, on January 10, 1940. See the bilingual facsimile *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu karjums of November 8, 1939 in Janis Dagis, Prezidents Karlis Ulmanis III*, Riga, Ed. Latvijas Universitate, 1990, p. 529. A similar procedure was also recorded in the case of Romania, but the situation of our country, at the time, was different from that of Latvia in the autumn of 1939.

<sup>13</sup> *Accord sur le transfert des citoyens lettons d'origine allemande en Allemagne du 30 octobre 1939*, internet page <http://www.leton.ch/lvrapatr.htm>.

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The Latvian citizens of German descent who opted for repatriation were transferred to the

Posen region, now Poznan, but the problems related to the properties and assets that they left behind were made difficult by the fact that in June 1940 the Soviet Union annexed the small Baltic State. The German authorities still tried to resolve this situation based on the good relations Berlin still had with Moscow, and this became the subject of a bilateral agreement, concluded on January 10, 1941. But the cooling of the German-Soviet relations and the outbreak of the war between two


great powers ended any possibility of a fair settlement.

Beyond these issues, it should be noted that, for understandable reasons, the Bucharest

diplomacy showed the highest degree of interest in everything related to the repatriation of the Germans from the Baltic States. Thus, in detailed reports, the attaché of legation and chargé d'affairs of Romania in Riga, Grigore Niculescu-Buzesti, repeatedly informed his superiors in Bucharest on how the repatriation of ethnic Germans took place. It is interesting, from this point of view, that the Romanian diplomat drew attention to the fact that a majority of ethnic Germans in Latvia, in fact about one third of them, refused repatriation, while many non-Germans had also opted for repatriation, especially those resulting from mixed marriages, as well as many Latvian citizens of Russian origin, all accepted without any restriction by the competent German authorities.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, Niculescu-Buzesti underlined the reluctance of many ethnic Germans from Latvia to repatriate, the more so as there was among them an acute sense of insecurity due, among others, to the uncertainties hanging over their future existence, the outcome of the European war, the ultimate fate of the Polish territories occupied by Germany where the German minority from the Baltic region would be colonized and, last but not least, the news sent in the former homeland, by various means, by the first Germans repatriated from Latvia which described

<sup>14</sup> A.M.F.A., Stock 71, Latvia, Years 1923-1940, Vol. 7, f. 241-242.



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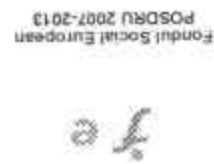
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in rather discouraging lines their new life in the *Reich*.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the Romanian diplomat emphasized an issue that would prove to be emblematic for the entire repatriation process of the Germans, from the Baltic area, as well as from Romania. In the diplomatic correspondence with the Bucharest, he also mentioned a certain lack of affinity of the Baltic citizens of German origin with what he called "Germany today." From his point of view, the seven centuries the Germans had lived in a different civilization and culture changed significantly the Baltic element from the German stock. In this context, few immigrants, with the notable exception of certain radical or militant elements, responded with a genuine enthusiasm to the call of the authorities in Berlin to be repatriated. On the contrary, the most common feeling among Germans from the Baltic states seemed to be that the repatriation proceedings had as main objective not the protection of German minorities, but the fact that they would serve as a tool for the Germanization of the occupied Polish territories and, not least, the financing of the war effort.<sup>16</sup>

As for the situation of the Germans from Romania, this was covered a year later, in 1940. From this point of view, it should be pointed out again the possibility that the Soviets might have wanted to apply the model of mutual assistance treaties with the Baltic States, as a first step towards annexation in the case of Romania as well, but the Finnish interlude provided Bucharest, and probably Germany as well, with a respite. For the Soviet Union, the Peace Treaty signed by Finland on March 12, 1940 "consummates the task of safeguarding the security of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Baltic Sea," as stated by Molotov on March 29, 1940, in a speech before the Supreme Soviet. On the same occasion, the Soviet diplomat stated that, as for the relations with Romania, although there was no non-aggression pact between the two states, and the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 245-246.  
<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.



seizure (sic!) of Bessarabia was never recognized by Moscow, there was no question of recovering

this region by force or deteriorating the relations with Bucharest.<sup>17</sup>

However, mid-June 1940, Moscow presented their ultimatum to the Baltic states: to Lithuania on June 14, to Estonia and Latvia on June 16. This was followed by the annexation of Lithuania on June 14, to Estonia and Latvia on June 16. This was followed by the annexation of August 1939. On this occasion, Molotov was to declare that, on the contrary, the mutual assistance pacts concluded by the Soviet Union and the Baltic states in the autumn of the previous year "had not produced the desired results," but, nevertheless, the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian citizens, as well as those of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina became Soviet citizens "with great joy."<sup>18</sup> Molotov also believed that the bilateral relations with Romania could now return to normal.<sup>19</sup>

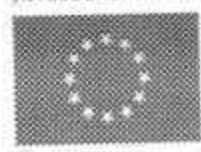
The German authorities, who had given their consent, in the previous year, to the annexation of Bessarabia by the Soviets, requested Moscow on this occasion to address the issue of the approximately 100,000 ethnic Germans who lived in the region between Prut and Dnester. But Berlin was intrigued by the fact that the Soviet ultimatum to Romania also referred to Bukovina and Hertza area, territories where there also lived many citizens of German origin.<sup>20</sup> Their situation could be dealt directly with the Soviets, but the *Reich* leaders also took into account the repatriation of the Germans in Romania, an issue presented to Bucharest authorities as being

<sup>17</sup> V. M. Molotov, *The Foreign Policy of the Government*, A Report by the Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs (Soviet of the Supreme session VI meeting) on March 29, 1940, State Publishing House of Political Literature, 1940, internet page <http://www.pp.cinet.fi/~pkrt01/history/molotov.html>


<sup>18</sup> Cf. Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941-1945*, s.l., Discus Books, Published by Avon, 1970, p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.


<sup>20</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 155; also, see p. 158.




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extremely urgent, the Germans expressed their availability to begin negotiations as early as

October 8, 1940.<sup>21</sup> As in the case of Latvia, this was the object of a bilateral, Romanian-German

agreement, published in the Official Gazette ("Monitorul Oficial") of October 30, 1940.<sup>22</sup> According to this document, that made direct reference to the ethnic Germans from southern

Bukovina and Dobruđa, any person of German origin from the abovementioned territories was entitled to seek repatriation. Once he received and registered the repatriation ticket, the applicant

entered the care of the German state and was subject to the obligations under the Repatriation Convention. His property, movable and immovable, that remained in the country was transferred

to the Romanian state, which paid, however, compensation in accordance with market prices. The outstanding debt of the repatriate to the Romanian state, generated by the abandonment

of his wealth was assigned to the German government, which also undertook to pay damages. Finally, each repatriate was entitled to take with him, duty free, 50 kg of luggage, his wife another

30 kg, and furthermore, each family could also take another 500 kg of large baggage.<sup>23</sup> For comparison, the Soviets allowed the ethnic Germans from areas it controlled and who had

requested repatriation to take up to 50 kg large baggage, 30 kg hand luggage and 2,000 lei of all their belongings

Together with the respective citizens, there were also expatriated to Germany parish registers,<sup>24</sup> documents of some German associations, societies and unions, as well as those of the

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21 A.M.F.A., Stock 71, E9, Year 1939-1940, Vol. 129, f. 234.  
22 The text of the Convention, the addenda, as well as the annexes are also found at A.M.F.A., Stock 71, E9, Year 1939-1940, Vol. 129, f. 107-131, 194-202.  
23 Franz Wiszniewski, *Radautz. Cel mai german oraș din Tara Fagilor* [Radautz. The Most German Town in Beech Country], Editor Franz Wiszniewski, Excerpts in free translation by prof. Ilie Vișan, p. 257-258.  
24 From this point of view, it is worth stressing the fact that the State Secretariat of the Vatican requested Bucharest, through the Romanian Legation to the Holy See, to be notified about the name of the priests of German origin who opted for repatriation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, although they answered promptly the telegram, stated that they did not have yet the necessary information to honour the request of the Vatican. See A.M.F.A., Stock 71, E9, Year 1939-1940, Vol. 129, f. 314 and 316.

administrative authorities from the villages that were completely repatriated. To manage the entire relocation process, a German Repatriation Bureau was founded in Bucharest, its German acronym being D.A.S., whose employees had the status of diplomatic officials. In its turn, the Romanian party created within the Ministry of National Economy a Subsecretariat of State for Colonization and Evacuated Population, which operated a General Commissariat for the Repatriation of the German Population. Its activity was to be supported by the local commissioners, the village mayors and the leaders of the legionary garrisons in the area.<sup>25</sup>

The Romanian authorities did not impose restrictions on the citizens of German origin that opted for repatriation. Although they were losing a significant workforce and they took on a substantial financial effort by absorbing into the public debt the value of the repatriates' property, the Romanian authorities have adopted this attitude because they could use the assets, lands and the agricultural inventory left behind by ethnic Germans to house and eventually to compensate, at least partly, the refugees from Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and subsequently, those from north-western Transylvania, territories lost by the Romanian state in the fatidic year 1940. Because they lacked the necessary financial strength to purchase the real estate of the German repatriates and, on the other hand, because of the rich supply generated by this exodus, many properties were in the end assessed under the market price. Under these conditions, it is obvious that this was not due to the Romanian authorities' malice, and the German party understood and agreed with the reasons on which this fact was based.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ștefan Purci, *Strămutarea germanilor sud-bucovineni și impactul asupra societății românești(III)* [The Relocation of the Germans of Southern Bukovina and its Impact on the Romanian Society(III)], in "Crai Nou", year XII, 2990, Tuesday, June 12, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ștefan Purci, *Strămutarea germanilor sud-bucovineni și impactul asupra societății românești(IV)* [The Relocation of the Germans of Southern Bukovina and its Impact on the Romanian Society(IV)], in "Crai Nou", Wednesday, June 13, 2001, p. 3.

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Moreover, according to the agreement between the Romanian and the German authorities,

the funds available in the account *Repatriation investments* were to be used for investments in Romania and non-commercial payments in Romania of the *Reich*, *investments* meaning such investments as to increase the production capacity of the country, and these would be established jointly by the two parties. On the other hand, the funds available in the account *Repatriation export* were to be used for the payment of the Romanian exports to Germany, as well as for certain investments in Romania of the *Reich*.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike the case of the Baltic states, there were many Germans repatriates from Romania who later decided to return to their birthplace. Their situation was handled by the Subsecretary of State for Romanization, Colonization and Inventory. In 1940 and 1941, the representatives of this institution have identified in concentration camps in Germany approximately 5000 people who decided to return to Romania. They were brought by train up to Vienna and then they were transported into the country on the Danube River. Afterwards, until 1943, 8 217 people were found in this situation, among them being many who came from the territories annexed by the Soviets in 1940.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, in case of the Baltic States there were two waves of repatriation or “resettlement”. The first was between October 1939 until May 1940 and the second from January to March 1941. The agreements forming the official basis for the first wave of repatriation in the Baltic States were concluded between Germany and the legal governments of those countries, and the other one between Germany and Soviet Union, which had meanwhile occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. So deriving from different agreements the conditions for the two waves of repatriation were different. Therefore, in the case of Baltic States, the first wave of repatriation

<sup>27</sup> A.M.F.A., Stock 71, E9, Year 1939-1940, Vol. 129, f. 223-224.

<sup>28</sup> Ștefan Purci, *Sirămutarea germanilor sud-bucovineni și impactul asupra societății românești(IV) [The Relocation of the Germans of Southern Bukovina and its Impact on the Romanian Society(IV)]*, in “Crai Nou”, Wednesday, June 13, 2001, p. 3.

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must be distinguished from the second. In addition, there are also different sources of information about the resettled individuals. Differently from the 1939-1940 repatriation, about which there are numerous documents preserved in Latvian and Estonian State Archives for example, both on the German and domestic agencies in charge of the whole process, there are very few documents on later repatriation. No materials of the repatriation commissions have been found in Estonia, and just a few in Latvia.<sup>29</sup>

In retrospect, the political decision to repatriate the ethnic Germans either from the Baltic States or from Romania, irrespective of the administrative or legal measures that accompanied and facilitated it created, on both sides, deep human and social distortions whose consequences can still be felt today. At the same time, however the repatriations from the Baltic States and Romania represented an accurate indicator of the fate and the particular situation of these countries. The Germans from Latvia, for example, finally accepted, without major problems, the possibility of immigrating to Germany, the measures taken jointly by the two governments encouraging and facilitating this process, in a political context in which fear of communism faded after the initial shock occasioned by the signing of the mutual assistance treaties<sup>30</sup> and, in general, the Soviet threat was not perceived as an immediate one, not even by the German authorities. There were bilateral provisions indicating terms of up to 10 years for the settlement of the situation. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the meaning given by Germans to the spheres of influence did not include the annexation itself, but other forms of domination. Thus, the Germans from Latvia could choose repatriation in a domestic political climate that did not anticipate Moscow's immediate aggression. In fact, in 1932 Latvia had concluded a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union and in October 1939 one of mutual assistance. The Latvian state also concluded a

<sup>29</sup> Laule Rand, *Resettlement of the German Minority from Estonia in 1939-1940*, in *Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, Estonia 1940-1945. Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity*, Tallin, 2006, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> A.M.F.A., *Stock 71, Latvia, Years 1923-1940*, Vol. 7, f. 241



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non-aggression treaty with Germany in the summer of 1939. Thus, there was nothing disturbing about fact – actually it was normal – that Germany concluded a non-aggression treaty with the

Soviet Union in August 1939.<sup>31</sup>

Berlin, on the other hand, knew very well that the tiny Baltic state entered the Soviet sphere of interest. The Soviet-Latvian Mutual Assistance Treaty confirmed Moscow's decision to implement to the letter the Secret Additional Protocol of August 23, 1939, so the decision to repatriate the ethnic Germans from Latvia did nothing but confirm the decisions made by Molotov and Ribbentrop.

Beyond such a confirmation, otherwise inevitable, the repatriation of the Germans from southern Bukovina and Dobruđa, in 1940, was also determined by other reasons. The Germans were taken aback by the fact that the Soviets claimed and subsequently annexed the northern part of Bukovina and Hertza area. The negotiations regarding the repatriation of the Germans from Romania began almost immediately, and when they were completed in the autumn of 1940, the ethnic Germans from southern Bukovina, and not only, had enough reasons to opt for repatriation to Germany. Romania had lost vast territories in a very short time, the waves of refugees and, with them, the news that came especially from the territories occupied by the Soviets, were increasingly disturbing, so leaving for Germany was for many the option of a safer life for them and their families. The fact that many of them returned later on was possibly determined not only by

<sup>31</sup> In a telegram sent from Riga to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest on October 8, 1939, Grigore Niculescu-Buzesti indicated that the public opinion in Latvia accepted with resignation the agreement with the Soviet Union, which, it was hoped, would result in a period of calm. In this context, the Romanian diplomat accredited in Riga assessed that, from his point of view, the Latvian-Soviet relations had entered a new phase, one of relative stability, without being able to foresee a notable change as long as the outcome of the conflict between Germany and the Western powers could not be predicted. The only fears at that time expressed by the Romanian diplomat referred to the possible changes in Latvia's domestic politics, changes viewed not only as possible, but even probable. See *ibidem*, f. 238-239.



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homesickness, but also by the fact that Romania's domestic situation remained somewhat stable and peaceful until 1943-44.

### The Repatriation<sup>32</sup> of the German Population from Bessarabia and Northern

#### Bukovina in 1940

The German colonists' repatriation from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina process can be

conventionally divided into four stages: the *diplomatic* stage, involving, on the one hand, the USSR's People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, represented by V. M. Molotov and, on the other hand, the German Foreign Policy Department, represented foremost by the German Ambassador in USSR, von Schulenburg, when the two parties cleared up their stands and took part in preliminary negotiations; the *organizational* stage, in which the Mixed Soviet-German Commission conducted negotiations and drew up the initial documents, which stood at the basis of the entire process; the *evacuation* stage, which began on September 15<sup>th</sup>, when the German part of the Mixed Commission arrived in USSR and began registering the colonists subject to evacuation; at last, the *final* stage, which consisted in the summing-up of the Commission's activity and principally in the inventory of the assets taken over by the USSR after the German colonists' departure to Germany. These stages do not have specific time limits, since throughout the evacuation operation, diplomatic actions were being taken by either of the parties, assets were being valued and taken over, and organizational problems were being solved.

Officially, the evacuation operation was the result of the Agreement between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the German Government on the evacuation of the German-origin people from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the German

<sup>32</sup> The Soviet authorities called this process "Evacuation", not "Repatriation".

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territory from September 5<sup>th</sup> 1940. A short press release on the signing of this agreement was

published in the newspaper „Pravda” of September 7<sup>th</sup> 1940. However, the evacuation was prepared much earlier and it was initiated by the German government. In the telegram of July 25<sup>th</sup> 1940, addressed to the German Ambassador von Schulenburg, the head of the German Foreign Policy Department, Ribbentrop, stated that Germany “is not interested in Bessarabia, but about 100 000 persons of German origin live in this region. Naturally, Germany is interested in their fate and believes that their future will be guaranteed. The German government reserves the right to make propositions to the USSR government, when the time is right, on the displacement of these Germans, similarly to the German population in Volhynia”<sup>33</sup>.

A mixed Soviet-German Commission was charged with preparing the evacuation of the German colonists. On July 16<sup>th</sup> 1940, the Decision draft of USSR’s Council of People’s Commissioners on the composition of the Soviet state delegation within the Mixed Soviet-German Commission had already been drawn up. The draft was examined directly by the President of USSR’s Council of People’s Commissioners, V. M. Molotov, who approved it after having consulted his deputies; it came into effect on July 17<sup>th</sup> as a directive from the Council of People’s Commissioners to the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs [involving the NKVD (the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs), the People’s Commissariat for Finance, the People’s Commissariat for Agriculture, the General Directorate “Displacements” within USSR’s Council of People’s Commissioners and the representatives of the party and Soviet organs in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine]. The President of the Mixed Commission on behalf of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was A. P. Vasjukov, and the members of the Commission were V. V. Osokin (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs), G. P. Arkadiev (People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs), I. L. Zlobin (People’s Commissariat for Finance), I. N. Karpov (General

<sup>33</sup> Valeriu Pasat *Trudyhnye uchopnuu Moldova 1940-1950 (Important Pages in the History of Moldova 1940-1950)*, Moscow, 1994, p. 70.

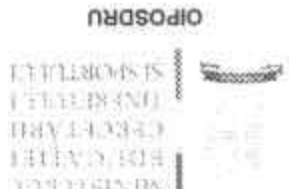


Directorate "Displacements" within USSR's Council of People's Commissioners) and I. Ia. Usikov (USSR's People's Commissariat for Agriculture) were named delegation experts.<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet delegation was in charge with signing a special agreement with the German delegation. The agreement was meant to establish essential aspects such as: who would be evacuated, the evacuation order, the assets issue, the evacuation time limits. The directives specified: "The Soviet delegation will bear in mind, during the negotiation process, that only German-origin people are to be evacuated (the persons of other ethnic origin will be evacuated only if they are members of a German family and if they live in the same household as the head of the family). The evacuation must be voluntary and is possible only based on a personal evacuation request."<sup>35</sup>

The annex to the Decision of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners included detailed rules on taking assets out of the country, including on the hand luggage and personal luggage (the latter should not weigh more than 50 kg for the heads of the family and single persons and 25 kg for each family member). If people left by animal-powered means of transport, they were allowed to take out of the country a personal wealth corresponding to the capacity of a two-horse carriage; as for domestic animals, the members of a household could take two horses or two oxen, a cow, a pig, five sheep or goats and ten fowls, whatever their species. It was forbidden to take out money, except Romanian lei (2 000 lei a person, at the most), precious metals, precious metal objects (except for watches, rings and cigarette holders, one piece per person of age). It was also forbidden to take away art objects, other merchandise in an amount exceeding family needs, homers, prints, photographs (except for personal photos), various valuable documents, more than a sewing machine, cars and motorcycles<sup>36</sup>. Thus, the preliminary evacuation terms were quite hard

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 71.  
<sup>35</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.





on the colonists<sup>37</sup>. At the same time, the nominal list of the Soviet delegation representatives was approved; all 17 members belonged to a single department – the NKVD. The representative in charge of the Soviet government delegation was P. S. Veretennikov, a lieutenant-major in the State security and his deputies were V. G. Zernov and I. A. Dobkin<sup>38</sup>.


During the meeting between the leaders of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the German officials, the participants stressed that the approach of the German's evacuation from the Baltic countries was different from the evacuation from Bessarabia. For instance, later, during a meeting with Schulenburg, Molotov indicated the following differences: "in Bessarabia, although we never acknowledged its occupation by Romania, the USSR laws (namely the laws on the nationalization of land and large enterprises) have just been reinstated, while in the Baltic countries, which were independent states, these laws will be enforced in the near future"<sup>39</sup>.

After the beginning of the bilateral Soviet-German negotiations, it became obvious that certain issues would cause considerable disagreement. These issues were related to the wealth of the persons displaced. The Soviet party practically insisted on giving it all up (except for the assets provided for in the July 20<sup>th</sup> Directives and Regulation). The second problem that proved to be hard to solve was the displacement of the people in detention. The Soviet party wanted to solve the matter diplomatically, while the German party pleaded for global evacuation. The evacuation staff was not agreed upon either – the 175-person staff did not satisfy the German authorities. All these problems initially caused the temporary suspension of the negotiations<sup>40</sup>.

The matter was immediately discussed in the Politic Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who approved, on August 6<sup>th</sup>, a new draft of "concessive" directive of the Soviet Government delegation. In this draft, the amounts in which certain goods (including agricultural

<sup>37</sup>Valeriu Pasat, *op.cit.*, p. 73-78.  
<sup>38</sup>*Ibidem.*  
<sup>39</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 77.  
<sup>40</sup>*Ibidem.*

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goods) could be taken out of the country were considerably increased and the evacuated persons were allowed to sell freely their personal assets. The wealth taken abroad, limited by established rules, was catalogued and valued and then included in the clearing between USSR and Germany, with payments extending over several years. The evacuation staff increased from 175 to 600 persons. These changes were notified to the German officials on August 7<sup>th</sup>. As for the German-origin persons in detention, the Germans' proposal was also accepted<sup>41</sup>.

Finally, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1940, A. P. Vasjukov, Secretary General deputy of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the USSR government, and the 1<sup>st</sup> class General Consul Wilhelm Neldeke, on behalf of the German government, "wishing to solve all the issues related to the evacuation of the German population from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina", signed the Agreement on evacuation<sup>42</sup>. The Agreement was made up of a preamble, four parts containing 21 articles, an additional protocol and the closing session protocol. The main sections included the issues provided for in the decision of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners of July 20<sup>th</sup> and treated the evacuation principles, the patrimony rights of the displaced persons, among which, according to paragraph 8 of article 3, the free sale of their assets, except for the nationalized ones. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part set out the competence, rights and obligations of the Mixed Evacuation Commission. The 3<sup>rd</sup> part treated the evacuation organization. The additional protocol indicated the number and the place of residence of the German evacuation staff. According to the supplementary and to the closing protocols, 16 articles were amended. Moreover, the Agreement included, as an annex, Instructions on sanitary actions, the railway transport of German-origin persons and the report form on the money taken from the displaced persons<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> See: *Ibidem*, p. 84.  
<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91-99.  
<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 105.

The Soviet delegation was made up of 252 persons: 65 persons delegated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Ukraine, 100 persons – by the People’s Commissariat for Defense from the military districts Kiev and Odessa, 30 persons – by the special section no. 3 of USSR’s NKVD, 17 persons – by Ukraine’s NKVD, 40 drivers – made available by Ukraine’s Council of People’s Commissioners. They activated in the General Headquarters of Tarutino, 5

in Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> After the arrival of the German evacuation Commission, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, Beria notified Stalin that, according to the NKVD data, about 60 members thereof were collaborators of the German information and counter-information services or persons related to the German intelligence activity in USSR in the past. He also mentioned that most intelligence agents were specialists in Ukraine problems and were aware of the work conditions of the intelligence services

and Berlin<sup>44</sup>. insure his absolute immunity”. These German officials benefitted from a direct link between Galati authorities should give the German official “all the support needed for carrying out his task and Soviet representatives. The pass ordered that the local administration, military and border local administration, the military and border authorities, other German delegation members and the Soviet-German border through the border points provided for in the Agreement, to contact the German population centers, to check the activity of the subordinated delegation members, to cross rights, including immunity and other diplomatic privileges. They were entitled to visit freely all the German delegation (the head and his deputy, the territorial heads and their deputies) enjoyed broad including a photo, seals and personal signature, valid until December 1<sup>st</sup> 1940. 15 members of the the territorial representatives and the delegation collaborators, received official documents All the members of the German government delegation, i.e. 600 collaborators, as well as



district headquarters and 50 territorial units<sup>46</sup>. The Soviet delegation was also assisted by 200

militiamen, a NKVD soldier platoon, 18 doctors, 3 asset-valuation experts and 8 cereal collectors, as well as 100 civilians as auxiliary force (interpreters, accountants, servants etc.)<sup>47</sup>.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the first convoy of displaced German-origin people headed for Chilia harbor; after that, the evacuation process continued, practically, on a daily basis. The members of the Soviet government delegation sent systematically all the reports and information related to the evacuation progress to the NKVD bodies of Ukraine and Moldova and then, they were forwarded to the adequate central bodies; the information was also sent to the republic party organs for information purposes<sup>48</sup>.

Some problems that occurred during the evacuation process were submitted for special review to the Politic Bureau of the Communist Party (b) Central Committee. Thus, in its September 19<sup>th</sup> 1940 meeting, at the suggestion of USSR's People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the Politic Bureau adopted the decision on the assignment of funds for the displacement of the German population. According to this decision, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs received 5 million rubles from the reserve fund of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners in order to provide the German official in chief with an adequate amount "for the subsistence of the German evacuation staff". The funds assigned to the German delegation were planned to be calculated within the clearing of the properties the displaced persons had left in the USSR<sup>49</sup>.

When the form of cereal collection could not be agreed upon, the letter written by delegation member Gh. P. Arkadiev and delegation chief P. S. Veretenikov, which presented the

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> The Archives of the National Security Ministry of the Republic of Moldova, File: "The Germans' Evacuation from the territory of Bessarabia". Reports from September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 1940. Pages aren't numbered.

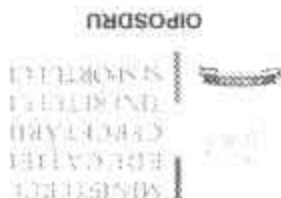
<sup>49</sup> Valeriu Pasat, *op.cit.*, p. 92-99.

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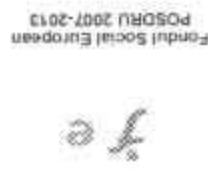
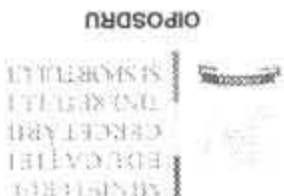
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problems in detail, was sent confidentially to the President of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners, V. M. Molotov. These problems were mainly related to the fact that the collection centers and other organizations responsible for receiving the mandatory cereal quotas from the population requested the Germans to deliver such a cereal amount, which they did not have. Besides, these institutions refused to collect one type of crop instead of another. The Soviet delegation asked the Politic Bureau for an emergency decision. The request was approved by the President of Ukraine's Council of People's Commissioners, L. R. Korniet, and it was sent to the central authorities on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The next day, it was sent to Stalin, Molotov, Vorosilov, Mikoian, Kaganovici, Vişinşki and Sobolev. Consequently, on September 25<sup>th</sup>, the Politic Bureau, upon the request of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners, decided to approve the Soviet delegation's suggestions, allowing the cereal collection centers to receive from the German population the cereals they had instead of the mandatory cereal quotas and to receive one crop instead of another<sup>50</sup>.

The Politic Bureau examined the Soviet delegation's suggestions on registering the agricultural tax amount as a loss and on mobilizing the population for crop harvesting, which were presented by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and approved them on October 7<sup>th</sup> 1940. Four days later, it also approved the decision draft of the Council of People's Commissioners on the evacuation expense estimate, amounting to 1.200.148 rubles (the amount requested originally was 1.600.000 rubles). On November 27<sup>th</sup> 1940, when the evacuation process had already ended, the Politic Bureau approved, upon the request of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the draft report of USSR's People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, addressed to the German Legation, on the transfer of the German-origin persons in detention<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 122.



Thus, the issues related to the Germans' evacuation were discussed at least six times in the Politic Bureau of USSR's Communist Party (b) Central Committee, which shows, on the one hand, the high level of party bureaucratic administration and, on the other hand, the special consideration of the governing party for the Soviet-German relationships.

At the second level, the whole operation was prepared and controlled by the NKVD. Lavrenti Beria issued a secret order concerning the start of the Mixed Commission's activity, where he showed that the evacuation could be used by the German party in order to infiltrate German spies on the Soviet territory. The order required the recruitment of intelligence agents from among the Germans who would be displaced to Germany. Special attention should be paid to the persons "who are likely to occupy positions in government, military, party and social organizations or who have connections to these organizations, but also to officials, writers, intellectuals etc." This recruitment involved a thorough training of the person recruited and the use of his/her blood relations. The most favorable group for recruitment was the one consisting of Germans who were opposed to the *Reich* political regime. Beria's order was to study the staff of the German Evacuation Commission, to identify among the German officials the ones who were the most suitable for recruitment and to point out their blood relations and any other types of relations in USSR. The detailed information on these persons, together with the "legends drawn up and the recruitment plan" were to be sent to the Ukraine NKVD and then forwarded to Beria. On the field, these actions were carried out by secret professional collaborators of the NKVD and were coordinated by the chief representative P. Veretennikov, a NKVD lieutenant-major.<sup>52</sup>

The Agreement of September 5<sup>th</sup> 1940 stipulated that "only the German-origin persons who expressed their wish to be evacuated will be displaced" and that "the evacuation is voluntary, thus

<sup>52</sup> The Archives of the National Security Ministry of the Republic of Moldova, File: "The Germans' Evacuation from the territory of Bessarabia", NKVD directives of August 21<sup>st</sup> 1940, pages 1-4.

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there can be no pressure, either directly or indirectly<sup>53</sup>. Nevertheless, although it had been declared voluntary, the Germans' evacuation was in fact a forced one, even if both parties' official statements underlined the authorities' concern for the interests of the people subject to evacuation. Clearly, from the German perspective too, the displacement was made under an obvious propagandistic pressure. This influenced the composition and the number of the groups displaced and, of course, the people's state of mind. Essentially, Germany claimed to be the initiator of this action and to protect the German population. The German authorities thoroughly identified all the German persons (although article 1 of the Agreement pointed out clearly the principle of voluntary evacuation), but it didn't object to including on the list their Russian, Ukrainian or "Moldovan" family members. The Soviet authorities rejected such applications. There were cases of sudden marriages to German-origin persons. The German officials generally didn't allow for persons of other origin than German to leave, but often these restrictions applied only to Jews. The evacuation records show several cases in which Jewish persons were "identified" within mixed families. Similar situations occurred in the district Cernăuți, where the German representatives not only avoided to register Jews, but also tried to convince the Germans married to Jews to divorce. When the Soviet authorities objected to these facts, which were a violation of the Agreement, the German representative Müller provided the following explanation: "If I take a Jew to Germany, I will suffer greater inconvenience than if I violate the Agreement by refusing to take a Jew, the husband of a German woman who consented to be displaced to Germany." These facts constituted an infringement of the Agreement and were discriminatory. The chief of the Soviet delegation, P. S. Vereennikov, was forced to submit a written objection on this matter to the chief German representative Hofmeier<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Valeriu Pasat, *op.cit.*, p. 91.  
<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 104.



Little information remained on the atmosphere that reigned in the evacuation period. The

Soviet party complied, in general, with the formalities provided for in the documents. However, there were also cases in which the financial authorities delayed the drawing up and issue of the fiscal lists. Obviously, there were also German-origin persons who refused to go to Germany. The President of the Soviet delegation, Vasjukov, registered 506 such refusals. He explained that "in most cases, the refusals came from German women married to Russian men or to Bulgarian men (31 cases) or from German men married to Russian or Bulgarian women and that, ultimately, the husband or wife refuses to leave his/her family".<sup>55</sup>

Vasjukov's note of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1940 is especially interesting in this respect, as it shows the agitation aimed at stimulating the displacement of the Germans from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. It describes the state of mind of the persons subject to evacuation: "Most of the persons who were going to be evacuated, especially the peasants, were extremely downhearted and only a small part of the youth and activists continued to militate. Several peasant women fainted with grief when they left their homes". Therefore, the German representative from the center in Paris (a village from the district Berezhina) justly wrote in his report: "The populations' abnegation is down, despite the fact that the local (national-socialist) organization is quite strong".<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the Soviets also noted that "the Germans signed up for evacuation as a result of an intense agitation among them, ... including threats and intimidation methods." The agitation came from the members of the national-socialist organizations, who made threats towards peoples' relatives and stated that all the Germans who refused to leave would be deported to Siberia.<sup>57</sup>

Another document contains an interesting description of German actions, too. On October 1<sup>st</sup> 1940, the member of the Soviet delegation Gh. P. Arkadiev sends V. M. Molotov and A. Ia.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, p. 56.



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Vişinski from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs a secret note entitled: "Note on Some Political Moments in the Actions of Evacuating the Germans from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina", in which he wrote: "on the whole, the German evacuation staff's behavior is different from the behavior displayed during the evacuation from the western territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine and of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Belarus in 1939-1940. The Germans are more self-assured, they make more claims and they act more impudently than during the past evacuation." He also mentioned "manifestations ... of arrogance, ease and often disrespect..."<sup>58</sup>

In many villages inhabited by Germans, researchers also found brochures and albums containing eloquent illustrations that praised the German success, the high standard of living in the Reich and that emphasized Hitler's prominent role and the German people's love for their *Führer*. At the same time, they showed the victims and destruction brought about by the communism. However, on the whole, in both parties' opinions, the evacuation took place in an organized and efficient manner. Vasilev, the President of the Soviet part of the Commission, made such an appreciation in a note addressed to Molotov. The general Lorentz also remarked "the positive aspect of the joint united work on the evacuation" and he asked the members of the Soviet Commission to communicate the German party's opinion directly to Molotov".<sup>59</sup>

On the other hand, in the practical actions, the Soviet authorities considered very helpful the detailed instructions signed on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1940 by the President of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners V. M. Molotov and sent to L. R. Korniet (Ukraine's Council of People's Commissioners), to T. A. Constantinov (Moldova's Council of People's Commissioners), to L. P.

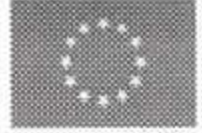
<sup>58</sup> The Archives of the National Security Ministry of the Republic of Moldova, File: "The Germans' Evacuation from the Territory of Bessarabia". Report 5 of October 5<sup>th</sup> 1940.  
<sup>59</sup> Valeriu Pasat, *Cyfoea npaada Mopoa Jlenopmayu c meymonpu Mopaa CCP 40 – 50 zc. (The Grievous Truth on the History of the Deportations from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova Territory in the '40s-'50s)*, Chişinău, 1998, p.57.

Beria (USSR's NKVD), to A. A. Sobolev (USSR's People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) and to A. P. Vasjukov (the Soviet government delegation). The directives of Moldova's Council of People's Commissioners and Ukraine's Council of People's Commissioners were drawn up at the same time – they had to issue instructions immediately on the identification of all the houses subject to nationalization, to insure the adequate functioning of the reception centers of the collecting organizations and to present proposals on the use of the assets left behind by the displaced Germans. Besides, Ukraine's Council of People's Commissioners was asked to appoint specialists, inspectors for taking over agricultural goods and products, to adequately equip the persons working on the evacuation and to strengthen the militia units in order to enforce the interdiction to buy goods from the Germans subject to evacuation<sup>60</sup>.


The issues related to the nationalization of the blocks that had belonged to important German industrialists, real estate owners and tradesmen were solved easily. They fell under the scope of the Law of August 15<sup>th</sup> 1940 on nationalization. The same provision was included in article 3 paragraph 7 of the Agreement of September 5<sup>th</sup> – these assets were not included in the inventory and, therefore, they would not be valued and paid by the Soviets<sup>61</sup>. The Germans expressed many times their dissatisfaction with the nationalization carried out, but on August 17<sup>th</sup>, they received clear explanations on this matter. Obviously, the Soviets would not give in on this subject<sup>62</sup>.

As for the sale of the Germans' assets for Soviet currency, the Soviet delegation member Arkadieiev communicated to the People's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov, and to his deputy A. Ia. Vişinski on October 1<sup>st</sup> that "the Germans started to sell their assets, mainly for lei, since the Soviet government had consented to the evacuation and all the more since

<sup>60</sup> Idem, *Trybnye cpranyuy ucmopyu Moxooby 1940-1950 (Important Pages of the History of Moldova 1940-1950)*, p. 118.  
<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.  
<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 87.




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negotiations had been launched in Moscow. When the German evacuation staff arrived to

Bessarabia (but also due to the enforcement of the law that put an end to the circulation of the "leu" currency), the Germans started to sell their property (household appliances, agricultural tools and machines, agricultural products, cattle, in other words their wealth, which should have been inventoried and valued and should not have been sold, according to the Agreement) for Soviet rubles. This situation was very convenient for the German party, since Soviet rubles were accepted in the mutual clearing between USSR and Germany, according to the Agreement terms. The free market sale of the assets, in the opinion of the Soviet authorities, could constitute a real danger in case Germany offered USSR an enormous amount of 50-60 million rubles or more<sup>63</sup>. This is why, on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Soviet authorities forbade the asset purchase from the German population. Ukraine's Council of People's Commissioners and Moldova's Council of People's Commissioners gave the local authorities specific instructions on this matter, and the People's Commissariat for Defense prohibited the asset purchase by military units. In order to keep the situation under control, civil and military patrols were created. Arkadiev stated that "this measure is applied only at the level of the local authorities and in order to fight speculation, which increased in the areas

inhabited by German population"<sup>64</sup>.


Finally, due to the control activity carried out, the asset purchase by military units, soldiers, institutions and collectors ceased. However, the purchase of the agricultural tools and machines by the other inhabitants could not be stopped entirely, because this was usually done in hiding, at night, as Soviet authorities pointed out many times<sup>65</sup>.

Serious contradictions also occurred in drawing up the inventory of the property abandoned by the Germans: there were still considerable differences between its valuation by the two parts

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem.

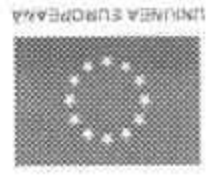
<sup>65</sup> Idem, *Cypocay npaada Mondaebi Jlenopmayu c meymonopy Mondaeckoii CCP 40 – 50 zc. (The Grievous Truth on the History of the Deportations from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova Territory in the '40s-'50s)*, p. 60.



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(the German valuation of a household was 5 000 rubles, while the Soviet representatives proposed 700-500 rubles, i.e. ten times less; the difference in the price for a cow was thus from 600 to 100-120 rubles)<sup>66</sup>. Finally, only in the district Chişinău and partly in Cernăuți, the valuation of products and goods left behind by the displaced persons was acceptable for both parties. This was also due to the special inventory (registration) lists drawn up in Romania in 1939-1940, according to the 1939 Law, which included the valuation of real estate properties based on the documents presented by the owners or on special statements made by witnesses, and which seemed acceptable to the Soviet authorities<sup>67</sup>.

One of the most important and difficult tasks was the common inventory and valuation of the houses and outbuildings that weren't nationalized, of the cattle and of the final agricultural production. On the whole, 21 485 houses were taken over for inventory and valuation purposes, out of which 5 573 houses were jointly valued by the Soviet and German representatives at 4.691.000 ruble in total. The price of 15.912 houses remained uncoordinated; they were mainly located in Bessarabia, were built out of clay and rocks and had clay floors. For these houses, there were considerable differences in price, as the Germans valued them at a high rate. Finding a solution for this issue was put off until the Commission's final session. The animals (horses, cows, sheep, pigs, calves, goats, oxen, fowls) were consensually valued at 2.456.000 rubles<sup>68</sup>.

There were major differences in the valuation of the final agricultural production. An agreement was reached only after additional negotiations and selective measurements. All the reserves included on the inventory lists were appraised at 6.353.000 rubles. Various machines (sewing machines, motorcycles, engines) were valued at 13.000 rubles. The total valuation sum

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>67</sup> *Iidem*, *Трудные моменты учета имущества Молдовы 1940-1950 (Important Pages of the History of Moldova 1940-1950)*,

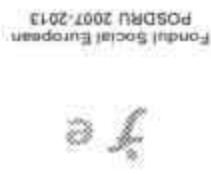
p. 105.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 122.

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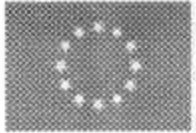
was 13.513.000 rubles<sup>69</sup>. Besides that, the displaced persons had to give up 15 kg of gold and silver, 8.101.000 rubles and 1.231.825.000 lei. Moreover, a certain number of animals, food products, agricultural machines and furniture were assessed as unusable – namely 22.853 cattle and fowls, 175.009 quintals of agricultural products, 765 quintals of potatoes, 45.614 agricultural machines (mowing machines, reapers, threshing machines, winnows, ploughs, lathes, means of transport) and 53.962 household appliances and various art objects, valued at 117.000 rubles. All the property – both inventoried and valued assets and unusable assets was registered by the Commission in reports and was handed over to the representatives of the local authorities for inventory and safe keeping. It was guarded by around 200 militiamen under the authority of the local bodies of the NKVD and by guard teams made up of local people<sup>70</sup>.

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, after the inventory of the assets valued jointly by the Soviet and German parties was finalized, the representatives of the local authorities received data on various crops and on their valuation<sup>71</sup>. In fact, on September 17<sup>th</sup> 1940, the authorities began registering the households and the persons who left. The first transport convoy comprised 50 motor vehicles and 850 people and it was scheduled to leave from Gnadenthal on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. According to certain preliminary calculations, 11370 people were scheduled to leave between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> of September (except for the people who left from Gnadenthal, 700 persons from Tarutino, 1000 persons – from Culm, 770 persons – from Crasna, 1000 persons – from Maraslienfeld, Leipzig and Tepitz, 3350 persons – from Berezina, Albeta, Arciz, including 300 sick and invalid people from the retirement homes). In fact, only 8000 people left, because the German authorities didn't prepare enough means of transport. The evacuation was carried out by train, by cars, by German ships through the Reni and Chilia harbors (most of the people were shipped from the Reni harbor –


<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 123.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 121.


<sup>71</sup> The Archives of the National Security Ministry of the Republic of Moldova, File: "The Germans' Evacuation from the Territory of Bessarabia". Report of October 25<sup>th</sup> 1940.




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about two thirds of the total number) and by animal-powered means of transport, through the border crossing and control points of Zalyj-Lucovica and Przemysl. The transport expenses by train and by ship were covered entirely by the German authorities<sup>72</sup>.

By October 20<sup>th</sup>, most of the colonists had already been evacuated. As shown in the note of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, issued by the representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the evacuation operation was finalized in the border crossing and control point Chilia. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the German representatives returned to their country<sup>73</sup>. In his report of October 25<sup>th</sup> 1940 to P. G. Borodin, the Central Committee Secretary of the Moldovan Communist Party (b), P. Veretenikov, mentioned that, by that date, 106.812 persons had left and that "the displacement was over, generally speaking, in the districts of Bessarabia. A small number of colonists hadn't left yet, namely those who were assigned to the district and local centers for technical work. Most of the people who hadn't left, but who were ready to leave, were colonists from Northern Bukovina, Cernăuți, where the departure was delayed because railways were being readjusted from narrow gauge to broad gauge and, consequently, 17.000 people hadn't left yet"<sup>74</sup>.

Hence the evacuation from Bessarabia was globally finalized towards the end of October and in Northern Bukovina, the evacuation ended on November 13<sup>th</sup>. On November 16<sup>th</sup> 1940, at 2.10 p.m., a secret notification from Akkerman to Vișinski stated that "the Germans' evacuation from Bessarabia and Bukovina was finalized. The entire German evacuation staff left Bessarabia on November 14<sup>th</sup> and Bukovina – on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The Germans who were imprisoned were released and evacuated, except for a small number. The animals and the agricultural production were valued everywhere, together with the German representatives, at acceptable prices. Few houses were valued jointly, especially in the Northern Bukovina. Most of the houses were not



<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, Report of September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1940, page 3; Report of September 26<sup>th</sup>, page 2.  
<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>74</sup> Valeriu Pasar, *Trudyhve cmpanyhы ucmonpuu Moldovaи 1940-1950 (Important Pages of the History of Moldova 1940-1950)*, p. 108.



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appraised because they were valued very differently by our representatives and by the German representatives. The evaluation of these houses was put off until the closing session of the Mixed Commission, when they will be appraised globally. Our evacuation employees currently draw up the documents. This will be over by November 20<sup>th</sup>. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, I shall go to Moscow. If Lithuania needs evacuation staff, I could delegate in Moscow 10-12 experienced colleagues for this purpose”<sup>75</sup>.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, in a detailed report addressed to V. M. Molotov, the President of the Soviet Commission, A. P. Vasiukov, communicated the final numbers: 133.660 persons were registered, 133.138 left, and 528 persons entitled to be evacuated refused to leave. Later, in the note of December 12<sup>th</sup> sent to Molotov, Vasiukov mentioned the number of persons that had not left – 552 persons, out of which one committed suicide, 15 died and 506 refused to leave from different reasons<sup>76</sup>.

A problem which was difficult and lengthy to solve was that of the German-origin persons imprisoned. As provided for in the draft drawn up by the Soviet delegation on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1940<sup>77</sup>, the persons in detention were not subject to evacuation. On August 20<sup>th</sup> 1940, the counselor of the German Legation, von Tippelskirch, submitted to the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs a note on the evacuation order of the Germans detained in the prisons of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Following the consultations with the “competent Soviet authorities”, a report was drawn up, which settled the order of evacuation of the persons in detention, and which was sent to the German Legation on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1940. All the evacuation details, including the inventory of their assets, complied with the Soviet-German Agreement on the evacuation. On October 12<sup>th</sup> 1940, the deputy of the USSR’s People’s Commissioner for Internal Affairs, V. N. Merkulov, sent

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>76</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>77</sup> Ibidem.

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copies of the report, marked as secret documents, to Ukraine's People's Commissioner for Internal Affairs, I. A. Serov, and to Moldova's People's Commissioner for Internal Affairs,<sup>78</sup>

The Mixed Commission established, together with the NKVD, that these persons should be

released and evacuated at the same time as the other colonists. The German Legation's note of October 29<sup>th</sup> mentioned that there were 161 German persons in detention and asked the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs "to see to their release". By November 4<sup>th</sup>, out of a total of 212 convicts subject to evacuation, only 58 had been released, and by November 13<sup>th</sup>, the number of Germans detained even increased up to 231<sup>79</sup>. The delay resulted from the fact that the local NKVD authorities had not received adequate instructions on the order of release of these convicts. This situation could lead to a delayed finalization of the evacuation process, and the competent German authorities requested the Soviets to expedite the release of the persons concerned or to extend the evacuation time limit<sup>80</sup>.

Thus, on November 12<sup>th</sup>, Vasjukov received a telegram from Vişinski, who informed him that the competent authorities were instructed to release the German convicts immediately. He also mentioned that these instructions did not cover the persons of a different origin, which were members of a German colonists' family. However, on November 13<sup>th</sup>, a new telegram informed that 38 persons were still in prison and asked the Soviet authorities to expedite the release<sup>81</sup>. Finally, by March 1941, the Germans succeeded in drawing up an additional list of 260 German-origin persons who wanted to go to Germany. Based on the additional protocol to the Agreement of September 5<sup>th</sup> 1940, the authorities established the order of evacuation and on March 15<sup>th</sup> 1941,

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 115.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, *Cypocai nraada Moxoabi Jlenopmayu c nepymonpu Moxaackou CCP 40 – 50 zc. (The Grievous Truth on*

*the History of the Deportations from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova Territory in the '40s-'50s)*, p. 67.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

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Iasi  
29.02.2012

the Vice-president of USSR's Council of People's Commissioners, N. A. Bulganin, issued a circular letter on the finalization of the evacuation operation on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 at the latest. Finally, the fact remains that the repatriation of the Germans from Eastern Europe in 1939, 1940 and 1941, either from Romanian territories or the Baltic States, beyond any similarities or disparities, nuances or consequences, was only one element in the redefinition of the spheres of influence, a barometer of the Soviet-German relations and aggression.

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