CITY OF DREAMS, LAND OF LONGING: CZERNOWITZ AND BUKOVINA AT THE CROSSROADS OF EMPIRES

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how places were imagined and how they shaped culture and politics in late 19th- and 20th-century East-Central Europe through the story of Czernowitz and Bukovina. The narrative follows them and their residents as they shifted from the Habsburg Empire to the Russian Empire, Greater Romania, the Nazi Empire, the Soviet Union, and independent Ukraine over the course of one century. The dissertation asks how Bukovina’s peripheral position shaped the ambitions and policies of the different states that laid claim to it. Moreover, it examines how the competing, overlapping, and frequently changing practices of multiple states influenced how locals imagined their place in the world.

This study brings new answers to old questions in the field of East-Central European history, such as nationalism and violence. It argues that nationalism cannot be understood except as a manifestation of changes in the relationship between people and places in an increasingly mobile world. Nationalists in Bukovina mobilized largely in response to the rise in emigration, which spurred troubling questions about culture, territory, and identity. By foregrounding the problem of “place,” this dissertation also shows that violence in East-Central Europe was part of a larger process of imperial rivalry.

Moreover, by highlighting the competitive dimension to the interaction between powers in the region, this study complements the narrative of violence that prevails in the field with a story of state-building, cultural reform, and mutual influences between antagonists. It stresses that East-Central Europeans did not live outside states but were transformed by every interaction with them. Nationalists, for one, took advantage of imperial competition and the Great Powers
exploited nationalism in return.

The feelings of homelessness and loss, and the obsession with roots and territory that plagued so many East-Central Europeans in the 19th and 20th centuries did not remain confined to this region. By bringing these connections into focus, this dissertation seeks to re-insert East-Central Europe into its larger European and global context.
To my father
Acknowledgements

“If you are lucky, there will be people in your life who will know which books to put in your hands at the right time,” my father used to tell me when I was growing up. In this respect, I was extremely lucky. The idea for this dissertation came to me while reading a book my advisor at Princeton suggested I look up. The book was called Memoirs of an Anti-Semite and the author was someone I had never heard of before - a man called Gregor von Rezzori. At the time, I was vaguely interested in contested territories and multilingualism, but could not decide on a topic. My advisor Stephen Kotkin did a splendid job of showing me the way without telling me where to go and teaching me how to follow my curiosity without getting lost. The result is a dissertation that I am fully invested in - one that has benefitted immensely from the insights provided by my teachers but is nevertheless my own.

I was extremely fortunate to have an advisor who encouraged me to take risks, embark on ambitious projects, and run with ideas - and who saw the pattern in the mess of ideas I produced well before it was obvious to me. Stephen Kotkin’s seminars on Global History and the Soviet Empire completely changed how I think about the past and shaped the kind of analysis I provide in this dissertation. I thank him for all this and, above all, for believing I could do anything I set my mind to. Andy Rabinbach and Jan Gross have been just as important to my intellectual development and the trajectory of this project. Andy Rabinbach encouraged me to study ideas in their cultural and political context and, with his great kindness and sense of humor, kept me sane and happy throughout my graduate school years. Jan Gross has provided me with a great model of intellectual honesty, courage, and persistence, encouraging me to read broadly and think outside of disciplinary constraints. I am also thankful to Irena Grudzinska-Gross for her infinite
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Note on Translations and Names

All translations in this dissertation are my own, with the exception of published sources that have already been translated (in those cases I used the translated editions). Throughout the dissertation, I refer to Czernowitz by its official name at different times. For the Austrian period, I use Czernowitz; for the Romanian one, I use Cernăuți; for the Russian occupation, Chernovtsy; for the Soviet Ukrainian period, Chernivtsi; and occasionally, I also refer to it as Tschernovits, in the Yiddish context.
You said: “I’ll go to another country, go to another shore,
find another city better than this one.
Whatever I try to do is fated to turn out wrong
and my heart lies buried like something dead.
How long can I let my mind moulder in this place?
Wherever I turn, wherever I look,
I see the black ruins of my life, here,
where I’ve spent so many years, wasted them, destroyed them totally.”

You won’t find a new country, won’t find another shore.
This city will always pursue you.
You’ll walk the same streets, grow old
in the same neighborhoods, turn gray in these same houses.
You’ll always end up in this city. Don’t hope for things elsewhere:
there’s no ship for you, there’s no road.
Now that you’ve wasted your life here, in this small corner,
you’ve destroyed it everywhere in the world.

C.P. Cavafy, “The City”
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Introduction

“Where do you come from?” is a simple question. But for someone born in Czernowitz in the twentieth century, no question was more difficult to answer. According to an old joke, the most a Czernowitzer could pull off was: “I don’t know, I haven’t read the newspaper yet.” Together with the province Bukovina, of which Czernowitz once was the capital, the city shifted from the Moldavian-Ottoman principality to the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire, the Greater Romanian nation-state, the Soviet Union, and then to independent Ukraine. Its residents often went to bed citizens of one state and woke up citizens of another. They were reluctant cosmopolitans who switched homelands, languages, and allegiances repeatedly throughout their lifetimes as their province and city shuttled between states and cultural spheres. Those natives of Czernowitz who chose or were forced to leave it, like the German-language poets Paul Celan and Rose Auslaender or the writers Karl Emil Franzos and Gregor von Rezzori, took with them a lifelong obsession with roots, origins, and homelands. Those who stayed behind, like the writer Josef Burg who continued to write in Yiddish in post-World War II Czernowitz for a total audience of one, never felt quite at home – an equally modern preoccupation. Though exceptional in many ways, their story reflects larger processes of transformation and movement that impacted East-Central Europe in the modern age. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, East-Central Europe was a point of departure and way station for millions of migrants who crossed state borders and even left the continent in search of better lives.¹ The population transfers, expulsions, and deportations that followed the world wars set millions more on the move. But even those who stayed put were swept up in the whirlpool of transformations triggered by the rise and fall of empires and nation-states. What did “place” mean in this world perpetually on the move? How did changing ideas of place shape culture and politics in East-

Central Europe? These are the questions with which this dissertation is broadly concerned.

This is the story of a place at the edge of empires, states, and cultural universes - a city and province far removed from the political and administrative centers of the polities that governed them. Vienna was more than 1,000 kilometers to the west of Czernowitz. Bucharest, the capital of Greater Romania, was over 600 kilometers to its south. Even today, a trip by train from Chernivtsi to its new capital Kyiv takes no less than fifteen hours. Distance had concrete consequences for the state-building policies pursued by various state administrations here. Habsburg, Romanian, Russian, and Soviet officials all proclaimed that their polities had a special mission to fulfill in Bukovina because of the frontier’s symbolic and strategic significance. But their resources rarely stretched as far as their ambitions. It was both this shortage of resources and their shared conviction that culture was the antidote to the backwardness and disunity of the borderlands that led state officials to privilege culture as the key to state-building. State officials were also reluctant to invest in the province because they feared it might slip through their fingers at any moment. Material culture was often recycled and new layers of culture and experience were superimposed on older ones. Traces of the past always resurfaced, threatening to undermine new social and cultural structures. Bukovina’s distance from the center preoccupied locals just as much. Czernowitz’s foremost newspaperman, a German-speaking Jew named Philipp Menczel, once compared Bukovina to a “terra incognita, situated somewhere at the endpoint of the Kultur gradient.” Some locals derived a sense of superiority from their position at the edge of “civilization,” which, they believed, made them more European than their counterparts at the center. Many others were plagued by an incurable feeling of homelessness and longing for other, distant or imagined worlds. This dissertation is, thus, about a unique place,

but all places are to an extent unique and yet their study can pose questions that reach well beyond their confines. The problem of living at the periphery of Europe, so central to this narrative, is particularly relevant now that Ukrainian Bukovyna is reconnecting with, of all things, its Habsburg past in order to fashion a European identity. More broadly, this dissertation shows how mobility—understood in terms of both movement and rapid change—shaped how both states and individuals experienced and imagined places over the course of more than one century. This is a question of particular concern to anthropologists and sociologists investigating the relationship between the global and the local in a world of transnational flows. Does either category exist in a world on the move? And how are they imagined and experienced? This project brings a historical perspective to these questions.

_Historiographic Contributions_

“Apply for a grant on ‘borderlands,’ and you get the grant even before you hit the send button,” Stephen Kotkin wrote in 2007 in an article describing how the field of Russian and Soviet history has shifted to “Eurasian” history to privilege the study of borderlands, empires, and exchange across the span of what he calls the “Mongol Commonwealth.” Years later, borderlands are still a ‘hot topic’ across the various sub-fields of history—from East-European to American, South Asian, and Middle Eastern. Everyone, it seems, is fascinated with the porosity and hybridity of borders. As a result, there is no shortage of works on the topic. Many of them are indeed excellent. This dissertation has greatly benefitted from this abundance of literature and interest in borderlands. But with this richness also comes the danger of replicating what has already proven successful. Follow the old recipe and you will bake a flawless cake. But you will never find out what else your ingredients could add up to. This dissertation takes inspiration from
an older recipe to bake something new. But before we discuss its contributions to the field of East-Central European and Modern European history, let us briefly review the scholarship this dissertation builds on.

To choose a borderland over a capital, an ethnic group, or a nation-state as the focus of one’s narrative is to already make an argument. What this argument looks like is not too difficult to guess. Most historians choose to write about borderlands because they simply want a change of scale and perspective after so many decades of writing about nation-states and national issues. This is what a good deal of global history is about. Global historians have been experimenting with “new spatialities” and exploring “novel geographies beyond the national and short of the global” in order to draw attention to the constructed character of territorial entities and to challenge “the conventional conception of territorial units” based on “images of self-sufficiency and autarchy.”\(^3\) The scholarship on borderlands has contributed to this move away from the national approach by zooming in on those in-between spaces that bucked the trend towards national homogeneity and uniformity, and allegedly resisted the various attempts of national elites and state administrations to force them into coherent ethnic and social categories. An extremely influential study in this vein was Pieter Judson’s *Guardians of the Nation*, a book that highlighted the obstacles nationalist activists faced in mixed-language regions, where people often “identified themselves with neither nation or both nations.”\(^4\) Tara Zahra developed this theme further in her book *Kidnapped Souls*, in which she argued that “national indifference” was a “driving force behind escalating nationalist radicalism” in the Czech-German borderlands.\(^5\) Jeremy King, in his book *Budweisers into Czechs*, also brought new perspectives to the study of

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nationalism in East-Central Europe by showing how in the Budweis borderland region, prior to the end of the nineteenth century “corporative and socioeconomic solidarities” mattered more to people than national languages.\(^6\)

The literature on the Western and Eastern borderlands of the Russian Empire is just as rich - and, for the most part, equally predictable. These works also trace how borderlands transformed from sites of encounters, exchange, and national ambiguity into sites of ethnic cleansing and national homogeneity. As the world was carved up and divided among rival empires and nation-states, Kate Brown shows in *A Biography of No Place*, this in-between space resisted the enormous pressure to transform and conform, but ultimately succumbed to the extraordinary violence that had to be unleashed upon its mottled populations to disentangle them. The book ends on a nostalgic note: with a retrospective look to the times when the people of the kresy were just ‘locals’ who identified with their land and landscape, and nothing more.\(^7\) In his book *The Reconstruction of Nations*, Timothy Snyder also shows how the territories that once formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth navigated the passage “from early modern to modern nationhood.”\(^8\) His narrative also culminates with the outbreak of World War II, which “finally broke the historical integument in which early modern ideas of nationality could cohere.” Another point this literature tends to make is that all borders are arbitrary and porous, and people - especially borderlanders - have always been highly mobile. In *Impossible Border*, a study of Germany’s “open eastern frontier,” Annemarie Sammartino shows how successive waves of migrations from the east complicated the task of forging a nation-state on the ruins of 

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the German empire in the aftermath of World War I. Caitlin Murdock’s study of the Saxon-
Bohemian borderlands Changing Places is another example of a study highlighting transborder
connections and exchanges ‘borderlanders’ established, this time through labor migration. These
books provide valuable insights, yet many of them fail to fully take advantage of the
unique perspective borderlands provide on larger questions of state-building, imperial
competition and conflict, and the interplay between politics and the cultural imagination. This
project seeks to remedy this lack by examining an East European borderland as a laboratory for
comparative and transnational history.

This dissertation explores the changing relationship between people, culture, and place in
a world on the move through the lens of one city and its hinterland - Czernowitz and Bukovina.
English-language historians of East-Central Europe have paid scant attention to Bukovina, most
likely due to the linguistic challenges of studying such a diverse region.9 Non-English-language
studies of Czernowitz and Bukovina are more numerous, but their limited focus on one regime or
one national group elides the most fascinating aspects of Bukovina’s history: its extraordinary
diversity and frequent transformations.10 By contrast, this dissertation follows the province and

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9 The only extensive studies of Czernowitz and Bukovina in English are: Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts
of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); and David
Jewish Civilization, 2013). Natalya Lazar has been working on a dissertation on the Holocaust in Bukovina
(*Czernowitz Jews and the Holocaust*). There is also a dissertation on Chernivtsi in the Soviet era: Svitlana Frunchak,
*The Making of Soviet Chernivtsi: National ‘Reunification,’ World War II, and the Fate of Jewish Czernowitz in

10 Some examples of edited volumes with separate essays on different nationalities include: Harald Heppner, ed.,
*Czernowitz: die Geschichte einer ungewöhnlichen Stadt* (Köln: Böhlau, 2000) and Arianne Afsari, ed., *Mythos
exception is Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina: Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen
Anspruchs Grossrumäniens, 1918-1944* (München: Verlag Oldenburg, 2011), which looks closely at the
“Romanization” policies undertaken by the new Romanian administration in Bukovina after World War I, focusing
on their impact on national minorities. Though much more ambitious than other studies, Hausleitner’s book is still
confined only to interwar period. Most studies that do not focus explicitly on one nationality are overwhelmingly
concerned with the Jewish population. See, for instance, Andrei Corbe-Hoisie, *La Bucovine: Éléments d’histoire
and the prevalence of national-focused historiography is Svetlana Frunchak, *Studying the Land, Contesting the*
its capital as they changed hands repeatedly from the late 19th century to the post-World War II era, highlighting continuities and overlaps between the ideas and political projects that intersected there. It encompasses the perspectives of different national, linguistic, and religious groups, urban and rural dwellers, intellectuals, peasants, and migrants—as well as the state officials who ruled them. The project diverges from most of the literature above in that it is equally concerned with the powers that came and went from this place, and with the ‘borderland’ society with which these polities interacted. It takes the borderland as its focus in order to understand not only what it meant to live at the periphery under different empires and regimes, but also to gain insights into those regimes by looking at how they manifested themselves at the margins as opposed to the heartlands.

Methodologically, this work aims to show that borderlands are “inescapable, comparative unique laboratories that illuminate the specificities of multiple empires.”1 Not every state that claimed Bukovina transformed it as efficiently and radically. All of them had to put up with the relics of previous regimes, yet some were more adept than others at making these legacies work in their favor. If we are to understand something not only about this place, but also about the different political systems, ideologies, cultural projects, and ideas that were put to the test here, these differences need to be acknowledged. The result is not so much a story about ‘locals’ who defied or succumbed to the powers that be, as one about people who were profoundly shaped by their experiences under different regimes. This dissertation does not portray Bukovina as a ‘no place’ suspended outside of history, but uses its history as a pretext to interrogate what ‘place’ meant in East-Central Europe (and beyond) over the course of a century marked by extraordinary

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changes. Places like Bukovina were exceptional in many ways, yet they can teach us something about cultural and political processes that spanned Europe and the globe. Unlike most other works in this vein, this study does not mistake mobility for cosmopolitanism. It focuses instead on mobility to explore how people and states have imagined and thought about places in a fast-changing world.

To give the reader a better understanding of my methods and goals, I will briefly review a few works that have inspired me to go in this direction. One model is Holly Case’s *Between States*. Case uses the Romanian-Hungarian borderland of Transylvania as a looking glass to examine how state leaders and national elites interpreted and negotiated “what Europe means and does.” Her study retells an all-too-familiar story of the twentieth century in Europe from the perspective of small states, as opposed to the great powers that shaped geopolitics. Case’s story transcends all kinds of boundaries: ethnic, national, and linguistic, as well as the lines between foreign policy and domestic politics. It does not do that to celebrate national ‘hybridity’ or mobility, but in order to understand why borders and territory have been so important to East-Central European states and peoples, and to address a much larger question: “how people in this region have understood what Europe is and how they projected their understanding onto political projects.”

This dissertation is similarly situated at the intersection of ideas and geopolitics. I too try to come to grips with a European and global phenomenon - the growing preoccupation with territory and place as the world moved towards increased mobility and globalization - through the prism of one small place.

Outside of East-Central European history, two models for what this dissertation tries to accomplish are Sunil Amrith’s *Crossing the Bay of Bengal* and Mariana Candido’s *An African...*  

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Amrith’s book is a longue-duree study of a region that has since been carved up and divided between empires and states. In it, he seeks to reconstruct this broken universe, to re-capture the colors and sounds of its cultural and mental landscape. But Amrith also studies this region as an arena for imperial competition, deeply embedded in the global and imperial economy. In addition, he makes an important methodological argument: that in order to understand the multi-faceted nature of a place, one has to bridge the artificial gaps between cultural, intellectual, political, and economic history. This is something I have tried to emulate in this dissertation, even though I could not aspire to writing a total history of Bukovina due to limitations of time and space. Another point of intersection between this study and Amrith’s work lies in our shared preoccupation with the ‘cultural imagination’ and the politics of belonging. This is where more direct comparisons between Eastern Europe and South-East Asia would be fruitful. “The Bay of Bengal,” Amrith writes, “inspired many imaginations and many visions of solidarity across distance, but it never developed into an idea with the force of territorial nationalism.”

Bukovina was very similar in this respect. Its history cannot be understood without this mythical, imaginary dimension - without understanding all the different mental maps that overlapped there. My final model comes from African history. In her monograph on the port of Benguela, Mariana Candido tells a transnational and global story through the prism of one place. Her narrative is both rooted and constantly shifting along with its protagonists. Similarly, this dissertation tells the story of a place through the people who lived there and left it. It follows them into the Russian Empire, America and Canada, Florence, Udine, Transnistria, Berlin, Moscow. It is not an urban or


14 Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*, 284.
environmental history, but an attempt to understand “shifts in the ways people identified
themselves” amidst rapid political and cultural change. Although it started out as a history of
Czernowitz, this project expanded to include the Bukovinian countryside. As it turned out, the
urban and the rural were not just convenient categories of analysis (and ways to limit the amount
of material I had to read), but different ways of imagining how culture is related to place. The
distinction and conflict between the village and the city was one of the fundamental problems
with which my protagonists wrestled.

This dissertation brings new perspectives into a field that was dominated for a very long
time by questions of violence, backwardness, and nationalism. Older accounts of East-Central
European history began with national revivals and ended with inter-ethnic strife. The new trend
has been to study Eastern Europe as a site of national indifference and cosmopolitanism.
Historians of Habsburg East-Central Europe departed from traditional narratives about the
inevitability of nationalism and national conflict in the region by exploring the challenges that
nationalists faced in borderland regions, where opportunism, side-switching, and national
indifference often proved stronger than national commitments. Other scholars, who took
regions rather than national communities or nation-states as their unit of analysis, revealed that
non-national forms of belonging such as provincialism and localism did not disappear with the
rise of nationalism but persisted alongside and indeed often reinforced the nation-state’s

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authority. Yet others challenged older narratives about East-European backwardness by exploring its “other” world of border-crossing, multilingualism, and internationalism. Historians of East-Central Europe have also become increasingly concerned with the inner workings of empires and states: from the relationship between individuals and imperial bureaucracies, to the involvement of East-Central European states in global commerce and international politics, to the social and political ramifications of mass displacement and mobility in the 19th and 20th centuries. This dissertation builds on a recent body of literature that challenges exceptionalist narratives about East-Central Europe by re-telling its history from a transnational perspective. To this body of historiography, this work adds new insights into how mobility in East-Central Europe - understood both in terms of physical movement and frequent change - shaped how states and individuals imagined, thought about, and experienced places.

My goal here is, however, not simply to import a global and transnational approach into East-Central European history, but also to show what new insights the region can in turn bring to modern European and global history. The problem of place pervaded late nineteenth- and

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twentieth-century thought: from Martin Heidegger’s reflections on the modern loss of a feeling of being at home in the world and Hannah Arendt’s political writings on statelessness to vast bodies of nostalgic literature and cultural practices like memory tourism. Although the preoccupation with movement, distance, and displacement has been a crucial element of the modern experience, the question of place has not received the attention it deserves in the historiography on modern Europe. The first time this field engaged seriously with the problem of place was when members of the Annales School, most importantly Lucien Febvre, began exploring how geographical space shaped societies and politics throughout history.21 In the 1980s, a “spatial turn” took place in the discipline, as Michel Foucault’s work inspired numerous studies of the “interpellation of power and place.”22 Today, ideas and experiences of place are studied more in the disciplines of historical geography, anthropology and sociology, and literary studies than in history. In this dissertation, I bring these theoretical concerns to bear upon a concrete context, where questions of place, space, and territory had practical significance. From this perspective, I shed new light on old questions in the field, such as the problems of nationalism and violence.

My first major contribution to the field is to show that nationalists in East-Central Europe mobilized largely in response to the rise in emigration and general mobility, which raised troubling questions about culture, territory, and identity. Therefore, I argue that nationalism in the region and in general cannot be properly understood except as a manifestation of larger changes in the relationship between people and places in an increasingly mobile world. Unlike


most other borderland studies, this dissertation also highlights the sheer diversity of nationalist ideas and the great extent to which they were shaped by interactions between nationalists and the states in which they lived. Nationalists, for instance, sought to take advantage of imperial competition and the Great Powers sought to exploit nationalism in return. Imperial state practices shaped what they could or could not imagine because, even as they criticized imperial power, nationalists continued to play by its rules. By eliding these dimensions, historians have too often replicated the picture painted by nostalgists or nationalists, of an East-Central Europe of rooted “nations” and rootless Jewish cosmopolitans. Moreover, the nationalisms we see in Bukovina contrast sharply with Benedict Anderson’s popular idea of “imagined communities.”

In Bukovina, speakers of the same language did not always imagine themselves as members the same national community. The ‘fatal diversity’ of human language, in Anderson’s words, did not lead to the instant crystallization of national identities. National communities were imagined in multiple ways that could not be easily reconciled and unified. Only one of these multiple imaginings won out in the end, while the majority of them “failed.” Subjects of one state imagined their national communities differently from co-nationals who lived outside that state’s borders.

Most important, nationhood was not always incompatible with other imagined communities. Individuals – even nationalists – lived in a world of empire and this shaped and constrained what they could and could not imagine. Very few of them aspired to separate from the empire and form sovereign nation-states. Before the international context changed radically, most nationalists merely dreamed of cultural unification and autonomy within the empire, to be accomplished at some future point. Nationalism did not mark a clean break with pre-modern or

“agrarian” society, as Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner suggested. Even after the rise of nationalist movements, whether one was a peasant, teacher, priest, bureaucrat, or intellectual still mattered. Loyalties to the nation overlapped with socio-economic and estate interests; and nationalists often had to appeal to these interests to consolidate national identities. When different ‘imagined communities’ clashed, the national ones did not always prevail.

In addition, this dissertation challenges overly simplistic assumptions about the ways in which geography, geopolitics, and place have shaped East-Central Europe’s history. One influential argument in this respect has been Larry Wolff’s claim that Eastern Europe’s “Easternness” was the invention of Western Europeans in the age of Enlightenment. Another common view is that Eastern Europe’s history was a function of its geopolitical condition as a region of small states caught in between rapacious great powers. This argument finds expression in works like Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands*, which places Russia and Germany’s violent clash on the territory of Eastern Europe at the very center of the region’s history. Both of these views underplay the agency of East Europeans in shaping their own fate. The narrative I present here portrays a more nuanced picture of the interactions between different national groups, and between local populations and the powers that ruled them. To be sure, living in a place shaped by imperial rivalries posed many challenges, but it also presented opportunities. Bukovina’s population was not merely the victim of rapacious Great Powers. It was also the protagonist of a story of state-building, cultural reform, competition, and negotiation. By highlighting these other dimensions, the following chapters complement the dominant narrative of state-driven violence.

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in the region with one of state-building and cultural reform.25

The questions I pose here also bring me into dialogue with recent anthropological and sociological scholarship that challenges traditional assumptions about the “isomorphism of space, place, and culture.”26 The past two decades have witnessed a surge of interest in cultural and social processes that complicated and transcended the classical tropes of modernity and cultural difference.27 There has been outpouring of works on migration, exile, diaspora, and nostalgia - my very subject. The specific forms and meanings of nostalgia, according to anthropologist Kathleen Stewart, “shift with the context – it depends on where the speaker stands in the landscape of the present.”28 In her highly influential book The Future of Nostalgia, Svetlana Boym defined nostalgia as a profoundly modern disposition and “side effect of the teleology of progress.” The nostalgic is for Boym someone who “internalized the division between the global and universal but yearns for the particular and looks backward.”29 In this dissertation, I too am concerned with how nostalgias chose their objects and why the nostalgic mood was so prevalent during the twentieth century. I examine the myth of the vanished worlds of Czernowitz in the context of cultural practices associated with the condition of displacement in the aftermath of war. A multiplicity of imagined doubles of Czernowitz emerged after each major rupture and transformation of the city. In the only English-language book on the subject,  

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Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer examine Jewish nostalgia for multicultural Czernowitz.\footnote{Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, 
*Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010).} They show how, long after its political demise, Czernowitz “remained alive ‘like a wonderful gift’ and a ‘relentless curse’” in the memory of the Jewish diaspora. Jewish memory of the city was indeed multilayered, blending together conflicting images of the city as a tolerant outpost of German culture and a site of the Romanian-perpetrated Holocaust.\footnote{Ibid., 18.} While the Jewish myth of Czernowitz is perhaps the most familiar, the lesser known Romanian, Ukrainian, and German imaginings of the city are just as important to understand. I bring these perspectives together, historicizing rather than reinforcing nostalgic myths of the city. I show how Bukovina came to “export” nostalgia for a lost homeland to Western Europeans and Americans disenchanted with an increasingly displaced and globalized world.

**Note on Sources**

This dissertation weaves together fragments of politics, culture, and ideas into a story about how rapid change shaped experiences and ideas of place and territory in nineteenth and twentieth-century East-Central Europe. It seeks to capture the experiences of both state actors, national elites, and people who went about their daily lives without ever climbing the political barricades. To span this wide spectrum of perspectives, the dissertation draws on both state-produced documentation such as bureaucratic records and archival sources, and newspapers, pamphlets and other ephemera, manuscripts, diaries, and novels. The narrative I present here is inevitably constrained by the sources I was able to get hold of. Some materials were richer and more easily accessible than others. A lot more memoirs and published sources on Bukovina and ‘Czernowitz’ exist in German, for instance, than in Ruthenian or Polish, the vast majority of
them authored by educated, middle-class Jews in Czernowitz. Nevertheless, I try to bring other voices into the story as well through other sources such as testimonies and oral histories. Sometimes, however, the experiences of men and women who left very few written traces behind them can only be guessed at or imagined. When the archival collections permitted it, I relied more heavily on documents relating to cultural and nationality policy than economics and administrative matters.

Overall, however, my source base encompasses a random collection of materials. This was a deliberate choice on my part. What better way to convey the richness of a place than by sampling a bit of everything it has to offer? The materials cited here include everything from records of the Habsburg ministry of interior, the police, and the ministry of education and religion, to documents of the Austrian magistracy in Czernowitz and the regional administration in Bukovina, protocols of the regional branch of the Communist Party with headquarters in Chernivtsi, and testimonials of Holocaust survivors. All these sources - whether state-produced or personal - are of course limited in what they can convey and need to be taken with a grain of salt. For this reason, I have tried to juxtapose very different kinds of sources to produce a kind of Rashomon effect.

While working on this project, I found myself re-tracing the trajectory of Bukovina and its people with my own feet. To assemble this narrative, I had to pick up the pieces scattered across five different countries on three continents by successive regime changes, wars, and occupations. My project took me to Vienna, where I researched the collections of the Austrian State Archive - in particular, the War Archive, the Administrative Archive, and personal collections. The materials for the final chapter of this dissertation came from the Literature Archive in Vienna and the German Literature Archive in Marbach. The Romanian National
Archives in Bucharest provided important materials on the interwar period in Bukovina and on Bucharest’s perspective on the periphery. At the State Archives in Kiev I discovered valuable documents about the Soviet occupation of Bukovina and a wealth of sources on how Soviet power was re-established in Bukovina after the war (which unfortunately did not make it into this dissertation). To understand the Jewish side of the story, I did research at the Yad Vashem Archives, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, the National Library in Jerusalem, and the Center for Jewish History in New York.

The bulk of my sources, however, come from the State Archive of the Chernivetskaya Oblast’ in Chernivtsi and the Yuriy Fedkovych University Library in Chernivtsi. While working in the small and improvised reading room of the regional archive in Chernivtsi for many months, I saw tens of university students come in looking for materials for their senior theses only to discover all the documents from before 1940 were in a “foreign” language: sometimes German, sometimes Romanian, sometimes Yiddish, more rarely Russian. I myself had a similar experience at the Austrian state archives in Vienna, when I came face to face with the notoriously illegible nineteenth-century German handwriting style known as the Suetterlin for the first time. Having no other choice, I followed the head archivist’s suggestion to simply sit down and teach myself how to read and write like a Habsburg. Before I could understand the “Ruthenian” side of the story, I had to learn Ukrainian. To get even an inkling of what unassimilated Jews in Bukovina thought and experienced, I had to learn Yiddish. This project presented many of the same challenges and frustrations my protagonists experienced while trying to adjust to the frequent regime changes they were experiencing. It required learning the ‘languages’ of different state bureaucracies, becoming familiar with different administrations, and learning to navigate different political, cultural, and moral universes.
The Chapters

Set in Czernowitz in the late Habsburg period, Chapter 1 examines the Habsburg ‘civilizing mission’ in Bukovina and its many paradoxes. It shows how the empire’s emissaries in Bukovina were able to uphold idea of Kultur much longer at the eastern periphery than in the west - ironically, thanks to the very ‘backwardness’ that Kultur was meant to cure. The chapter also examines how locals appropriated the imperial concept of Kultur and gave it inflections that contradicted the empire’s aspirations for the province.

Chapter 2 treats the problem of nationalism in Austrian Bukovina through the prism of the interactions between nationalist elites and imperial institutions, and their shared preoccupation with the ‘emigration problem.’ This chapter shows that imperial officials at the empire’s eastern frontier were more worried about mass migration than radical nationalism. Nationalists also mobilized largely in response to the ‘emigration fever,’ which they blamed on the German-language education system that supposedly condemned their co-nationals to a life of poverty. Far from colliding with the imperial administration in every respect, nationalists carried out their activity within the framework of imperial institutions with which they were very much at home.

Chapter 3 follows Czernowitz and Bukovina through successive occupations and liberations during World War I, conveying both the challenges and opportunities inherent in Bukovina’s geopolitical position at the crossroads of empires. It treats the borderland as a site of interaction and conflict between rival empires, showing how the land and its population became clay in the hands of different occupation forces seeking to reshape both the newly conquered territories and each other. Here we see how the Austrian and Russian occupation authorities
competed even in the midst of conflict, and how successive liberations, occupations, and revolutions affected the dynamic between different national groups in the province and reshaped people’s loyalties.

Chapter 4 deals with the afterlife of the Habsburg Empire in Bukovina, stressing how difficult it was to radically transform a place profoundly shaped by imperial rule into a reflection of nationalist ideology and the principle of national self-determination. This chapter specifically examines the material culture and cultural practices that Austria left behind, following former cultural and intellectual elites as they reinvented themselves from imperial into national citizens. Then it turns to one of the greatest paradoxes of the nationalization process: the emergence of the stateless person.

Chapter 5 presents the interwar years in Bukovina not only as the ‘aftermath’ of empire but also as a time when national administrations embarked on new civilizing missions and cultural experiments. This chapter shows how the very meaning and experience of distance and peripherality were different in a world of nation-states, and how regionalism emerged in Bukovina in response to centralization efforts. It then examines the Romanian administration’s efforts to build national culture at the northern periphery, showing how difficult it was both to define and distinguish such a culture from the already-existing one Bukovina’s new administration inherited from the Habsburgs. The chapter ends with an investigation of nationalisms in the aftermath of empire, looking at the German, Jewish, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Polish cases in Bukovina to interrogate how the triumph of nationalism on the continent changed older nationalist movements.

Chapter 6 begins with the Soviet invasion of Northern Bukovina in the summer of 1940 and ends with the joint Romanian-German re-occupation in the summer of 1941. It analyzes yet
another cultural experiment and state-building project undertaken in Bukovina: the Soviet attempt to transform the northern half of the province from an outpost of bourgeois nationalism and capitalism into one of socialist modernity and progress. The chapter focuses on three key elements of the Soviet occupation: how the Soviets went out of their way to involve the local population in the sovietization project, how they sought to purge Bukovina of its capitalist legacies and modernize it while also actively promoting the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture at the expense of Romanian, and how they took advantage of the war context to bring about fundamental changes in Bukovina’s demographics.

In Chapter 7, Bukovina shifts back to Romania and becomes absorbed into the Nazi Empire. This chapter deals with the nationalization project launched in Bukovina by the new Romanian administration headed by Marshall Antonescu. It shows how this new regime attempted to solve in a few years what previous Romanian governments had failed to accomplish over the course of two decades - and how they managed it to a great extent thanks to the legacies of the Soviet occupation. This chapter also engages the question of how Bukovina’s dominant nationalities, Romanians and Ruthenians, interacted with the occupation forces and how they were able to pursue their own goals while being in a position of inferiority to the Great Powers by constantly switching allegiances. The chapter then goes on to show how Bukovina’s large Jewish population was driven out of their homes and into the camps of Transnistria, examining how Cernăuți turned from a Jewish center into a Holocaust site practically overnight - and what consequences this transformation had for the city and its non-Jewish population.

The story wraps up with Chapter 8, which examines the nostalgia for the ‘vanished world’ of Czernowitz and Bukovina - its only successful export to the West. This chapter brings before the reader three literary figures who have contributed to the mythology that has emerged
around Bukovina: Gregor von Rezzori, Paul Celan, and Josef Burg. They were very different writers, with very different career trajectories, yet they shared a similar preoccupation with origins, homelands, and roots - and similar feelings of homelessness and displacement. This chapter examines how these figures became icons of a vanished multicultural Eastern Europe and why their works became so popular outside the region and in translation;

Go to Ukrainian Chernivtsi today and you will find a shop with the freshly painted sign “K&K Tabak Trafik” - a reminder of the city’s Habsburg, “kaiserlich und königlich” days. Not too far from the city hall, in the former Jewish quarter, a blue house proudly displays a Romanian inscription: “Painter of signboards. Isak Eisikowicz. Founded 1910.” Walk down any of Chernivtsi’s streets and you will step on manhole covers engraved with the city’s Austrian, Romanian, and Soviet names: Czernowitz, Cernăuți, Chernivtsi. Right across the street from the former headquarters of the secret police, there is a new bronze statue of Emperor Franz Joseph. Ukrainian Chernivtsi is reconnecting with its multilingual and multicultural past in order to fashion a European identity. In what follows, I hope to implicitly shed light on questions that are especially relevant today: What does it mean to live at the periphery of Europe? What role does East-Central Europe’s past play in current debates on the meaning of Europe? How do East-Central Europeans - those who move and those who stay put - imagine their place on a continent that is in the midst of reconfiguring itself?
Chapter 1

Culture Bearers

In October 1875, the writer Karl Emil Franzos traveled from Vienna back to Bukovina, where he had gone to school, to attend the “Oktoberfest” in Czernowitz. It was not a traditional German beer-drinking festival that Franzos went to see but something much more solemn. To mark the one-hundred-year anniversary of Austrian rule in Bukovina, the imperial administration was inaugurating a new university in Czernowitz. That it was still possible to open a German-language university anywhere in the empire as late as 1875 seemed nothing short of extraordinary given the rise in nationalism and deepening economic crisis over the past decade.¹ Yet it happened in Bukovina. “The monarch’s [Joseph II] genius idea,” as Franzos would later write in his book Halb-Asien, “to make out of Austria a German Culturstaat, was achieved only in Bukovina.”² Only there had the administration, through Kulturarbeit, managed to fulfill Joseph II’s dream of building a new state founded on “equal, German Bildung.” “Whoever knows the cultural state of this place in 1775,” Franzos added, “will recognize that the transformation that happened rarely has parallel in Europe.”³ Out of the “pile of clay huts that called itself Tschernauz one hundred years ago,” Kultur had created “the friendly, civilized German city Czernowitz.”⁴ A hopelessly backward place had been lifted out of its “misery and poverty” and turned into an island of civilization. It was under Joseph II’s rule, as Franzos said, that the Habsburg Empire began identifying itself with the concept of Kultur. But Kultur

³ Ibid., 147.
⁴ Ibid.
belonged not only to the Habsburgs. Other European empires in the age of enlightened absolutism also went from invoking a “God-willed order” to making more secular arguments about cultural superiority and promises of “uplifting their subjects in the name of general welfare” to justify their rule. But by 1875, when officials and professors from all over the empire gathered in Czernowitz to celebrate Austria’s Kulturmission, the age of Enlightenment had been long dead and buried. Why did Kultur survive here, at the easternmost edge of the empire? And what significance did it have?

This chapter shows how important ideas were at the empire’s periphery both as a form of legitimization and self-definition for the state and as a way of managing an economically troubled and nationally diverse environment. It contributes to the recent shift in the historiography on Austria-Hungary away from its traditional concern with nationalism towards forms of non-national affiliation and belonging: ‘national indifference,’ nation-building, and regionalism; and less-studied topics such as gender, cities, and state and citizenship issues. By following the idea of Kultur as it circulated between state and non-state actors, and between different national groups in Bukovina, I tell a story of overlaps, borrowings, and communication across political and national borders, challenging traditional narratives of conflict between nationalism and supranationalism. The chapter also parts with Larry Wolff’s Inventing Eastern Europe, showing that the rhetoric of backwardness and civilization was not simply invented by westerners in the age of Enlightenment and imported into Eastern Europe, but was part of a set of cultural practices that emerged out of interactions between the local population and the states that

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5 Richard Wortman discusses these ideas in the context of imperial Russia in Richard Wortman, “Cultural Metamorphoses of Imperial Myth under Catherine the Great and Nicholas I,” Kulturpolitik und Theater: Die kontinentalen Imperien in Europa im Vergleich, ed. Philipp Ther (Muenchen: Boehlau, 2012), 74-97; Philipp Ther, “Einführung in die Kulturpolitik der kontinentalen Imperien,” Kulturpolitik und Theater, 8.
ruled them.\textsuperscript{6} In these ways, the chapter brings a new perspective to the conceptual history of *Kultur* and *Bildung* as well. In the German context explored by George Mosse and Reinhard Kosseleck, these ideas followed a trajectory from apolitical concepts to legitimizing tools for the state and for socio-economic groups like the bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{7} If we look beyond German thinkers to the periphery of the German-speaking realm, however, these ideas take on additional dimensions. Here, they evolved from tools of self-legitimization for the empire into practices that shaped the daily lives of individuals to such an extent that they threatened to destabilize imperial authority.

The claim that Austria was a *Kulturstaat* had very different implications in 1875 than a century earlier, when Bukovina was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire. In this new context, the concept of *Kulturstaat* was meant to redefine the empire as a power that transcended politics, making its military defeats and confrontations with nationalism seem easier to bear. Because Bukovina was economically behind most other crownlands and because its elites had less political power than their counterparts elsewhere, the concept of an Austrian *Kulturmission* did not come under challenge here to the same extent that it had elsewhere in the empire by the 1870s. When local political elites requested a German-language university in 1874, imperial officials at the center jumped at the opportunity to demonstrate that Austria continued its historic mission to “cultivate” the East undisturbed. In Bukovina, imperial officials also hoped to substitute *Kultur* for the financial resources the empire could not afford to invest in a distant province. While waiting for the transformative powers of *Kultur* to manifest themselves, cultural


institutions in Bukovina remained unfinished and struggled to keep themselves afloat. *Kultur* also failed to unify the province’s diverse population around a common culture. Instead of creating cultural uniformity, the German language reflected the cultural particularisms it was supposed to transcend.

But the idea captured the locals’ imagination, shaping daily life and practices in ways imperial officials in Bukovina never anticipated. Impatient to see Bukovina transformed into a modern province, local Austrophiles who took the empire’s promises of progress through *Kultur* seriously continued to complain about the province’s backwardness when imperial officials no longer wished to hear about it. The more Bukovinans expected *Kultur* to solve their problems and make them a part of the civilized world, the more difficult it was to achieve this. For the infatuation with *Kultur*, far from curing Bukovina of its ‘backwardness,’ in fact aggravated its economic problems. *Kultur* and *Bildung* became objects of competition and reasons for conflict. *Kultur* failed to achieve its aims not because it remained an alien concept but precisely because it imprinted itself so firmly on the locals’ imagination.

Due to its peculiar combination of particularism and universalism, *Kultur* could accommodate multiple interpretations – and in Bukovina it did. There, emancipated Jews in search of a new identity came to define themselves through the ideals of *Bildung* and *Kultur*, insisting both on the universal benefits of these ideas and on the indispensability of the German language to their dissemination. For as long as the German nation was defined in universal terms, the Jewish writer Karl Emil Franzos strongly advocated German nationalism, reinforcing a particularist view of *Kultur* that would eventually result in his own exclusion from the German nation. The German *völkisch* movement in Bukovina took this particularism even further, identifying *Kultur* and *Kulturarbeit* with the German people rather than the imperial
administration. But in promoting this view, völkisch activists often appealed to the universalist dimensions of Kultur: its apolitical, transcendental, and international character. Finally, Kultur inspired and enabled nationalist challenges to it. Nationalist activists denounced Kultur’s pretensions to universalism as hypocritical. But what allowed them to criticize Kultur so well was the fact that they were fully at home in its mental world.

_Austria’s Kulturmission in Bukovina_

October 3, 1875 found Czernowitz aglow, “each individual house having been lovingly and carefully lit up and decorated.” For once, Austria’s remotest, easternmost capital was swarming with people. Some of them had come from neighboring towns and villages. Others had traveled for hours to get here from the west of the monarchy and from abroad. In the Volksgarten, Czernowitz’s large public park, the guests were regaled with free music and dances performed by “Romanian and Ruthenian, German, Hungarian, and Slovak peasant boys and girls, Lipovenians and Gypsies, all in national costume.” After nightfall, Czernowitz’s Jewish mayor Eduard Reiss led a torchlight procession through the city, accompanied by music performed by an infantry regiment. The most crucial part of the program, the inauguration of a new university in Czernowitz, was saved for last. The festivities ended with a banquet in the old city circus, decorated for the occasion with flags, emblems, and armors. Bukovina had marked its first century under Austrian rule that summer, on July 4. But the jubilee celebrations were postponed so that they would coincide with the opening of the university, approved by the

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8 Landesfeier der Vereinigung des Herzogthums Bukowina mit dem österreichischen Kaiserstaate und der Eröffnung der kk Franz Josephs Universität in Czernowitz, 4 Oktober 1875 (Czernowitz: Rudolf Eckhardt, 1876), 18.
9 Ibid.
Emperor in May and scheduled for that fall. The result were three days packed with celebration. Then the guests left, the lights were dimmed, and Czernowitz returned to normal.

It was no coincidence that the two festivities had been merged into one. This was a symbolic gesture that equated Austrian governance with cultural progress and prosperity, portraying the empire as a new kind of power founded on culture and ideas rather than physical force. As the dean of the new law school put it in his inauguration speech, with Austria’s expansion in Europe, “love of truth and a spirit of duty have come to replace the obedience of slaves, lit up and led by the torch of science, which is casting its brilliance increasingly over these lands too.” Karl Emil Franzos, who was a journalist in Vienna at the time, agreed that “the same spirit pervaded both [festivities], just as they were both born out of the same spirit.” In the opening of the university, Franzos saw the culmination of a long process of “Culturarbeit” that had begun in 1775, the day that Bukovina was transformed “from a desert into the protected (...) province of a civilized state.” Imperial officials, former governors, and professors who participated in the inauguration also raved about Bukovina’s development, modernization, and growth under Austrian rule. “In every respect,” one speaker observed, “the well-being of the province has increased and Bukovina was brought closer to world commerce and the focal points of civilization.”

In addition to progress, cultural development, and well-being, the festivities also highlighted Austria’s apparent success in managing Bukovina’s extraordinary diversity by creating “common links between its subjects through Kultur and Bildung.”

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12 Karl Emil Franzos, Aus Halb-Asien, 142.
languages and nationalities are represented here,” one of the province’s former governors said during the festivities, “and yet the harmony in which the entire province celebrated this so significant day does not hold true of this day only.”\footnote{Lagler, Heinrich. \textit{Die Landesfeier der hundertjährigen Vereinigung}, 45.} But even that day of harmony was not free of conflict. Just across the border, in Jassy, the Romanian authorities were holding a festivity of their own in memory of prince Grigorie Ghica, who had been executed in 1774 for opposing Bukovina’s incorporation into Austria. Just as the new monument to Austria was being unveiled in Czernowitz, a large batch of newspapers printed to look like obituaries “with black rims,” denouncing Austria for “kidnapping” Bukovina from Moldavia, were on their way from Jassy to Czernowitz.\footnote{DACHO (Derzhavnij archiv Chernivets’koi oblasti, Chernivtsi), f.3, op.1, d.4010, 4 October 1875.} Weeks later a group of Romanian students were arrested for sending a telegram of condolences to Jassy on the jubilee of Austrian Bukovina, which they described as “the cut off part of old Moldova.”\footnote{Mihai Eminescu, “În Neue Freie Presse ne-a întâmpinat…,” \textit{Răpirea Bucovinei} (București: Saeculum,1996), 96.}

Aside from this isolated group, most of Bukovina’s intellectual and political elites were happy to assert their loyalty to the monarchy by participating in the festivities. Intransigent Romanian nationalists like the poet Mihai Eminescu proclaimed the arrested students heroes and dismissed the anniversary celebrations as a “Jewish” affair. Yet the mastermind behind the 1875 jubilee was neither a Jew, nor a German but a man from a mixed Romanian and Ruthenian family. Constantin Tomaszczuk, a professor in his late thirties, had attended the \textit{Obergymnasium} in Czernowitz, studied law at the university of Lemberg, and then gone on to become a deputy in the provincial parliament in Czernowitz and the parliament in Vienna. Tomaszczuk was a convinced liberal and centralist who, as the Club of the United German Leftists put it after his death, “was so completely filled with German \textit{Bildung} that he could represent our interests just
In March 1874, Tomaszczuk pleaded with the authorities for permission to open a German-language university in Czernowitz. He framed his request not so much in terms of Bukovina’s needs but instead stressed the benefits such a university would bring to the Austrian state as a whole. Tomaszczuk’s argument was that “Austria’s unity rests on the common educational path of all those who go beyond the level of the masses in their Bildung.”

“This common educational path, the kinship of ideas,” he explained, “have fostered and developed a political nationality, the Austrian political nationality.” A German-language university in Czernowitz, Tomaszczuk assured authorities, would break the cycle of intellectual fragmentation in the east that had been exacerbated by the polonization of Galician universities.

Tomaszczuk’s pleas confirmed Austria’s self-image as a Kulturstaat and civilizing force at a time when these claims were coming under attack. Both in the empire’s western crownlands and in Galicia, the trend had been to move away from German as the dominant language and assert the primacy of national rights and cultural autonomy. The empire’s six existing universities were slowly and painfully disintegrating into separate national sections. In 1872, the Czechs demanded that Prague University be divided into a German and a Czech section. In addition, countless petitions for new universities in the national languages and parallel classes at existing universities were piling up on the ministry of education’s desk. At this late point in the process of fragmentation, a request like Tomaszczuk’s seemed astounding. What could be more compelling than a half-Romanian, half-Ruthenian politician in the middle of nowhere pleading

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18 Denkmalcomite in Czernowitz, ed. Gedenkschrift aus Anlass der Enthüllung des Denkmals für Dr Constantin Tomaszczuk, am 17 October 1897 (Czernowitz: Czernowitzer Buchdruckerei-Gesellschaft, 1897), 11.
19 Tomaszczuk’s speech can be found in Gründung, Entwicklung, und Ende der Franz-Josephs Universitaet in Czernowitz (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: Piepersche Buchdruckerei und Verlaganstalt, 1955), 10.
20 Ibid.
for German Kultur? “Bukovina’s non-German sons,” Tomaszczuk assured the authorities, “also strive for a German university because German education has universal significance. Woe to the nation that fears the influence of foreign culture.”

Some politicians at the center feared that opening a university so far from Vienna would be a waste of time and effort. But liberals who clung to the idea that Austria was a Kulturstaat with a civilizing mission in the east saw in a prospective German-language university in Czernowitz “a spiritual lighthouse in the middle of these multi-lingual peoples, giving them all the same light (…) and binding them all together through the consciousness of their unity.” This was how Tomaszczuk, a non-German from distant Bukovina, became a living symbol of that ”group of Austrian non-Germans who could not imagine the state without the Germans” when such figures were in short supply.

The point of the 1875 jubilee was to show how far Bukovina had come during its century of Austrian rule, from a backward land covered in forests and roamed by bears and wolves to a bastion of Kultur and Western civilization. But even one hundred years after its incorporation into Austria, Bukovina still lagged behind the other crownlands. Its economy was among the least developed in the whole empire and its literacy levels among the lowest. Yet the ‘backwardness’ that imperial narratives presented as the very antithesis of Austrian Kulturarbeit was also the reason why the idea of Kultur could endure in Bukovina long after it had lost credibility elsewhere in the empire. Both in general and especially in the 1870s, when Austria was in the grip of an economic crisis that left many of its institutions bankrupt, Bukovina was not very high on the empire’s priority list for funding. When Emperor Franz Joseph was invited to

24 Ibid., 35.
25 Denkmalcomite in Czernowitz, Gedenkschrift aus Anlass der Enthüllung des Denkmals für Dr Constantin Tomaszczuk, 11-19.
attend the festivities in Czernowitz, for instance, he declined because “although it is my most ardent wish to visit the land of Bukovina, I cannot exceed the budget (...) given the current economic conditions.”

Similarly, when the authorities decided to honor Tomaszczuk’s request, they did so not because they were prepared to invest heavily in building a new outpost of German Kultur in the East but because a university in Bukovina could be built fast and on the cheap. The province already had a public library and other educational institutions that could be recycled to keep expenses to the minimum. Moreover, as the minister of education Karl von Stremayr observed, in a distant province one would not have to worry too much about the quality of education: the university would not have to rival Vienna.

The claim of having a Kulturmission to fulfill in the backward East was more than a form of self-legitimization and a pretext for imperial conquest. The Habsburg administration’s faith in the transformative powers of Kultur translated into a strong preference for cultural policies over economic reforms. Officials in Bukovina were concerned above all with raising literacy levels and expanding the school system. On arriving in the province, Bukovina’s military governor General Freiherr von Splenyi, resolved that the Habsburg administration’s first priority in Bukovina should be to build more schools, for “the entire nobility [in Bukovina] barely knows anything about literature” and that “only the well off (...) could educate their children.”

And indeed, school reforms implemented under Joseph II’s rule transformed the province’s educational system from a collection of district schools in the Moldavian language into a well-organized network of standardized institutions: main schools, “trivial schools,” and normal schools. The imperial school law of May 14, 1869 gave Bukovina’s school system an even stronger impulse to develop. By 1885, there were 252 primary schools in the province as

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26 Cited in Die Landesfeier der hundertjährigen Vereinigung, 5.
27 Kurt Kaler, Die Gründung der kk Franz-Josephs-Universität, 20-23.
28 Die Landesfeier der 100 jährigen Vereinigung, 9.
opposed to 50 schools ten years before the *Reichsvolksschulgesetz.*\textsuperscript{29} By 1905, the provincial school council reported that there were 399 public primary schools in all of Bukovina.\textsuperscript{30}

What these numbers failed to capture were the unexpected consequences of relying on an idea to transform everything, from the culture to the economics of a place. While it was true that Bukovina’s school system grew under Austrian rule, it was also true that schools in Bukovina succumbed rapidly to the economic and cultural illnesses they were supposed to cure. Many schools were, as the *Czernowitzer Tagblatt* reported in March 1903, “only on paper and they are also regarded as such.”\textsuperscript{31} A lot of them were small, makeshift institutions with only one classroom and one teacher, and no more than twenty-five or thirty students who did not even attend classes regularly. Due to lack of space and teachers, many schools had to operate in half-day shifts, while others had to make do with improvised locales. Even in a large town like Suceava, in 1871 the girls’ school held classes in a room that also served as a meeting place for town representatives. Noises from the street and hallways, where the town sometimes held a market for cattle, often interrupted schoolwork.\textsuperscript{32} Rural schools fortunate enough to have buildings of their own were usually in very poor shape. “In the few cases where I found school houses with brick walls,” one school inspector reported in 1871, “the water came in through the walls so they are covered in dry mold.”\textsuperscript{33} The inadequacies of the school system were a constant source of dissatisfaction in the provincial diet, where representatives of all nationalities complained that Bukovina was the empire’s most neglected crownland. The Jewish deputy Benno Straucher once complained that schools in Bukovina were located in former morgues and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] “Das Land,” *Czernowitzer Tagblatt*, 11 March 1903.
\item[32] DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 186, April 1871.
\item[33] DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 186, August 1871.
\end{footnotes}
community jails, “or in stables that are covered in fungus (...) so that when children come home they can’t do their homework but have to be cleaned up by their parents first.” Kultur failed to undo poverty and it also failed to cure Bukovina’s peasant population of its aversion to education. On receiving their first schools, some communities chased out teachers with stones. Ten years after this happened in the village Woloka, the teacher still “never had any particular students except for the children of relatives, the priest, or the village forester.”

In bringing the vicious circle of poverty and illiteracy to an end, Kulturarbeit proved ineffective unless accompanied by coercive measures that contradicted the democratic values at its core. Most important of all in this respect was the obligatory-schooling law [Schulzwang], first introduced in Bukovina in January 1873. Because the province was still lagging far behind the rest of the empire in literacy levels, the Schulzwang law was at first less ambitious here than in other crownlands. Beginning in 1873, all children between the ages of seven and thirteen in Bukovina were obligated to attend school, while in other parts of the empire the obligatory schooling period was eight years. According to the law, parents who did not send their children to study would have to pay fines in cash or suffer detention. In Bukovina, the fines ranged from one to twenty florins and the period of arrest from one to four days. Local teachers, school principals, and community leaders were urged to implement the law fully and without compromise. Yet as late as 1903, the Czernowitzer Tagblatt observed that Bukovina’s rural population still consisted largely of uneducated persons, “a raw people who lives in wild instincts and fills the prison cells.” There were many reasons why the Schulzwang was so

34 Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtages (Czernowitz: Eckhardt, 1902), 23 July 1902, VII Sitzung, 265.
36 Constantin Ungureanu, Învățământul primar din Bucovina, 57.
37 Note from governor Bourguignon to all district school councils and the Czernowitz city school council from 17 December 1898, published in Pädagogische Blätter, 10 January 1899.
38 “Das Land,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 11 March 1903.
ineffective. One of them was that in practice, the law did not make education more accessible to the poor but marginalized them even further. Even an impassioned believer in *Kultur* like Constantin Tomaszczuk had to admit, eventually, that only the poorest in Bukovina paid school fines, while more prosperous community members typically went unpunished because they bribed the authorities.\(^{39}\) But even with the best will in the world, the *Schulzwang* could not be implemented fully, for Bukovina’s school infrastructure was insufficiently developed to sustain full attendance. Although children were legally obligated to go to school for six years, very few primary schools in the province offered more than one or two grades.

Whether coercion was necessary to build *Kultur* in Bukovina was the subject of protracted controversies in the local press. Some argued that coercive measures like the *Schulzwang* discriminated not only between economic classes but also between national groups. This was the official position of the Romanian nationalist school journal *Freie Lehrerzeitung*, which held the obligatory-schooling law responsible for deepening the poverty of an already struggling rural population that consisted mostly of non-German speakers.\(^{40}\) Others claimed that coercion was indispensable to *Kulturarbeit* in an environment that was fundamentally hostile to the idea. The *Schulzwang* was, in this view, the sole chance the rural poor had to escape their low socio-economic condition. This opinion found expression in the correspondence the *Lehrerzeitung* received from teachers who insisted that primitive measures inadequate in “more cultivated” provinces were indispensable in backward Bukovina. In the East, one author argued, people regarded schools as “an evil that Beelzebub himself shrewdly concocted for the misery of the people,” and so they would do everything they could to circumvent the law unless they were

\(^{39}\) *Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtages* (Czernowitz: Eckhardt, 1883), 31 July 1883, X Sitzung.

\(^{40}\) “Die Schulstrafen,” *Freie Lehrerzeitung*, 13 March 1909.
severely punished. Another teacher insisted that the school fines were an “act of culture” necessary to break the population’s indifference to education and assert the status of teachers in local society: “without Schulzwang there is no Kultur (...) for when the poor can participate in Kultur, this can only help them in their battle for existence.” The conflict over the Schulzwang did not run solely along national lines, however. The Ruthenian nationalist Stepan Smal-Stocki, for instance, strongly advocated school fines as a way of increasing literacy levels among Ruthenian peasants.

In fact, the imperial administration was more often criticized for doing too little than for imposing its own will too much on the local population. These criticisms came not only from nationalists but also from Austrophiles disappointed with Kulturarbeit’s failure to transform socio-economic conditions in Bukovina. As the temporary scaffolding on which the empire set out to build Kultur took on a permanent character, Bukovina gave the impression of being suspended in a perpetual state of transition. Local Kultur enthusiasts blamed the situation on the central authorities’ neglect and indifference. And indeed signs of neglect were never in short supply. When it was inaugurated in October 1875, the Francisco-Josephina university in Czernowitz was a nomadic institution, with teachers and students moving between provisional locales. There were high hopes, however, that more resources would become available in the near future. By 1914, it had become clear that these hopes were futile. For twenty years in a row, the academic senate had petitioned the ministry for financial help to improve conditions at the university to no avail. Books were kept in dark cellars, reading rooms were unusable, and heating

41 “Die Wahrheit über die Schulstrafen,” Freie Lehrerzeitung, 17 April 1909.
42 “Sind die Schulstrafen notwendig? Eine Stimme aus Lehrerkreisen,” Freie Lehrerzeitung, 3 September 1911.
installations were broken. With so many other urgent problems at the empire’s center, the authorities were reluctant to invest in a province located at the state’s edge, in an area that could easily fall into enemy hands in the event of a war. “It was a beautiful thought to found a university in such an exposed outpost as Czernowitz,” the *Czernowitzer Tagblatt* concluded in February 1914, “it would have been a cultural center and a blessing for the entire province. But it cannot fulfill this high mission if the state denies it the means to do so.”

*Kultur* and *Bildung* also failed to unify Bukovina’s diverse population through a “common binding force” - as Tomaszczuk put it in his speech in the Vienna parliament in 1874. This was not because the German language was in such a dominant position that it alienated all non-German speakers, as nationalists insisted. On the contrary, instead of transforming its speakers, the German language was transformed by them. Although all three local languages [Landessprachen] – Romanian, Ruthenian, and German – had equal status in Bukovina, in practice German was the main language of mediation between different national groups in the province and also the best-represented language in the press, school system, and the administration. This was not so much the result of deliberate policies as of inertia. State employees who moved frequently from one crownland to another had little incentive to learn the local languages when they could get their work done without resorting to them. Many non-native German speakers in Bukovina also preferred to speak German because it granted them access to a higher social and economic status. On several occasions, Austrian officers stationed in Czernowitz even complained to the head of the Greek-Oriental church, metropolitan Vladimir Repta, that they could not learn Romanian because there were so few Romanian speakers in the

46 Ibid.
city – and most of them spoke German anyway. But German speakers in Bukovina did not form one unitary linguistic, cultural, and moral community. They spoke not just one German but multiple Germans that reflected the influence of the “culturally inferior” languages and particularist dialects the German language was supposed to transcend. The German-speaking press in Czernowitz scolded Romanians for speaking German incorrectly. In turn, Romanian nationalists blamed the Jews for corrupting the German language, while they themselves professed a burning desire to speak and write German without mistakes. In parallel, there also emerged a regional dialect of German the local press jokingly termed “Bukowinärisch.” For local Austrophiles, “Bukowinärisch” was a painful reminder of Bukovina’s ambiguous position within the world of Kultur. “The laziness and brashness of communication that are so typical of this province,” the Czernowitzer Tagblatt complained in August 1903, “stigmatizes Bukovinans in the German West.” When Constantin Tomaszczuk pleaded with the imperial authorities to approve Bukovina’s petition for a German-language university in Czernowitz, he insisted that “Germanization is not to be feared” because the German language was universal. But as it turned out form was independent of content: German could serve as a vehicle for both universalism and particularism.

Bukovina’s multilingual school system made linguistic uniformity – whether in German or in the ‘national’ languages – impossible to achieve. Although the German language was the main language of instruction in most schools in Bukovina, non-native speakers were allowed to use their mother tongues while learning to speak German. According to official regulations, “classes with non-German children in the two lowest grades should be organized in such a way

48 DAChO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 11744.
50 “Wie wir sprechen,” Czernowitzer Tablatt, 30 August 1903.
51 Kurt Kaler, Die Gründung der kk Franz-Josephs-Universität, 20.
that they can participate in them successfully and the teacher has the duty to use their mother
tongues in these grades.”

But non-German-speaking students did not transition smoothly from
speaking their native languages to speaking literary German. To the dismay of school officials
who went on inspections around Bukovina’s schools, most students spoke a mixture of
languages, all of them with mistakes. As late as 1911, students and teachers at the III
Staatsgymnasium in Czernowitz (the so-called ‘Romanian’ gymnasium) spoke a sloppy German
with “mistakes that do not appear in the great German language area.” The Romanian language
did not fare any better either: “due to the particular conditions of the province, pronunciation in
Romanian is also not impeccable.”

What were these “particular conditions”? Because
Bukovina’s nationalities were not evenly distributed across territory, students could not be easily
separated by nationality so as to minimize the number of languages spoken in class and increase
their exposure to German. Even though Bukovina’s school laws explicitly favored schools with
one language of instruction over mixed ones, a very large number of schools thus ended up being
multilingual. By the end of 1885, there were 68 mixed-language schools in Bukovina and 15
primary schools that used as many as four different languages: German, Romanian, Ruthenian,
and Polish. Even as late as 1909, in some Polish communities in Bukovina, teachers “have to
present each explanation, indeed each sentence in three different languages.”

Contrary to what

52 DACHO, f. 211, op. 2, d. 726, 11 March 1898.
53 DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 11221.
54 DACHO, f. 211, op. 2, d. 726. The Bukovinan school law of January 1873 explicitly favored schools with one
language of instruction to mixed ones. DACHO, f. 211, op. 2, d. 726, May 1898. The primary school in Klokucza, for instance, reported in 1898 that it could not create uniform language sections because more Ruthenian and
Romanian speakers attended the school than Polish and German speakers. The administration had no choice but
group them into bilingual German-Romanian and Ruthenian-Polish groups. The six-grade public primary school in
Czernowitz also could not divide its students into uniform language groups, as instructed, because of the unequal
numbers of German, Ruthenian, and Polish children enrolled.
55 “Massgebende Grundsätze über die Frage der Minoritätsschulen und sonstigen sprachlichen Berücksichtigung
56 DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 10349, I. 6, 1909. In many cases, the only way to separate children by language was to
teach them in shifts. This method had a major drawback: it shortened the amount of time that students spent in
nationalist critics argued, imperial officials did not deliberately cultivate multilingualism in Bukovina, nor did they encourage the population to speak the linguistic hybrid that they ended up speaking. Lack of space and resources contributed more to this than official policies did. Because it was too expensive to build separate classrooms and schools, native speakers of different languages were often taught together under the same roof. Who could dream of pure languages in places like Kaczyka or Neu Solonetz, where teachers, in order to make themselves understood, “must repeat each explanation, indeed every sentence in three languages” – Polish, German, and Ruthenian?57

The Trouble with Belief

The rhetoric and ideals of Kultur may have been an intellectual import of empire into Bukovina, but they did not remain a foreign imposition on the province. Locals invested Kultur and Bildung with new meanings and advocated these ideas even more passionately than the imperial officials who claimed to govern in their name. It was a local, after all, who fixed Bukovina in the empire’s imagination as an island of Kultur in the midst of the cultural desert of “Half Asia” Born in the Galician town Czortkow and educated in Czernowitz, the writer Karl Emil Franzos moved to Vienna to work as a journalist. In the 1870s, he began writing ethnographic sketches about Galicia, Bukovina, Southern Russia, and Romania for the newspaper Neue Freie Presse. In 1876, these sketches were published in one volume titled Aus Halb Asien – a new term Franzos used to designate the lands between Europe and Asia, where

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57 DAChO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 10349, June 1909.
“the deepest Uncultur and relatively high Cultur stand side by side.” As an insider of Half Asia, Franzos felt he could afford to be ruthlessly critical of its backwardness: its tasteless Moldavian aristocrats, foul-smelling Russian boyars, and narrow-minded Galician Jews. At a time when no Austrian official could say something of the kind without incurring the wrath of non-German nationalists, Franzos proclaimed that only German Kultur could cure Half-Asia’s cultural ailments. This, he claimed, could be clearly seen in Bukovina: a formerly backward land that had been successfully transformed through German Kultur into a flourishing piece of Europe in the midst of the “Half-Asian” cultural desert.” For Franzos, Kulturarbeit had nothing to do with the imperial administration, which he accused of “indolence and inconsequence,” and everything to do with Germanness: “the German spirit, this best and most powerful magician under the sun.” “We Germans,” he observed, “need to remain what we have always been, quiet, selfless fighters for Bildung and humanity.” This man, who always wrote about the Germans in the first person plural, came from a family of Galician Jews.

The ghost of Halb Asien haunted Bukovinans for decades to come. Both Austrophiles and nationalists who contested the empire’s civilizing role in Bukovina imagined the province as a place that balanced uneasily between European civilization and Asian barbarity, ready to swing in either direction at a moment’s notice. These ideas found expression in Czernowitz’s German-language press, which cultivated among the urban public an almost pathological fear of backwardness and stagnation. Newspapers like the Czernowitzer Tagblatt and Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung regularly surveyed Czernowitz to determine whether the city had become a Western Grossstadt. Nothing disturbed them more than the city’s in-betweenness, its suspension

58 Karl Emil Franzos, Aus Halb-Asien: Culturbilder aus Galizien, der Bukowina, Südrussland, und Rumänien (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1876), III-IV.
59 Ibid., 113.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 9.
between East and West, old and new. “Today we are half Grossstadt,” the Czernowitzer
Allgemeine Zeitung complained in 1904, “and half hick town, half Orient and half Occident.”\(^6^2\)

Not only did Czernowitz seem to lack coherence and unity, but it also defied any attempt at
classification. Some parts of it were clearly urban, but they were still fragile compared to the
rural elements, which lent Czernowitz the character of an oversized village. As it became evident
that Czernowitz still did not belong to the world of Prague and Vienna despite its rapid increase
in population and size, the urban press went from cheerleading to criticizing. These concerns
found expression in the nationalist press as well, where they were used to disprove Austria’s
claims of having brought civilization to Bukovina. Behind its superficial western appearance,
one Romanian newspaper noted in 1908, Czernowitz remained an “old oriental settlement.”\(^6^3\)

The more invested locals became in it, the more destabilizing and subversive did the idea
of Kultur become. Austrophiles in Czernowitz expected Vienna to radiate culture to the East, “to
bring light and enlightenment to the furthest district of the land.”\(^6^4\) Yet the disturbing truth was
that Vienna’s ties with the periphery remained weak. At the empire’s center, as the Czernowitzer
Tagblatt pointed out in 1903, “they think it is enough for all the threads to come together in
Vienna. But this is not so. The threads must also go from the center to the remotest North, South,
West, and East. Especially to the East.”\(^6^5\) Instead, the empire was feeding the East ideas and
rhetoric as a substitute for institutions and money. Due to a lack of resources, the imperial
administration made little effort to build an industry in Bukovina, although the province
struggled with economic crisis for decades. Nor did they stimulate Czernowitz’s development
into the major commercial center it had the potential to become given its location at the

\(^{63}\) Freie Lehrerzeitung, 19 September 1908, 1.
\(^{64}\) “Das Land,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 11 March 1903.
\(^{65}\) “Die Mission Österreichs,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 15 February 1903.
crossroads between the Austrian and Russian Empires and Romania. It was not just these material shortcomings that frustrated locals who embraced the ideal of *Kultur*, but also the condescension with which Bukovina was regarded at the center. It seemed unbelievable that Vienna should take so little interest in a place that looked up to it as much as Bukovina did and that, no matter how Czernowitz improved, it could never rid itself of its reputation for “misery, moral degeneracy, and ignorance and corruption.” Czernowitz’s unrequited love for Vienna turned into frustration and anger, as many Bukovinans felt that they were being unfairly treated as second-class citizens or “stepchildren” of the empire. From this, some even derived a strange sense of superiority and the confidence that, simply by virtue of living at the empire’s remotest periphery, they understood what *Kultur* and *Bildung* were all about better than did the Viennese.

The disenchantment with Vienna did not translate into a similar disillusionment with *Bildung* and *Kultur*. Bukovinans who embraced these ideas only to discover that the center continued to look down upon them took refuge in even more *Kultur* and *Bildung*. In a volume of sketches he published in 1910, the local humorist Franz Porubsky poked fun at Czernowitzers who spoke in aphorisms and quotations, sat around in coffee houses, and purchased a piano even if they could not play it to demonstrate their status as *Gebildete*. Such scenarios, humorous as they were, revealed an important symptom of Czernowitz society: its obsession with its own provinciality and its desperate longing to transcend it by demonstrating its membership in the civilized world. From eating “Kremeschnitten” and sipping “mélange,” as the *Bildungsbürgertum* in Vienna were doing, to reciting Schiller, Porubsky’s Czernowitzers would go to any lengths to “refute with all their might the unavoidable prejudice shared by all observers at the center when they think about the bad ‘neighborhood’ in which their co-citizens find

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Another manifestation of this infatuation with Bildung was Studierwut, or “study fury,” as the press described the rush to enroll in gymnasiums and university that gripped the middle classes in Czernowitz. As one Jewish woman who used to live on Czernowitz’s main street Herrengasse would later recall, “everyone would turn” on hearing one passer-by greeting another with “Ich grüsse Sie, Herr Doktor!,” as the city was so full of Doktoren. Bukovina’s deficient economic infrastructure and incomplete educational system reinforced this obsession with academic titles. Given the lack of a local industry, students had little else to do but join the already numerous ranks of lawyers, professors, and civil servants in the province. Since Bukovina had no intermediary schools [Bürgerschulen] or trade schools, children who were merely looking to fulfill their mandatory schooling period also had to enroll in elite gymnasiums for lack of other options.

The infatuation with Bildung, far from curing Bukovina’s economic illnesses as many hoped, destabilized the local economy even further by creating a surfeit of educated people for whom there were no jobs. The “academic proletariat,” as the local press called it, grew so much that the authorities began to fear social unrest. “If there were workers’ demonstrations for the intellectual professions,” the Czernowitzer Tagblatt wrote in July 1914, “our doctors would be marching in a long, long line.” But even though so many graduates could not find employment, parents continued to push their children into gymnasiums, believing academic titles to be the only reliable antidote to poverty and the only way to make it into “the upper class with one
lea."

As a result, Czernowitz’s gymnasiums became the most overcrowded in all of Austria. To manage the steadily increasing number of students, the I Staatsgymnasium in Czernowitz had to be divided into four parallel classes in 1864. But after the university opened in 1875, enrollment numbers soared again. By 1897, the gymnasium had expanded to eight parallel sections, breaking every enrollment record in the empire. By 1899 a total of 980 students were attending the Staatsobergymnasium in Czernowitz and by July 1903, when the Czernowitzer Tagblatt predicted that Bukovina would soon “be flooded with students,” as many as 1,750 students were enrolled in the gymnasium. The university was also crowded, with a total of 600 students attending classes that year, the vast majority of them locals from Bukovina. This trend worried even the Austrophile press, eager as it was to promote Kultur and Bildung. For the truth was that Bukovina’s illiteracy rates continued to be among the highest in the empire. While 49.4% of the empire’s population was literate in 1880, only 9.1% of Bukovina’s population was literate at that point. Four years before the outbreak of World War I, a little over a half of Bukovina’s population still could not read and write.

The success of the Bildung idea not only did not improve Bukovina’s economic situation but also failed to create unity among its diverse population. Recall Tomaszczuk’s speech in the Vienna parliament in support of his petition for a university in Bukovina. When another deputy by the name of Eduard Süss called into question the political value of building a university at the empire’s remotest frontier, Tomaszczuk insisted that “the university should not be a means of achieving unilateral political purposes” but that opening such a university in Czernowitz would

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71 “Zum Schulbeginn,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 2 September 1903.
72 DACHO, fond 211, opis 1, delo 4326, January 1897.
73 DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 5322, November 1899.
74 “Die Studierwut,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, July 14, 1903.
75 “Unsere Mittelschulen,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 18 July 1903.
76 Constantin Ungureanu, Învățământul primar din Bucovina, 143.
definitely further Austria’s historic mission because Austria’s development as a state rested on “the development of German Bildung and Kultur.”

What Tomaszczuk and others like him did not doubt for a second was that Bildung and Kultur would serve as a “common binding force (...) among [Austria’s] subjects,” uniting through a common cultural and intellectual heritage members of different social and national groups. As Friedrich Schuler von Libloy, the dean of the new law school in Czernowitz, put it in his inauguration speech in October 1875, “the useful deeds of science (...), they are the ones who keep conquering hearts and (...) take education into social strata – both the high and low, various nationalities – who honor it as a common tie.” By 1890, barely fifteen years later, these claims already seemed doubtful. As one German-language newspaper in Czernowitz observed, “the tie that keeps everything together seems weakened, the parts of the whole that belong together put their differences forward and are cold or even defensive towards each other (...) Is that Bildung, tolerance, enlightenment?” Although Czernowitz had no doubt become more educated [gebildeter] and enlightened than ever before, Bildung did not seem to have done away with the “separation of various national, confessional, social and even political circles.” How was that possible? Was it then not true that “the state of social life is the main measure for the intellectual achievement of a society?” Even perceptive observers like the author of this piece did not cast doubt upon the power of Bildung to transcend differences and act as a “connecting, equalizing force” when faced with these disappointments.

Their conclusion was, rather, that Czernowitz’s Bildung level had not grown sufficiently fast to counteract deepening social rifts and escalating national tensions.

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78 Ibid.
79 Friedrich Schuler von Libloy, Festrede zur Eröffnungsfeierlichkeiten, 12.
80 “Unser Gesellschaftsleben,” Bukowiner Nachrichten, 24 August 1890.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
The common ties of Bildung not only failed to cancel out old differences but also generated new conflicts. The problem was not that Bildung was insufficiently developed but that it became widely recognized as a marker of status and prestige in imperial society. Different groups who contended for power carried their battles into the realm of Bildung, turning what could have been a basis for cultural and intellectual unity into a new arena for competition. As a spiritual and intellectual ideal, Bildung appealed only to a small segment of the population in Bukovina. These were the German-speaking Jews in Czernowitz, who were enthralled by the idea of a society to which anyone who embraced liberal, humanist values could gain admission on equal terms. But Bildung was also the key to power and symbol of status for both the Jewish Bildungsbürgertum in Czernowitz and the national intelligentsia. Even as they fantasized about replacing imperial Kultur with national cultures, Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists continued to inhabit the world of Kultur. They did not express their discontents with imperial rule and their appeals for national rights by withdrawing from this world; rather, they did so by competing for access to Bildung. They measured their political success in the number of prestigious gymnasiums and schools they secured for the nationalities they represented. In their infatuation with gymnasiums, academic titles, and general Bildungsdrang (as contemporaries called it) nationalists were no different than the Jewish Bildungsbürgertum they accused of monopolizing the educational system. “It is quite curious,” the legal scholar Eugen Ehrlich reflected in 1916, then a professor at the university in Czernowitz, “that both peoples [Romanians and Ruthenians] first think about founding as many gymnasiums as possible.” Every year, Romanian and Ruthenian delegates in the provincial diet complained that Bukovina lacked an indigenous middle class because it had only gymnasiums but no trade schools and Bürgerschulen. But when

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push came to shove, no nationalist wanted his nationality to be underrepresented in the prestigious gymnasiums. When a German politician suggested that fewer students should enroll in the Gymnasien and more should pursue a practical education, the Ruthenian nationalist Nikolai von Wassilko snapped: “While [the Germans] themselves eat the apple, they want the Romanians and Ruthenians to eat the peel only. (...) We are supposed to remain a nation of shoemakers and tailors who feed the civil servants from outside!”

When Czernowitz’s gymnasiums became too overcrowded as a result, this gave the different groups engaged in competition yet another reason to do battle. Both liberal Austrophiles and nationalists in Czernowitz acknowledged that the overfilling of schools was a problem, but they had very different ideas of who was to blame and what could be done to remedy the situation. The Jewish liberal press frowned upon Czernowitz’s “study fever” because it reduced the overall quality of education and destabilized Bukovina’s provincial economy by giving rise to an “intellectual proletariat.” As for who was at fault, the German-language Jewish press had no doubt that it was the nationalists who used school politics to divert public attention from important social and economic issues to trivial national squabbles. The absence of trade schools and the proliferation of civil servants in Czernowitz was, in this view, “a fatal gift given us by the politics of nationalities and small nations.” So was the poverty of the peasants, for whom a gymnasium education had little use, as their profession had nothing to do with Greek translation and German classical literature but solely with agriculture. Because nationalists were anxious that their national groups be well-represented in elite educational institutions and the bureaucracy and administration, peasant children who went to school were encouraged to “join the ranks of

85 “Die kleine Grossstadt,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 10 April 1914.
86 Prof. Dr. Wolfram, “Zur Mittelschulfrage,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 10 September 1911.
starving civil servants and the unemployed intelligentsia.”88 Instead of encouraging nationalists in their practices by responding to their petitions for more schools, the Czernowitzer Tagblatt urged the authorities to invest more in the province’s economy and industry: “we must set boundaries to Studierwut and the corresponding factors must make sure that the rush to study is redirected towards the right path that will heal this province.”89 Nationalists, on the other hand, blamed the Bildungsdrang on the Jews who were “thrusting themselves in unbelievable numbers into the schools and universities supported by Christians.”90 Similarly, they dismissed criticisms voiced in the Jewish press as veiled attempts to deny the non-German nationalities access to an educational system that the Jews were monopolizing. The nationalist solution to the social and economic instability caused by Studierwut was to urge even more nationals to send their children to school so they could eventually oust the Jews from their dominant position.91

_The Lives and Fates of Kultur_

Due to its peculiar mix of particularism and universalism – its simultaneous identification with Germanness and universal values – the Kultur idea could accommodate multiple interpretations and translate into a variety of political projects. Just like in Switzerland, Karl Emil Franzos argued, in Bukovina different nationalities lived together peacefully because they were bound together by “Cultur or Germanness, which means the same thing.”92 Kultur and Germanness meant the same thing not only for Franzos but for many others as well. That was

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89 “Die kleine Grossstadt,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 10 April 1914.
91 Ilie Toroțiu, Românii și clasa intelectuală din Bucovina: Notițe statistice (Cernăuți: Editura societății academice Junimea, 1911), 17. This study published in 1911 by a local Romanian warned that Jews had come to occupy the most important functions in Bukovina. Bukovina, the author complained, was swarming with “foreign functionaries” for whom the province meant nothing but a “dark corner where culture couldn’t penetrate because it was inhabited by people who do not even deserve to exist.”
92 Karl Emil Franzos, _Aus Halb-Asien_, 186.
precisely the problem. While in theory *Kultur* and *Bildung* were not attached to any specific group, in practice they were mediated through a specific language: German, which some national groups mastered better than others. Due to their language skills, Bukovina’s urban Jews, who formed the majority of German speakers in the province, along with the ethnic Germans, were much better equipped to navigate the German-language school system than were the rural Romanians, Ruthenians, and Poles. Jews typically formed the largest contingent of students enrolled in schools, especially beyond the primary level. In 1880, for example, the municipal council in Czernowitz reported that more than half of the total number of students enrolled in both *Realschulen* in Bukovina was of “Mosaic religion.” From this, they concluded that “the Israelite population has grown in a completely different way over the past decades than the Christians with respect to their number and prosperity.”93 To the exasperation of Romanian nationalists, who regarded the Greek-Oriental religious fund as a national Romanian institution, Jewish students dominated not only the secular school system but also institutions supported by the Orthodox Church. In 1891, for instance, the Greek-Oriental *Oberrealschule* in Czernowitz had 366 students: 154 of them Jewish, 139 Roman-Catholic, and 37 Greek-Oriental.94 Even as late as 1906, when non-German speakers in Bukovina had much better access to schools and parallel classes in their national languages, Jews continued to form the majority of gymnasium students. Out of the student body enrolled in Bukovina’s five gymnasiums that year, 56.3% were German speakers and out of that number, 40.3% were Jewish.95 With great alarm, the Christian Social periodical *Bukowinaer Volksblatt* reported in March 1909 that the main state gymnasium in Czernowitz “has become a purely Jewish school.”96 To many non-Jews, especially Romanian

93 DACHO, f. 211, op. 2, d. 2192.
94 DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 3382.
95 DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 8531.
and German nationalists, Bukovina’s imperial school system came to seem like an incubator for Jewish officials, civil servants, and politicians. Anti-Semitism translated into hostility towards the imperial administration and the ideas it championed, which Romanian and German nationalists dismissed as mere instruments in the hands of the Jews.

Ironically, not even those who benefitted the most from the supranationalism of *Kultur* and *Bildung* could imagine these ideas to be anything other than thoroughly German. Bukovinian Jews who defended the universalism of *Kultur* were also passionate advocates of the German language and staunch defenders of German culture. Even before Germans in Bukovina had their ‘national awakening’ with the emergence of the anti-Semitic Christian Social party, Germanophile Jews like Karl Emil Franzos were urging the German *Volk* to hold on to the German language against the Austrian administration’s attempts to de-Germanize the empire.

What Franzos did not suspect then was that, when this finally happened, it also meant the end of his own membership in the German *Culturstaat*. “I am far from encouraging the Germans to hurt others through superfluous national demonstrations, and through exaggerated assertions of their dominant position,” Franzos wrote. 97 And yet, as he saw them, German *Kultur* and *Bildung* could only be fully inclusive and universal if they kept their German character. Were German culture to “dissolve itself in sublime cosmopolitanism,” Franzos warned, all would be lost. 98 But Germanization was also not what Franzos had in mind: “I am thinking here only of the dissemination of German *Cultur* and between such a deed and Germanization there is a rift impossible to bridge.” 99 Franzos inherited this belief in the superiority of all things German from his father, who had raised him to think of himself as German first and foremost, and only then Jewish. True to his father’s wishes, Franzos later moved from Czortkow to Czernowitz, “the

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98 Ibid.
99 Karl Emil Franzos, *Aus Halb-Asien*, X.
“antechamber to the German paradise” as he called it, to attend the German-language gymnasium there. As a student in Graz, Franzos also joined a nationalist German Burschenschaft. In 1870, he was arrested for giving what the Habsburg authorities deemed to be an excessively nationalistic speech before a gathering of the Club of German Nationals in a Graz beer hall.\textsuperscript{100}

Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, who taught history at the university in Czernowitz before World War I, gave \textit{Kultur} a new interpretation that was at variance but not in conflict with the idea of an imperial Austrian \textit{Kulturmission} in the East. An ethnic German from a family of Swabian colonists in Bukovina, Kaindl attended the same gymnasium as Franzos and later enrolled in the university in Czernowitz as a student of history. There he first learned about Georg von Schoenerer’s movement from Western Austrian classmates who brought with them to Czernowitz an enthusiasm for the pan-German movement and a desire to spread “radical national consciousness” among Bukovinian Germans. When Schoenerer was arrested in May 1888, Kaindl’s German colleagues took to the streets, singing “Die Wacht am Rhein” in front of Maria Theresia’s monument on Czernowitz’s main square.\textsuperscript{101} Though German himself, Kaindl did not participate in these demonstrations, for Schoenerer’s plans to sever Austria’s non-German territories from the rest of the empire and join the Austrian German heartlands with the German Reich in order to save ethnic Germans from Slavic domination seemed to him misguided. That Germans in the empire were in crisis was beyond doubt. But the solution to this crisis, Kaindl was convinced, was not to withdraw behind the narrow borders of a German nation-state.

Against Schoenerer’s ethnically particularist conception of the German nation, Kaindl articulated a vision of German nationhood defined by \textit{Kultur} and \textit{Kulturarbeit} – a cultural community with

\textsuperscript{101} Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, in \textit{Die Geschichtswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen} (Leipzig: Verlag von Feliz Meiner, 1925), 177.
no definitive political boundaries, joined organically by a shared history, language, common, and civilizing mission. In many ways, Kaindl’s ideas were typical of nineteenth-century völkisch thought, which also posited that Germans were bound together by a common German essence that reached across space and time. But unlike other völkisch thinkers, who felt nostalgic about the pre-industrial past, Kaindl identified this essence with modernity. In the East, he argued, the Germans had brought modernity to peoples that were embittered enemies of western European culture.102

Though he did not advocate a return to pre-modernity, Kaindl did feel nostalgic about another imagined past, when Germans had been both attached to their communities and able to move freely across state borders in pursuit of connections and exchanges with other German communities. This idyllic image found expression in Kaindl’s Geschichte der Deutschen in den Karpathenländern, a three-volume work published between 1906 and 1911, which argued that “Germans in these lands form an organic whole, their history and fate are intimately tied.”103 Against the Prussian school of German history, which put the nation-state before the Volk, Kaindl argued that peoples and cultures mattered more than states and state borders. The implication of the narrative of German history that Kaindl put forward was that the German Volk could not be confined to any one state, for the organic ties that bound together Germans since time immemorial transcended state borders. In the distant past, when borders had not yet become an impediment to movement, Germans had been more unitary and more nationally conscious. If the opposite was true in the present, this was only because “ignorance about history and the conditions of our German settlement area has not allowed our clear consciousness of the völkisch

103 Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, Geschichte der Deutschen in den Karpathenländern 3: Geschichte der Deutschen in Galizien, Ungarn, der Bukowina und Rumänien seit etwa 1770 bis zur Gegenwart (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1911), IX.
unity of Germans in the East to surface [aufkommen].”\textsuperscript{104} The claim that the nation-state had harmful consequences on nationhood may seem curious in retrospect. This is because the kind of nationalism that triumphed in the end was not Kaindl’s but Schoenerer’s. But at the time, it was far from obvious to someone like Kaindl that the nation-state was necessary to consolidate national consciousness. To foster national unity, Kaindl in fact believed that it was imperative to forge international ties between German communities across different states. To bring this about, he launched a movement that aimed to bring together Germans from all over the Carpathian territories and foster cultural and economic exchange among them. As a member of the \textit{Verein der christlichen Deutschen in Bukowina}, Kaindl had participated in other forms of national defense work [\textit{Schützarbeit}] as well. But the \textit{Karpathendeutschenbewegung} took this initiative to another level by bringing together national organizations that had remained separate and unaware of each other’s work. The movement convened for the first time in 1911 in Czernowitz, and then in Ruma, Vienna, and Biała until the outbreak of World War I forced Kaindl to interrupt his activity.\textsuperscript{105}

Painful as it was to have to flee his home in Czernowitz and start a new life in Graz, World War I emboldened Kaindl to take his dream of a Greater German space of \textit{Kultur} even further. As the German-Austrian troops withdrew from Bukovina, Kaindl launched an offensive of his own, publishing one article after another in the Austrian and German press, to convince the greater German public of the importance of reconquering the East. “If the Germans step back,” Kaindl warned, “their place will be taken by someone else.”\textsuperscript{106} Not only that, but Germans in the

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\textsuperscript{104} Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, “Die Tagungen der Karpathendeutschen,” \textit{Deutsche Arbeit Heft} 12, no. 3 (1912-1913), 160.
\textsuperscript{105} Heinrich Haupt, Adam Schmidt, Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, \textit{Bericht: die vierte Tagung der Karpathendeutschen in Biala 1914 und über die Tätigkeit der Hauptleitung 1914 bis 1921} (Graz, 1921).
\textsuperscript{106} Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, “Deutsche Aufgaben in den Karpathenländern,” \textit{Deutsche Arbeit} 14, no. 4 (1914-1915), 220.
\end{flushright}
interior of the continent would be in danger if there were no more outposts of the German *Volk* and *Kultur* to defend them in the East. “Precisely in the eastern territories their continued existence and consolidation in this sense is of the highest importance,” Kaindl wrote, “not only for Austro-Hungary but also for the German Reich, which cannot survive without the Habsburg monarchy.”

Places that had been transformed by German *Kulturarbeit*, from Hungary and Transylvania to Bukovina and the Balkans, were for Kaindl German territory – not in the sense of belonging to a German nation-state but of having been “conquered for western culture,” as he wrote of Bukovina. By working the land and building cities, bridges, and schools, everywhere they lived Germans had “spread high *Kultur* and laid foundations for spiritual and material progress.”

In Bukovina, Germans had transformed a “wild, empty land in which not even the highest positioned *geistliche Würdenträger* could read and write” into one that was culturally developed enough to sustain a university. Like Franzos, Kaindl attributed the successes of *Kulturarbeit* in Bukovina not to the imperial administration but to the German *Volk*. Though he too insisted that *Kultur* was a German and not imperial phenomenon, Kaindl also believed that there were different ways of being German and that the most authentic one was to be found along the shores of the Danube and not in Prussia. Ironically, by insisting on the superiority of this Austrian variety of German nationhood, Kaindl ended up reinforcing the particularism he despised and hoped to overcome through his transnational German movement.

When the Habsburg monarchy collapsed in 1918, Kaindl began to advocate federalism. In the post-World War I years, he translated his old idea of a German *Kulturnation* unconstrained

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107 Ibid.
by state borders into a vision of a Central European federation revolving around a Greater German state built on the foundations of shared German Kultur. A federation of this sort would also be, in Kaindl’s opinion, an ideal way to overcome the particularisms that had caused so much disunity and conflict throughout Germany’s long history. Tracing the roots of federalist thought in German history to Metternich and earlier, Kaindl argued that federal ideas had been around for much longer than the idea of the nation-state, which kleindeutsch historians wrongly claimed to be both a necessary and inevitable outcome of German history. In Österreich, Preussen, Deutschland, which he published in 1926, Kaindl put forward a new narrative of German history from a new perspective that did not project the nation-state into the past but focused instead on the development of universalist ideas such as that of a Grossdeutschland.112 The main bearer of the Greater German idea through the ages, Kaindl contended, had been Austria, although historians partisan to Prussia sought to minimize Austria’s role in German history. “Only by redressing this point of view are we going to gain ground under our feet again,” Kaindl argued.113 A supporter of Anschluss, Kaindl died eight years before his dream of a Greater Germany was accomplished in the new form of a National Socialist empire. Though he never saw his federalist plans coming into fruition, Kaindl’s idea of redefining the German nation around Kultur and Kulturarbeit did resonate with some of his contemporaries. In the interwar years, Germans disenchanted with the failures of the Weimar Republic began writing the author of the Geschichte der Deutschen in den Karpathenländern to ask for information about German settlements in the East. “Ever since it became impossible to do anything worthwhile in Germany,” a maidservant from a village near Munich wrote Kaindl in 1923, “now that saving money is out of the question, I ask you kindly to give me more in-depth information

113 Ibid., viii.
on the Germans in Transylvania or tell me who can help me to obtain a position there.”\(^{114}\)

Needless to say, Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists also failed to appreciate the universalism of ideas that were being disseminated through a language other than their own. In the view of both nationalist radicals and more moderate advocates of national culture, a truly cosmopolitan culture such as *Kultur* purported to be was neither possible nor desirable. “An upbringing in the cosmopolitan sense,” one Romanian teacher declared in 1899, “which would tend to make youth not belong to any one nationality in particular but to humanity in general, is a phantasmagoria.”\(^{115}\) Because culture was necessarily national (whether openly or covertly), any attempt to transcend its national essence was doomed to fail. A culture that was not national was not only meaningless but even harmful to those who were exposed to it. This was how national activists in Bukovina justified their persistent requests to switch from a bilingual and multilingual education to teaching only in the national languages. Studying in German no doubt put non-native German speakers at a disadvantage, making it more difficult for them to master the same material as their German-speaking classmates. The overall effect (and intention) of a German-language education, so Romanian and Ruthenian national activists insisted, was to confine non-German speakers to a subordinate position in Bukovina’s society and economy. Even worse, bilingualism and multilingualism adversely affected moral development. Children who dabbled in many different languages, becoming familiar with all of them and yet remaining unattached to either one, developed morally questionable selves. A 1912 Romanian-language brochure that appealed against bilingual education in Romanian schools argued that Bukovina’s bilingual Romanian gymnasiums were producing a new species of national renegades who

\(^{114}\) Letter to Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, 21 September 1923, Box 3, Raimund Friedrich Kaindl Archiv, Universität Graz.

\(^{115}\) Domnica Bodnar, “Oare să ia educațiunea și un caracter național?,” *Pädagogische Blätter*, 10 October 1899, 296.
switched national identities at their convenience. “A duplicity of language,” he author wrote, “is also a moral duplicity, a duplicity of character. Now you are a good Romanian if the interest requires it, then you are a good German if that is more useful.” The obvious thing to do was to fight against this cosmopolitanism, as “it is dangerous to human and national culture.”

But the nationalist alternative had much more in common with Kultur than nationalists liked to admit. The Romanian and Ruthenian national intelligentsias that came out of Bukovina’s Austrian school system in the 1880s and 1890s could not help but be influenced by the ideas and rhetoric of rule through enlightenment to which they owed their own move up in the world. As with Kultur, the national cultures they envisioned claimed to be democratic but were in fact little concerned with the interests of the masses. Even though they periodically denounced the Austrian school system for forcing Kultur down peasants’ throats without bothering to adjust curricula to their needs, nationalist intellectuals were more interested in changing the language of instruction than adjusting the entire educational system to the needs of the peasantry. When put to the test, their vision of culture proved just as foreign to the peasantry as Kultur was. Peasants may not have hungered for Goethe, Schiller, and Greek translation, but neither were they driven by an all-consuming desire to speak in their mother tongues to defend their national culture from foreign invasion. No wonder that when German-language middle schools in Bukovina began offering optional Romanian and Ruthenian classes as prescribed by the provincial law of April 1869 very few students took advantage of them. At the Greek-Oriental Oberrealschule in Czernowitz, only 9.3% of the student body enrolled in Romanian classes in 1867/7 and only 4% of them in Ruthenian classes. The classes were meant to give Romanian and

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116 Vasile Greciuc, Utracvismul sau două limbi de predare la liceele românești din Bucovina (Cernăuți: Tipografia Societatea Școala Română în Suceava, 1912), 32.
117 Ibid., 33-34.
Ruthenian students a chance to cultivate their native languages, as national activists demanded. But there was no clear overlap in fact between the students who enrolled and those who registered as native speakers. This was, in the opinion of one teacher who risked losing his job because of the low enrollment rates in language classes, “partly because of ignorance about the law, partly because of indifference.”\textsuperscript{119}

Much as they criticized Austria’s claims of having brought culture to the backward East, nationalist activists never questioned the assumption that culture was power. No matter how hard they thought about how to reach deeper into the village in order to improve the lives of the illiterate peasantry, nationalist activists in Bukovina always ended up opening yet more reading societies, organizing charity balls and cultural events, publishing journals, and agitating for education in the national languages. A case in point was the journal \textit{Junimea Literară}, founded by a group of young Romanian nationalist intellectuals in 1904 to revive interest in Romanian literature and wean off foreign culture the “descendants of the Latin race at the gates of the Orient,” as the historian and editor-in-chief Ion Nistor put it in the journal’s first issue.\textsuperscript{120} The linguist Sextil Pușcariu, a member of the Junimea circle, once wrote that “an intensive cultural movement (...) could be the glue that ties us together, bringing about the much-wanted reconciliation within the bosom of our society, which today is fractured, either due to affiliations with political parties or because of the passivity of its members.” Culture, Pușcariu observed, could bring people together, creating harmony where politics only bred factionalism and hatred: “when several people read or listen to the same literary piece, their souls come together and identify with the always pure soul of the true poet.”\textsuperscript{121} The more one listens to these nationalist odes to culture, the more they seem to fuse with the hymns Jewish Austrophiles in Bukovina and

\textsuperscript{119} DAChO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 1504.
\textsuperscript{120} Iancu Ion Nistor, \textit{Junimea Literară}, January 1904.
imperial administrators were singing to *Kultur*. The national cultures with which nationalist intellectuals wished to substitute *Kultur* were also meant to create moral and political unity through common language. Imperial officials in Bukovina found that the German language, instead of imprinting universal values, absorbed and reflected the particularisms it was supposed to transcend.\(^{122}\) Nationalists’ ambitions were similarly thwarted by their discovery that national languages were in fact impure and that very few “nationals” in Bukovina were in fact monolingual.

**Conclusion**

General Petală, the head of the Romanian division that crossed the border into Bukovina in October 1918 and occupied the province, met with Mayer Ebner, editor-in-chief of the *Ostjüdische Zeitung* and leader of the Zionist party in Bukovina on June 1, 1919. Although Ebner was supposed to interview Petală about his plans in Bukovina, Petală asked more questions than he answered. He wondered, for instance, if Jews in Bukovina recognized the “historic rights” of Romanians to Bukovina. Ebner said that they did but then he added that other nationalities in Bukovina had “historic rights” to this territory as well because they “all contributed to the cultural build-up of the land.”\(^{123}\) What mattered the most was not whether a people inhabited a territory first, but whether they transformed it through *Kulturarbeit*. “A block of stone,” Ebner wrote, “has only a small material worth. Only the skillful hand of the sculptor gives the stone its true worth.”\(^{124}\) From a deserted marsh on a “primitive cultural level,” Bukovina had developed into a civilized province thanks to the concerted efforts of its nationalities, especially the Germans and Jews who developed urban life and commerce in the

\(^{122}\) DACHO, f. 211, op. 1, d. 11221.


\(^{124}\) Ibid.
province.

Ebner’s arguments reached the ears of Nicolae Iorga, the mastermind of Romania’s anti-Austrian wartime propaganda campaign and the most influential nationalist intellectual at the time. In his own publication *Neamul Românesc*, Iorga criticized Ebner for underplaying the Romanian contributions to Bukovina’s development. Ebner denied ever having said this but could not help but note that working the land – which was what the Romanians had done before the Germans and Jews arrived in Bukovina – was only “the precursor for higher Kultur.” “I would be even more justified in asking whether it is not better for the culture of the Romanian nation,” Ebner wrote, “that Iorga does not cut trees, dig up roots or remove stones, or that their Eminescu has ridden the Pegasus instead of the plough horse.”

*Kultur* remained a bone of contention after 1918 too, as Bukovinans continued to argue about what it meant, who participated in it, and why it mattered, and as the idea became increasingly entangled with new issues like citizenship rights and rights to territory.

Every political project founded on *Kultur* was shaped by the concept’s inherent tensions and contradictions. Austria’s *Kulturmission* in Bukovina rested on the assumption that *Kultur* could reconcile differences and achieve prosperity by forging common values and a common mentality. Imperial officials and Austrophile intellectuals contrasted Bukovina’s civilized state under Austrian rule with the province’s former backwardness and *Unkultur*. But it was precisely Bukovina’s “backwardness” that made it possible to celebrate Austria’s *Kulturmission* so openly here as late as 1875, when nationalism had taken increasingly radical forms elsewhere in the empire. Instead of transforming economic conditions, *Kultur* fell prey to them. Instead of forging unity, it reflected and amplified differences. The firmer its grip on the locals’ imagination, the more destabilizing *Kultur* became. Austrophiles who took to heart the claim that Bukovina was

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meant to play a special role within the empire as an outpost of German *Kultur* in the East began criticizing the imperial authorities when this failed to happen. The infatuation with *Bildung* and *Kultur* destabilized the provincial economy by giving rise to an “intellectual proletariat.”

It also created new opportunities for conflict between groups that viewed *Kultur* and *Bildung* as important markers of prestige to be fought over. Though supposedly accessible to all, *Kultur* was conveyed only through the German language, which some groups spoke better than others: this was yet another contradiction. The largest group of German speakers in Bukovina were urban Jews. They became even more invested in disseminating German *Kultur* and *Bildung* than the imperial administration. This discredited the empire’s claims of building democratic *Kultur* in Bukovina in the eyes of the Christian population, who came to identify the imperial administration and its policies increasingly with Jewish interests and Germanization. *Kultur* was also taken up by German Christian Socials in Bukovina, who redefined it as ethnic German property: an achievement of the *Volk*, independent of the empire and its institutions. Finally, the ideas of *Kultur* and *Bildung* left a profound imprint on nationalist thought in Bukovina. Nationalists also harbored the ambition to create unity within national communities through common culture and language. They also shared the assumption of imperial *Kultur*-bearers that culture was the key to power and the antidote to both economic ills and national conflicts. Even though they did not fully integrate *Bildung* into their nationalist program, nationalists availed themselves of its institutional framework, using it as a springboard for their own projects and as a means of asserting their own claims to power.\(^{126}\)

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\(^{126}\) Raymond Geuss, “Kultur, Bildung, Geist,” *History and Theory* 35, no. 2 (1996): 156. Geuss writes about the evolution of *Kultur* from Kant’s interpretation to Herder’s: from a universal value accessible to all rational human beings to a plurality “of different, nationally specific ways of living, each with its own particular way of viewing the world.” He argues that beginning with the 1870s *Kultur* began to refer to a plurality of nationally distinct ways of living but that *Bildung* was never absorbed fully into the nationalist program.
Chapter 2

Nationalism, Empire, and the World

The Italian steamship Attivita arrived in the port of Rio de Janeiro on December 8, 1895. On board were 1,536 Austrian emigrants, most of them from Bukovina and Galicia. Almost one third of the passengers were children under ten. Thirty-two of them died during the journey and an additional forty who had been gravely ill perished shortly after their arrival due to malnutrition, poor hygiene, and lack of medical care.¹ Only some of those who made it to Brazil after a journey that left them “spiritually and physically finished, devoid of will, [and] without energy” reached their final destinations. On arriving, the emigrants were placed in “immigration homes” where they spent weeks and often months waiting to be sent to their colonies. In June 1896, the newspaper Bukovyna reported that the two immigration homes in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paolo were overfilled because people who were supposed to have reached their destinations long before were still waiting for the authorities to build settlements and measure land in preparation for colonization. The immigrant camps took as many casualties as the transatlantic journey. According to the Austrian consul in Rio, fewer than half of the emigrants who arrived in Brazil survived their first few months there. Under an unbearable heat of forty-five degrees, the new arrivals were “locked up in a terribly cramped space, made to subsist on poor nourishment and bad water, surrounded by filth, [and] had to bear the sight of the dead bodies of relatives every day.”² Although the camps had a capacity of 1,000 people, between 1,500 and 2,000 immigrants were crowded into windowless rooms, where they slept on trestle beds with no

¹ Bukovyna, 12 November 1896.
² DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6639, 19.
pillows or on the floor. The news about the terrible conditions of life in the immigrant camps and colonies of Brazil soon the front pages of the press back home. The *Gazeta Lwowska* in Lemberg and the nationalist Ruthenian *Bukovyna* in Czernowitz painstakingly documented the plight of returning emigrants crowding into the Austrian consulate in Genoa to beg for a free ride home.

Nationalism - so the story goes - was Austria-Hungary’s undoing in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If we look at the empire’s western half, the nationalist story indeed seems all-consuming. As national frictions and tensions escalated, imperial officials and national elites were swept into a never-ending spiral of disagreements and squabbles so loud and disruptive that they even paralyzed the parliament in Vienna. If we move further east, to the empire’s periphery, we see a very different picture. In Bukovina, mass emigration was a much greater source of instability for the empire. Entire villages along the empire’s eastern border emptied out as thousands of people left first to Russia, then overseas. This chapter shows how the rapid increase in mass mobility presented both imperial officials and nationalist elites in Bukovina with a major challenge. Nationalists - not all that radical before then - mobilized largely in response to the rise in emigration, which disproportionately affected the non-German speaking population. They blamed the emigration crisis on ‘foreigners’ dominating imperial institutions and having the empire’s backing to do whatever they pleased with the peasant population. Yet most of the time nationalist elites were not in dissonance with the empire. On the contrary, they worked within the empire’s institutional frameworks - and even benefitted from them a great deal. Nationalists shared more with the imperial officials they purportedly opposed than with the people in the name of whom they spoke. The emigration crisis, above all, revealed how deeply entangled the national, imperial, and global had become.

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3 *Bukovyna*, 12 November 1896.
Historians of East-Central Europe have been too busy writing about nationalism to pay much attention to the problem of emigration. Apart from a series of isolated studies on the topic, most of them in German, there seems to be no coherent body of literature around this question. Tara Zahra’s recent *The Great Departure* breaks the silence on the topic, showing how mass emigration from East-Central Europe was linked with broader debates about freedom, mobility, and state sovereignty.\(^4\) Her book reveals that the emigration movement had an enormous impact above all on the governments and societies that emigrants left behind. Those who stayed worried that the ‘America fever’ and ‘Brazil fever’ would “destroy individuals, families, nations.” At the same time, East European governments discovered that they could manipulate emigration and use it as a steam valve “to serve domestic and international goals.”\(^5\) An even more important argument the book makes is that most emigrants did not leave their homes in search of freedom, as the American popular myth would have it, but because they had no choice. Finally, Zahra shows how nationalists, government officials, and the emigrants themselves were involved in a heated transatlantic debate about mass emigration. This was a hugely important phenomenon - and it was on everyone’s mind, including nationalists who saw “emigration as a potential weapon in the nationalist demographic struggle.” This chapter builds on these arguments and brings a local perspective to them, following Bukovinan emigrants, imperial officials, and nationalists as they tried to wrap their minds around the emigration phenomenon. My overarching aim here is to show to what a great extent nationalism in the Habsburg Empire was shaped by the rise of emigration. Radical nationalism was the byproduct of changes in the relationship between people, territory, and culture - and not the cause. By focusing on the emigration movement, in this chapter I also seek to reconnect the history of that remote corner of

\(^5\) Ibid., 6.
Eastern Europe that was Bukovina with the history of Europe as a whole and the globe.

*The Emigration Fever*

The 1890s were “stirring times in Austria.” The crisis erupted in April 1897, when Prime Minister Count Casimir Badeni issued new language ordinances for Bohemia mandating the equality of the Czech and German languages for inner civil service. Riots and popular demonstrations broke out all over the empire’s western crown lands - in Prague, Graz, Salzburg, and Vienna - and German-speaking governments in Bohemia, Moravia, the Alpine lands, and Silesia “vigorously opposed these ordinances.”\(^6\) The language conflict paralyzed the parliament in Vienna. In Czernowitz, only a distant echo of these turbulent events could be heard. Imperial officials here had many problems to deal with, but radical nationalism was not one of them. Several nationalist movements had emerged in Bukovina yet none of them seemed to threaten the empire’s stability at the frontier as much as the “emigration fever.” By the late 1890s, Bukovina was in the throes of an emigration movement so “feverish” that “only the few, most prosperous people” would have stayed put had the imperial authorities not intervened.\(^7\) By the time the ‘emigration fever’ erupted, peasants in Bukovina and Galicia were already experts in border-crossing as they had been engaging in seasonal labor migration for decades. People who lived along the border with Russia even crossed it several times a day to visit family on the other side or to collect cattle that happened to stray across the border into the Romanov empire. The men and women of the frontier gave in to the temptation of wandering off land in search of a better life more easily because ‘the other side’ was always within their reach. In villages along the frontier with Russia, locals could climb on a hill and look across the Dniester into the

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\(^7\) DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 5816, л 115.
Russian Empire. “Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul,” says Herman Melville’s Ishmael in *Moby Dick*, “then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball.” For Bukovinan peasants with little or no land and huge debts, the substitute was emigration. The emigration problem was specific to the eastern borderlands, yet its consequences, causes, and implications were global. The Austrian administration worried that the emigration fever would severely diminish its labor force and negatively impact the monarchy in the event of a war. At the frontier - where the empire was supposed to showcase its civilization and display its superiority to onlookers across the border - the peasant exodus was also a painful indicator of its failures. In the global competition for people and resources, Austria seemed to be losing to its rivals.

The emigration movement worried imperial officials in Bukovina more than the rise of nationalism because it seemed much more insidious and harder to control. Nationalist elites were visible and easily identifiable. Moreover, they spoke the same language as the educated imperial elites and inhabited the same institutional frameworks. One could negotiate with nationalists - not so much with the peasant migrants who snuck out of the country. The emigration ‘fever’ exposed the administration’s lack of control over its own population. The first major emigration epidemic in Bukovina started in October 1892, when several families with children passed through the northernmost district of Bukovina on their way from Galicia to the Russian Empire. The travelers crossed the border between Austria and Russia at Onuth, a small town located on the right shore of the Dniester. All was quiet along the frontier between Bukovina and Russia until “the most extraordinary rumors began spreading like a wildfire from community to community.”

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9 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 5816, l 115.
and fully equipped farms, as well as a tax exemption. Only a few months earlier, a fisherman carried by the currents of the Dniester beyond the mid-line marking the border between Austria and Russia would have been likely shot by Russian soldiers.\textsuperscript{10} By late September, however, Russian border guards were offering Austrian emigrants an unusually warm welcome, helping them cross the border by pointing to the “dry spots in the Dniester” and luring “the residents of Onuth, Samuszyn, Czarnypotok gathered (...) in feverish excitement (...) with food and wine.”\textsuperscript{11} Once they got to the other side of the frontier, the emigrants were gathered in guard houses (\textit{Czerdaken}) and given a festive welcome. The border guards gave them meat and bread and “the happy meal was accompanied by singing and dancing until the late hours of the night.” Perched up on “elevated points,” locals on the Austrian side of Sanuszga, Onuth, and Czarnypotok watched the spectacle unfold under their very own eyes. As the “emigration epidemic” threatened to spread from the border communities to the interior of the province, the captain of the Zastawna district sprung into action. On October 12, he set out on a journey around the district to warn the “people gathered everywhere” about the “sad consequences” and dangers to which they were exposing themselves and their families by leaving.\textsuperscript{12} But his warnings remained without effect. Another group of families left the district over the course of the following couple of days. The district captain recommended that the border be cordoned off for at least three weeks to prevent the “plague from spreading from the border into the district.”\textsuperscript{13} Then he went on an inspection trip along the border, making arrests left and right, halting families who were on their way to Russia, and sending them back to their homes under surveillance. Between October 12 and October 15, a total of twenty-six people were caught in Onuth and Okna. No emergency

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., I 244.  
\textsuperscript{11} DACHÖ, fond 3, op. 1, d. 5816, l 56.  
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., II 13-14.  
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., I 15.
measures could stop the migrants from trickling out of the country. As soon as one section of the border had been strengthened, another stretch burst open.

It was unclear what had sparked off the ‘emigration fever’ and what could be done to stop it. Imperial officials in Bukovina looked into the matter and concluded, despite evidence to the contrary, that the emigration movement was the work of its rival Russia, which supposedly lured the frontier population out of the country in order to diminish Austria’s labor power and destabilize it economically. Emigrants who returned to Bukovina told district captains and prosecutors that they had left so they would make more money and escape their debts at home. For the north of the province, and especially for the communities along the Dniester river, 1892 had been a difficult year, with an unusually poor harvest, high taxes, and a cholera epidemic. New restrictions on the issuance of passports to day laborers who regularly crossed the border from Bukovina into Romania or Bessarabia to look for work removed the only existing economic safety valve. While emigrants themselves named rural poverty and economic decline among the causes of their departure, imperial officials refused to attribute the emigration phenomenon to economic failure; on the contrary, they insisted that the ‘emigration fever’ affected only the poorest of the poor and therefore should not be mistaken for an indicator of economic failure; According to the captain of the Czernowitz district [Bezirkshauptmann], only day laborers and young men with nothing to lose found the prospect of immigrating to Russia appealing enough to leave their homes. Since most ordinary men stayed behind, officials concluded that the emigration problem was “no reason to search for ways of improving the situation of the peasant population.”14 Nor did imperial officials think that mass migration was a sign of popular discontent because peasants in Bukovina had never been “characterized by an enterprising spirit, but always by a notorious attachment to the Heimat.” Assuming that peasants would never leave

14 Ibid., 160.
their homes if they had a choice, the imperial administration attributed the emigration wave to foreign propagandists and agitators awakening “an adventurous desire to emigrate” among an essentially static and rooted peasant population.\textsuperscript{15} Moreover, crossing a relatively well-guarded frontier into Russia required more coordination and thought than imperial officials were ready to grant the peasant migrants. Instead of crossing the border directly from Galicia to Russia in an area of high security, the migrants were taking much longer routes in order to reach portions of the frontier that were less well supervised. People with such a “very low level of education, who barely knew Bukovina by name” - in the words of one district captain - seemed very unlikely to come up with such an elaborate plan on their own. From this, Austrian officials deduced that the Russian government had in fact planned the movement - even though no clear evidence of Russian involvement was found.

While nationalism in Bukovina was quite temperate and fairly predictable, the emigration movement had many unexpected socio-economic and political ramifications. It not only exposed the empire’s domestic economic problems, but also indicated its vulnerability to the slightest ‘foreign’ intervention and the porosity of its borders. It was enough for a Russian border guard to crook his finger for whole villages to leave Bukovina overnight. The Russian government in St Petersburg, it seemed, had more control over Austria’s frontier than the Austrian government itself. The Russian imperial authorities seemed to be not just luring people across the border, but also making sure that they were leaving their homes for good. Emigrants who crossed the border into Russia were not allowed to take with them any possessions they couldn’t carry on their backs. To encourage Austrian emigrants to settle down, the Russian authorities would not allow them to return home unless they obtained approval from the governor in Kishinev first; While waiting for the governor’s decision, the petitioners were placed under arrest, “which is why (…)

\textsuperscript{15} DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 5816, l 244.
they prefer to give up on their return altogether.” Russian officials streamlined their procedure for dealing with new arrivals from Austria. From a “confidential source,” a district captain heard that emigrants were first taken to Kamienetz Podolski, where they were made to swear an oath of allegiance to the Russian emperor, baptized in the Eastern Orthodox rite, and then sent off into the Russian interior. For the two hundred Austrian emigrants who were still waiting in the border town of Nowosielitza in December 1892 to be sent further inland, there were other plans. Rumor had it that they would be resettled in the Caucasus in the following spring. In addition, the emigration movement was also deeply imbricated with the problem of nationalism. Different nationalist factions were involved in both spurring and blocking the exodus of people from Bukovina. The Russophile Old Ruthenian party in Bukovina predictably encouraged the Ruthenian-speaking peasant population to emigrate to Russia. In this way, they were also asserting themselves over their political adversaries, the Young Ruthenians who were working alongside imperial officials to curb the emigration movement. Unlike the Young Ruthenian elites, who were well versed in imperial politics but not so close to the rural population, the Old Ruthenians gained a following by speaking the language of the peasantry. They sent speakers into the countryside telling peasants that the Young Ruthenians, working hand in hand with the Austrian government, were responsible for the peasants’ misery and destitution. They spread the rumor that Young Ruthenians were even planning to introduce the Latin alphabet and Latin classes in Bukovinian schools so they could convert Ruthenians to Roman Catholicism. Old Ruthenian publications such as the Rus’ka Pravda proclaimed that “that the oppressed people in Galicia and Bukowina can find shelter in Russia, and each one of those who goes there receives a house (…) and the entire inventory necessary for agriculture.” And this was enough for many Bukovinian peasants to say “good health to the German king, and now let’s go to our little father”
- the “peasant emperor” as the Russophiles called the tsar.

Although foreign governments and propagandists certainly played a part, the ‘emigration fever’ in Bukovina was not so much the result of foreign infiltration, as Austrian officials claimed, as one of very few ways in which peasants could assert control over their own fates and exert some kind of agency. It was in fact locals - both peasants and Jews - and not the ‘foreign agents’ officials feared so much who spread the word about emigration opportunities. One man who was caught agitating in the Czernowitz district said he wanted other peasants to emigrate too “in order to create a community for himself in Russia.”16 Others had a material interest in getting their neighbors to leave, as emigrants who left their homes in a hurry typically sold their land and goods for very low prices. Many emigrants who left also kept in touch with the people back home convinced neighbors to join them as well. Once the emigration avalanche started, it proved unstoppable. People trusted relatives and neighbors who assured them that a better life was to be found abroad more than ‘foreign agents’ or imperial officials warning them not to go. In February 1894, a detective hired by the Czernowitz city magistrate to keep an eye on the emigration problem reported that several families in Rosch were about to sell their households and land in preparation for their departure to America around March 1. The investigations revealed that no foreign agitators were involved. The most committed advocates of emigration were, as it turned out, the locals themselves. Emigrants who had returned to sell the land they left behind or to take relatives with them spoke about the “golden mountains” and “marvels” in America. One such emigrant who returned to Rosch with his pockets full of money after working in America for a few months, took with him first one neighbor and then several other families. The rumors spread quickly. In March 1894, the magistrate of Luzan reported that there too at least four families had left for Canada. Further away, in the Radautz and Solka judicial districts,

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16 DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 5816, l 60.
several families were also preparing to leave to America.\(^{17}\) What emerged was a kind of transnational emigration movement over which the imperial administration had only partial control.

The emigration movement gave rise to a series of transnational institutions and networks that perpetuated it in turn. There were travel agencies that specialized in transporting emigrants from this part of the world to North and South America. Unlike the imperial officials who struggled to contain mass emigration, unsuccessfully most of the time, these agencies made a profit out of it by helping emigrants navigate various state bureaucracies and get to their destinations. The most active travel agencies in Bukovina were Florio & Rubattino, with headquarters in Udine, and the transportation agency Ancona, both of which reached prospective clients through the mediation of local agents who distributed brochures to passers-by in markets and other public places. Those who got their hands on the pamphlets were instructed to hide them from the authorities and pass them on to other interested parties.\(^{18}\) The entire operation would have been impossible without the participation of locals who collected money for ship tickets, illegally disseminated emigration propaganda, and gave distant travel businesses in Hamburg or Bremen a human face that people could trust. It was only by hiring local agents that Western European companies were able to reach customers in remote places like Bukovina and Galicia. In exchange for a very small share of the profits made by the travel agencies for which they worked, the local “agitators” put their lives on the line to fulfill and over-fulfill the yearly quotas of emigrants travel businesses required to keep running. In some areas, these agitators were extraordinarily successful. In only five days, six Ruthenians who went from door to door telling people how great life was in Canada managed to convince about two hundred families in

\(^{17}\) DACHO, fond 3, op. 2, d. 6288.
\(^{18}\) DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6888.
Kadobestie to emigrate in November 1896. The families who left were apparently under the impression that “the Austrian Kaiser himself desires our locals to emigrate.” Around the same time, a real “emigration fever” erupted in Repuzynetz, where “night and day people go around talking about nothing but emigrating and selling their goods and houses.” In 1899, the Austrian ministry of external affairs reported a sharp spike in the number of Bukovinan and Galician emigrants to the United States due to the “very successful activity of emigration agents.” Local authorities were urged to make use of the recently issued law of 21 January 1897 to ban emigration propaganda.

Imperial officials took it upon themselves to protect the population against these predators through a variety of measures ranging from mild warnings to bans on emigration. But in the absence of a strict emigration law, imperial officials could only try to dissuade locals from leaving but not hold them back. As soon as they were informed that a new group of families were planning to leave for America in February 1894, the authorities in Rosha (a suburb of Czernowitz) went on alert. The Greek-Oriental parish office and the evangelical pastorate were instructed to fight the movement “from the pulpit” and the railway office to keep a record of all comings and goings. The passport and registration chancery received orders to issue passports for foreign travel only after detailed investigations. Officials made prospective emigrants attend meetings about the dangers that awaited them abroad. Locals went along with this but did not change their minds. Officials who took matters a step further met with extreme hostility and resistance. When the district captain of Kotzman tried to prevent several families from going to Canada on account that the “conditions of life” there were unfavorable, locals took their grievances to the authorities in Czernowitz. Having already sold their homes and bought ship

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19 Ibid., l 50.
20 DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6639.
tickets to Canada, the families in question sent a petition to the governor, noting that “the undersigned are peasants without any other profession,” who needed passports because “in Bukovina a day laborer in the countryside has to work during the summer for 20 Thaler per day to feed himself (…) while the people who left earlier from their communities to America in various locations in Canada have become rich by working there.” So strong was the pushback that the matter required Vienna’s intervention. In October 1896, Count Badeni instructed the governor of Bukovina that “concerning the issuance of passports to such persons who, despite all the well-intentioned (…) warnings about emigration have firmly decided [to leave], if there is no legal impediment, it is recommended to stick to the general passport regulations and not cause applicants any unjustified difficulties, as previous experiences have shown that we cannot expect to stop the emigration movement by denying people passports.”

The emigrants’ agency should not be overestimated, however, for no space was completely outside the state and its sphere of influence - not even the transnational space of emigration. State governments negotiated with each other to bring the flow of emigrants under control. The fates of emigrants were ultimately shaped by their decisions. After wave after wave of emigrants had left Bukovina for the Russian Empire, in January 1893, the Russian border guards started turning emigrants back. At the request of the Austrian authorities, the Russian government officially declared the frontier closed to “all Galician peasants who wish to settle en masse on the territory of Russia.” Shortly thereafter, the provincial governor urged local officials, priests, and district captains in Bukovina to inform the population of the change in Russia’s border policy and to let them know “as urgently as possible that it will be in their own interest not to let themselves be led on in the future by the promises of agents without scruples.”

21 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6888, l 29.
22 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6888, l 37.
The news took awhile to trickle down. On February 25, eight people arrived in Toporoutz from Czernawka, to cross the border into Russia. They managed to reach “the Russian border cordon Rodzdorozy near Bilowidec by Toporoutz, located in the forest.”23 They spent the night there and attempted to cross the border in the morning but were turned back by the Russian border captain, who told them they would only be admitted to Russia if they were in possession of valid travel passes. An additional seventy-seven emigrants were dispatched back to the Austrian side of the border in Nowosielitza on February 28. For the Russian government, this was merely a reversal of policy to accommodate Austria-Hungary’s request. For the people who were turned back at the border, this was a disaster for they had sold all of their belongings back home for very cheap. On the little money they had left, they could expect to survive only a few months at the most. Caught in between two empires now in competition, now in collusion, the emigrants got the short end of the stick.

But overall the Austrian authorities were much less successful in restraining the emigration movement than bringing nationalism under control in Bukovina. The emigration wave only grew over time, reaching alarming proportions before the outbreak of World War II. That the movement had something to do with the progressive impoverishment of Bukovina’s peasant population could no longer be denied, as the Austrian governor himself admitted in a letter to the ministry of interior in Vienna. On March 9, 1900 and May 10, 1901, deputies in the provincial diet, government councilors, district captains, and representatives of various political and economic societies gathered in Czernowitz at the governor’s invitation to discuss the emigration problem. The key question under debate was whether the emigration movement could still be considered a normal phenomenon or, rather, a symptom of grave economic illnesses that required the government’s intervention. The participants agreed that emigration had become a

23 Ibid. l 160.
problem “towards which one cannot safely remain indifferent,” rooted in the fact that “broad
districts of the local population can no longer find the conditions necessary for a decent existence
on their small farms.” Once the economic causes of the problem were acknowledged, officials
discussed which “measures of an economic nature” could be taken to curb the movement. The
following decade did not see any major improvements either. As late as April 1914, the district
captain of Storozynetz reported that “the unfavorable economic situation in certain emigration
areas here, which makes itself felt among the rural population usually at the beginning of the
year, especially after all supplies reserved for the winter have been consumed, leads to a
pronounced increase in emigration overseas.”

To the economic roots of the emigration movement, now acknowledged by imperial
officials, the Balkan Wars added a political and military dimension. In the aftermath of the wars,
the imperial authorities became increasingly worried about the effects of unregulated mass
migration on the empire’s military. Unless it was kept within bounds, the emigration movement
threatened to “impair the ability of the monarchy to defend itself” in the event of a war. District
captains and the local police confirmed these fears by pointing to the high numbers of young
males who had left the empire in recent years without fulfilling their military duty. A series of
orders and decrees were issued to keep the movement in check. In March 1909, the Austrian
ministry of defense ordered that all requests for exemptions from military training be turned
down. A new decree issued in January 1914 required all male persons between seventeen and
thirty-six years of age who wished to travel overseas to display travel documentation in the form
of either a passport issued by the district authorities or a pass card or travel certificate, proving
that they had performed their compulsory military service. Those who left the monarchy without

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24 DACHO, fond 3, op. 2, d. 18637, l 7.
25 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 12040, l 55.
fulfilling their military duty first would be placed under arrest for up to one year, and required to pay a fine of 2,000 crowns. In March 1914 Czernowitz’s train station was turned into a surveillance center for emigration from Bukovina. Additional police agents were hired to monitor all trains used by emigrants along the stretch Czernowitz-Hatna-Dornawatra. State functionaries, police staff, and even local employees of the ministry of finances were quickly mobilized to supervise and control all comings and goings. But the personnel were insufficient given the large masses of people who regularly crossed the border. In March 1914, the director of the Czernowitz police observed that the police organs at his disposal were “incapable of responding to growing needs” and that an additional eighteen police agents would have to be hired to cope with the mass of emigrants. Even with all this surveillance in place, it was actually not too difficult to leave the country. As one district captain pointed out, most emigrants going overseas were disguising themselves as seasonal migrants. “It isn’t all too hard to procure a passport in the Kingdom of Romania,” the captain noted, “such that the person who evades military duty can flee the country even through Austria as a so-called foreign citizen.”

These attempts to control mass emigration from Bukovina were complicated by the locals’ ignorance about the laws and the imperial officials’ ambivalence towards emigration. Local police organs came down harshly on emigrants caught with forged travel documents and falsified military certificates. In April 1914, police agents on the train from Czernowitz and Kolomea arrested a boy who claimed to be on his way to Galicia but was in fact traveling to America. From the travel documents they found sown inside the boy’s coat, the police concluded that the culprit had not yet fulfilled his military duty. In the months after new emigration laws were issued, the Czernowitz press teemed with reports of arrests and trials of illegal emigrants. Before long, there were even rumors that the government had banned emigration entirely.

27 DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 12040, l.37.
Imperial officials were anxious to disprove these rumors which, they feared, might cause unrest among the population. And indeed, the Austrian constitution granted the freedom to leave to anyone who carried valid travel documents and certificates proving they had performed their compulsory military service.

The imperial government’s awkward attempts to contain the emigration movement in the absence of a definitive emigration regulation law brought the issue back to the center of public debate. The new restrictions placed on emigration at the request of the military administration proved very unpopular not only with seasonal workers who were directly affected by the new provisions, but also with critics who believed that some forms of emigration were useful to the empire. On returning from his tour of Austrian settler colonies in South America, a certain Graf Berchtold published an essay arguing that emigration to South America could in fact benefit both individuals and families, and the state. If properly carried out, overseas emigration could serve as an extension of the seasonal migration in which thousands of Bukovinans and Galicians were engaging while crossing the border periodically into Russia or Romania in search of work. Eduard Graf Wickenburg, another vocal critic of the government’s emigration policies, took this idea further. He claimed that the emigration movement offered more economic opportunities than disadvantages. If they returned home, migrant workers to Argentina - for example - could bring an additional 30-50 million crowns back into the monarchy. Emigration to South America could also act as a substitute for territorial conquest and colonization. By following the example of Italy, which “twenty years ago was in economic ruin and now is so strong due to emigration,” Wickenburg believed that Austria too could profit from emigration. “We have land, we have workers, we have the best sailors of the world,” he wrote, “but our land stays empty and our workers are unemployed.” To keep the population from sinking into destitution even more,

\[28\] DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 12040, l 99.
Wickenburg urged that the emigration movement be regulated in such a way that “those who return are healthy and bring money” back home.

_Nationalism and Empire_

“In no other land is it as complicated as in Bukovina. Here we don’t have to take into account as in other crownlands only two languages but six, German, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Polish, and Hungarian. … If we concede this, the diversity of languages to be used by the administration is so great that a common language of mediation is indispensable.... German is the only language that can function as such.”

29 These reflections appeared in 1910, in an issue of a German-language periodical from Czernowitz. Naturally, the reader will conclude, only a German would take such pains to defend the German language! But the author was, in fact, a Romanian – and a nationalist at that. Aurel Onciul, leader of the Romanian Democratic Party in Bukovina, published this piece in _Die Wahrheit_ – a Romanian periodical written entirely in German. Why would any nationalist in his right mind write in a language other than his own? To find out, we will explore the empire’s second “problem” in Bukovina: nationalism.

In Habsburg history, nationalism has been both an obsession and phobia. For a long time, the field was dominated by scholarship that conflated the entirety of Habsburg history with the problem of nationalism. These older studies drew a straight line from inter-ethnic conflict and underdevelopment to imperial collapse, and the emergence of nation-states. Istvan Deak was one of the first historians to challenge this story in his book _Beyond Nationalism_, which examined the Habsburg Empire from the perspective of the army, a supranational institution that “succeeded in

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preserving the multinational monarchy without applying major force.”30 This was the starting point for a new wave of studies that looked “beyond nationalism,” to other topics like the monarchy and its ceremonies and rituals, the imperial state and loyalty to the state, education and middle-class values, gender issues, economics – things that were previously obscured by the obsessive preoccupation with national conflict.31 Other scholars returned to nationalism to examine it in the specific contexts of multinational cities, rural areas, and borderlands. Most studies of regionalism, national competition, and national indifference in the Habsburg Empire have centered on Bohemia and Moravia. The language barrier is most likely why no comparable studies of Bukovina exist. Once the nightmare of Austrian bureaucrats, Bukovina’s complicated “language question” is now the torment of historians. Aurel Onciul would appreciate the irony.

If we turn eastwards, several hundred kilometers in distance from Vienna, and add four extra languages to the mix, we see a story of continuities and points of intersection between empire and nationalism. From the vantage point of Austria’s most multilingual crownland, it becomes evident that both imperial and national projects revolved around the same problematic assumption: that unity – specifically, cultural unity – was a prerequisite to power, prosperity, progress, and legitimacy.32 Bukovina’s case also reveals that empire and nationalism were joined through common state institutions. Yet another point of convergence between empire and

nationalism was the borderland environment they sought to transform. The common challenge of managing a diversity of languages while building a unified culture prevented both imperial officials and nationalists from achieving their “mission,” while also keeping them from failing completely. In short, Bukovina’s case shows that nationalism and empire can be adequately understood only when we consider where they overlap.

The imperial world that nationalists in Bukovina inhabited not only shaped their values but also provided them with an institutional and legal foundation for their work. Even in contesting Kultur and building an alternative national consciousness, nationalist leaders worked within and through imperial structures. Imperial legislation, most importantly Article 19 of the fundamental laws of 1867, aided nationalists in their efforts to create national cultures. Article 19 stipulated that all “peoples in the state have equal rights and each one of them has the inviolable right to preserve and cultivate its nationality and language.” The second paragraph added that all customary [landesueblich] languages in the empire had the right to equal representation in school, offices, and public life. In provinces where multiple languages were spoken, public schools were to be organized so that children would not have to study a second local language [Landessprache]. But the law did not specify how exactly these national rights were to be put into practice. Without specific regulations, responsibility for the matter fell to the individual crownlands. In Bukovina, vague regulations of this sort were doomed to fail. Here, five different languages were recognized as customary: German, Polish, Ruthenian, Romanian, and Hungarian. Of them, German, Ruthenian, and Romanian also had the status of official local

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34 Hannelore Burger, Sprachenrecht und Sprachgerechtigkeit im Österreichischen Unterrichtswesen 1867-1918 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995), 37-38. This last provision had been especially included to spare German speakers in Bohemia and Moravia the trouble of studying Czech, but it ended up working to the advantage of non-German nationalities.
35 Gerald Stourzh, Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten, 61.
According to Article 19, all of these local languages were equal in status: children who spoke them had the right to study in their mother tongues in school, and civil servants were also expected to use all *Landessprachen*. But the number of polyglots who could master three or four different languages in speech and writing was small – and if they did exist, few of them pursued civil servant careers in Bukovina. To facilitate communication, the German language acquired the status of *lingua franca*, although this was never formalized.

Bukovina’s demographic and linguistic diversity made violations of Article 19 inevitable, but it also kept complaints within certain bounds. Such was the fate of many Romanian and Ruthenian petitions to the imperial court. Take the example of Ambros Comorosan’s “fight for our [Romanian] language.” A lawyer from Bukovina, Comorosan spent some years working in Dalmatia and Vienna. There, he “had the privilege to observe the beautiful battle, the most beautiful battle of Serbs and Italians for their people and language.”

By comparison, the Romanians seemed to cut a pitiful figure, as “deputies from Bukovina weren’t really interested in the language question.” Inspired by the Serbian and Czech battle for national rights, Comorosan decided to return home and embark on a fight of his own to save the honor of the Romanian language. In 1910, he launched a series of complaints that reached the ministry of justice and the *Reichsgericht*, lobbying on behalf of a Romanian who had petitioned the district court in Gurahumora in Romanian but then received a response in German. While the ministry of justice recognized that “the use of local languages in Bukovina’s courts” also applied to written communication, it noted that due to the province’s multilingualism the German language was customarily used instead—which meant official communication in German did not violate the law. In its note to the High Imperial Court, the ministry also pointed out that “nobody feels that

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37 Biblioteca Academiei Române, A218/2.
their language rights are hurt” since “the German language in Bukovina is not just a local language but a so-called language of mediation.” A change in the language situation, the ministry said, would be impossible given that “the Ruthenian, Romanian, Polish and German language would have to be introduced into state offices, which under the existing circumstances would be completely unthinkable.”

Ruthenian nationalists used the same channels to assert their own language rights and were similarly defeated – not by the oppressiveness of imperial laws but by their vagueness. When Sich, a Ruthenian nationalist association in Czernowitz, complained to the Reichsgericht that the provincial court had violated Ruthenian national rights by communicating the result of a trial in German, they were told that the incident could not be considered a violation as no system had yet been devised to implement Article 19 in such a diverse province. This was in 1912; Article 19 dated back to 1867.

Still, nationalism in Bukovina thrived on the vague laws through which the empire sought to manage difference. Nationalists put the ambiguities of Article 19 to the service of their cause. According to the principle of “Gleichberechtigung” (equal rights) they demanded that all local languages be included into the school curriculum as main languages of instruction for native speakers and obligatory disciplines for others. Nationalist leaders insisted that children receive as much of their primary school education as possible in their native languages and then continue studying in their mother tongues at the gymnasium level as well. Their reasons for this were not just ideological but also pragmatic: nationalists assumed that state-issued regulations would be more effective in fostering “language consciousness” among the population than their own cultural societies, literary journals, and popular press were. Faced with a population that was overwhelmingly ignorant and indifferent about its national and language rights, nationalist

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38 Biblioteca Academiei Române, A218/2.
intellectuals and politicians leveraged the state’s power to translate a “right” into an “obligation.” In 1878, Romanian and Ruthenian language teachers at the Greek-Oriental Oberrealschule in Czernowitz petitioned the provincial school councils to make classes in these languages compulsory for all “nationals” (Romanians and Ruthenians) and obligatory for at least one year for all non-nationals who chose to enroll in them. The provincial school laws of April 1869 had introduced optional classes in the Landessprachen into the curriculum of German-language Realschulen in Bukovina, but so few students were interested in them that the courses were dropped. This not only put the language teachers out of work, but also threw other parts of the curriculum into disarray. As one teacher observed, “the majority of Romanians and Ruthenians are so behind in their mother tongues that this causes them significant difficulties in religion classes.”40 National delegates, of course, also pressured the provincial diet to make instruction in the local languages at the middle school level obligatory for non-native speakers. This did not work so well, as Article 19 mandated that students in public schools should not be forced to learn a second local language.

Nationalists spoke not only a language of rights and citizenship, but also one of negotiation and persuasion. Rival nationalist camps like the Romanians and Ruthenians sought to leverage the empire’s power in their own favor and against their enemies. To achieve this they related their own interests and needs to the empire’s geopolitical problems. The magic word here was Russia. Imperial officials looked to the border with the Russian Empire with anxiety, watching out for “foreigners” and spies that might cross over unnoticed. The “mixed national character” of the province, as one of Bukovina’s governors once put it, exacerbated fears of anti-Austrian “agitation” and pro-Russian propaganda.41 Nationalists were only too aware of these

40 DACHO, fond 211, opis 1, delo 1504, November 1878, p 9.
41 OeStA, AVA, MdI Präsidiale, ZI 4616/1877.
fears and sought to turn them to their advantage. They competed to demonstrate their loyalty to the empire and took pains to prove that they were Austria’s most “natural ally,” and not their enemies. A Ruthenian-authored brochure from 1903 insisted that Austria benefitted the most from supporting Ruthenians in Bukovina because, unlike the Romanians, they had serious reasons to dislike Russia. As far as the Romanians were concerned, the booklet insisted that they were more dangerous than the Ruthenians because they had strong ties with the neighboring Romanian state that gave them money, positions, and a strong dose of hostility to Austria.42

Nationalist politicians sought to draw the imperial authorities to their side also in disputes with internal enemies. These squabbles made it all the way to Vienna. In one instance, the ministry of education was asked to interfere when a Ruthenian professor in the theological department of the university in Czernowitz who was the head of an examination commission was accused of behaving in a way that was “offensive not only to both candidates examined, but also to the entire Ukrainian nation.” Professor Kozak, the person in question, was well known for his Russophile affinities and hostility towards the language the petitioners called “Ukrainian” (rather than Ruthenian). Instead of examining Ruthenian students in either Romanian or Ruthenian, Kozak was apparently using “an incomprehensible” mix of church Slavonic and Russian in order to mystify the candidates. Even worse, the professor supposedly insulted the “Ukrainian language” by calling it “a Galician dialect that has to be eradicated.” The authors of the complaint, no doubt members of the Young Ruthenian party, described the incident as “a mean attack of a Russian professor against Ukrainian theologians” and appealed to the authorities in Vienna to punish Kozak for his anti-Ukrainianism.43 The Young Ruthenians made sure to use their ties with the government in instances like this, both to settle scores more effectively with

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42 Eine Kulturliga für die Bukowina: Offene Antwort auf die Rede des Dr. Popovici in der rumänischen Kulturliga in Bukarest (Czernowitz: Verlag von Romuald Schally, 1903).
43 DACHO, fond 3, opis 1, delo 11124, ark. 2, August 1911.
rivals and to assert their supremacy over other Ruthenian factions.

The principle of equal rights brought changes not only to the relationship between empire and individual Volksstämmen, but also between national groups that had never recognized each other as equals before.\textsuperscript{44} The idea of Gleichberechtigung was not to everyone’s advantage, especially not to those groups that had traditionally dominated others politically and economically. In Bukovina, Article 19 disturbed the traditional relationship between Romanians and Ruthenians. When the concept of national equality threatened to work against them, Romanian nationalist leaders reinterpreted it at their convenience. They made distinctions between “real equality” and “artificial equality,” appealing to the empire to do “historic justice” to their peoples by restoring their privileges over other groups. Imperial officials tried to enforce constitutional rights without revolutionizing local power structures so as not to upset elites whose support they needed. But this was a difficult balance to strike, and the awkwardness with which officials managed conflicting interests brought upon them everyone’s wrath. The Romanian-Ruthenian conflict over Bukovina’s Orthodox church best illustrates this dynamic. When they incorporated the province, the Austrian authorities created a separate Orthodox bishopric for Bukovina in Czernowitz. An imperial decree from August 1781 radically altered the organization of Bukovina’s Orthodox church. Fourteen monasteries were closed and the church’s money and land were secularized and integrated into a provincial “Greek-Oriental religious fund.” The fund was supposed to cover some of the costs of building and maintaining schools and also to pay for the education of future priests. Additionally, the Orthodox church and its religious fund were no longer Romanian institutions, as they had been under Moldavian rule.

\textsuperscript{44} Legally, the Austrian Empire never recognized the existence of “nationalities.” The fundamental laws of 21 December 1867 spoke of “Volksstämmen” only – broadly defined as “peoples.” Article 19 of the constitution defined the “equal rights of all Volksstämme” in the monarchy as a citizenship right of individuals, and not a collective right. See Emil Brix, \textit{Die Umgangssprachen}, 36.
but now jointly served the Romanian and Ruthenian communities. A law from 1869 introduced
Ruthenian as a second official language of the consistory. The multinational character of the
church was further consolidated in January 1873, when the Greek-Oriental diocese in Bukovina
became the archdiocese and metropolitanate for Bukovina and Dalmatia.\textsuperscript{45} Romanian church
elites and nationalists alike resented the empire’s intervention into affairs that, in their opinion,
concerned them only and the Ruthenians. Ruthenians, on the other hand, welcomed the presence
of a third party that could help them achieve power in the church administration.

From the 1880s to 1913, when the church conflict reached its peak, both sides flooded the
provincial government and central authorities with petitions, lamentations, and memoranda. In
May 1881, the Ruthenian nationalist society \textit{Rus’ka Rada} complained to the provincial
government that Ruthenian parishes were staffed with Romanian priests who could not speak the
language and had been “busying themselves with the de-nationalization of Ruthenian believers
for many years.”\textsuperscript{46} In 1898, the Young Ruthenian delegate in the provincial diet Hieroteus
Pihuliak protested in a popular meeting that because of the Romanian hegemony over the
Orthodox church, the Ruthenian people were losing their national consciousness: “it is self-
understood that these priests do their best to present the Ruthenian intelligentsia, who want to
show the people the path to salvation, in the worst light.” Pihuliak proposed that the Ruthenians
“send delegates to the Kaiser and ask that the Bukovina orthodox diocese be divided into two.”\textsuperscript{47}
In response, a group of Romanian priests sent a memorandum to the provincial governor in 1899,
denouncing the Ruthenian petition as “nothing but tendentious politics.”\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Erich Prokopowitsch, \textit{Die Rumänische Nationalbewegung in der Bukowina und der Dako-Romanismus. Ein
Beitrag zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenkampfes in Österreich-Ungarn} (Graz/Köln: Verlag Hermann Böhlau,
1965), 75-86.
\textsuperscript{46} DACHO, fond 3, op 1, delo 4533, May 1881.
\textsuperscript{47} SANIC (Serviciul Arhive Naționale Istorice Centrale), Fond Iancu Flondor 9, May 1898, 7.
\textsuperscript{48} SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor 9, 18/30 October 1899, 12.
declared that they favored absolute equality between Romanians and Ruthenians, but only as long as “this equality is a real one, and not a so-called equalizing justice, through which an artificial and mechanical balance should be created between the two nationalities.” After the Ruthenians had gone to see the Emperor, the Romanians went too. In 1911, the “Greek-Oriental Romanians in Bukovina” appealed to the Emperor for protection against the Ruthenian assault on the “historical continuity of the church and its national Romanian character.” The Ruthenians continued to push for the separation of the church into two independent dioceses with separate consistories, both with the seat in Czernowitz and equal claims on the religious fund. “In our time we had to make great sacrifices as far as the historical character of our church is concerned for the sake of constitutional rights and peace within the church,” the Romanian note to the Emperor read. The petitioners insisted that the Romanians keep the archdiocese in Czernowitz and the religious fund, which they viewed as exclusively Romanian property. They called for a division of the church by national cadastre rather than territory, fearing that in mixed areas the Ruthenians “would assimilate Romanian minorities.”

The imperial authorities called upon to solve the church question were not indifferent to the “complications” that a poor solution to the conflict might create “given the border position of the crownland.” They especially feared that their decision might worsen the conflict between the two groups, making both sides more receptive to Russophile propaganda. In order to pacify the Ruthenians and bring the church closer to the ideal of national equality, Bukovina’s governor Rudolf von Meran recommended placing a Ruthenian, Artemon Manastyrski, in the position of archimandrite. Although there were clear advantages to dividing the church along national lies,

49 Ibid.
50 SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor 9, 4/17 July 1911, 17.
51 Ibid.
52 SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor 9, “Chestia delimitării dioceselor naționale Greco-orientale din Bucovina,” Constantin Hormuzachi. Also SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIII/26, 2.
Meran observed that this was impossible to do without upsetting either side. The ministry’s decision to name a Ruthenian without consulting the archbishop and consistorium proved explosive. In a succession of demonstrations throughout October 1913, Romanian priests and nationalist leaders in Czernowitz protested that Manastyrski’s naming violated the “historic development of the Greek-Oriental church in Bukovina.” At one of these meetings, the archbishop Vladimir von Repta described the ministry’s decision as a violation of the principle of equal rights. “There is no mention of nationality,” he argued, “either in the religious regulation plan or in the internal regulations of the consistory. The regulations demand only that members of the consistory can speak both languages.” The Ruthenian priests, of course, welcomed the decision and made no secret of their satisfaction. They also took to the streets, this time to thank the Emperor for Manastyrski’s appointment and request that Bukovina’s archdiocese be divided in “the interest of peace keeping” between the two nationalities. The conflict escalated as a result of their demonstrations. Romanian delegates in the provincial parliament organized a meeting of their own, declaring that Manastyrski’s naming "makes it impossible for both nationalities to live in peace in the same church." A few days later, a group of Ruthenian delegates convened to complain about the “unjust, violent thirty-three-year-old rule of the Romanian minority and its exploitation of Ruthenian believers.” Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for the imperial officials who were caught in the middle of this, World War I broke out before the church question could be resolved.

Both Austria’s Kulturmission in Bukovina and the various nationalist projects that

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53 SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor 9, XXXII/21 and XXXII/24.
54 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXII/22, October 1913, 3-4.
55 Ibid., 5.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 2.
58 Ibid., XXXII/18, January 1913, 1-2.
unfolded here rested on the assumption that language, in its pure form, had the power to bridge differences and transform consciousness. These assumptions collided head-on with the language practices of a province commonly described as a “tower of Babel.” The German language of Kultur, instead of subsuming and civilizing Bukovina’s culturally “inferior” languages, began to resemble the dialects it was supposed to transcend. Instead of one German, there emerged multiple Germans with syntax and expressions borrowed from other local languages. The mixed-language school system indirectly contributed to this language osmosis. Although imperial school laws explicitly favored schools with one language of instruction, a great number of them were multilingual in practice. One reason for this was that Bukovina’s different language groups were not neatly distributed across territory. Another was lack of space and money.59 As late as 1909, a school inspector reported that in some Polish communities, teachers “have to present each explanation, indeed each sentence in three different languages.”60 The result was that many students spoke a mix of languages. A school inspector reported in 1911 that students at a state gymnasium in Czernowitz spoke German with “mistakes that don’t appear in the great German language area,” and that “due to the particular conditions of the province, pronunciation in Romanian is also not impeccable.”61

The national, monolingual model of education proved just as difficult to implement as that of a German-mediated Bildung. First of all, the idea did not appeal to everyone. Its most vocal opponents were not imperial officials or ethnic Germans but Czernowitz’s Jews.

59 “Massgebende Grundsätze über die Frage der Minoritätsschulen und sonstigen sprachlichen Berücksichtigung sprachlicher Minderheiten in den Volksschulen,” Pädagogische Blätter, 25 June 1899. In 1884/5, fifteen primary schools in Bukovina were using four different languages of instruction, while an additional 68 were mixed-language institutions.
60 DACHO, fond 211, op. 1, d. 10349, l. 6, 1909. In many cases, the only way to separate children by language was to teach them in shifts. This method had a major drawback: it shortened the amount of time that students spent in school. In wintertime, Polish-speaking students at a school in Waskoutz had to go home after only two hours of class because it was too dark to continue classes later in the afternoon.
61 DACHO, fond 211, op. 1, d. 11221, 10 January 1911.
Assimilated Jews in Bukovina’s capital and other urban centers constituted the majority of German speakers in the province and were invested in keeping the German language in a dominant position in public life. Their large representation in administrative bodies allowed Czernowitz’s Jews to keep German the main language of instruction in the city’s public schools long after the rest of the province had introduced instruction in the national languages into the primary school curriculum. In 1897, when the provincial school council considered separating Czernowitz’s schools by language, the municipal council rejected the proposal. The council agreed to introduce Romanian instruction into suburban schools where “the non-Romanian elements of the population are only weakly represented.” But when the city was concerned, the council argued that “the differentiation of city schools by language and their re-establishment as purely national schools is frowned upon by the community.” In the rest of the province, the language segregation process began in 1898-9, when first- and second-grade students were divided into separate groups by mother tongue. But even here, the difficulties often proved insurmountable. Several primary schools in Czernowitz’s suburbs were forced to group students in the lower grades into bilingual classes because of the disparity in the numbers of speakers of different languages. In other cases, the language separation could not occur due to lack of space, and so schools had to revert to the bilingual model. The other major obstacle was that the students’ mother tongues were not always the languages they spoke best. One primary school reported that some of its Greek-Catholic or Greek-Orthodox students “can only speak German, and must therefore be enrolled in a German section.”

An even greater obstacle was the population’s “utter lack of language consciousness” – a

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62 DACHO, fond 211, op. 2, d. 704, 8 October 1897.
63 In third grade, students were grouped into bilingual sections (German-Polish, German-Ruthenian, German-Romanian, etc) only to be reunited in fourth grade in classes where all the teaching was carried out in German.
64 DACHO, fond 211, op. 2, d. 743, II 1-2, 20 September 1898.
trait the liberal German-language press criticized as well. Nationalists blamed it on fellow intellectuals who sold their souls to the German language. “The entire Romanian intelligentsia which calls itself the flower of the nation,” the Junimea complained in 1908, “is suffused with cosmopolitanism and places no value on the Romanian language.”

The situation also appalled nationalist circles across the border in the neighboring Romanian state. In 1908, a school principal affiliated with the nationalist organization Liga Culturală [The Cultural League] wrote that in Bukovina there were “many cultured Romanians who can’t speak Romanian at all.” “Unfortunately,” he noted, “it’s very true that in the bosom of their own families many Romanians from the educated strata speak only German and this sickness is spreading increasingly.”

For the urban, educated strata of all nationalities, there were many incentives to speak German well. Fluency in the German language guaranteed better career prospects as well as social and economic mobility. Except for a few radicals, even Romanian and Ruthenian teachers who pushed for parallel classes in the national languages at the Czernowitz gymnasia favored including as many hours of German instruction as necessary to prepare students to compete with native speakers.

Nationalists hoped to find national consciousness and language purity among the peasants. But the peasants too disappointed them. Nationalist publications openly admitted that peasants had no qualms about speaking the language of their so-called ‘national adversaries.’

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66 A new cultural unity movement had emerged here under the aegis of an organization entitled Liga Culturală [The Cultural League], presided by the nationalist historian Nicolae Iorga. Members of the Liga wrote pamphlets, gave speeches, and distributed nationalist propaganda across the borders, into foreign territories inhabited by Romanians.
68 Before the Obergymnasium in Czernowitz opened parallel classes in Romanian in 1898, the faculty convened to discuss how much German students enrolled in these classes should learn. One Romanian teacher argued for a curriculum that included enough hours of German instruction to prepare Romanian students well for the upper grades, where all classes were conducted in German; otherwise, he feared, students would not be able to compete with German speakers. Other teachers insisted that the parallel classes should work as a self-sufficient institution and not merely as preparation for instruction in German in the upper grades and at the university. DACHO, fond 211, op. 1, d. 4326.
“Among the many bad habits from which our villagers suffer,” one Romanian journal scolded, “is also the bad habit of speaking German or Russian when they happen to meet a stranger. These villagers don’t love their language at all, the language in which every Romanian should take pride because it is one of the most beautiful and sweetest on the surface of the whole earth.”

The author urged readers to use the imperial laws that gave them the right to speak and write only in their mother tongue: “Always speak Romanian in church, school, in the meetings of communal committees, of village banks and in reading cabinets! Beware of other foreign languages as of fire, with them you will only make fools of yourselves!”

On the other hand, Romanian nationalist publications also tried to put a positive spin on the multilingualism of Romanians in Bukovina, attributing it to their higher intelligence and “talent” for languages. A German-language pamphlet from 1900 “by a Bukovina Romanian” said that Romanian peasants learned Ruthenian very easily due to a “marked love of foreign languages and talent for languages.” As a result, the author noted, in “mixed-language communities there are Romanian peasants who (…) after learning Ruthenian neglected Romanian so much that they can barely speak it now.”

Since many peasants were bilingual, both Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists could reclaim them. Nationalists fought over children to put in their schools and parallel classes and, when the numbers were too low, accused each other of de-nationalizing the population by forcibly enrolling them in a language group to which they did not belong.

In Bukovina, nationalists therefore spent as much time - if not more - criticizing the so-

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69 “Vorbiți și scrieți Românește!,” Deșteptarea, 1 January 1908, 49.
70 Ibid.
72 A scandal broke out in 1908, when the Romanian delegate in the provincial diet Florea Lupu complained that the school administration in Ceahor shifted students around to inflate enrollments for the Ruthenian section. A commission went to Ceahor to look into the matter and the issue was settled in the Ruthenians’ favor because many students could indeed speak Ruthenian. Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtages (Czernowitz: Eckhardt, 1908), 30 October 1908, III Sitzung, IV Session, X Wahlperiode.
called “nationals” they claimed to represent as they did condemning the government and “foreigners.” To shake the population out of their passivity, nationalist leaders pointed to adversaries as models of success. Aurel Onciul’s Voința Poporului [The People’s Will] berated Romanians in Bukovina with abandon. It accused Romanian parents of raising their children to be slaves to foreign cultures and servants to any government. It chastised students for their pessimism and lethargy: “their servility towards authority, cultivated especially in foreign schools until recently, is now in their blood, and this servility together with the peel of foreign culture has turned the tender Romanian’s heart into a weak, hesitant being who wants nothing and obeys everyone.”73 Voința Poporului had no misgivings about offending its readers. “While the children of Romanian functionaries (…) become first-class cosmopolitans,” one article raged, “the children of suburban and lower strata remain an illiterate mass exposed to every kind of influence.”74 It is unsurprising that few readers were willing to subscribe to journals that insulted them on a regular basis. The nationalist press in Bukovina struggled to keep itself financially afloat. The Christian German newspaper Bukowinaer Volksblatt barely got by, as did the Romanian Freie Lehrerzeitung, which had to close down in 1912 due “the indolence” of readers unwilling to pay for their subscriptions.75 The major Ruthenian newspaper Bukowyna continued to exist largely thanks to the subsidies provided by a nationalist organization. The liberal Jewish press, on the other hand, thrived. As one Romanian newspaper lamented, “Jewish newspapers without principles appear every day in large format and have their own printing presses, while we remain a poor party paper.”76

Nationalist diatribes against rootless Jews and Austrian Beamten obscured the fact that, in

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73 “Cu încredere înainte,” Voinţa Poporului, 13 January 1907, 6.
74 “Chestii școlare,” Voinţa Poporului, 4 October 1908, 2.
an age of empire and globalization, mobility and multilingualism were much more common among the poorer, less educated members of the population. Multilingualism and cosmopolitanism in the region are still viewed as the preserve of Jewish outsiders – the “strangers” who moved between borders, feeling at home everywhere and nowhere – or highly educated intellectuals who spoke multiple languages and embraced liberal and progressive values. In turn-of-the-century Bukovina, Ruthenian and Romanian peasants were in fact more mobile than the urban Jewish population. They regularly crossed Bukovina’s borders to look for seasonal labor in neighboring Romania, while many left their homes for good and emigrated overseas. They did not see a virtue in mobility: one moved around not because it was liberating and fashionable to do so, but because one could not afford to stay put. That and not so much the proverbial rootlessness of Jews was a source of anti-Semitic conflict in Bukovina at this time. Multilingualism was also more common among non-native German speakers, particularly in ethnically mixed areas, than among German-speaking Jews and Austrian officials.

The “cosmopolitan people for whom the fatherland is wherever it is good to live,” as the Romanian poet and nationalist Mihai Eminescu once described the Austrian administration, were in fact more deeply rooted in one language and culture than a great deal of Bukovina’s rural population. Nationalist politicians and delegates were the first to admit this. Along with the inadequacies of the school system, the language incompetence of Bukovina’s Austrian civil servants was a favorite topic of debate in the provincial diet. In a 1902 session, the Ruthenian delegate Nikolai von Wassilko described Bukovina’s situation as “perhaps the worst in all of Austria as far as the language education of officials is concerned.” Wassilko protested that civil

78 Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtages (Czernowitz: Eckhardt, 1902), 23 July 1902, IX Sitzung, 432.
servants who were legally obligated to have language qualifications were hired on the basis of vague promises that they would learn the local languages on the job. Even vague statements like “we had a cook at home and the two of us spoke in the local language” would do, apparently.\textsuperscript{79} Nationalists blamed the situation on the empire’s indifference towards Bukovina’s non-German speakers. The central authorities, eager to muffle these complaints, pressured the provincial government to enforce language regulations when hiring officials and civil servants. In 1911, Bukovina’s delegates in the imperial parliament passed a resolution demanding that only individuals “who in addition to German, are perfectly competent also in Ruthenian and Romanian respectively, in speaking and writing” should take civil servant positions in the province. The governor protested in a letter to the ministry of interior that the lack of “suitable candidates for the office of administration forces me to name young people from other crown lands” who “of course have difficulties picking up the Landessprachen, which are completely foreign to them.”\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, he noted that even those qualified candidates “born in the province and raised here only rarely master another language other than German in writing and speaking.”\textsuperscript{81}

In short, higher education and status did not necessarily go hand in hand with multilingualism and cosmopolitanism. Locals who were qualified enough to take up civil servant positions in Bukovina also tended to give in to the temptations of “the foreign.” As for the German-speakers who occupied positions in Bukovina’s administration and military, they had few incentives to study the local languages since they could get by perfectly well by speaking only German. On several occasions, military officers stationed in Czernowitz complained to the

\textsuperscript{79} Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtages (Czernowitz: Eckhardt, 1902), 26 July 1902, IX Sitzung, 429.
\textsuperscript{80} DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 11325, 13, 1913.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
Greek-Oriental metropolitan Vladimir Repta that it was impossible to learn Romanian in a city
where there were so few Romanians and everyone spoke German anyway. In 1913, Repta put
the Greek-Oriental residence building at the military’s disposal for a three-month-long language
class for officers. The ministry of war declined the offer, noting that officers did not require
“grammar classes” but needed only “practical language” skills. Learning the local languages,
with or without grammar, was more trouble than it was worth for many German-speaking civil
servants. On settling in Bukovina, few of them enrolled their children in optional classes in the
Landessprachen. Many felt that Romanian and Ruthenian were not worth the effort because they
were culturally inferior. German-speaking officials often demanded exemptions from
Landessprachen classes for their children, for reasons ranging from ill health to poverty and
intellectual exhaustion. One petitioner mentioned, among other things, that “both languages [are]
poor in literature, [and] don’t reward the effort of learning them.” Another one remarked that his
child, who had to study Greek, Latin, German, French, and Romanian or Ruthenian at his
gymnasium in Czernowitz, couldn’t put the time to better use, to amass “more important and
useful knowledge.” Functionaries and military personnel demanded these exemptions also
because they did not plan to settle in Bukovina permanently. Mobility, like education, did not
necessarily translate into multilingualism. People on the move did not see the point of learning
additional languages they would likely never use again.

The non-national loyalties that emerged in Bukovina under imperial rule placed greater
obstacles in the nationalists’ path than the imperial officials nationalists berated. “No matter what
their origin may be,” a Romanian professor in Czernowitz explained in a public lecture in 1884,

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82 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 11744, l. 13, 30 July 1913.
83 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 11744, l. 15, 11 October 1913.
84 DACHO, fond 211, op. 2, d. 1131, l. 2.
“if people speak the same language they feel and consider themselves to be like brothers.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. Contrary to what nationalists assumed, individuals did not naturally coalesce into unitary national communities, nor did their allegiances to language always take precedence over other forms of belonging. Individuals had interests that cut across language, religion, and “nationality” – and often these interests came first. Take the example of Professor Vladimir Milkowicz, a native speaker of Ruthenian who taught East European history at the university in Czernowitz. In response to a Romanian petition for a separate chair in Romanian history, in 1910 the ministry of education decided to split the East European position into two separate chairs, one focusing on Romanian and the other on Ruthenian history. Like the nationalists who protested that Romanian history could only be taught by a Romanian, the ministry too assumed that Milkowicz could and would take over the new Ruthenian history chair as a native Ruthenian speaker. To everyone’s surprise, Milkowicz refused the position. In a letter to the ministry, the exasperated professor enumerated all the fields in which he had once specialized but then had to drop due to lack of materials or for political reasons: Byzantine history, Polish history, Romanian history. Milkowicz categorically refused to now habilitate himself in Ruthenian history on the grounds that “constant change of fields is deadly to the scholarly work of a professor.” Profession trumped nationality and language not only in this one case.

The conflict between teachers on the one hand and priests and peasants on the other was another instance where professional status outweighed national allegiance. In Bukovina as elsewhere in the empire, the Reichsvolksschulgesetz of 1869 stimulated the development of a

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85 Ion al lui G. Sbiera, “Puterea graiului național,” în Prelegeri Publice Poporale ținute în erna 1883/84 de cătră Membrii Soțietății pentru cultura și literatura română în Bucovina. (Cernăuți: Tipografia Archiepiscopala, 1884), 16.

86 DAChO, fond 3, op. 2, d. 21466, 172, 1909.
secular, supraconfessional primary school system. By divorcing schools from the church, the law also created a need for new teachers who could educate students of different nationalities and religions according to standardized curricula. In 1870-1872, a new pedagogical institute for male and the female teachers was founded in Czernowitz to prepare young men and women for teaching positions in the province’s rapidly expanding school system. On graduating, many young teachers took positions in village schools. Peasants welcomed teachers with distrust and hostility – or, in the case of one teacher in the village of Woloka near Czernowitz, with a hail of stones. Peasants thought they had nothing to learn from teachers – except, perhaps, “twirling the walking stick and wearing glasses on one’s nose,” as one teacher put it. Teachers found themselves caught in between the modernizing state and peasant society. Peasants perceived them as agents of the state, enforcers of the much-hated Schulzwang that punished parents with fines and imprisonment if they refused to send their children to school regularly. But the state did not go out of its way to support teachers either. Not only did it underpay them, but it also denied them the protection and status of a civil servant rank. The teachers also clashed with traditional intellectual elites: the village priests. “Peasants will always listen to the priest and look upon the schools with hatred” – one teacher pessimistically concluded in 1899. Teachers called priests “bloodsuckers” and “apostles of stupidity” and accused them of keeping peasants backward and poor in order to fatten their own wallets.

In addition to conflicts of interest between different professional and socio-economic groups, there were also antagonisms between old and new political elites in the province. These divisions overlapped at points, pushing national frictions into the background of Bukovina’s political life. In January 1901, a new journal titled Die Freie Lehrer-Zeitung appeared in Czernowitz. The first issue appealed to all teachers in Bukovina to set national animosities aside

87 “De ce țăranul privește școala cu dispreț?,” Pädagogische Blätter, 10 April 1899.
and join hands in fighting for their rights: “our national feeling is a private matter of the individual that has nothing to do with the pure school and teacher interests we share.” In August 1901, more than 800 teachers convened in Czernowitz. The future anti-Semite Mihai Chisanovici and the Jewish teacher Kalman Dubensky, standing side by side, urged teachers to put social and economic justice before nationalism. Dubensky argued that “every teacher in Bukovina must have the conviction that he is first of all a teacher and only then a Romanian, Ruthenian, Pole, or German.” Chisanovici’s enthusiasm for the teacher’s cause even got him, the future radical nationalist, suspended from his job and accused of “anarchism” and “socialism.” The gathering presented a memorandum to the provincial government and diet – a long list of complaints about the many ways in which teachers’ rights were being violated in Bukovina. “Around the same time, a “progressive club” emerged in the provincial diet in opposition to older national parties and conservative elites. The so-called Freisinniger Club consisted of Nikolai von Wassilko’s Ruthenian party, the Romanian national democrats under Aurel Onciul, the national Jewish party under Benno Straucher, and the Armeno-Polish alliance led by Stefan Stefanowicz. The progressive coalition did not reject nationalism altogether but put national conflicts on hold in order to implement socio-economic and political reforms that all nationalist leaders of the young generation deemed necessary. The Freisinnige relied on the support of the teachers and championed their cause. After their electoral success in 1904, the “progressives” passed a bill to improve teacher salaries. The West watched open-mouthed as the “most forgotten crownland of the monarchy” became “the most progressive crownland” as far as

89 “Kosmopolitismus?,” Freie Lehrer-Zeitung, 15 September 1901, 2.
90 SANIC, Fond Ianuc Flonor 2, August 1901.
teachers’ rights were concerned.92

The teachers’ movement and the progressive alliance disintegrated once they achieved their objectives, and national antagonisms returned to the foreground. The national always returned, but so did the fractures within national communities. Fragmentation and disunity were common even among those who consciously embraced the national cause. Every nationalist camp suffered from this—and every single one fancied itself exceptional in its disunity. Having one Romanian national party in Bukovina instead of at least two clashing parties was rare. This happened only once, in fact, in 1908 when a united Romanian party emerged under Iancu Flondor’s leadership. Both before and after this point, Romanian politicians in Bukovina were divided into factions: one revolving around Aurel Onciul’s democratic party, another around Iancu Flondor, George Popovici, the landowner elites, and later a radical faction headed by Dorimedont Popovici. Flondor’s Deșteptarea battled the Lehrerzeitung, now a mouthpiece of Onciul’s party; Popovici’s Apararea Nationala [The National Defense] waged war on Voința Poporului and vice versa.93 In August 1908, Onciul’s publication Voința Poporului announced that “there used to be democrats and today they are no more, instead of them there is the Romanian Christian-Social party. (…) Everything that led to suspicion and disunity is avoided and today’s press is conciliatory and objective.”94 But this was a premature conclusion. In 1910, Flondor withdrew from the party. “Discord and the fight between brothers,” he wrote to Onciul, “caused our nation in Bukovina many painful losses over the past decade, completely consuming the strength of Romanians and their resistance against de-nationalization, [and they] nestle once

94 “Adunarea Apărăriștilor și uneltirile trădătoare de neam ale deputatului Tâchiță Isopescul,” Voința Poporului, 2 August 1908, 1.
again within our nation.”95 The Lehrerzeitung resumed its war on the priests, lamenting the “unique curse” that doomed Romanians in Bukovina to “devour each other. One barely manages to create some unity among them and immediately there emerges a new faction.”96

German and Jewish politicians too suffered from the “unique curse” of factionalism. Conflicting views on German-Jewish relations in Bukovina broke both nationalist camps into factions. Traditionally, Bukovina’s German and Jewish national parties had formed electoral alliances and collaborated in the diet to keep the German language in a dominant position. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, both sides were becoming increasingly uncertain about this alliance. In 1897, a group of Germans affiliated with the German Christian Social organization in Bukovina split with the Progressive German Party. To the Progressives’ secular program, Christian Socials opposed a concept of German nationhood that revolved around religion rather than language. If religion superseded language, so the Christian Socials reasoned, then it was no longer necessary to accommodate the Jews. Anti-Semitism, another central component of the Christian Social program, fed on and reinforced this conception of German nationhood. These views put German Christian Socials on the same side of the barricade as non-German nationalists. Christian Socials accused progressives of betraying the German nation, especially after the municipal council in Czernowitz, where Germans from the progressive party were well represented, granted Romanians, Ruthenians, and Poles independent schools but refused to open separate schools for ethnic Germans.97 Not even the festive opening of a German national house in Czernowitz in June 1910 could mask the antagonism between the two German factions. Shortly before the event, the Volksblatt declared that Christian Social Germans would

95 SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor 11, 7 November 1910.
97 “Schul und Lehrerfragen,” Bukowinaer Volksblatt, 20 August 1911, 1.
not participate “if the Jews too are welcome in the German house.”\textsuperscript{98} The battle took other forms. In November 1910, members of several \textit{Burschenschaften} in Czernowitz bombarded with eggs Catholic German students during a public procession of the Catholic association Frankonia in Czernowitz.\textsuperscript{99} Students who sympathized with the German national party felt threatened by the foreign Catholic students who participated in the procession alongside Catholic German students from Bukovina.\textsuperscript{100} The Christian Social organization in Czernowitz complained directly to the ministry of education about the “un-German behavior of German national students” and their violation of academic freedoms.\textsuperscript{101}

Similar conflicts divided the Jewish community. The electoral law of 1907, which introduced universal suffrage to the Austrian half of the empire, exacerbated divisions within the Jewish community and pushed the ideal of national unity into the background. New national leaders entered the political arena, turning former progressives into conservative elites. In 1910, the Zionist Leon Kellner, a professor of English literature at the university in Czernowitz, founded a new Jewish party. Its main target was Benno Straucher, the most prominent Jewish politician in Bukovina, head of the Jewish \textit{Kultusgemeinde} and representative of Czernowitz in the provincial diet. Straucher rose up to the challenge and attacked Kellner in return. Kellner’s \textit{Volksrat} and Straucher’s \textit{Volkswehr}, the main publications of the rival factions, turned into

\textsuperscript{99} The Franz Joseph University in Czernowitz had traditional dueling student societies on the German model – with the crucial difference that most of them were actually not German. There were two German national fraternities (Arminia and Teutonia). The most numerous \textit{Burschenschaften} were Romanian (Arboroaia, Junimea, Bucovina, Academia ortodoxa, Dacia, Moldova); Catholic German (Frankonia); Ukrainian (Sojuz, Zaporozhe, Czornomore); Polish (Ognisko, Lechia); Jewish (Hasmonea, Zephira, Hebronia, Humanitas, Emunah, Heatid); and there were also several supranational ones (Austria, Lesehalle, Gothia, Alemannia). Hans Prelitsch, a former member of a \textit{Burschenschaft} in Czernowitz, writes that “the so-called ‘Germanic romance’ of student life” united students of different nationalities and religions. In this, Prelitsch sees evidence that Bukoviners were “the first Europeans,” mastering the “art” of co-habitation long before this became a “measure of European maturity.” Hans Prelitsch, \textit{Student in Czernowitz: Die Korporationen an der Czernowitzer Universität} (München: Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen, 1961), 8.
\textsuperscript{100} DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 10925.
\textsuperscript{101} DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 10959, l 4, 4 December 1910.
battlefields. Kellner’s party organized public meetings to protest the corruption within the Kultusgemeinde caused by Straucher’s “clique economy” and monopoly on politics. As an antidote to this, Kellner proposed free and direct elections to the Kultusgemeinde and a new national program that prioritized religious and social education for “the people.” Kellner’s party quickly rose in popularity and drew over to its side even some of Straucher’s party colleagues. Like Flondor, who resigned from the “united” Romanian party in 1910 convinced of its impending dissolution, Straucher too had to resign from the National Jewish Party because of “oppositional parties” that “shattered the healthy spirit of the overwhelming majority of Jews in the province.” In his letter of resignation, Straucher wrote about the “lack of a Jewish popular, national consciousness and feeling of belonging together” among Bukovina’s Jews. This was, in his opinion, because of the “heterogeneous composition [of Bukovina Jews], made up of national and assimilatory elements, and representatives of the most varied occupational and interest groups and social strata.”

Divisions at home made grandiose dreams of national unity across frontiers all the more alluring. Unable to keep national communities in Bukovina from falling apart, nationalist leaders looked beyond the province’s borders for salvation. German progressives hung Bismarck’s portrait on the walls of the Deutsches Haus; Christian Germans dreamed of an all-Catholic Austrian Empire; Old Ruthenians looked to Russia; Young Ruthenian nationalists put their hopes in Galicia; Jewish nationalists dreamed of Palestine; and Romanian nationalists made pilgrimages across the border into the neighboring Old Kingdom. Dreams of unity between

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102 DAChO, fond 10, op. 1, d. 974, I 42, April 1913.
104 Ibid., 7-9.
105 This was the first Romanian nation-state, which consisted of the principalities of Moldova and Wallachia, unified in 1856 under Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza while they were still under Ottoman suzerainty. The term is used to distinguish this state from Greater Romania, which emerged after World War I when the Old Kingdom annexed incorporated territories.
co-nationals across frontiers were appealing in part because they remained but a distant possibility. Leon Kellner, a man who described himself as a “Zionist body and soul,” participated in Herzl’s congresses, traveled to Palestine, and “sacrificed much money and time” to the Zionist cause. But even he envisioned Palestine only as a place of hope and refuge for the future, not necessarily an option for the immediate present. Through his work, Kellner hoped to “lay the foundations in the present for an edifice that in the distant future will perhaps be spacious enough to protect our great-grandchildren from storms and bad weather.”

“The Jewish home is first of all in ourselves, in our souls, in our hearts,” he once wrote. The inner, Jewish home and dreams of a distant future in Palestine did not keep Kellner and other Zionists in Bukovina from imagining themselves as good Austrians and Germans at the same time. Leon Kellner considered himself “a good Austrian in every respect, ready to share happiness and sadness with the fatherland,” while also feeling “completely German: the German language has become my second fatherland, my spiritual home.”

Unable to form a unitary party in Bukovina, Romanian nationalists looked longingly across the province’s borders. The proximity of a young Romanian state that took an active interest in co-nationals abroad, offering them material and cultural support, gave Romanian nationalists in Bukovina advantages over the Ruthenians and the Jews, who did not have a state of their own. But even this link did not solve the fundamental problem: speakers of the same language did not naturally form unitary communities. Dreams of national brotherhood and salvation burst when Romanians from Bukovina encountered co-nationals from neighboring provinces and states. To encourage these encounters, the historian Nicolae Iorga started teaching

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summer classes in Romanian history and literature beginning with 1908 in Valenii de Munte, in Romania. The purpose of these classes was to foster a sense of shared history and culture among Romanians from the Old Kingdom and neighboring territories belonging to different states. The classes attracted very few Romanians from Bukovina, and even the few enthusiasts who participated returned home disappointed. The poet Gavril Rotica, one of ten Romanians from Bukovina who attended the classes in 1908, was “hurt by the very reserved, glacial attitude of our brothers from Ardeal towards Bukoviners.” Even Iorga, the apostle of national brotherhood, was not above prejudice against the Bukovina Romanians. During his travels through Bukovina, Iorga had found that Romanians there felt nothing but scorn for Romania, a country they held to be backward and primitive: “I never saw anyone’s face light up when they hear the words ‘from Romania’ (…). Here, on the contrary, even the best of us have to carry our origin from Romania as a stain.” Iorga also observed that Romanians here could no longer be distinguished from other nationalities. Not only did they look and behave like Austrian functionaries, but they also spoke Romanian “only when they don’t want others to understand them.” Even in the villages, Iorga encountered Romanians who spoke Russian and dreamed of the “good and faithful Tsar” who ruled just across the border, “giving people big stretches of land.”

All the bad things Bukovina stood for – estranged cities and amnesic villages, national renegades ashamed of their origins – supplied the nationalist mythology of the young Romanian nation-state with excellent material. The alienated periphery provided Romania with a mission:

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110 Junimea Literara, July-August 1918, 195.
111 Nicolae Iorga, Neamul Românesc din Bucovina (București: Editura Institutului de Arte Grafice Minerva, 1905), 58.
112 Ibid., 216.
113 Ibid., 75.
to reconstruct a glorious past that had supposedly vanished, to recover all its lost children, and to keep national consciousness at the frontiers of Romanian civilization from going extinct.

Nationalist intellectuals in the Old Kingdom made Bukovina the center of a network of events, characters, and places that challenged imperial narratives. Four years before the anniversary of Bukovina’s centennial under Austrian rule, in 1871, the Romanian academic society Romania Juna in Vienna invited Romanians in Bukovina and beyond to commemorate 400 years since the foundation of Putna monastery by the Moldavian prince Stephen the Great. “In this place,” the Bucharest newspaper Romanul wrote on the eve of the celebrations, “in this wonderful, charming place, where each hill has a legend and a Doina sighs in every river; where every corner is bound with memories of past deeds: in this place the university youth is celebrating the memory of Stephen the Great, the builder of the monastery Putna and a founder of our people.”

The Romanian nationalist counter-narrative to imperial histories of Bukovina continued to develop and resurface. Years later, a visit to Putna threw even the disenchanted Nicolae Iorga into ecstasy: “Here in the night that serves him as a shroud, he was with us, Stephen, our Stephen, the voivode, our just emperor, it is him and not ‘Francis Joseph The First.’” Romanian nationalists constructed an alternative timeline and geography for Bukovina, linking it to Moldova and Jassy rather than Galicia and Lemberg and Vienna. As a replica to Bukovina’s imperial jubilee in 1875, the Moldavian city Jassy commemorated in 1877 one hundred years since the death of Grigore Ghica Voda, the prince who ruled the Moldavian principality when the Habsburg Empire annexed its northern part (later to become Bukovina) in 1775. Anxious to nip irredentism in the bud, the Austrian authorities briefly arrested a few Romanian students who telegraphed condolences to Jassy.

114 Article from Romanul, 20 August/1 Sept 1871 copied in SANIC, Xerografii Viena, CCXLII, 27.
115 Nicolae Iorga, Neamul Românesc, 147.
When the Romanian state annexed Bukovina at the end of World War I, these encounters were incorporated into an official narrative of national martyrdom that highlighted the desire for unity and solidarity supposedly felt by all Romanians across space and time. The hotheaded students who were punished for telegramming Jassy, the nationalist poet Mihai Eminescu who planned the celebrations in Putna, the irredentists who crossed the border into Romania during World War I – these became the heroes of Romanian nationalism, while other, more ambiguous characters and ideas were discreetly pushed under the rug. Iorga’s early writings on Bukovina already contained the idea that the nationalism embodied by the Romanian state was the only correct and true one. His attacks on Bukovina’s Romanian politicians showed that it was not enough to agitate for national unity. Iorga disliked Romanian nationalists in Bukovina because their ideas were so unfamiliar and so deeply rooted in the context of the empire in which they lived. In Iorga’s eyes, Aurel Onciul, for all his talk of national rights, was merely an arrogant Austrian dandy.\(^{116}\)

In Bukovina, ideals of national purity and unity had to be adjusted to less than ideal conditions. On the flip side, unexpected opportunities could arise from these challenges. In a brochure from 1894, Elena Voronca, a member of the Society of Romanian Ladies, described national indifference and confusion as a fertile state where “nothing is so consolidated that it cannot be opened up again; only from now on will the consolidation begin.”\(^{117}\) According to Voronca, Romanians in Bukovina were at fault for not exploiting the situation but excluding those who spoke Romanian imperfectly and labeling them as Ruthenians instead of taking advantage of their malleability. Nationality, she argued, should revolve more around sentiment than blood, particularly in a place like Bukovina where “nobody will dare say that their blood is

\(^{116}\) Nicolae Iorga, Neamul Românesc, 119.
\(^{117}\) Elena Voronca, Casa Națională: Conferință ținută în 9 decembrie 1894 în folosul fondului pentru clădirea unui palat național (Cernăuți, 1894), 9.
There was hope in the old Romanian saying that: “Father is Russian, Mother Russian, but Ivan is Moldavian.” Similar ideas found expression in the work of an organization that emerged in 1900 with the aim to “recover” peasants around Bukovina’s villages who “out of ignorance or confusion think they are Russians [Ruthenians] and even speak or fight against Romanians, who are however their brothers from long ago, from glorious times.” “The Bukovina Razesi and Mazili Society,” as it was called, started publishing magazines and booklets for these so-called lost Romanians, in Romanian and Ruthenian translations. Readers were informed that their ancestors had in fact been free, wealthy Romanian peasants who had stopped speaking Romanian when Ruthenians came to Bukovina from Galicia. “Wherever the Romanian element comes into contact with the Ruthenian one,” so they argued, “not only is the latter resistant as a result of its intellectual inferiority but it is even expansive-aggressive as a result of the propaganda issued from Ruthenian centers.” The solution was to resurrect the Romanian language where it was forgotten. If this were to succeed, “we will turn the country into what it used to be, a Romanian country.”

To consolidate national boundaries, national leaders in Bukovina often had to step outside of them, invoking non-national interests, making alliances with other national groups, and even embracing some semblance of supranationalism. Anti-Jewish feeling, widespread among different social and economic strata and easy to stir up, promised to bridge differences where mere appeals to national unity could not. To put an end to the “conflict of interests” that kept Romanians divided and politically weak, the leader of the Romanian democratic party Aurel

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118 Ibid., 4-5.
119 Ibid., 5.
120 Apel cătră răzeșii din satele înstrăinate. Lămuriri asupra originei răzeșilor și îndemnuri cătră răzeșii bucovineni de-a se emancipa de influența ruteană, de un Răzeș din Bucovina, (Cernăuți, Societatea tipografică bucovineană, 1911), 10.
121 Ibid., 1.
122 Ibid., 31.
Onciul resorted to anti-Semitism. The united Romanian party, which emerged in 1908 on Onciul’s initiative with Iancu Flondor as its president, made anti-Semitism the basis of national unity. “We have the firm hope that the priesthood, seeing what criminal abuses were committed recently by them [the Jews], will be together with us and the people,” Onciul wrote in his newspaper *Voința Poporului* that year, hoping to draw priests and progressive teachers together in support of the national cause.\(^{123}\) Anti-Semitism appealed not only as a way of “laying foundations for lasting peace in the Romanian camp,” but also as a political strategy for bringing Romanians closer to Austria’s most powerful political party, the German Christian Socials.\(^{124}\) With support from the German Christian Socials, Onciul calculated, the Romanians could become a political power both in the province and the empire as a whole. “We have reached the conclusion that an alliance of all friends of the Christian people in Bukovina under the Christian Social flag is necessary,” Onciul announced in *Die Wahrheit* in August 1908.\(^{125}\) Why a formerly progressive, anti-clerical, and nationalist Romanian party would agree to ally itself with a German party—and a clerical one at that—was in no way obvious. To make anti-Semitism and Christian Socialism work within the frameworks of a Romanian nationalist party took some mental acrobatics.

To survive politically, national leaders had to be prepared to change course and reinvent themselves without detracting too much from their national program and losing credibility. If German Christian Socials in Vienna were anxious to assert the German character of their party, their counterparts in Bukovina were eager to form alliances with other non-Jewish national groups in the province because they were too few and isolated to be politically significant on their own. Romanian leaders saw in this an opportunity to advance their cause. In 1908 the

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\(^{123}\) “Cătră învățătorimea română din Bucovina!,” *Voința Poporului*, 26 April 1908.


\(^{125}\) Ibid.
journal *Viata Romaneasca* in Jassy published a letter from a Romanian in Bukovina, who described the German Christian Socials as “an imperial party to which other nationalities might attach themselves, organized into national parties with a Christian Social program.”

To make the transition to the Christian Social alliance smoother, Onciul and his allies redefined progressivism and liberalism to make them go hand in hand with anti-Semitism. “In the West,” *Die Wahrheit* argued, “progress and liberalism demand that we spurn anti-Semitism while here, they require that we cultivate it.”

“Anti-Semitism in Bukovina,” *Die Wahrheit* explained in 1907, “has absolutely nothing to do with religion but rests on a purely economic basis.”

The next step was reinforcing the nationalist dimension of the program. “Our Christian Social friends,” Aurel Onciul explained, “don’t want to meddle in the affairs of our school and church.”

Romanian and German leaders put their own spin on Christian Socialism, such that an empire-wide movement that called for national segregation became oddly cosmopolitan in practice. Romanian Christian Socials toned down the German character of the movement, emphasizing its supranational and regional dimensions instead. Romanian publications portrayed Christian Socialism as a movement ideally suited to Bukovina’s political and national situation. “In Bukovina,” Onciul’s *Voința Poporului* wrote in March 1908, “anti-Semitism will find an exceptionally fertile terrain in which to operate like nowhere else in the whole of Austria (...) for nowhere else have they [the Jews] enslaved the local population and corrupted so terribly public

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127 “Herr Dubensky – im Sinne des ‘Freisinns,’” *Die Wahrheit* April 1908 [also reprinted in Freie Lehrer-Zeitung 11 April 1908].
life like in our country.” Through Christian Socialism, so the Romanians argued, Bukovina was finally breaking with its tradition of accepting western politics thoughtlessly, “whether it fit our situation or not.” Christian Socialism was, of course, also an import from the west. But in Bukovina, the Romanians considered themselves the main driving force behind the movement. The Christian Social program encouraged a peculiar form of supranational solidarity between non-Jewish nationalities, one that revolved around anti-Semitism. This allowed Christian Socials from Bukovina to write, as one of them did in the Viennese Reichspost in 1908, that “exclusive nationalism was nothing but a whip in the hands of the Jew, who sat and watched the battle of all against all with great satisfaction.” Anti-Semitism, on the other hand, was “the magic that has taken hold of the oppressed in towns and villages,” and “the form through which the oppressed of all nationalities can get along.”

Imperial, National, and Global Spaces

“Ever since the unsuccessful emigration of Bukovinan peasants to Russia,” the Ruthenian Bukovyna announced in March 1896, “there has been no more talk (...) of people thinking of leaving our land and going into the faraway world.” But the rumor had already spread that Canada was a more suitable destination for prospective emigrants than Russia. Following the ban on emigration to Russia, the exodus of Bukovinans did not stop altogether, but merely changed direction from East to West. For a while the most popular destination was America. Though further removed in space, the United States were in fact easier to travel to and return from than the Russian Empire – at least until a new law was passed, denying entry to temporary migrants.

130 “Mișcarea antisemită în Bucovina,” Voința Poporului, 29 March 1908.
132 „Viața Românească în Bucovina,” Voința Poporului, 19 April 1908.
133 „Trezirea Bucovinei,” Voința Poporului, 24 May 1908.
and requiring all new settlers to take American citizenship. Many left for just a few years and, having accumulated handsome sums of money, returned home to settle down and buy with their savings all the land and cattle they would otherwise never afford. Others left for South America never to return. The “great departure” - as Tara Zahra calls the successive waves of emigration from East-Central Europe that began in the late nineteenth century - was the point where imperial interests, nationalist commitments, and global trends and phenomena converged. An in-depth analysis of the “emigration fever” reveals how deeply entangled these three planes or ‘spaces’ were by the late nineteenth century. After the emigration wave to Russia subsided, Bukovinans and Galicians started emigrating en masse to Canada, the United States, Brazil, and Argentina. Both imperial officials and nationalist elites were alarmed by the scale of this phenomenon. Both sides mobilized to bring it under control. The emigration crisis provided nationalists with a powerful cause around which to rally the masses. It gave nationalist movements in Bukovina a boost as national leaders linked up the economic roots of the emigration problem with their older national grievances.

Like the imperial authorities in Bukovina, nationalist elites also held “foreigners” responsible for the emigration crisis. By “foreigners” they did not mean foreign governments, but other nationalities looking to benefit at the emigrants’ expense. Nationalist elites most often accused Jews of orchestrating the emigration movement in order to exploit Christian peasants and workers. The Romanian paper Die Wahrheit, for instance, blamed the exodus of ethnic Romanians from Bukovina on the Jewish economic monopoly. Economic anti-Semitism was, according to the editor Aurel Oniciul, the only way to stop the emigration plague. The Christian German newspaper Bukowinaer Volksblatt made a similar point in 1912, when the emigration movement reached new heights. According to the editors, local travel agencies run by Jews were
working to increase the number of emigrants hand in hand with state officials and institutions. The *Volksblatt* reserved its harshest criticisms for Nathan Eidinger, a Jewish entrepreneur from Bukovina whose business dealings with foreign travel bureaus were apparently “the reason why thousands of workers are leaving our land.” Eidinger was accused, among other things, of using the protection and authority of provincial state institutions to deliver a quota of six hundred workers to the Austro-Americana transportation agency for emigration to Argentina. Through the machinations of people like Eidinger, the newspaper complained, institutions that were meant to protect the rights of local workers had in fact become complicit in exploiting them. The Ruthenian nationalist press also published with relish stories of emigrants returning from overseas despoiled of all their possessions by nasty travel agents - usually with Jewish names. In March 1896, for instance, the newspaper *Bukovyna* reproduced a letter allegedly from a Galician emigrant who had just returned from America. Mykhailo Zatorsky related how he had decided to join other Galician emigrants in Brazil, together with his wife and three children. After selling his house and land, Zatorsky had set off to Vienna without a passport. From there all the way to Florida, the Zatorsky had been passed down from of one travel agent to another. In Bremen, an agent by the name of Misler had persuaded them to drop their plans and board a ship to New York. From there, the family was to go to New Georgia in Northern Florida. In New York, a second travel agent got Zatorsky to sign a contract and asked him to pay $5 in exchange for 50 acres of arable land and a pair of mules. On reaching their destination, the family found only “white and yellow sand and rocks.” When they asked their supervisor to move them to a different location, the Zatorsky’s were sent to a plantation where they worked for several weeks as slaves. Exasperated and penniless, Zatorsky wrote: “I still consider myself happy to have

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134 *Bukoviner Volksblatt*, 19 May 1912.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
returned home, although in a completely ruined state.”¹³⁷ Not all national factions shared the view that emigration was dangerous. Unlike the Young Ruthenian Bukovyna, the newspaper Selenena, a small press organ of the Old Ruthenian party urged Ruthenians to emigrate. In September 1896, its editor Iwan Bilecki came to Czinkeu to mobilize locals to go to Canada. Nine days after his visit, the head of the gendarmerie post on duty reported that in Czinkeu, Wasileu, and Kuleutz, the locals’ “desire to emigrate to Canada” had increased significantly over the course of the previous eight days.

Nationalist elites believed they had a duty to protect co-nationals from deceit and exploitation by shrewd travel agents and agitators. There was no shortage of ideas and projects for dealing with the emigration problem. One of the proposed solutions was to create two emigration agencies, one in Lviv and the other in Vienna, to Ruthenian emigrants on their way to America. First, the emigrants would stop in Lviv to obtain their travel documents. The agency would teach each emigrant where to go and “to which nation he belongs and where he can write in case he wants to hear news from home.”¹³⁸ The second emigration agency in Vienna would then provide emigrants with up to date information about the departure of ships from Italian ports and escort them to the port of departure. The idea behind this project was not to block emigration altogether but to nationalize the emigration process. In this way, nationalists hoped, emigrants would at least preserve their national identity and be more likely to return home. None of these plans was implemented in the end. Nationalists complained that all of their warnings had been in vain, for “our Ruthenians are going anyway.”¹³⁹ Why was this the case? According to one author, even though their conditions of life were far superior to those of co-nationals in Galicia, Bukovinans would rather dream of riches falling from the sky in a foreign country than

¹³⁷ Bukovyna, 1 March 1896.
¹³⁸ Bukovyna, 2 May 1896.
¹³⁹ Bukovyna, 6 September 1896.
work their own land at home. Apparently, some emigrants who had no clue where they were going thought “Canada” was just another province of the Austrian empire and that “they just have to leave their own homes and they will suddenly become gentlemen.” Very few of them in fact did.

The emigration movement was also where local and imperial interests took on global dimensions and implications. The population exodus from Austria-Hungary’s eastern periphery confronted the monarchy with new foreign policy and diplomatic challenges. The task of managing the inflow and outflow of people, and dealing with travel companies with offices and agents on three continents brought the governments of empire and states on both sides of the Atlantic face to face. They crossed paths and forged new ties. Travel businesses worked for different state governments as much as they worked against them. In the late 1890s, South American governments resorted to the services of travel agencies to attract new settlers for state colonization projects. The two travel companies that signed a contract with the government in Sao Paolo in 1897, for instance, were obligated to deliver within a period of three years a total of 60,000 European immigrants to be employed on coffee plantations in Brazil. Out of these, 10,000 people were to be Austrians from “Tirol, Steiermark, Görz, Kärnten, Istria, and Galicia.” According to the 1897 contract, the Brazilian government had promised to cover only the transportation costs of emigrants who traveled in families. Travel agents found a way to bend the rules so as to serve single emigrants as well. They created imaginary families by matching together individuals with false identity papers and “family forms.” Travel agencies honored some rules and contracts by breaking others. The emigration movement also revealed how deeply interconnected and interdependent state governments were - even those that were otherwise only loosely related. When one state changed its mobility regime or introduced new

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140 DAChO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6639.
restrictions on emigration, every other state around it and beyond was indirectly affected. Transit states like Italy sometimes modified their emigration policies to control the inflow of emigrants from the East. Many emigrants from Bukovina and Galicia left from Italian ports. Since by the time they arrived there they were completely penniless, for the weeks and sometimes months leading up to their departure they roamed the streets begging for food and causing trouble.\textsuperscript{141} When the Italian government passed a new law completely banning emigration in 1896, the Austrian Prime Minister Count Badeni warned the provincial authorities in Bukovina and Galicia to prepare for the worst. As the Austrian authorities had predicted, to compensate for their loss of clients in Italy, travel agents began to put even more pressure on people at Austria-Hungary’s frontiers to emigrate. When making foreign policy decisions, imperial officials were compelled to think in global terms.

While nationalists went on hoping the emigrants would one day return, imperial officials kept in contact with those who left and intervened on their behalf with the authorities of the foreign states they were now living in. As Austrian immigration to the New World increased, so did the presence of Austrian officials and institutions in all major American cities. The consulates were the immigrants’ first line of defense against the abuse or neglect of state officials abroad, as well as a much-needed safeguard for those who needed help reaching their settlements or returning home. Not a few emigrants appealed to them for assistance. Bukovinian and Galician emigrants were vulnerable and poorly prepared to deal with unanticipated circumstances at their destinations - such as overcrowding, land shortages, and unemployment. Miscalculation and misinformation had grave consequences for the new arrivals. By July 1898, all the settlers in the Bukovinan and Galician colony of Santa Cruz in Brazil were thin and pale, sick with fever and covered in mosquito bites; “now it’s okay,” the settlers told the Austrian

\textsuperscript{141} DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6639, l 6.
consul who visited their colony in the fall of 1898, “but in the summer we will go one after another back to the hospital.” Disease also took its toll on their fields of corn and rye. Having been previously uninhabited, the lands emigrants were assigned were difficult to cultivate and slow to yield crops. In the colony Antonio Olintho in the Brazilian highlands of Parana, another Austrian consul found that the “path to the colony was strewn with crosses” and numerous graveyards all around. Of the 3,000 people who had been settled there in December 1895, only 377 Ruthenian families and 60 Polish families were left. While the Brazilian government supported them financially for the first six months or so, the settlers had gotten by. Once this grace period expired, the colony fell prey to the most “extraordinary destitution” and many settlers starved to death. When the news about this tragedy reached the Brazilian authorities, the state secretary himself traveled to the colony to inspect the situation. The situation of the Austrian settlers in Antonio Olintho greatly improved after an Austrian consulate was established in the region. During the consul’s visit in 1898, the Ruthenian colonists asked for permission to “make a request to the monarch for the donation of a church bell.” Bukovinians and Galicians in the New World maintained their ties with the Austrian empire even after resettling permanently in the New World. Just as the emigrants themselves continued to feel entitled to the protection and support of the Kaiser, imperial officials too regarded these people not as foreigners, but as an extension of their empire overseas.

An even larger number of Bukovinans and Galicians went to Canada and the United States. Over the course of one summer alone, over 5,000 Ruthenian peasants settled in the Canadian North-West. Each male family member over eighteen received 160 acres of land for free and, as the Austrian consulate in Montreal reported, “the settlers almost without any

142 Ibid., l 70.
143 DACHo, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6639.
144 Ibid., l 72.
exception are happy about their circumstances in the new *Heimat*."\(^\text{145}\) Not all were quite so fortunate. After paying for their journey to Canada, many immigrants were too poor to take advantage of the cheap land available there. If they failed to get jobs - as many did - recent immigrants could not make it through the rough Canadian winter without support from friends or help from the Austrian authorities. To warn readers against these perils, the Ruthenian press in Bukovina published letters by destitute emigrants who had come to regret their decision to leave - most likely written by the editors themselves. “I say only that this land is worthier of the name Siberia than Canada,” one emigrant supposedly wrote the Austrian authorities back home, “and I ask you, dear captain, not to give passports to anyone, for whoever comes here will curse and lament his evil fate.”\(^\text{146}\) Immigrants lured to the United States by the promise of cheap land found that clearing and tilling the land they received took up to three years of hard work, during which time they lost all their money and fell into ruin. Necessity turned many aspiring farmers into workers. Due to a lack of coordination between travel agents and state officials, the large immigration wave from Austro-Hungary to the United States in 1897 coincided with the peak of economic depression. New immigrants arrived just in time to join the ranks of the unemployed. In the coal district in Pennsylvania, the few Austrian immigrants who managed to get jobs found themselves participating in work stoppages and strikes side by side with the American workers. The chaotic comings and goings of immigrants who arrived in the middle of winter with no money in their pockets or who found no jobs and had to be sent back home were a serious drain on the finances of the Austrian consulates abroad. In their correspondence with Vienna, Austrian consuls in Canada repeatedly pleaded with imperial officials back home to hold back emigrants who had no other sources of support. The consulates also played a mediating role between

\(^{145}\) DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 6888.
\(^{146}\) Ibid.
immigrants and the institutions of their host states.

Austrian officials both feared the consequences of emigration for the empire and took pride in the achievements of Austrian emigrants abroad. Having no colonies overseas, the Austrian empire sought to assert its cultural superiority and influence in the world vicariously, through its citizens who were participating in the colonization projects of other states. In their missives to Vienna, Austrian consular officials celebrated the *Culturarbeit* carried out by Ruthenian peasants in Brazil, and the hard work of Bukovinians and Galicians in Manitoba. The Austrian consul in Montreal, for instance, described the efforts of Ruthenian colonists from Galicia and Bukovina in Canada as “astonishing especially in comparison with those of settlers of other nationalities.” Although they had arrived in Canada only the previous summer, “our peasants” had already settled down and made a favorable impression on older settlers, who never failed to praise their “diligence and ambitiousness.” In the large number of Austrian immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, some consular officials abroad saw signs of prestige rather than reasons for alarm. According to one consul’s reports from Montreal, the whole Canadian North West was populated by Austrian citizens, the vast majority of them stemming from Galicia and Bukovina. In addition to the 1,000 families that had arrived in the summer of 1897, “all spread out throughout the province Manitoba and the north western territories” were 2,080 Austrian and Hungarian families who owned a total of 43,670 acres, 5,073 horses, 21,720 cattle, and 6,100 sheep.

At the same time, the emigration movement was also a potentially dangerous extension of the empire’s internal problems abroad. When take out of their immediate context and transplanted into the New World, old inter-ethnic and religious frictions took on new dimensions. In the Apostoles colony of settlers from eastern Galicia in Argentina, Polish settlers
away from home felt free at last to give vent to their national sentiments. When a delegate of the Austrian embassy in Buenos Aires visited the settlement in 1899, the Poles in Apostoles expected him to speak to them in their mother tongue. When it turned out that the delegate could only speak German, the Polish settlers were greatly disappointed for they had thought that “since [Rakovsky] had a Polish name he could understand Polish.” In the absence of state structures that could keep national frictions and assimilatory pressures in check, the Ruthenian settlers who lived in Apostoles side by side with the Poles were asserting their difference by proclaiming allegiance to the Austrian empire. In a letter to the newspaper Bukovyna in January 1900, a Pole from Apostoles called his Ruthenian neighbors “Russian-Austrian patriots.” Ruthenian settlers from eastern Galicia, he observed, “do not consider themselves to belong to our people, but think of themselves as Austrians (“jo ne Polok, jeno Ostryjok”) and listen with indignation when they are addressed in Polish, and our national colors irritate them as the color red does a bull or a turkey.”\footnote{Bukovyna, 26 January 1900.} Austrian consular officials kept a close eye on these antagonisms, knowing that what Austrian citizens did abroad would have consequences for the interior of the monarchy as well.

Conclusion

From the 1890s through World War I, the emigration crisis in Bukovina and Galicia was on everybody’s lips. Both imperial officials and national elites were deeply preoccupied with the “emigration fever,” which threatened to deplete the frontier province of its population thus threatening both the empire’s security and nationalists’ designs to foster national consciousness among the population. While thousands of Ruthenian, Romanian, and German-speaking peasants were leaving the Austrian periphery, a different category of people - West European travel companies and the agents they hired in Eastern Europe - were thriving on the mass exodus from
the East. Imperial officials attributed the crisis to Russia’s machinations to undermine Austria by taking advantage of the vulnerability of its border populations. Although propagandists and travel businesses did contribute to the movement, the emigration crisis was in fact a reflection of deeper economic and social problems that remained unsolved. No wonder then that the mass exodus from Bukovina and Galicia continued through the decades leading up to World War I. Even though they increased security measures at the border, imperial officials could never fully control how many people left the eastern periphery and where they went.

By contrast, nationalism seemed much more manageable. Nationalist leaders worked closely with imperial officials and institutions, playing their national game by the empire’s rules. Nationalists and imperial officials belonged to the same world of intellectual elites and spoke the same language of education. Both groups were in many ways disconnected from the world of the Bukovina’s largely rural, uneducated population. This made them natural partners in negotiation. Bukovina’s extraordinary ethnic and linguistic diversity challenged the totalizing programs of both imperial officials and nationalist leaders. People had a variety of interests and allegiances that shifted constantly and could not be subsumed under one, unitary form of belonging. Nationalists were not different in this respect. They too ‘suffered’ from a diversity of interests that made their parties factionalist and short-lived. There was not just one type of nationalism that emerged here but many different national programs, with different ideas about what was best for the nation and how the national dream could be fulfilled. Some of these were inspired by Bukovina’s particular ethnic and linguistic situation and were at odds with the programs of nationalists in a neighboring state or even in another crownland of the monarchy. Often, the boundaries between nationalism and supranationalism were very fluid as nationalist intellectuals had to appeal to loyalties that transcended the nation in order to strengthen the boundaries of
disunited and incoherent national communities.

The national and transnational, imperial and global also overlapped in complicated ways as nationalist leaders, imperial officials, and state governments set out to monitor and manage the waves of emigrants that were leaving the empire’s eastern periphery. Nationalist leaders believed they had a duty to protect their co-nationals from the perils of deracination so they went out of their way to curb the flow of emigrants from Bukovina and Galicia. They too had little control over the people who left. Figuring out how to best protect the emigrants’ national core so they would not be forever lost to the nation became their main concern once they realized the emigrants could not be stopped from leaving. Like the nationalist elites, the imperial government also continued viewing and treating the emigrants as though they were still part of the body politic. They sent consuls around Austrian emigrant settlements in North and South America to inspect the conditions Austrian colonists were living in and intervene with the local authorities to better their situation. In turn, the settlers appealed to Austrian representatives abroad for financial assistance. This was the closest a continental empire like Austria-Hungary came to acquiring colonies overseas when every other self-respecting empire already had some. The emigration movement from Bukovina and Galicia to the New World also forged new ties between the empire and overseas states with which it was only weakly related. As a result, imperial officials - even those at the empire’s easternmost edged - were forced to think increasingly in European and global terms.
Chapter 3

World War at the Edge

In August 1910, Philipp Menczel was taking the waters in Wilhelmshoehe near Kassel when he met a German delegate in the Vienna parliament.\(^1\) On hearing that Menczel was from Czernowitz, the German exclaimed: “So you are from Czernowitz? From Czernowitz? Just a second, isn’t that right near Kattowitz?” Menczel gently corrected his interlocutor, noting that the two cities were in fact 700 kilometers apart. When the man also failed to respond correctly to Menczel’s impromptu quiz on the total number of German universities in Europe, Menczel told him off: “We [in Czernowitz] cannot afford the luxury of treating the west as unresearched territory.”\(^2\) By August 1914, Czernowitz was no longer an unknown, unresearched place. It was suddenly at the edge of the eastern front, near the theater of war, in the middle of events. A few weeks into Czernowitz’s first Russian occupation, Philipp Menczel was taken away in the middle of the night and transported to Siberia as a political prisoner. He landed in Tomsk and Chelyabinsk, then in St Petersburg, and once he was released, he traveled to Bohemia, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Stockholm before returning home to Czernowitz in October 1917. By December 1918, the empire of which he had been a citizen all his life had ceased to exist. Czernowitz became Cernăuți – a Romanian city. Unable to overcome “the loss of a feeling of

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\(^1\) Philipp Menczel was a journalist and lawyer, and allegedly also a confidant of Bukovina’s governor Prince von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurth. Menczel founded some of Czernowitz’s most prominent German-language newspapers. In 1894, he started publishing *Jüdisches Echo* - a Zionist publication. He also launched the *Czernowitzer Tagblatt* (in 1903) and *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* (1903). Until 1918, he was the editor-in-chief of the *Czernowitzer Allgemeine*.


being at home” there, Menczel relocated to Vienna. “The new feeling of home is born in pain,” he wrote in 1932, “the old home that was torn away from me hurts, just as the amputated arm hurts the person who was operated.”3 By the end of the war, even those few who had managed to stay in one place no longer felt at home. This story, common across Europe, took a particularly dramatic turn in Bukovina – a province that experienced three occupations and liberations, a revolution, and the collapse of an empire over the course of only four years.

Czernowitz newspapers celebrated the outbreak of war as a chance for the city to get in step with the rest of the empire: “When the clock strikes a happy hour here, it does for us too. We no longer live in the East European time zone.”4 The great powers locked in conflict also saw the war as an opportunity for reform, transformation, and conquest. So did the locals caught between occupations. In them, the war stirred ambitions they sought to fulfill by negotiating, collaborating, and playing one occupying power against another. Although rumors about Austro-Hungary’s defeat circulated in Bukovina as early as 1914, the returning administration did not take the prospect of imperial collapse seriously until the last moment. This state of uncertainty did not come to an end when the governor boarded the last train to Vienna and Bukovina fell into the hands of Greater Romania. The empire was gone but the imperial subjects remained. The same challenges Austrian bureaucrats had once faced in Bukovina now puzzled the province’s Romanian rulers. Now the northernmost province of Greater Romania, Bukovina hung over the map of the Romanian nation-state like a question mark over a disputed argument.

This chapter tells the story of a place that was perpetually on the move and a population that frequently went to bed subjects of one state and woke up subjects of another. This is also a story about World War One on the Eastern front. Most of our assumptions about World War One

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3 Ibid. 194.
4 “Czernowitzer Tagebuch aus der Kriegszeit,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 15 August 1914.
and its legacies are derived from studies of France, England, and Germany. They are unrepresentative of how the war was lived, what it meant, and what effect it had on places and people in East-Central Europe and Russia. Historians of the Habsburg Empire, Russian Empire, and Eastern Europe have recently sought to integrate the “other half” of the continent into narratives of the Great War by emphasizing the exceptional character of the war experience there.\(^5\) The Eastern front - so their argument goes - is important precisely because it was so different from the Western. To begin with, the war followed a different chronology on the Eastern front: in areas like the Balkans, the cycle of violence started a few years earlier with the Balkan Wars, while in other areas the war had that continued well past 1918.\(^6\) The dynamic of the war on the Eastern front was also very different: this was not a war of trenches and immobility, but of movement, rapid changes and reversals, and improvisation. There were differences also in the methods and outcomes of warfare in the East. The war on the Eastern front, it has been argued, was a war without victors and with uncertain victories, where the losses suffered by both winners and losers were greater than the gains.\(^7\) And finally, World War One on the Eastern front has been portrayed as a war “of paradoxes,” blurred categories, and many dimensions, partly due to the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual environment in which it unfolded.

This chapter is inspired by a group of works that examine the particular manifestations and consequences of World War I in East-Central Europe and Russia, while also seeking to insert this story into broader European narratives. Historians of both the Russian and Austrian Empire have shown that the war profoundly changed the role of these states and their

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interactions with society. In his book *Making War, Forging Revolution*, Peter Holquist has argued that Russia’s total war mobilization made possible “a new state and socio-economic order” by providing the political classes with opportunities to implement visions of a state more directly involved with Russian society. On the Austrian end, John Deak has shown that the war in fact had the opposite effect, curtailing the growth of the state apparatus and bureaucracy and damaging the state’s relationship with society by placing it fully at the service of the military.

By contrast, this chapter explores the changing relationship between the two states at war through their interactions with the population of a territory they occupied several times and took turns in ruling. From this narrative, Bukovina’s multinational population emerges not merely as an object of various occupation policies, but also as a mediator and active participant in the interactions between Great Powers. Russia’s and Austria’s occupation policies in Bukovina were not purely directed towards exploiting and managing the territory and its population, but also towards influencing each other. Even more interestingly, through their overlap in Bukovina the two occupation forces began to resemble each other more than they were willing to admit.

There has been much work on the problem of violence on the Eastern front, most of it drawing connections between World War I, the prevalence of authoritarian regimes in postwar East-Central Europe, and the catastrophe of the Second World War. In *War Land on the Eastern Front*, Vejas Liulevicius argued that wartime experiences and practices of occupation had transformative consequences for both the occupied and the occupiers. More specifically, he shows how German occupation forces coming into contact with “the East” for the very first time

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developed a particular outlook on Eastern Europe as a place in need of civilizing, a vision that stayed with them for decades to come. In turn, the population subjected to the Germans’ *Kultur* practices was involuntarily dragged into an irreversible process of nationalization and politicization. This chapter turns this scenario upside down by focusing on a place that had belonged to the German cultural sphere for at least a century but that fell under the control of the “barbaric” Russians a few weeks after the outbreak of war. This was not a previously unexplored place but one that had been “worked on” (through *Kulturarbeit*), remade, abandoned in haste, and then taken over by the “uncultured” enemy. What happened then? How was this story different? As the following pages will show, the problem of *Kultur* remained the key issue. Here it was not drilled into the minds and hearts of locals by the representatives of a foreign state, but was instead a matter of concern for the local population. Local German-speaking elites, especially Jews, interpreted their war experiences through the prism of the antithesis between German *Kultur* and Slavic barbarism. As for the rest of the population, especially the peasantry, they could not care less. To some, *Unkultur* held greater appeal. This chapter also adds a new dimension to the views presented in a recent volume on *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe’s First World War* by a group of historians who argue that the disappearance of the state under repeated occupations in World War I created “cultures of violence” in Eastern Europe.\(^\text{11}\) In what follows, I show that an appetite for violence emerged in Bukovina as a result of conflicts between groups that supported different occupation authorities. The violence that took place in Bukovina was not random but it was carried out under the protection of state authorities.

Great Power Competition at the Edge

Somewhere near a ravine to the east of Czernowitz, two pillars stood facing each other. A wooden board nailed onto the black and yellow pillar read “Austrian Empire.” Perched above the Gothic inscription was the double-headed Habsburg eagle. Barely ten steps away, another eagle looked it “threateningly in the eye.” This was the Russian eagle, towering above the Cyrillic inscription that spelt “Russian State.”12 Here, only miles away from Bukovina’s capital, the two great powers came face to face. Bukovina was thus at the center of events long before Vienna and Budapest got a taste of the conflict. By the end of August, the rumbling of shotguns and artillery fire could be heard in Czernowitz. Locals observed the first Russian attacks on Austria-Hungary from a meadow at the periphery of the city through binoculars. But the confrontation did not unfold only on the battlefield. The war was fought also through rhetoric and occupation policies. Squeezed between the two empires, Bukovina became the object of competing territorial claims. As the frontline shifted, the Austrian and Russian armies conquered and lost the province repeatedly. Bukovina became a point of overlap between them – a place where the belligerents interacted in more complicated ways than on the battlefield, confronting but also competing with and emulating each other. Each occupation regime in Bukovina inherited a social landscape profoundly transformed by the previous occupations, shaping in turn the policies of occupations that followed.

Nowhere did Austria-Hungary’s frontiers seem more porous than in Bukovina, the small province bordering on the Russian Empire and Romania. Long before the hostilities officially commenced, the Austrian authorities there were already fighting a silent war against the Russophile and Greater Romanian propaganda that slipped into the province from the east and south. It was Bukovina’s multinational composition that made state borders so permeable.

12 Philipp Menczel, Trügerische Lösungen, 28.
Propagandists in the Russian Empire and Romania relied on Ruthenians and Romanians, respectively, to spread their ideas and serve as a springboard for the expansionist ambitions of these states. The Russophile movement originally came to Bukovina from Galicia. There, it had evolved out of the tensions between Poles, whom the Austrian authorities put in positions of power in exchange for their loyalty, and the Ruthenian population, who were traditionally in a subordinate position.\footnote{Z.A.B. Zeman, \textit{The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918} (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). The Russophile movement spread to Bukovina, North-Eastern Hungary, and the Carpathian Rus. 13} Although Ruthenians in Bukovina had fewer grudges to bear the Austrian administration, their situation was also inferior to that of Romanians, who made up the majority of provincial elites. Although the Ruthenians in Bukovina were able to develop an intelligentsia of their own after the 1860s, their representation in the provincial diet remained weak. For the longest time, the central authorities appointed only Romanians to the position of provincial captain \cite{Hagen:2007:War}. For Ruthenians in Bukovina, the Russophile movement held appeal also for religious reasons, as the overwhelming majority of them were Eastern Orthodox rather than Uniate. In the years just prior to the war, however, the movement gained a new dimension as Slavophile activists in Petersburg began providing Russophiles in Bukovina and Galicia with financial support and paying propaganda visits to towns with Ruthenian populations.\footnote{Mark von Hagen, \textit{War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918} (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2007), 7. In 1913, a Galician-Russian association in Petersburg led by the Panslavist leader Count Vladimir Bobrinsky began to provide aid to Old Ruthenian societies in Galicia. Slavophile leaders like Michal Bobrinsky and Andrzej Potocki toured Galicia and Bukovina, making stops in Cracow, Lemberg, and Czernowitz. 14} Alarmed by the spread of anti-Austrian ideas among local Ruthenians, the authorities in Bukovina and Galicia took radical measures to put a damper on the movement. They put suspicious individuals under surveillance and arrest, closed down newspapers, and organized “monster trials” against political suspects.

By September 1914, when the Russian troops first took Czernowitz, the city had already
earned a dubious reputation as a hideout for Russian agents and spies. Earlier that year, a group of Ruthenians charged with leading a pro-Russian irredentist movement had been arrested and put on trial in Marmaros and Sziget and in Lemberg.\(^{15}\) The first trial, which lasted from December 1913 to March 1914, pointed to Czernowitz as the headquarters of the “heads of a high treasonous group with networks all over Austria-Hungary.”\(^{16}\) Alexei and Georgii Gerovski, the main suspects, were arrested in January in Czernowitz together with their family when they were found guilty of distributing religious propaganda among the Russophiles who were on trial. On searching the Gerovski house in Czernowitz, the authorities discovered further incriminating evidence: an account of a conversion of a priest from the Greek-Catholic to the Orthodox faith, a memorandum on the persecution of “the Russian nation” in Galicia, and declarations by the Slavophile Count Bobrinski.\(^{17}\) Before they too could be put on trial and sentenced that year, the Gerovski brothers escaped the criminal court building where they were held in Czernowitz. On June 9, the *Czernowitzer Tagblatt* reported that the Gerovskis, instead of facing trial, “are probably kissing the soil of Russia.”\(^{18}\) The day before, the brothers had fled Czernowitz with the help of a prison guard who gave them new clothes, let them out the front door, and then drove them across the border to Russia. The ease with which they had escaped seemed to suggest that a much larger Russophile plot might be at work in Bukovina.

The Greater Romanian propaganda that infiltrated Bukovina led Russophile propagandists to redouble their efforts. The two irredentist currents reinforced each other to a degree that alarmed the Austrian authorities, who were helpless to keep the subversive


\(^{16}\) “Flucht der Brüder Gerowski aus dem Untersuchungsgefangnis,” *Czernowitzer Tagblatt*, 9 June 1914.


\(^{18}\) “Flucht der Brüder Gerowski aus dem Untersuchungsgefangnis,” *Czernowitzer Tagblatt*, 9 June 1914.
movements in check. By 1913, the authorities in Bukovina were aware that a Greater Romanian movement had come into being across the border, with grand ambitions for the national and political unification of all Romanians. In Bukovina too, there were signs that the time was ripe for the Greater Romanian idea. In their reports to Vienna from 1913, the Czernowitz authorities pointed out that members of the Romanian intelligentsia had taken to visiting Romania rather frequently of late. Theater companies from Romania were giving guest performances in Bukovina and Romanian personalities were coming increasingly often to Czernowitz to give lectures. In turn, Romanians in Bukovina were sending their children to study in Romanian universities. Much of this enthusiasm for Romania stemmed from its recent victory in the second Balkan war. As one Austrian official put it, the outcome of the war had “filled Romanians with an exaggerated consciousness of their power and pride,” making even the traditionally skeptical Bukovina Romanians look to the young nation-state with interest and admiration.

In the wake of the Balkan wars, nationalists in the Old Kingdom moved from advocating cultural unity to calling for the political unification of all Romanians. The main force behind this propaganda was the Cultural League in Bucharest, headed by the nationalist historian Nicolae Iorga. By the end of 1913, the idea of Greater Romania had gained ground not only in the universities and among youth groups in the Old Kingdom, but also in the army and schools. Since the movement had already drawn supporters among Romanians in Transylvania, officials worried that a slight change in Bukovina’s political fortunes would stoke Romanian irredentism there too.

Although there was no doubt Romania was exporting the Greater Romanian idea to Bukovina, the connections between locals and nationalists across the border were difficult to

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19 AT-OeSTA (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien), AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium, Zl 12535/1913.
20 SANIC (Arhivele Naționale ale României, București), Xerografii Viena, XLIV/6, 12 September 1913.
21 AT-OeSTA, AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 12535/1913.
22 Ibid.
track down. Officials identified culprits by relying on rumors, reports, and denunciations that were often contradictory or unsupported by evidence. Romanians priests and students were known to fraternize with their “brothers from the Old Kingdom.” And yet, none of them expressed themselves “in a manner that broke the law or political decorum” nor did they leave any incriminating evidence behind them. The usual suspects were Romanian Orthodox priests, renowned for their intense nationalism and fanatical efforts to “romanize” Ruthenian parishioners. In the spring of 1914, for instance, Bukovina’s governor Rudolf von Meran reported that a Romanian priest from a border community had to be expelled from his post and put under surveillance for his improper behavior towards the Ruthenian parishioners on whom he forced Romanian-language masses, as well as for his suspiciously good relations with the Romanian border guards. Another Orthodox Romanian priest came under suspicion when a rumor reached the governor that was receiving financial support from the Cultural League in Bucharest.23 But more often than not, rumors about the subversive activities of Romanian priests found no confirmation. And yet, the mood among Romanians continued to sour. Greater Romanian propaganda sneaked into Bukovina through the most surprising channels. Peasants who went to Romania to do seasonal work picked up rumors that Austria would lose Bukovina in the event of a war with Russia and spread them among locals.24 Already in the fall of 1913, a Romanian priest predicted that Bukovina would not belong to Austria much longer.25 Unlike the Romanian intelligentsia, which was already sold on the Greater Romanian idea, Bukovina’s large peasant population seemed indifferent to these rumors. Even so, officials feared that this complacency would not last long, as the peasants were “easy to influence because of their lack of

23 AT-OeSTA, AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 3048/March 1914.
24 AT-OeSTA, AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium, A 2096, Zl 949/19 January 1914.
25 AT-OeSTA, AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium, A 2096, Zl 10103/ 2 September 1913.
education and naivety.”

After the rumors and propaganda came the Russians. The hostilities on the eastern front began in late August, with the clash of Austrian and Russian armies in Galicia. The month of August brought the Central Powers good news: the Russian armies were defeated at Tannenberg and the Masurian lakes, and on the Galician front at Krasnik and Komarow. Soon the front line approached Czernowitz. On August 25, the Viennese received with their morning coffee and newspaper the “very delightful news” that “an attack on Bukovina by the Russian troops was countered near Nowosielitza” – not far from Czernowitz. Six hundred Russian prisoners marched through the city that evening. But soon the tables were turned. One week after the battle near Nowosielitza, Czernowitzers were awoken from their sleep by a deafening blast. Austrian troops in retreat had exploded the bridges over the river Pruth, which connected the city with the villages that were now under Russian occupation. By the next morning, the Russians had come so close to the city that they could be seen from the city hall tower. With the Austrian troops gone and the Russians threatening that Czernowitz “would be made one with the earth if the population do not hand themselves in,” the mayor had no choice but to “hand over” the city. On September 2, the victorious Russian troops entered Czernowitz and set up shop in the city hall. By the end of September, the Russians had emerged triumphant on the Galician front, captured Lemberg, and advanced further into Austro-Hungary. By December, the Austrian troops were pushed out of Serbia as well. But fortunes turned often during the war and the eastern frontline shifted back and forth. Czernowitz skipped from one side of the Austro-Russian border to

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26 AT-OeSTA, AVA Inneres Mdl Präsidium, A 2096, Zl 12.535/1913.
another. The Russians conquered the city three times: in September 1914, once again in late November, and in June 1916. The Austrian troops liberated it in October 1914, February 1915, and August 1917. The provincial administration, evacuated at first to Dorna-Watra and then to Prague, returned to Bukovina definitively only in April 1918.

Under both Austro-German and Russian occupations, culture was a key element in the wartime governance in Bukovina. The devastating defeats suffered by the Central Powers on the eastern front in the summer of 1916, when General Brusilov’s armies marched across Galicia towards the Carpathian passes, piqued the interest of the Austrian and German publics in the territories where “our armies suffered difficult hours and bitter luck with heroic bravery and unshakeable confidence in victory.” News of the destruction the Russian troops had inflicted on the populations of Galicia and Bukovina during their occupations provided Austrian propagandists with rich material for their stories of Russian barbarism and savagery. Readers of a propaganda pamphlet published in Austria in 1916 were told that Galicia and Bukovina – now a “cemetery of peoples in the East” – were first discovered during the Great War. Before that, the author explained, Galicia and Bukovina were little known in the west, as they suffered from “a series of very particular problems that remain foreign to the rest of Europe.” The pamphlet did not dwell on these problems, however. Its aim was, rather, to convince readers of the wonders achieved by Germans and German Kultur in the East, to persuade them that the East was worth fighting for – if only because the Germans, through centuries of work, had made the East what it was. In Bukovina, the author argued, German culture had penetrated even more deeply than in Galicia and the influence of the “German character” could be seen even better than elsewhere. This was, supposedly, because “the soil was still virgin and the population suffering from

31 Zach, Galizien und Bukowina, 4.
poverty and ignorance was glad to let itself be led and taught by the Germans.”\textsuperscript{32} The Germans, so the story went, had transformed Bukovina from a “desert, almost covered only with forests and marshes” and “completely uncultivated territory” into an oasis of \textit{Kultur}.\textsuperscript{33} Thanks to “German work and civilization,” Czernowitz had acquired all the trappings of modernity and urban life – schools, elegant hotels, an electric train.\textsuperscript{34} In Bukovina, the antithesis of German \textit{Kultur} could also be seen clearly in the shootings, robberies, and brutalities committed by the Russians.

The rhetoric of \textit{Kultur}, so central to the wartime propaganda issued by the Central Powers, also found expression in local accounts of the Russian occupation. It was the German-speaking, highly educated and assimilated Jewish intelligentsia in Czernowitz that embraced this rhetoric most fervently. Even before the war came to an end, two Jewish journalists from Czernowitz published their memoirs of the war and Russian occupations. Julius Weber, an editor for the \textit{Czernowitzer Tagblatt}, published his account of Czernowitz’s first two Russian invasions, entitled “Russian Days in Czernowitz,” in 1915.\textsuperscript{35} Two years later, Philipp Menczel published his own memoir, “Taken Prisoner to Siberia.” Among the first “blessings of Russian culture” Menczel remembered experiencing during Czernowitz’s first Russian occupation was the sight of “a Cossack who swam across the Pruth (…) and had gotten so drunk he completely lost consciousness.”\textsuperscript{36} No circumstances were dire enough to put Menczel off arguing about the superiority of German culture. From his perspective, the war – especially as it was felt in

\textsuperscript{32} Zach, \textit{Galizien und Bukowina}, 203.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 187.
\textsuperscript{35} Julius Weber was a journalist who edited the \textit{Volkswehr}, a newspaper sponsored by the Jewish politician Benno Straucher in Czernowitz between 1904-1912. Weber also worked for the \textit{Czernowitzer Allegemeine Zeitung} and later was the art specialist for the \textit{Czernowitzer Tagblatt}. Hugo Gold, \textit{Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina} (Tel-Aviv: Ed. Olamenu, 1958).
Czernowitz – was a clash between civilization and brute force. On the train to Siberia, Menczel clashed with a young Russian Social Democrat who was also being sent into exile and persecuted but who nonetheless insisted that German culture was stifling the Russian people. The indignant Menczel remarked that “such a people [the Russians] can also not achieve any great deeds and enduring works of culture and this people must be happy to have in its neighborhood another people, the Germans, who never held themselves back but felt it was their duty to carry civilization to the Volga and further...”37 Julius Weber, who witnessed the first Russian occupation before fleeing Czernowitz together with the Austrian administration to Dorna-Watra, described the Russian occupation in similar terms. His memoir depicted the Russians as brutal savages: bursting into the university library and “tearing the costly classics into paper shreds,” stealing and breaking collections, turning the gymnastics room into a “butchery” and using the sports equipment as support “for the cut up meat.”38 Interestingly, both Menczel and Weber made sure to differentiate between the Russian officers, who “tried to appear civilized,” and the Cossacks and “Asiatics” who gave the Russian occupation the character of a “Tatar invasion.”39

The Russian occupations were in fact not all shooting and looting. Russian soldiers did commit acts of violence, but the authorities also sought to impress locals with their “sense of order and justice, spirit of hygiene and welfare, humanity, and culture.” Shortly after Czernowitz’s third liberation by the Austrians, the Allgemeine Zeitung related how the Russian authorities during their time in Czernowitz had gone out of their way to make an impression as “Überkulturmenschen.” The measures they took to prove their superiority to the Austrians included cleaning the city five times a day and fining barbers who failed to wear white robes.

37 Menczel, Als Geisel Nach Sibirien, 90-91.
39 Menczel, Als Geisel, 28.
None of this impressed the Austrophile editors, who likened the Russians’ efforts to appear civilized to “covering up a crust of dirt with French perfume.” With every invasion, they argued, “the masks fell” and the reality of Russian brutality came back into view. But _Kultur_ was not always the key to locals’ hearts. For much of Bukovina’s peasant population, _Kultur_ remained nothing but an irritation. Although they themselves fell victim to the chaos of war, peasants were glad to see the Russians in Czernowitz not in spite of but precisely because they did not seem to care much about school fines, taxes, and commercial regulations. Under the Russian administrations, the peasants were exempted from paying taxes and sending their children to school. They were also invited to help themselves to land confiscated from landowners who had fled the province. In the Kotzman district to the north of Czernowitz, the invading Russian troops not only spared Eastern Orthodox peasants the violence they inflicted on local Jews, but “even made them a gift of robbed goods and allowed the peasant population in many cases to take away undisturbed the belongings of others.” When the Austrian troops returned in February 1915, peasants in the Kotzman area were prepared to receive the Russians with open arms. Similar scenes played out in Czernowitz during the second Russian occupation. In January 1915, Georgii Bobrinski, the governor of occupied Galicia, promised a group of peasants who were brought to Czernowitz to welcome him on his visit that he would distribute among them the goods of the religious fund and Jewish property. According to Julius Weber, who recounted the episode in his memoir, the peasants in fact returned to Czernowitz one week later to reclaim the goods they had been promised.

Members of the lower classes, petty merchants, and smugglers benefitted even more from

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40 “Russische Verwaltungskomödie in Czernowitz,” _Czernowitzter Allgemeine Zeitung_, 26 August 1917.
41 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 24694/17 Febr 1917.
42 DACHO (Derzhavniy arkhiv Chernivetskoj oblasti, Chernivtsi), fond 3, opis 1, delo 12462/ 21 July 1915.
the obliteration of rules during the Russian occupations. Under the Russians, Czernowitz became – in the words of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* – an “Eldorado of commerce.” Small businesses thrived and individuals who barely made ends meet under normal circumstances became rich overnight.

What good was all the Austrian talk of cultural superiority to the shoemakers and tailors who made fabulous profits selling shoes and clothing to Russian officers and their families? Against the background of the food crisis in Austria, which forced the Austro-German authorities to requisition grain from locals, the inflow of sugar, flour, and coffee under the Russian occupation left locals “staring astonished.” Locals “traded and made business during the invasions such that whoever participated in this made great gains.”

Eduard Fischer, the head of the gendarmerie in Bukovina, reported in February 1917 that more luxury goods had been sold in Russian Czernowitz than everyday items. The buyers were, apparently, the “light-headed wives” of Russian officers who came to the newly annexed city to splurge. One of the most widely-sold articles during the Russian occupations was, according to Fischer, eau de cologne, “used by Russian soldiers as a replacement for alcohol, which was forbidden.”

Another report from September 1917 noted that Jewish merchants – the few who stayed behind after most prosperous Jews had left the province – were also sorry to see the Austrians returning to Bukovina. After the revolution, when the anti-Semitic tsarist occupation authorities left the province and former restrictions imposed on the Jews were lifted, Jewish merchants in Czernowitz could make a fortune.

Women also navigated the transition from Austrian rule to Russian occupation rather gracefully. As Fischer reported, thousands of peasant and lower-class women who lived on daily wages took Russian lovers and followed them into Russia when the armies retreated. In August 1917, as many as 292 women left with the Russian troops. More perplexingly, middle-class

45 AT-OeSTA/ AVA Inneres Mdl Präsidium A 2096, Zl 24694/17 February 1917.
46 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres Mdl Präsidium A 2096, Zl 18090/1917, 12 September 1917.
women with families also abandoned their homes. Fischer ascribed this “to the easy morals that were typical of this place [Czernowitz] in peacetime too, and on the other hand to the fact that Russians and especially officers impressed women with their gentlemanly behavior and rich gifts...”  

With the Russians, there also emerged in Czernowitz a “special hospital for female illnesses,” including “numerous venereal diseases.”

Unlike in the first occupation, on their second incursion into Bukovina the Russian troops pillaged, robbed, and murdered indiscriminately, thus alienating even those who awaited them with open arms. In the words of one Austrian official in Kotzman, the second time around the Russians “no longer differentiated between nationality and confession, between my things and your things, and the peasant population suffered not only materially but also morally and physically.” Moreover, people who had been sympathetic to the Russians and even aided them during their first occupation of the province now felt “Austrian again and shudder at the thought of being subjected to a new invasion.” In the Kotzman district alone, the hurricane of the second Russian invasion left in its wake hundreds of uninhabitable homes, victims of beatings and murders, and impoverished men and women whose cattle, furniture, money, and agricultural equipment had been taken away. The plunder varied in size: from village banks to the clothes on the bodies of locals who happened to be in the way. In one village in the Kotzman district, a Ruthenian priest lost his boots to the Russians, who “took it from his body by force.” Just like in Galicia, in Bukovina the Russian occupation authorities deported hundreds of locals into the Russian interior. A first wave of deportees included prominent Jewish personalities and former Austrian officials. More deportations took place during the second occupation. The Russian general staff had absolute control over who and when they would resettle. The Jews suffered the

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47 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, ZI 24694/17 February 1917.
48 AT-OeSTA/AVA, Inneres MdI Präsidium, A 2096, ZI 23741/ 3 December 1917.
49 DACHO, fond 3, op. 1, d. 12462, 21 July 1915.
worst from the deportations, as the military authorities suspected them of collaborating with the enemy and spying on Austria’s behalf.\textsuperscript{50} Of the 446 people deported from the Kotzman district during the second occupation, 331 were “Israelites,” 67 Greek-Orthodox, and 48 Catholic. In the Huzul mountain districts, where the Russians burned down houses and “tore [clothes] apart in front of their eyes and burnt expensive, irreplaceable goods,” local women began holding secret masses for the Kaiser.\textsuperscript{51}

As the war went on, the actions of the two great powers that clashed in Bukovina began to converge in unexpected ways. The Russians, whom the Austrophiles accused of barbarism, went out of their way to prove they were not merely cultured people but, as the \textit{Allgemeine Zeitung} put it, “Überkulturmenschen.” The Austrian occupation forces, for all their claims of cultural superiority, began to resemble the very barbarians they denounced. Before the war had even started, the Austrian authorities began taking increasingly desperate measures against Romanians and Ruthenians they suspected of disloyalty and irredentism. A great number of locals of both nationalities were put under surveillance, arrested, and punished without any proof of guilt. The usual suspects were Orthodox priests and teachers. All in all, up to 30,000 people ended up in the Thalerhof camp for political prisoners.\textsuperscript{52} On the other side of the border, Russian authorities were taking similarly drastic measures against the Ukrainians and Germans. In August 1914, the only Ukrainian-language publication in the Russian Empire was closed down. That same year, the Russian authorities also prohibited the celebration of the one-hundred-year

\textsuperscript{50} Peter Gatrell, \textit{A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I} (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1999). In the Russian Empire, Jews were not allowed to live within 50 kilometers of the western frontier because they were suspected of endangering security at the border. When they suffered military defeats, the high command was allowed to take harsh measures against Jews in the borderlands – they attacked individual Jews and confiscated their property, in retaliation for their losses.
\textsuperscript{51} AT-OeSTA/AVA, Nachlass Wassilko I, Karton I, Konvolut I, 1916.
\textsuperscript{52} Von Hagen, \textit{War in a European Borderland}, 11.
anniversary of the poet Taras Shevchenko. Although ethnic Germans served in the Russian army, the German language was officially banned when the war broke out and German newspapers and public gatherings prohibited. In Austria, the wave of persecutions grew with the outbreak of war. The authorities searched individuals with Slavic names and tracked down suspicious individuals – who were never in short supply. Inns, taverns, and coaches were perfect settings for denunciations. In July 1914, the Bukovina gendarmerie arrested a Romanian “theologian” on suspicion of espionage. The informers – his travel companions and the owner of an inn where the man stopped on his trip – suspected him for no other reason than that he looked out the window often, wished to visit Romanian priests in the neighborhood, and asked detailed questions about the activities of the army at the front. The man had already spent half a year in prison when the authorities decided that “officials without a juridical education” but “preoccupied by the good of the state had arrested him entirely by mistake.” Another Romanian, a gymnasium teacher, was interned in Thalerhof when the owner of an inn denounced him for saying that “Romania is for Russia and against Austria and Russia promised Bessarabia to Romania and we must go save our brothers in Transylvania.” Later investigations failed to reveal any evidence against him and the man was pardoned, although he lost his job nonetheless.

Stories of individuals unfairly suspected and punished were just what radical nationalists in Bukovina needed to prove to the world the incompetence, corruption, and ill will of Austrian

54 Gatrell, A Whole Empire Walking, 24.
55 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 7616/15 April 1915.
56 Ibid.
57 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 16594/23 November 1914, Encl in Zl 17231/3 December 1914.
58 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 17231/3 December 1914.
authorities towards their nationalities. Nationalist propagandists in the Old Kingdom also welcomed these stories. The mediators between these two spheres were the Romanian teachers, youth, and members of the intelligentsia who had left Bukovina for Romania during the war. In the estimate of Bukovina’s governor Graf von Meran, by April 1916 a total of 300 Romanians had fled to Romania. Almost all of them belonged to the intelligentsia: “the Romanian peasantry behaved beyond reproach while the Romanian intelligentsia fell short for the greatest part.”

One of the exiles was Ion Nistor, a professor of Romanian history at the university in Czernowitz who was rewarded for his patriotism with a position at the university in Bucharest as soon as he crossed the border. Gavril Rotica, a teacher and passionate nationalist, also fled to Romania. The path to Romania was one of no return for those who left. All teachers who left were banned from teaching again. To Governor Meran, it seemed extraordinary that anyone should wish to take “such a grave step so light-heartedly.” In retrospect, the phenomenon seemed inexplicable except as a result of a lack of “state feeling” among teachers and youth due to the excessive nationalization of schools and the privileging of “national feeling” over patriotic education. For the same reasons, Meran believed that young people were unwilling to serve their fatherland on the front.

From the other side of the border, the exiles launched diatribes against the monarchy, exposing real and imaginary injustices committed against the Romanian nation. One of the loudest voices was the Romanian journalist Ion Gramada, who upon landing in Bucharest launched a press war against the pro-Austrian Romanians who stayed behind in Bukovina. In a series of incendiary articles, Gramada accused the Austrian authorities of using the war as a pretext to persecute Romanians through charges of espionage and treason, arbitrary arrests, and

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59 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/26-29, 1 April 1916, 8.
60 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/26-29, 19 March 1916, 5.
61 Ibid.
random deportations to internment camps. Gramada listed the names of Romanians who had
been arrested by the Austrians – in his own words, “not for stealing or crimes but for expressing
the opinion that the time had come to return Bukovina to Romania.”\(^{62}\)

The Austrian authorities could not publicly deny Gramada’s stories because, as it turned
out, no one person in Bukovina and beyond knew exactly how many people had been arrested
and on whose orders. From the Kriegsueberwachungsamt, the investigations proceeded to the
ministry of defense, the military commando in Lemberg, and the field courts in Miskolcz and
Besztercze. The bungle, caused by the lack of coordination between the civilian and military
authorities, discredited the Austrians both in the eyes of the Romanian public and those of locals
in Bukovina. In response to Gramada’s article in the Bucharest newspaper Dimineata, in October
1914 governor Meran reported to the ministry of interior that a great number of Romanians had
indeed been arrested on military orders, although the precise number was unknown. Several
individuals listed by Gramada among the arrested could not be tracked down at all. As for the
other arrests, they included a Romanian priest from a Ruthenian community suspected of
treason, another priest who had been overheard by a Jewish woman asking a peasant for
information about the situation on the front, and a group of peasants who had gone over to the
Russian side during the battle of August 23. Meran also admitted that the gendarmerie and
military officials who had carried out the arrests did not always treat the accused with the respect
they deserved before their guilt had been proved. One case stood out in particular: that of a
Romanian priest who had been arrested and chained together with a Gypsy. This story proved
true, to Meran’s embarrassment, though the governor made sure to point out that at the time
these incidents happened, the local population did not react negatively. On the contrary, some

\(^{62}\) AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 14619/23 October 1914, contains a German translation of
Ion Gramada’s original article in Dimineata’s issue from 2 September 1914, “Verfolgung der Bukowinaer
Rumaenen.”
people were “so exasperated by the priests that when they were arrested, they insulted them.”63

After several months of going back and forth between different military and civilian authorities, several other individuals whose whereabouts had been lost were finally dug up: one man who had been arrested on charges of espionage in August 1914 was in Thalerhof; another had been arrested for welcoming the Russian troops and then released; yet another had been imprisoned and months later found not guilty.64

The Austrian authorities were further discredited by their own administrative incompetence and failure to curb the violence of their own troops and that of their German allies. These blunders compromised them in the eyes of a local population that was, if not always devotedly patriotic and loyal, at least well-disposed towards the Central Powers – especially after the “cold shower” of the second Russian invasion. Locals who experienced one occupation after another drew their own comparisons: the Austro-German troops did not come off well. In a letter to Koko Wassilko,65 who had fled to Vienna – the wartime center of the Ukrainian national movement in Galicia and Bukovina, the Ukrainian politician Hieroteus Pihuliak complained in June 1915 that back home “Hungarian, Croat, Polish legionaries and even Germans from the Reich outdo each other in damages, destruction, and bullying.”66 The indiscriminate brutality of the allied troops worked to the Russians’ benefit. By comparison, the Russians seemed to have behaved more mildly. They pressured the rich, especially the Jews and wheedled the masses by

63 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium, A 2096, ZI 14618/23 October 1914.
64 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium, ZI 3262/13 February 1915. The men in question were Giurumia, arrested in August 1914 and imprisoned in Thalerhof after being deported to Brunn; Usatiuk arrested in August 1914 for welcoming the Russian troops in Rarancze and then released; Lițu, arrested for high treason and Jitariu arrested in July 1914 and then released in January 1915 after interrogations.
65 This was the name given to Nikolai Wassilko (later Mykola Vasylko) (1868-1924). Originally from an ethnic Romanian family, Wassilko became the most prominent Ruthenian (Ukrainian) politician in Austrian Bukovina. Wassilko was a deputy in the provincial Diet and a member of the Imperial parliament in Vienna. At first he was a member of the Old Ruthenian party and then came to represent the Liberal Alliance and the Ukrainian National Democratic Party.
66 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, 24 June 1915.
giving them gifts (robbed goods).” On its return to Bukovina, the Austrian military behaved as though they were operating in enemy territory. Soldiers were given the freedom to destroy whatever they liked. In the northern districts, inhabited mostly by Ruthenians, the troops burned fences, trampled meadows, and stole everything – down to the last cow and horse. In the most prosperous Huzul community, a village named Moldawa, only one man still owned a wagon and two horses by 1915. As for the military officials responsible for the requisitionings, Pihuliak reported that they had no interest in the sufferings of the local population. In particular, Pihuliak singled out the Etappenoberst in Moldawa, who was supposedly “very angry and cares about nothing at all but giving the Jewesses who work at the post office diamond rings as gifts.” None of the civilian authorities, not even the governor, could put an end to the haphazard behavior of the military, as military orders overrode all other decisions. Pihuliak’s lamentations were not the only ones to reach Wassilko in Vienna. In March that year, a desperate letter arrived from Seletin, notifying Wassilko that Huzuls were starving – not under the Russians, but under the Austrian administration. The food crisis was so grave that in some areas the gendarmes had to confiscate potatoes from landowners and distribute them among the population - “many poor devils ate the potatoes raw.”

As the food crisis deepened and the Austrians became increasingly dependent on their German allies, their popularity dropped still further. On returning to Bukovina after the third Russian occupation, in 1917, the Austro-German troops requisitioned food from locals, often haphazardly and against official regulations. Locals who were relieved to see the Austrians returning were quickly disenchanted when sub-officers and soldiers – especially German ones – who were unauthorized to requisition food did so anyway, adding insult to injury by calling

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67 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton I, Konvolut 1, June 1915.
68 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton I, Konvolut 1, 22 March 1915.
locals “traitors who do not deserve any protection.” What became of the requisitioned food and goods was unclear, as the soldiers who confiscated them did not give receipts or report to the treasury [Operationskassen]. This plunder caused – in the words of the head of the gendarmerie Eduard Fischer – a “great feeling of insecurity about one’s possessions.” By February 1917, when Fischer submitted his report on the situation, Austrian military commanders were making an effort to reinstitute order among the troops. Even so, locals continued to complain about the behavior of the German troops, who made a mockery of the requisitionings by taking away “half-ripe corn, throw[ing] corn and wheat to the horses as fodder, and sometimes even releas[ing] horses into fields of oats, corn, wheat, and clover causing great damages without any particular reason.” These haphazard confiscations embittered peasants so much that “today they say openly that they were treated incomparably better under Russian rule.”

As the Monarchy became increasingly reliant on German support both in its military operations and in procuring food for the population and troops, the Germans began to undercut orders issued by Austrian authorities in occupied or liberated territories. The overall effect of these tensions between the allies regarding the local population was confusion and distrust of all authorities. As Fischer put it, peasants in Bukovina “do not know who governs today: the Austrian officials or the German commanders.” Locals had every reason to be confused. In some communities, German military officials tore down announcements posted by the Austrian civilian authorities. In others, they put up posters forbidding the population to sell food to Austrian troops. The brutal requisitionings and the conflict between the authorities exacerbated the food crisis. Robbed from both left and right, peasants stopped cultivating their land: “they explain that their efforts and worries which they put into working their soil were in vain because everything was taken from them by German

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69 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, ZI 24694/1917.
soldiers over the course of a few days and destroyed.”

_The Nationalities Question_

“Multilingualism has disappeared and so has the conflict between the nationalities… from the diverse millions suddenly a tight, unitary mass has emerged, forgetting its language squabbles because now they know only one language – the language of arms for the Kaiser and the empire” – so the _Czernowitzer Tagblatt_ wrote on August 5, 1914 barely one week after Austria declared war on Serbia. Starry-eyed as these words might sound in retrospect, they captured the hopes with which both Austria-Hungary and Russia went into the war. Both powers approached the war as a potential cure to the national squabbles that threatened their stability. Russia and Austria-Hungary fought each other not only on the battlefield, but also by sowing discontent among each other’s nationalities and courting the favor of national groups that were displeased with their current status in the enemy empire. From the outset, all the belligerents issued proclamations and made promises to liberate the oppressed nationalities from each other’s rule. These liberation missions, of course, facilitated their own expansion into enemy territory. On September 16, 1914, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich published a manifesto to the peoples of Austria-Hungary, promising to fulfill all their “national desires.” Leaflets and pamphlets bearing similar messages began circulating around Bohemia, Moravia, Bukovina, and Galicia that month. The Duke also authored a special appeal to the Poles, promising to reward them for their loyalty with a greater, united Polish kingdom under Russian rule after the war. In turn, the German and Austrian Foreign and War Ministries tried to weaken Russian power by stirring

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70 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, ZI 24694/17 February 1917.
71 “Neues,” _Czernowitzer Tagblatt_, 5 August 1914.
72 Zeman, _The Break Up of the Habsburg Empire_, 53.
national uprisings and revolutions on Russian territory. The Austrian authorities were especially interested in Ukrainian irredentist organizations and the destabilizing potential of their propaganda efforts on Russian territory. The nationalities caught between the great powers and their promises of national liberation suffered, as Mark von Hagen put it, “consequences from conflicts over their loyalties.” But the war also gave national leaders the chance to put into action ideas that had been impracticable only months before.

National leaders in Bukovina were not mere pawns in the Great Power game, but fully cognizant players who seized the new opportunities created by the war to pursue their own goals. Their power over their own fate and that of the nationalities they represented was, of course, limited. Yet, nationalists made the best of it. They turned the rhetoric of national liberation employed by both powers to their own advantage, seizing on the promises that Austrian and Russian authorities made in exchange for their support and collaboration. Even more significantly, they translated their own claims into the language of great power competition and state interests. They mixed effusive declarations of loyalty with subtle threats that, should their demands not be met, their national groups might be tempted by offers made by the enemy.

Nikolai von Wassilko, or Mykola Vasylko as the ethnically Romanian “Ruthenian” politician from Bukovina came to be known in the Ukrainian world, spoke this language well. In the midst of the anti-Russophile campaigns prior to the outbreak of war, Wassilko reassured the authorities in Vienna that both Romanians and Ruthenians in Bukovina had no desire to “exchange the good Austrian administration (…) for tsarist slavery.” At the same time, Wassilko dropped hints that, insofar as the Russophile movement held any appeal among Ruthenians in Galicia and Bukovina, Austria was not entirely without fault. As he put it in a speech in the Reichsrat in 1912, Austrian

73 Sukiennicki, *East Central Europe during World War I*, 92.
74 Von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland*.
75 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, Konvolut 2.
policies of “neglect, contempt, and oppression of the Ruthenian people” had thrown many Ruthenians into Russia’s arms. As the war drew closer, Wassilko’s appeals to the authorities became increasingly explicit. In May 1914, Wassilko pleaded in the Reichsrat for a rapid solution to the “rightful demand” that Ruthenians in Bukovina were making for a separate Orthodox bishopric, noting that as the Russian government supported Russophile Romanian priests in Bukovina, the natural thing for Austria to do would be to take the Ruthenians under its wing. “We never asked for Russia’s help,” Wassilko reassured the Austrian authorities, “and also in our future in Austria we have no wish from Russia except that it does not disturb us (…) in our cultural and economic development (…) under the protection of the Austrian constitution.”

Just as the belligerent powers came to speak the language of national rights, national leaders learned to identify their own cause with those of the states to which they appealed for support. Eager to benefit from the anti-Russian elements of the Ukrainian movement, the authorities in Vienna and Berlin offered Ukrainian nationalists not only encouragement but also financial backing. On August 4, 1915, a group of Russian Ukrainian émigrés formed the Union of Liberation of Ukraine in Lemberg. In May 1915, the General Ukrainian National Council emerged in Vienna. In exchange for the support they received from the Central Powers, the two organizations offered to send Ukrainian volunteers to join the imperial and royal troops at the front. The Austrian authorities also hoped to benefit from the propaganda these organizations would carry out among Ukrainians in Austria and on enemy territory, and among prisoners of

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66 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, Konvolut 2. Speech in the Reichsrat from 8 October 1912, XLVI Session, 9 Sitzung, Wien.
69 Von Hagen, War in a European Borderland. The Union of Liberation offered to send to the front up to 8,000 Ukrainian volunteers to fight on the Central Powers’ side. Ukrainian politicians in Galicia also created a volunteer Ukrainian legion on the Polish model: 2,000 legionaries swore loyalty to the Austrian Emperor in September 1914 and joined the imperial and royal troops.
Nikolai von Wassilko played an important role in these developments. Having fled from Czernowitz to Vienna on the eve of the first Russian invasion, Wassilko joined the other Ukrainian politicians who formed the General Ukrainian National Council in 1915. As a deputy head of the Council, Wassilko called for territorial autonomy for all Ukrainians within Austrian borders. A document on the “Ukrainian question” composed by the General Ukrainian Council in June 1916 noted that “Galicia and Bukovina must be tied to the state even more profoundly and tightly than before,” since the “solution to the national problem in the north-east will bring with it the national-political strengthening and consolidation of the monarchy.” As the Council framed it, the new arrangement would benefit the Monarchy above all, as the Ukrainian question and the stability of the empire were inextricable. Bukovina and Galicia – so the authors of the document argued – could be either a source of stability or of problems for Austria-Hungary. The Ukrainians there would be a bulwark against Russia if the Austrian authorities ensured that all their needs were being met: “Galicia and Bukovina are politically worthy to Russia only when the Ukrainians in these lands are powerless.” To empower the Ukrainians, the Council suggested the following measures: exchanging the official appellation of “Ruthenians” with “Ukrainians”; opening a Ukrainian university in Lemberg; counteracting Galicia’s tendency towards autonomy and domination by Poles; supporting Ukrainian schools; fostering economic life in conquered territories inhabited by Ukrainians; and, interestingly enough, also making German the official language of the state in Austria.

By contrast, Romanians in Bukovina courted the tsarist Russian occupation authorities, as

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80 Von Hagen, War in a European Borderland. While the Ukrainian National Council worked to counter the Russification policies introduced by the Russian occupation authorities in Galicia and Bukovina, the Union of Liberation of Ukraine was encouraged to carry out national propaganda in areas of Russian Ukraine occupied by the German and Austrian armies, and among prisoners of war.

81 Sukienicki, East Central Europe, 113.


83 Ibid., 12.
their policies aligned well with Romanian interests. In Czernowitz especially, the Russian occupations amounted to a social revolution that opened the way for ethnic Romanians to climb into positions previously occupied by German speakers. The night that Bukovina’s new civilian governor Evreinov arrived in Czernowitz, the former Austrian mayor Theodor Weissenberger was awoken from his sleep, told to take “warm clothes and money,” and then deported to Siberia together with other city notables. With the German-speaking elites out of the way, the Romanians were free at last to take over the city administration. On Evreinov’s instructions, the former municipal council was replaced with a new city administration consisting mostly of Romanians: Titus von Onciul, Hakmann, Scalat, and the forester Welehorski. The mayor – for the first time in a long while – was Romanian too: Themistocles Bocancea, a middle-aged lawyer who had been forced to flee to Russia together with the Russophile Alexei Gerovski, whom he defended during Gerovski’s trial for high treason in 1914. The first Russian occupation gave Bocancea the chance not only to return home but also to secure a good position under Russian protection. An Austrian report from 1915 noted that Bocancea’s actions had been motivated “by no means by political convictions, but rather by material reasons (…) and in order to maintain his position, he became a spineless instrument of the Russian government and a terror for the population, especially for the Jews, to whom he denied all rights.” But nationalist convictions could lead to the opportunism and so-called “spinelessness” that Austrian officials ascribed to “material reasons.” 1912 found Modest Skalat protesting the oppression of Romanians in the Russian Empire and declaring that “Romanians in Bukovina are in the best position, for their full

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84 Julius Weber, Russentage in Czernowitz, 34.
85 This was the new civilian governor of Bukovina, previously a vice-governor in Kishinev.
86 Julius Weber, Russentage in Czernowitz.
national freedom and development are granted by the law. By 1914, Scalat was saying just the opposite. Now that the Austrians were gone and the Russians offered him a position as a city magistrate, Scalat threatened that Bukovina would go over to Romania and the Romanians would soon be in charge. “You hope that the Austrians come back,” he would say, “but that is out of the question, Austria is in tatters, Austria is lost, now we (Russians together with Romanians) will rule here.” First Austrophile, then Russophile, Scalat ended up a victim of his own flexibility. On returning to Czernowitz, the Austrian authorities put him on trial for collaboration with the Russians.

Those individuals who put themselves at the disposal of the Russian authorities – whether for material reasons or purely out of conviction – did not merely execute orders, but became fully complicit in the policies of the occupation regime. Before the Russian troops arrived in Czernowitz in September 1914, Konstantin Hostiuc, the son of a Romanian priest with a “passion for games,” was secretary of the provincial committee and a member of Czernowitz’s municipal council. After the Austrians withdrew from Czernowitz for the second time in October, Hostiuc could not resist Bocancea’s offer to make him the head of tax administration. Hostiuc went above and beyond his responsibilities to demonstrate his loyalty to the Russians: for instance, he removed all Austrian symbols and emblems from the city. Like Hostiuc, Robert Vitek – a Czech nationalist from Moravia, married to the daughter of a Russophile teacher in Czernowitz and dreaming of Czech independence – worked enthusiastically for the occupation regime. As soon as news of Russian victories came from the front, Vitek and his friends Johann Roman, Tertio Tonioni, and Hans Fischer “shook hands and celebrated the good news with

88 DACHO, fond 10, opis 1, delo 846, 26 May 1912, ll. 65-66.
89 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/76-77, 16 April 1918, 5.
90 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/76-77, 16 April 1918.
champagne.” Nationalism, material interests, fears and dislikes of one’s neighbors all converged to make collaboration with the Russian occupiers appealing. As an assistant to the Russian police, Johann Roman, a Greek-Catholic from Seret, could blackmail people he disliked with deportation to Siberia. Tertio Tonioni, an Italian who had been living in Czernowitz for many years, became head inspector of the Russian secret police in the second occupation not least because this allowed him to plunder the city to his heart’s content. Hans Klemens Fischer offered his services to the Russians because he “ran into debt” and feared imprisonment. When the Russians occupied Czernowitz for the third time in June 1916, the new civilian governor General Fedor Trepov named Robert Vitek mayor. Vitek organized anti-Austrian marches through the city and renamed the Rathausstrasse in Czernowitz General Lichitsky in honor of the Russian “liberation” of the city. Vitek and his circle did not go unrewarded: the city administration was practically their fiefdom and the money poured into their pockets.

After February 1917, it was the Ukrainians in Bukovina who benefited the most from the policies of the new occupation regime – though all nationalities “found open doors and a listening ear among the Russian authorities and officials.” Once the ban on the Ukrainian language was lifted and the Provisional Government formally “abolished national and religious discrimination,” Ukrainians – not just Russophiles – could envision achieving their national ambitions within the framework of the Russian Empire. In March, Governor Trepov was

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92 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 23741/December 1917.
93 Ibid. Another one of Vitek’s initiatives was to build a cemetery for Russian soldiers in the middle of the city “in gratitude and appreciation of the [Russian] liberation from under the Austrian yoke.”
94 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 23741/3 December 1917. As mayor, Vitek gave himself a yearly income of 9600 rubles and an additional 2400 rubles as a supplement; he surrounded himself with his friends, whom he named advisors and put in charge of requisitionings.
95 Ibid.
96 Sukiennicki, East Central Europe, 304. Ihor Kamenetsky, “Krushevskyi and the Central Rada,” in The Ukraine. In March, socialists moved from the Soviet into the government and took over foreign policy. The new ministry of interior removed all former governors and replaced them with chairmen of self-governments (Zemstvos) as
replaced with a new regional commissar: Dmytro Doroshenko, a Ukrainian nationalist and a
believer in a federal solution to the Ukrainian problem. As soon as he landed in Czernowitz,
Doroshenko took the Ukrainian intelligentsia under his wing. To the alarm of local Romanians,
the new governor treated Bukovina as though it were Ukrainian territory – and the Ukrainians
took the message to heart, switching allegiances from the Austrians to the Russians. Under
Doroshenko’s administration, Vitek and the Romanian elites protected by the tsarist
administration were ousted and replaced with Ukrainian activists. Shortly after the revolution in
Petrograd, members of the city council that had been dissolved by the tsarist authorities in July
1916 and representatives of the All-Russian Union of Zemstvos – a welfare institution that came
to Czernowitz with the occupation authorities – gathered in the German house in Czernowitz to
elect a food supply committee.97 Under the presidency of Professor Bahry, a Ukrainian
nationalist from Kiev, the Czernowitz branch of the Union of Zemstvos distributed both food and
Ukrainian propaganda.98 In April, the supply committee met again: this time it proclaimed itself
a “great citizens’ committee” and took the city hall by assault, ordering Vitek to leave.
Originally, the meeting was supposed to put the city administration in the hands of Ukrainians
and make Ukrainian the sole language of official communication.99 Though these plans never
came to fruition, the Ukrainians did obtain a privileged position as mediators between the
Russian authorities and the rest of the local population. Ukrainian activists who came to

commissioners of the Provisional Government. On April 2, 1917 the Provisional Government formally abolished
national and religious discrimination. Already from the early days of the revolution the Ukrainian national
movement grew by the day. There were demonstrations in Kiev and a Central Ukrainian Rada was quickly formed.
On April 19, 1917 the Rada proclaimed the territorial autonomy of Ukraine. Eventually the Provisional Government
recognized the formation of a Ukrainian General Secretariat. The Rada proclaimed itself the Ukrainian People’s
Republic when the provisional government fell, on November 19, 1917, but it did not wish complete separation
from Russia.

97 Thanks to Vitek and his protégés, who had been peddling confiscated goods to Russian and Galician merchants,
Czernowitz was in the throes of a food crisis. To alleviate it, the meeting decided to form a food supply committee
that would sell food against ration cards for cheaper prices.


99 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Z1 23741/3 December 1917. In May 1917 Doroshenko was
replaced with another Ukrainian activist Oleksandro Lotoskij.

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Czernowitz with the new occupation authorities encouraged their co-nationals to “join their brothers in Russia to fulfill the ideals of a free Ukraine.”

Although the majority of “urban Ruthenians” remained rather indifferent – according to the Austrian police director – the revolutionary regime did more to attach the borderlands inhabited by Ukrainians to the empire than the tsarist authorities had ever dreamed of doing.

The frequent changes in occupation regimes, each with its own “national liberation” mission and nationality policies, added a new dimension to older tensions between Bukovina’s nationalities. The frictions that came out of the war were deeper and harder to contain than the pre-war conflicts between nationalists vying for resources and favor with the Austrian administration. By the end of 1917, not only national leaders but the broader masses of the population had scores to settle with each other. This was because the occupation authorities rewarded and punished individuals based on their nationality, assuming their membership in a certain national group to reveal their loyalties. Another reason was that the Austrian and Russian occupation regimes relied on denunciations by locals to track down collaborators with the enemy. When the Russian troops returned in November 1914, Governor Evreinov accused the Jews of “celebrating the withdrawal of Russian troops from Czernowitz, burning the Russian flag, mocking Russian institutions.” As punishment, the Jewish community was expected to pay a contribution of 50,000 rubles and six Jewish representatives were taken hostage. A committee formed to collect money but since “all the wealthier Jews left Czernowitz” together with the Austrian administration they were unable to gather more than 1000 crowns.

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100 Ibid., 23. The revolution also gave a new impulse to the Polish national movement: Russian Poles came over to Czernowitz, came into contact with local ones, organized new organizations to promote the freedom and independence of Poland and organize meetings and events.

101 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres Mdl Präsidium, Zl 23741/3 December 1917.


103 CAHJP (Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem), HM 2/8594, 4 February 1914.
Jews failed to pay, another thirty people were taken hostage. The Russian authorities also invited locals to give declarations about the “brutalities” committed by the Austrian administration on its return to Bukovina and finger “collaborators.” This gave those who had been denounced on a previous occupation a chance to take revenge on their informers. Aleksandr Strelchiuk, a thirty-four-year-old Orthodox peasant from Glubokaya, described in his declaration how more than 150 “Russian peasants” were arrested by the Austrian gendarmerie in October 1914 and four of them hanged on lampposts to scare villagers. According to Strelchiuk, the informers had been Jews and ethnic Germans who resented the peasants who welcomed the Russian troops and pointed them toward Jewish homes. Aleksandr Skibnevskyi, a middle-aged Polish landowner from Glubokaya who came under suspicion for pro-Austrian sentiments, also proved his loyalty by naming local Jews who turned in Christian peasants to the Austrians.

When the Austrians returned, they drew up their own lists of collaborators. Only a few of them were arrested and put on trial, as most had already fled across the border together with the Russian troops.

Christian-Jewish relations in Bukovina deteriorated rapidly during the war. The first two Russian occupations gave popular anti-Semitism a new impulse. The Russian authorities encouraged local Christians to give free rein to their old resentment and hatred of the Jews. The

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104 CAHJP, HM 2/8594, 15 July 1915. Julius Weber, *Die Russentage in Czernowitz*, 63. In Weber’s account, governor Evreinov arrived in Czernowitz in December and Lavrentiev, the general commander of the Russian troops in Bukovina, came on November 28. Weber says that Evreinov asked the provisional mayor Dr Hostiuc to summon twenty notable Jews – while a report from the Jewish community in Romania says the military governor summoned Jews in the “public square” and made them pay 50,000 rubles and then took 7 hostages. A letter to the Alliance Israelite from Bucharest mentions that the Jews were gathered on November 29 (the letter is dated 16 December 1914; Weber says Hostiuc took his new position on December 5 and then summoned the Jews). Both dates are possible but here I choose to go with Weber’s account.

105 DAChO, fond 283, opis 1, delo 4.

106 „Die dritte Invasion von Czernowitz,“ *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 August 1917. The third Russian occupation, after the February revolution was quite different in this respect. Shortly before the withdrawal of the Russian troops, the Russophile Alexei Gerowski returned to Czernowitz and attempted together with Vitek and his circle to stage a pogrom. But the new city administration prevented it and Doroshenko had Gerovski and his friends arrested and deported to Russia.
traces left by these policies could still be seen in October 1917, after the withdrawal of the
Russian troops, when the Austrian governor on a tour around Bukovina noticed that the houses
of peasants had been largely spared, while those of Jews who had fled during the war had been
burnt to ashes. The tsarist military authorities were notoriously anti-Semitic: they typically
blamed Jews for their failures at the front and suspected them of spying for the enemy. Russian
soldiers were given a free hand to brutalize and rob the Jewish populations they encountered in
occupied territories. In Bukovina too, Jews were deported, robbed, beaten, murdered, and
subjected to countless humiliations. In the Kotzman district, Russian troops took “some Jewish
families from certain communities and chased them like a herd towards the firing line which ran
right outside Szypenitz.” Hundreds of Jews fled the invading Russian troops. In the middle of
winter, they ran towards the Romanian border with little more than the clothes on their backs. A
Bucharest representative of the Alliance Israelite described the “innumerable women, old men
and children shaking from cold [and] begging to be let in across the frontier to take refuge in
Romania” – with no result, as the Bucharest authorities only accepted refugees who could prove
that they had plans to leave the country as soon as they had arrived. The anti-Semitic policies
of the Russian occupation regime were compounded by the thirst for revenge of local Romanians
and Ruthenians. Already in April 1915, only a few months after the Austrians had returned to
Bukovina, the atmosphere was ripe for a reckoning with the Jews. A Ukrainian teacher from
Wizenka wrote to Nikolai von Wassilko that “it is not impossible that the people should soon
reckon with the ‘patriots,’ as they deserve.” According to him, many “innocent Ukrainians”
had been deported to Hungary after a deputation of Jews presented the Austrian army with a list

107 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 20914/24 October 1917.
108 DACChO, fond 3, opis 1, delo 12462, July 1915.
109 CAHJP, HM 2/8594, 1 December 1914.
110 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, Konvolut 1, 8 April 1915, 5.
“our poor people and explained that the Ukrainian population is friendly towards the Russians and fraternized with them, the best proof of this being that they received soup, meat, and potatoes from the Russians.” The brutalities inflicted by the Russian authorities on the Jewish population on their return to the province legitimized them in the eyes of the peasant population.

The Austrian authorities, on the other hand, lost the respect of the local Christian population by being – at least in the opinion of many Romanians and Ruthenians – too lenient towards the Jews. Austrian officials, above all the head of the gendarmerie Eduard Fischer, were reputed to prioritize the interests of the Jewish community. Romanians and Ruthenians thought it a supreme injustice that the Austrian administration should trust Jews more than Christians. That Jews should be taken seriously seemed scandalous to the Romanian politician Serbu, who believed the Jews did nothing for Austria’s war effort except denounce Christians and waste time in Viennese cafes. When Serbu came under surveillance in May 1915 for “unpatriotic activities and espionage,” he was convinced that “Jewish speculators – so-called high patriots” had spread false rumors about him. In a biting letter to the governor, Serbu threatened that if the authorities did not set him free he would “have nothing left to do but follow my brave, self-sacrificing colleagues [the Jews] to Vienna in order to play ‘war tarot,’ there in the coffee houses.”

A Ukrainian man from Seletin, writing to Wassilko earlier that year, thought it “laughable” and foolish that an Austrian general stationed there regularly should take two Jewish women for rides in his car and “kiss them with pleasure on their fresh beautiful faces and when he meets them in the village, he plays the knight and kisses their hands – isn’t it nice?” The question was rhetorical. The author went on to complain about the humiliations suffered by Ukrainians who had sacrificed themselves at the front only to see all the laurels and decorations go to General

111 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, Konvolut 1, 8 April 1915, 3.
112 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIII/56-62, 20 May 1915, 4-5.
113 AT-OeSTA/AVA Nachlässe, AN Wassilko I, Karton 1, April 1915.
Fischer’s Jewish “chancellery staff” instead. Anti-Semitism became the stuff of anti-Austrian propaganda. A letter from Jassy, signed with the pseudonym “Jeremie” and received by the War Ministry in June 1915, claimed that Bukovinian Romanians had fled to Romania to escape the “Jewified monarchy.” Jeremie accused the Austrian authorities of favoring Jews over Christians by granting them exemptions from military service and giving them the best teaching positions in Czernowitz – all of this to keep the German language in a dominant position.

The war and occupations generated new conflicts not only between nationalities but also within national communities. To be sure, the discriminatory policies of the Austrian and Russian occupation regimes gave cohesion to the nationalities they targeted, but they still failed to create monolithic national camps. The war presented individuals with new choices that caused new disagreements to emerge between members of the same national group. Romanians in Bukovina were faced with the choice of fulfilling their national ambitions within the framework of empire and remaining loyal to Austria, or crossing the border into Romania and joining their co-nationals there. Decisions were not always informed by national imperatives, but also by professional and material considerations. Youth who feared mobilization and teachers who were struggling on meager salaries were among the first to flee to Romania. Fervent nationalists – people like Ion Nistor or Gramada – also went into exile. But many more stayed behind. They not only refused to go but actively combated the anti-Austrian propaganda disseminated by their co-nationals in exile across the border. The Romanian newspaper Viata Noua in Czernowitz rejected Gramada’s allegations in the Bucharest press. The head of the Romanian national party in Bukovina Euseb Popovici and the delegate Zurcan officially denied Gramada’s allegations. In

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114 Ibid., 5.
115 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 11352/3 June 1915. Also Zl 13543/30 June 1915. Eventually, the letter ended up in the hands of Bukovina’s governor, who confirmed that, while the numbers of deserters reported by the letter were a wild exaggeration, “there have been some grievances with respect to teachers in Czernowitz” and “a great number of Jews have tried by all means to evade their military duty.”
return, Gramada accused the Austrian authorities in Bukovina of staging articles in the patriotic press and getting them “written with the gendarmes behind one’s back.” Nevertheless, he admitted that Romanians in Bukovina and their co-nationals in the Old Kingdom were divided by a “deep abyss” caused by “the fact that we do not know each other and we make no effort either to get to know each other.” In response, the Viata Noua reassured readers that Romanians in Bukovina felt nothing but love for the Kaiser – as evidenced by the “hundreds of volunteers who actively demand to be taken to the battlefield.” All exaggerations aside, there was some truth in this. In October, governor Graf von Meran reported that Gramada’s “treasonous disposition” was rare among Romanians in Bukovina: “the people in the Romanian parts of the province are patriotic, they have faith and hope for the Kaiser and speak of him with great respect and childlike love.”

The disagreements began in the months leading up to the outbreak of war, when the nationalist Cultural League in the Old Kingdom intensified its propaganda against Austria-Hungary, concentrating its efforts on “saving” oppressed Romanians in Transylvania and Bukovina. As it transpired, not all Romanians wanted to be saved. In April 1914, in an article in the Czernowitzer Tagblatt, Romulus Reut – a Romanian delegate in the provincial diet –

116 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 14618/23 October 1914, Copy of the ‘Verfolgung der Bukowiner Rumaenen,” from Dimineața, 2 September 1914.
117 Ibid.
118 AT-OeSTA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 14618/23 October 1914, Enclosed article from Viata Noua, 27 September 1914.
119 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 14619/23 October 1914.
120 Liga Culturala pentru unitatea tuturor Romanilor [Cultural League for the Unity of all Romanians] came into being in 1891 as “one of the most important avenues for constructing national ideals in the cultural realm and connecting them to a political agenda.” Under the leadership of historian Nicolae Iorga, the Cultural League became very active. Its members included intellectuals from both the Old Kingdom and on the other side of the Carpathians. Their propagandistic and nationalist activities were intensified after 1914, when they sponsored the defection from Austria-Hungary of a number of Romanian writers. Maria Bucur, “Romania: War, Occupation, Liberation,” in European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda 1914-1918, eds. Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (Cambridge University Press).
dismissed the Cultural League’s propaganda as a tactical error and a product of Russian-French propaganda. In Reut’s view, Romanians should fear not Austria-Hungary and Germany but Russia – which the Cultural League now applauded for treating Romanians in Bessarabia more justly than the Austrians did Romanians in Bukovina. He believed the misconception stemmed from Romania’s recent victory in the Balkan wars, which had swayed public opinion from a pro-Central Powers position to a pro-Russian one. Even so, Reut wrote, nobody could deny that Romanians in Bukovina had nothing to complain about: “During my three-year service as delegate I myself turned in many Romanian petitions to the state administration and it never happened that such a petition was not accepted.”\textsuperscript{122} In short, Reut concluded, “there is no system aiming at gagging the Romanian language.”\textsuperscript{123} Aurel Onciul\textsuperscript{124} also expressed his disapproval of the Cultural League and its claims of speaking on behalf of all Romanians: “For us Bukovina Romanians, any intervention of the Cultural League in our affairs is absolutely undesirable.”\textsuperscript{125} A Romanian nationalist, Onciul could not envision his ambitions fulfilled except within the framework of Austria-Hungary. “The existence of our entire nation,” Onciul wrote, “depends on the existence of a powerful Austria-Hungary.”\textsuperscript{126} Even those Romanians who were less effusive in declaring their loyalty to the Monarchy felt that nationalist propagandists across the border were arguing about the wrong things and ignoring the “rightful and well-grounded” complaints of Romanians in Bukovina.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{122} Romulus Reut, “Die rumänische Kulturliga und die österreichischen Rumänen,” Czernowitz Tagblatt, 12 April 1914.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{124} Aurel Onciul (1864-1921), who appeared in the previous chapter, was a lawyer by profession and the general director of the Insurance Society of Moravia in Brünn. He was a member of the Imperial parliament in Vienna and then also a member of the provincial diet in Bukovina. He was the representative of the Romanian democratic faction within the Liberal Alliance [Progressive Alliance] and head of the Romanian Democratic Party.  
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{127} “Stimmen unserer Rumänen,” Bukowinaer Post, 5 April 1914.
More than five thousand Romanian peasants from all over Bukovina gathered outside the Johannes Novi monastery in Suczawa on November 22, 1914. The organizer was Aurel Onciul, who hoped the event would make a strong impression on the anti-Austrian public in Romania. The ceremony began dramatically: the peasants flung their hats in the air and shouted “Long live our Kaiser!” Then there were speeches. One of them, read by a mayor, pleaded with the Romanian King to fight on the side of Austro-Hungary: “We learned from our parents that the most dangerous enemy of the entire Romanian people are the Russians, against this only Austria can defend us… shed no Romanian blood and invade not our land, but order your soldiers to fight shoulder to shoulder with the royal armies.” Another speaker urged the “gentlemen in Bucharest not to concern themselves about us,” as Romanians in Bukovina “feel very good as Austrian citizens” and “already have a fatherland, that we love and wish to defend to our last drop of blood.” The gathering had another aim: to organize a Romanian volunteer corps similar to the Huzul legions formed earlier under General Fischer’s supervision. The initiative was Fischer’s, who wished not to offend the sentiments of the loyal Romanian population by excluding them from the war effort. By the end of the week, around 1,200 Romanian volunteers had placed themselves at Fischer’s disposal. Five years later, on November 11, 1919, Romanians were once again summoned, this time to Czernowitz. The occasion was the celebration of one year since Bukovina’s “liberation” by the victorious Romanian troops. In this new world, memories of the 1914 demonstrations of loyalty to the Kaiser caused nothing but

128 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 17501/7 December 1914.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
131 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 16936/28 November 1914, Encl in 17501/7 December 1914.
embarrassment. Between 1914 and 1919, Bukovina experienced several occupations and liberations, one revolution, and the collapse of an empire. Austria-Hungary proved brittle and easy to destroy. But the rubble it left behind could not be easily removed.

The comings and goings of troops to and from Bukovina made it seem as though anything could be done and undone here in the wink of an eye. The February revolution, which transformed the Russian Empire so profoundly and irrevocably, merely slipped through Bukovina. It came with the new occupation authorities and left with them when they returned to Russia in August 1917. The new governor Dmytro Doroshenko encouraged locals to take an active part in the revolutionary fervor. Locals also found out about the revolution from the newspapers that flowed into Czernowitz from Kiev, Petersburg, and Moscow, and the Russian soldiers who talked about the events in public meetings and demonstrations. In Czernowitz, the revolutionary atmosphere culminated with the ousting of Robert Vitek, the mayor formerly appointed by the tsarist authorities, by a “citizens’ committee” that took the city hall by assault. There was also a small revolt in the Czernowitz prison, encouraged by the Russian prison staff.

For the returning Austrian officials, it seemed perplexing that the Russian occupation regime should instigate Bukovina’s population to revolutionary activities. General Fischer’s only explanation for this was that “the Russian revolutionary officials wished to awaken a certain revolutionary mood among the local population with the intention of leaving behind, for the Austrian authorities after their return a population disposed for revolution.”

But the revolutionary mood was undercut by the exigencies of the revolution itself. Because power continued to be contested in Petersburg for months after the February revolution, the new occupation authorities sent to Bukovina by the Provisional Government were not secure in their posts and their revolutionary policies did not seem definitive. As late as August 1917, the

132 AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, ZI 24694/17 February 1917.
Russophile Alexei Gerovski could stroll back into Czernowitz and demand that the old tsarist city administration be restored. This never came to pass, as Doroshenko prevented the new Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army Lavr Kornilov from giving Gerovski his approval.\textsuperscript{133} By December, Gerovski was gone but so were Doroshenko and the revolution. In came Emperor Karl on August 7, after one year of Russian rule.

The ease with which the Monarchy reclaimed Bukovina after three Russian occupations and a revolution gave the returning Austrian authorities the illusion that not much had changed since 1914. State officials returned to their posts in April 1918. The schools and university were also scheduled to reopen that fall and in July the university rectorate petitioned the ministry of education for new portraits of the Emperor for the classrooms. Behind this semblance of normality were changes that could not be undone merely by reversing the policies implemented by the Russians, as the Austrians sought to do. By 1917, many poor peasants who owned nothing before the war had received land confiscated from landowners by the tsarist authorities. Now that the Austrian authorities were back and the landowners too, peasants were required to give back all their war booty. Needless to say, none of them found the prospect of losing their newly acquired property too appealing. To make matters worse, the Austrian military announced in the summer of 1918 that they would begin requisitioning food again. All along the border with Ukraine, there were peasant revolts.\textsuperscript{134} After successive occupations that never lasted more than a year, locals had become deeply distrustful of state authorities. In October 1917, Bukovina’s new Austrian governor Count Ezdorf reported that locals were reluctant to volunteer information about the wartime behavior of neighbors because they feared they would be punished if the

\textsuperscript{133} AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres MdI Präsidium A 2096, Zl 23741/3 December 1917.
\textsuperscript{134} AT-OeSTA/KA NL B/8: 15, July 1918, 1506.
Russians were to return again.\textsuperscript{135} Their suspicions of state officials and their intentions were confirmed in July 1918, when the news leaked out that the Emperor had secretly agreed to unite Bukovina and East Galicia into an autonomous Ukrainian province at the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations earlier that year. The arrangement was a concession to the Ukrainian republic, from which Austria desperately needed grain to alleviate its food crisis. Locals felt helpless and abused. Unsure whether to believe the news or not, governor Ezdorf warned the minister of interior that there might be street demonstrations in Czernowitz if the government were indeed to go ahead with the rumored “division of Bukovina and the unification of its Ukrainian part with East Galicia.”\textsuperscript{136}

By the time the Austrian authorities were prepared to come to terms with the changes made by the war, it was too late. Instead of strengthening the monarchy, Emperor Karl’s last-minute attempt at reforming the empire only accelerated its dissolution. Over the course of a few months, the monarchy plummeted into a systemic crisis from which it never recovered. In Bukovina the nationalities quickly moved from making demands for autonomy to declarations of independence. The military defeats suffered by Austria-Hungary and Germany in the summer of 1918, as well as Austria’s poor management of its food crisis and disintegrating military, contributed to this outcome. Against this display of administrative incompetence and military failure, Emperor Karl’s manifesto granting all nationalities in Austria autonomy and proposing Austro-Hungary’s reorganization into a federal state did not stand a chance. As soon as the manifesto was out, the nationalities formed separate representative councils and interpreted Karl’s appeal as an invitation to secede. On October 17, members of the Romanian club in the Reichsrat, representatives in the provincial diet, and mayors from all over Bukovina met in

\textsuperscript{135} AT-OeSTA/AVA Inneres Mdl Präsidium A 2096, Zl 20914/24 October 1917.
\textsuperscript{136} SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/88-89, 16 July 1918, 3.
Czernowitz to proclaim the right of “the Romanian people in Bukovina” to “determine its own fate.” The participants declared their solidarity with co-nationals in Transylvania and Hungary, and demanded the creation of a joint representative body for all Romanians in the empire.137 Only ten days later, members of the Romanian club convoked a Constituent Assembly in Czernowitz, demanding Bukovina’s unification with other Romanian territories into an independent nation-state and electing a National Council to represent Romanians in Bukovina officially at the upcoming peace conference.138 On October 28, two members of the National Council – Iancu Flondor and the Romanian delegate Serbu – asked Ezdorf to give the provincial administration over to them. But as long as the Ukrainians too were laying claim to Bukovina, Ezdorf stayed put.139

The crisis that brought about the demise of the Austrian administration in Bukovina also kept it alive there longer than elsewhere in the empire. The governor remained at his post for as long as possible, struggling to bring under control a state of chaos that neither the Romanians nor Ruthenians – who both claimed Bukovina – could tackle by themselves. By late October 1918, the province had plunged into confusion as military units and the police and gendarmerie began disintegrating and soldiers began fleeing their barracks and plundering and shooting in the streets. To reinstitute order, Governor Ezdorf needed to impose martial law — but he lacked the means to do so. The only armed bodies that still recognized his authority were an improvised citizens’ guard, a police corps formed of reserve officers and officers who had lost their positions or had fled from Ukraine, a handful of gendarmes, and a group of soldiers hired by the police.

137 SANIC, Xerografii Viena, XXXIV/95, 3-4.
138 SANIC Iancu Flondor 19, 41. Erich Prokopowitsch, Das Ende der österreichischen Herrschaft in der Bukowina (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1959). Prokopowitsch argues that Flondor’s return to Bukovina and his emphasis on the idea of Greater Romania had something to do with the radical nature of these demands. He was convinced that Romania would incorporate Bukovina since the Entente had promised it.
139 The Ukrainian National Assembly in Lemberg claimed Northern Bukovina for the greater Ukrainian state.
When the railway line between Lemberg and Czernowitz was cut off and the city was in danger of running out of coal, Ezdorf pleaded with the Ukrainian Rada government to send raw oil from Galicia until the end of December. In exchange for their support, the Ukrainians expected Ezdorf to support their own cause in Bukovina. But even with the fuel secured, the administration was still hanging by a thread. Soon Ezdorf ran out of cash; the credit he obtained through the Czernowitz branch of the Vienna Bank was enough to last only through the month of November.¹⁴⁰ In the meantime, things were beginning to fall apart in Vienna. On October 31, a coalition government took over in German Austria and by November 4 only the army still acknowledged the Emperor’s authority.¹⁴¹ No longer responsible to anyone except the local population, who supposedly saw in Ezdorf the only “guarantee that peace and order will be maintained,” the governor remained in office under the pretext that nobody else could guarantee a modicum of safety and order and that Bukovina’s territorial division between the Romanians and Ruthenians had not yet been decided. On November 2, the governor summoned representatives of the Romanian National Council and the Ukrainian Rada to discuss the transfer of power. Two of the Romanian representatives, Hormuzaki and Grigorovici, asked Ezdorf to remain in office until the peace settlements, but the Rada disapproved.

Because both the Romanians and Ruthenians had enough power to contest Bukovina and act on their territorial claims, the imperial collapse lasted longer in Bukovina than in Bohemia and Moravia, where the Czechoslovak national government took over immediately. On November 3, thousands of armed Ukrainian peasants took the city by storm, while soldiers rioted and plundered. Governor Ezdorf positioned gendarmes around the bridges over the Pruth, ordering them to shoot any soldiers who attempted to cross it from the Ukrainian side. In the

¹⁴⁰ Prokopowitsch, *Das Ender der österreichischen Herrschaft*.
countryside around Czernowitz, Ukrainian peasants and soldiers began disarming the Austrian gendarmerie and local Radas began to oust the district captains. The evening of November 3, the governor met with the Romanian representative Aurel Onciul and the Ukrainian Omelian Popowicz to discuss the transfer of power but once again Ezdorf refused to hand over the administration, on the grounds that he had not yet received instructions from the center. Five more days passed before Ezdorf wrote the ministry of interior in Vienna, asking for guidance. His temporizing gave the Romanians the opportunity to outwit the Ukrainians and claim all of Bukovina for themselves. On November 4, Iancu Flondor informed Ezdorf that the Romanians had sent out for help in Jassy. The following day, a group of Ukrainian legionaries occupied the gendarmerie building and police headquarters in Czernowitz and on November 6, the Ukrainians backed by the Ukrainian army occupied the provincial administration demanding that Ezdorf transfer power directly to them. Instead, Ezdorf gave over the reins to both Omelian Popowicz, the local representative of the Rada government, and the Romanian Onciul. But that same day, a Romanian military division entered Suczawa and in a few days reached Czernowitz too. On November 11, Iancu Flondor took over the provincial administration and a general congress was later convened in Czernowitz to proclaim “the unconditional and eternal unification of Bukovina with its old borders up to the Ceremus, Colaciu and the Dniester with the Old Kingdom of Romania.”¹⁴² That same day the new regime in Vienna proclaimed itself the German Austrian republic. Ezdorf remained in Czernowitz until the end of December, when he and some other 150 Austrian officials were put on a special train and sent back to Austria.¹⁴³

¹⁴² SANIC, Iancu Flondor 19, 15/28 November 1918, 47.
¹⁴³ Prokopowitsch, Das Ende der österreichischen Herrschaft, 48. During this time, Ezdorf almost came under arrest twice, each time barely escaping with Flondor’s help.
Conclusion

With the outbreak of war, Bukovina became the object of competing claims by both great powers and younger nation-states seeking to expand at their expense. Austro-Hungary and Russia, old neighbors who met a few kilometers to the east of Czernowitz, clashed here in the very first months of the war. As the frontline moved together with the troops, the province shuttled back and forth between Austria and Russia. Bukovina’s position at the edge of the frontline gave a specific quality to the clash of Great Powers on this territory. This clash took the form not only of armed conflict but also of competition and emulation. As the province swung back and forth, different occupation authorities had to deal with the legacy of policies pursued by the occupation regimes that preceded them. Their own approach to governance was always – even if only indirectly – a product of competition with the enemy. From the rapid succession and overlap of occupation policies, there emerged a shared vocabulary of wartime governance. Though its ambitions in the east were ostensibly different from those of Austro-Hungary, Russia could not help but emulate its rivals’ claims to cultural superiority. In a territory that Austria showed off as proof of its success in civilizing the east, the Russian authorities found themselves compelled to speak the same language of culture. In Bukovina, both belligerents also had the opportunity to exploit what each perceived to be the greatest weakness of its enemy: the nationality question. The paradoxes inherent in the rhetoric of national liberation that both Austrian and Russian authorities embraced were evident in the multinational province, where placating one national group meant alienating another. The war gave an unexpected twist to the occupation policies of both great powers. The actions of Austrian authorities provided critics of the monarchy with convincing arguments against it. The Russian invasions, brutal as they were, benefitted certain groups who stood to gain from the upheaval and chaos.
The story of Czernowitz and Bukovina during the war is, essentially, the story of a small place caught between great powers. This was a difficult position, but also one that offered opportunities. The ways in which locals experienced, responded to, and negotiated with the occupation authorities that came and went reflected both the destructive and creative dimensions of the war. Local Austrophiles greeted the war with enthusiasm, seeing in it an opportunity for the empire to transcend frictions between the nationalities. The war and occupations also provided nationalists in Bukovina with a new opportunity to put forward ideas and pursue ambitions that had been impracticable before. Nationalist leaders took advantage of the rivalry between the great powers to increase their demands and ask for favors on behalf of their national groups. In their appeals to the great powers, Ukrainian and Romanian leaders spoke the language of cultural and national liberation. Romanians and Russophiles of other nationalities benefitted the most from the protection of tsarist occupation authorities, while the Ukrainians thrived under the post-revolutionary Russian occupation. The Jews were persecuted and abused by the Russian occupation authorities, while enjoying some protection under the Austrian authorities. These discriminatory wartime policies helped crystallize national solidarities while also exacerbating frictions between different national groups. Locals came out of the war eager to settle scores with each other. The animosities between different national groups coming out of the war were of a different degree and quality than before the war. At the same time, the Great War failed to eliminate all differences and antagonisms within national camps. New fault lines emerged between nationalists who defected during the war and those who stayed behind and sought to achieve their goals within the framework of empire.

The ease with which every occupation regime picked up the threads after being chased out by enemy troops shows how fast changes occurred during the war and how easily reversible
they often were. Nothing seemed to stick: everything could be dismantled and then swiftly reassembled. When the Russian troops first arrived, they immediately found locals who were willing to help them govern the province. The same people who collaborated with the Russian occupation forces during the first occupation left with them when the Austrians recovered the province, and then returned once again with the Russians to resume their work. When Petrograd was seized by the revolution of March 1917, distant Czernowitz experienced a revolution of its own, replete with red banners and workers’ demonstrations. But when the Austrian troops returned months later, the revolution was rapidly forgotten and Emperor Charles came on a visit to celebrate Bukovina’s liberation. Portraits of Franz Joseph went into and out of the city hall. As late as September 1918, when the Habsburg armies were already disintegrating, the authorities were planning to reopen the university. The population – at least those who had not evacuated the province – seemed to accommodate to whatever regime was in power. But this was only part of the story. Underneath this slippery surface were legacies – both of empire and of war – that were impossible to undo. For all their attempts to turn back the clock to the prewar period, the Austrian authorities had to reconcile themselves to the changes that had happened in Bukovina during the war and revolution. After successive occupations, locals viewed all authorities with distrust and were easily swayed by rumors that Bukovina would end up either with Ukraine or Romania. Even so, Bukovina’s governor was at his post longer than his counterparts in other provinces. In only a few weeks, Czernowitz went from Austria to Ukraine, briefly, and then from Ukraine to Romania when the Romanian armies were invited to bring order to the province. The Romanians behaved as though the matter of Bukovina’s territorial division had been already settled and thus the province transitioned from empire to nation-state.
Chapter 4

Austria after Austria

Imagine waking up one day there where “the Kaiser and Tsar used to bid each other good-night” to find both Kaiser and Tsar gone and the empire’s “golden flag” replaced with the “vulgar flag of the new republic” of Austria. Imagine the humiliation of seeing the empire dissolve under your very own eyes, “betray[ing] and desert[ing]” you, and turning you into a “second-class human being.”¹ Born in 1914, Gregor von Rezzori grew up in this “melancholy landscape,” in a family of Old Austrians for whom the empire had been “an idea and ideal; an ordered image of the world, of human society striving to make God’s will come true,” as he writes in his autobiographical novel Memoirs of an Anti-Semite.² They “lived only when they talked about bygone days,” the narrator says about his parents, “the golden glow of their memories came solely from that sunken golden flag.”³ A former Austrian bureaucrat of Italian origin, Rezzori’s father felt completely at sea in the new world of nations and nation-states. His “undisguised scorn” for Bukovina’s new ruling nationality alienated him from the “land where he had been cast away.” But despite his unflagging devotion to the empire and the German language, he felt no more at home in the old imperial capital, “so, in spite of the fact that we were Austrians, my father never again set foot in Austria.”⁴ The world the Rezzoris inhabited was filled with both revolutionary fervor and nostalgia for the old order, thirst for the future and “the melancholy of golden memories.” They lived at a time of momentous transformations, but

² Ibid., 201.
³ Ibid., 196.
⁴ Ibid., 202.
also one of inertia and resistance to change. Contrary to what contemporary nationalists liked to think, the transition from a world of empires to one of nation-states was neither smooth nor sudden. Bukovina’s century and a half under Austrian rule could not be imagined away, neither could the empire’s rich - and only too visible - legacies in the province be ignored. The Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga should have been the first to recognize this, for less than a decade after Austria-Hungary’s collapse, he published an enormously influential book about the Byzantine empire’s long afterlife in Europe entitled Byzantium after Byzantium. In it, he argued that the Byzantine Empire continued to shape European history even after it declined politically and then collapsed. The same was true of the Habsburg Empire. Had his nationalist convictions not led him to dismiss Austria’s legacies as negligible, Iorga too might have seen the parallels.6

By the end of World War I, not even the most loyal citizens of the Habsburg Empire wished to see the monarchy resurrected in its old form. Although the empire’s collapse could not be foreseen until very late in the war, the Habsburg administration hastened its disintegration by discrediting the ideal of supranational loyalty and eroding the empire’s legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Wartime policies such as the deportation or execution of non-Germans suspected of treason and espionage deepened national divisions to such an extent that when the empire split along ethnic lines in 1918, nobody was surprised. Though ideologically weak, the empire had an enormous advantage over its successors. The material, institutional, and cultural infrastructure it developed over the course of centuries had a tremendous power of inertia. When Bukovina split off from Austria and joined Romania in the fall of 1918, the regime change did not even show for a long while. Everywhere one turned, there were Austrian buildings and monuments and German was spoken. Bukovina remained firmly anchored in the cultural world of empire even

5 Nicolae Iorga, Byzantium after Byzantium (Iaşi, Romania: The Center for Romanian Studies, 2000).
when the empire was no longer a political reality. The “assumptions, perceptions, prejudices, and hopes which influenced the geopolitical shape of empire” continued to influence the national order as well.\(^7\) The experience of living under imperial rule provided Bukovinans with a cultural and intellectual framework for making sense of the new order and their place in it.

In addition to these material and cultural legacies of empire, the Romanian administration also inherited a class of provincial elites who acquired their positions under imperial rule. With the state- and nation-building process in the newly incorporated provinces in full swing, the Romanian authorities could ill afford to dismiss these imperial elites altogether and risk throwing the administrative apparatus into disarray. But keeping them in place was equally problematic because they gave the national administration a “foreign” appearance. What kind of nation-state was this if it could not afford to “liberate” ethnic Romanians in the newly incorporated territories from the “foreign” yoke and put them in positions of power? To reconcile their ideological commitment to rebuilding the province along national lines with the practical necessity of keeping the administration going, the Romanian authorities were forced to make more compromises than they would have liked. A surprising number of teachers, lawyers, military officials, national politicians, and civil servants trained under imperial rule were absorbed by the nation-state. Others - former military and political elites - came crashing down together with the empire.

By the time it “returned” to its “motherland” Romania in 1918, Bukovina bore the imprint of a century and a half of imperial rule. Nationalists who expected its “national” essence to resurface immediately after the unification with Romania were in for an unpleasant surprise, for the transition did not occur naturally. The new political geography rested on a fiction of

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ethnic and cultural uniformity that could not be achieved without recourse to coercive measures. In territories as multinational and multilingual as Bukovina, the “fusion of state and nation” was, as James Sheehan writes, especially “prolonged and painful.”\(^8\) But the incongruence of ethnic and territorial borders was not a new and unprecedented problem. Imperial officials and nationalist politicians in Bukovina had wrestled with it before 1918 as well. The result was an intricate scheme to reconcile the territorial structure of politics with the nationality principle known as the ‘national compromise’ of 1911. By contrast, the Romanian authorities set about redefining the relationship between people and territory through a new mobility regime. To turn the fiction of national unity and autonomy into reality, they adopted new citizenship laws that marginalized and excluded individuals who did not fit clearly within the ethnic and territorial categories with which they operated. Though intended to do away with all the ambiguities tolerated under imperial rule, this new citizenship policy gave rise to new contradictions. When mapped on to reality, the concept of national citizenship gave rise to a new class of rootless individuals suspended between states and national categories - at home everywhere and nowhere in particular.

This chapter has two aims. The first is to show how the transition from empire to nation-state occurred in Bukovina, in a cultural and social landscape profoundly shaped by imperial rule. How did former imperial citizens navigate the sea change and how did they adjust to living in a world crisscrossed by new national and state boundaries? What traces did a century and a half of imperial rule leave and how they did they shape the governance policies adopted by the Romanian administration? The chapter presents the change of regime as a drawn-out process. Because political, cultural, and social change did not occur at the same time and in the same

rhythm, post-imperial Bukovina often stood with one leg in the future and one in the past. Did the material, cultural, and intellectual relics of empire in Bukovina form a coherent whole, and what was their place in the new order? Were they simply absorbed by the nation-state, eliminated, or recycled? My second aim in this chapter is to reflect on the nature of imperial rule by exploring the empire’s afterlife at the periphery. Does empire end when imperial rule ends?

Relics of Empire

After a long journey through the summer heat, a traveler stepped off the train in Cernăuți. No border guards had stopped him in Itzkany to check his documents. The train simply rolled on across what used to be the frontier between Austria-Hungary’s easternmost crownland and Romania. It was 1919 and the visitor was the illustrious historian Nicolae Iorga, the mastermind behind Romania’s greatest nationalist propaganda organization, the Cultural League. This was his first trip to Cernăuți in a long while, a long-awaited return to a place he had not been allowed to visit for the past ten years. Despite the Romanian prime minister’s warnings that “being banished is exactly what Mister Iorga wants to incite public opinion in Romania (…) against the monarchy once again,” the Austrian authorities had decided to deny him entrance into Bukovina for good when the historian attempted to pass through the province on his way to a conference abroad in 1909. From the border with Bukovina, Iorga went straight to Jassy to participate in an anti-Austrian demonstration. Amid the crowd of students waving Romanian flags and proclaiming that Bukovina was an “ideal that no Romanian will give up,” Iorga no doubt felt avenged. But his real revenge came in the summer of 1919, when the historian strolled into Cernăuți for the first time without a passport. The past year had brought about unbelievable

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10 SANIC, CCXL, 14 January 1909; 7 June 1909.
changes. Gone were the Austrian border guards, gone were the travel permits, gone was the empire that had once made Iorga’s travels so difficult. Meanwhile, the unified Greater Romania that Iorga and other nationalists had dreamed into being was more alive than ever before. With the confidence of one certain that history was on his side, Nicolae Iorga proclaimed Austria-Hungary an aberration of history. He claimed that Bukovina was merely a truncated part of the Moldavian principality with nothing special “in its tradition, history, architecture, or art.”\(^{11}\)

While reading a bill “concerning the unification of Bukovina with Greater Romania” before the Bucharest parliament a couple of months later, a Bukovinian Romanian by the name of Romulus Reut similarly argued that “coming here today from Bukovina, we bring a dowry with us (…) we bring a purely Romanian heart and a purely Romanian soul.”\(^{12}\)

What both Iorga and Reut affirmed with such great confidence was more wishful thinking than reality. In Iorga’s view, the nation-state was the only natural form of organization because it “ruled over only one people” who did not have to be bound to each other by artificial means. This was the very opposite of what Austria-Hungary had been: the product of administrative artifice, an entity lacking cohesion and unity, held together only by the imperial “subject” who “moved from one place to another according to where it is more likely to get a rich harvest.” According to Iorga, Austria-Hungary belonged to a chapter of history that was now over. To regret its passing, as some Bukovinans did, was both absurd and pointless. As Iorga put it in one of the lectures he gave in August 1919 in Cernăuți, “Austria cannot be regretted any more than Don Quixote’s Rosinanta, who passed away sticking out its long tongue (…) by the side of a road.”\(^{13}\) By contrast, the broken threads of Bukovina’s Moldavian past could be picked

\(^{11}\) Nicolae Iorga, *Aportul Bucovinei la cultura Româneasca* (Cernăuți: Editura Librariei La Marca Tarii, 1925), 5.

\(^{12}\) DAChO, f.6, op 1, d 13, 29 December 1919, 1.1-2

\(^{13}\) “Bucovina in trecut, conferinta tinuta in Cernăuți, 16 August 1919,” in *Conferințe Bucovinene* (București, Tipografia Cultura Neamului Românesc, 1919), 10.
up again without too much difficulty. In October 1918, after Austria-Hungary’s collapse, the historian wrote in one of his editorials in the magazine Neamul Românesc that “the Moldavia of Stephen the Great has risen again.”\(^\text{14}\) Never mind the five hundred years that had elapsed since Stephen the Great’s death. Romulus Reut’s comments about Bukovina’s purity of heart were coming from a very different place. Reut had started out as an Austrian loyalist who took his duties to the fatherland seriously, criticizing Romania’s anti-Austrian policies and shielding the monarchy from the poisoned arrows launched by Iorga’s Cultural League. But now that his old fatherland was gone, Reut had the good sense to jump on the bandwagon of national unification. 1919 found him proclaiming that “not for one moment did we lose the longing to be by your side” and assuring Bucharest that nothing valuable came of Austria-Hungary’s rule in Bukovina except for the nationalism of men like himself, who “drank [from the well] of German science” but kept a “Romanian soul.”\(^\text{15}\)

Nationalists who rejoiced in Austria-Hungary’s collapse were eager to make a clean break with the imperial past and embark on a “glorious national future” - a new age of moral and spiritual renewal and cultural and economic progress. But the past was not so easy to forget because, contrary to what people like Iorga claimed, the empire had left behind many lasting traces. Bukovina’s supposedly Romanian character was not apparent at the end of a century and a half of imperial rule. The empire had left a deep imprint on the province’s capital Czernowitz - now renamed Cernăuți -, a city that seemed suspended somewhere in an alternative universe where the Central Powers had won the war. Almost everything in Cernăuți reminded of Austria: the administrative buildings painted ‘Habsburg yellow,’ the numerous synagogues, the countless


\(^{15}\) Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 12 April 1914.
schools and gymnasia, the university with its quirky Moorish architecture, the theater named after the German humanist poet Friedrich Schiller, the statues of Habsburg empresses, the streets and shops that resounded with German-language conversation, the double-headed Austrian eagle atop the city hall. In 1922, not long before King Ferdinand’s visit to Bukovina, one general reported that the province’s roads were still flanked by “wooden poles painted in the Austro-Hungarian colors” and “in the buildings of various authorities and in cafes there are no portraits of the royal family.” Instead, Cernăuți’s cafes proudly displayed “paintings representing the victories of the central armies” and passers-by could be seen wearing “emblems representing the former emperors Wilhelm and Carol with the German-Austrian national colors. In their homes, high school teachers kept “life-size portraits of the former emperor Franz Joseph, while the portraits of their Majesty the King and Queen [of Romania] are completely missing.” The empire’s ideology might have been ‘decaying,’ but its material culture was powerful enough to make the administrations of successor states feel threatened even after the empire’s collapse. The Romanian administration feared that German-language inscriptions and street signs, old Austrian textbooks and the like would constantly remind Romanians in Bukovina of their “slavery in the past,” keeping them in a state of subservience that did not befit their new status as Bukovina’s new ruling nationality.

The statues of emperors, double-headed eagles, and German inscriptions that kept turning up everywhere on former Austria-Hungary’s territories were like an army of ghosts that went on fighting after the empire’s death. The Romanian administration began its offensive against them as soon as it set foot in Bukovina but the echo of empire was so strong that no measures proved

16 DAChO, fond 12, op. 1, d. 76, l. 1.
17 Ibid., l. 2.
18 DAChO, fond 213, op. 1, d. 1556, l. 7, 1923.
effective enough. As always, the problem was the discrepancy between the administration’s goals and what it could achieve in practice. An order from February 1919 converted many German place names in Cernăuți into Romanian ones. The Franz Josefsgarten became the Arboroasa garden, after the nationalist Romanian association that got into trouble in 1875 when several of its members were briefly arrested for sending a letter of condolences to the Romanian authorities in Jassy instead of celebrating Bukovina’s centenary under Austrian rule. Austriaplatz took the symbolic name of Grigore Ghica-Voda, Bukovina’s ruler at the time when the province was annexed by Austria. Elisabethplatz was renamed Vasile Alecsandri square, while Hauptstrasse became King Ferdinand street.\(^{20}\) Of course, the old street names remained imprinted not only on locals’ memories, but also on the signs that could not be changed all at once. A decree from 1919 required all public businesses in Cernăuți to change their foreign-language nameplates into Romanian ones within two weeks. “The implementation of this decree turns out to be impracticable,” wrote the Innkeepers’ Association in September. “It is namely out of the question, that the painters of nameplates, 6 in number, should finish the nameplates of several thousand business owners and merchants in such a short time.”\(^{21}\) To save themselves the expense of ordering new nameplates, shopkeepers crossed out bits and pieces of foreign names, such that “what is left of the text is either names or signs in the Romanian language.”\(^{22}\)

To give Cernăuți “as soon as possible (…) an aspect and character” reflecting its Romanian past, Austria’s ambassadors in stone and bronze were removed one by one - some by official decree, others on the initiative of nationalists eager to prove their heroism in the battle with the empire’s ghosts.\(^{23}\) A decree issued by the minister-delegate’s office in January 1919

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20 CAHJP, HM2/8336.5, 20 February 1919.
21 DACHO, fond 12, op. 1, d. 76, 30 September 1919, l. 33.
23 DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 88, 4 February 1919, l.1.
ordered that all Austrian emblems displayed on “the edifices of offices or in their interiors” be promptly removed.24 Shortly afterwards, the secretariat for internal affairs in Cernăuți decided that “today names of squares, parks, streets etc reminding of this [imperial] rule can no longer be maintained,” for “traces of this rule, so unkind to the Romanian element, are insulting the sentiments of every true Romanian.”25 This was all good but very difficult to implement over a short period of time. Eager to prove their patriotic zeal, local nationalists took the matter into their own hands. In accordance with the January 1919 decree, the monument to Empress Maria Theresia in the middle of Czernowitz’s Austriaplatz had been removed shortly after the unification. But the socle bearing the old German-language inscription remained in place. In the spring of 1921, a committee formed to “erect a statue of Ghica Voda instead of the former statue of Empress Maria Theresia” convened a “national demonstration” to remove what was left of Maria Theresia’s statue from “liberated Bukovina.” Before a crowd of Romanian intellectuals and high school students huddled around the empty pedestal, a certain Dr Jianu declaimed: “What greater insult can there be for us than to read every day on the pedestal of this statue that we must eternally remember the unification of Bukovina with Austria, while Bukovina was stolen through dishonest intrigue?”26 With great pomp, a group of students from the Normal School in Cernăuți then covered the socle with a flag depicting Bukovina’s “kidnapping” by Austria. From this, the nationalist Glasul Bucovinei concluded that “Romanians in Cernăuți should not be so indifferent to Austria’s traces.” The students had done what the newspaper had always encouraged its readers to do: they had taken ownership of the city and made changes for which “it is not necessary always to receive orders from above.”

Removing all physical traces of empire was hard enough, but replacing them with

24 DACHO, fond 6, op. 1, d. 7, l.1, 1919.
25 DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 88, l.1.
26 “O manifestare patriotica,” Glasul Bucovinei, 5 April 1921.
evidence of Romania’s existence proved even harder. At the end of a war and occupation that had left it in economic ruin, Romania had much to reconstruct and little money to squander on decorations and celebrations. These were nevertheless important, above all in the newly annexed territories, where the authorities were eager to demonstrate their cultural sophistication and generosity to a still skeptical populace. By 1922, when a beloved statue of Friedrich Schiller was removed from the theater square, the Romanian administration had already acquired the reputation of “enforcers of a curse flung by world history (…) upon the Habsburgs and their empire.”  

But to make one’s presence felt, it was not enough to demolish statues, change street names, and send the Austrian eagle flying from the city hall tower to the “land museum” where it now belonged together with the empire, leaving behind a trail of empty pedestals and broken frames. The local population had to be impressed with new monuments and public festivals for which they themselves were also going to pay in fact, for Bucharest could not afford the expenses. This was how Cernăuți’s new monument to national unification came into being in 1924. The monument’s inauguration on November 12 was a day to remember. That morning the Romanian royal family arrived in Cernăuți to participate in the festivities and perhaps, as the Czernowitzer Morgenblatt surmised, also to “persuade the very diverse population” of Bukovina through their presence “of the need to strengthen its ties to the Old Kingdom.” Happy to have them all to themselves even for just one day, the local authorities kept their Majesties busy attending a festive mass at the city Cathedral, visiting the war heroes’ cemetery, seeing a performance at the national theater, and dining on fine “salmon mayonnaise,” “hare steak,” “French salad,” and “giardinetto” to the accompaniment of Beethoven, Schubert, and

27 “Denkmäler, ein Wort an die Bildstürmer,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 26 September 1922.
28 DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 3510, l.2.
Boccherini.\textsuperscript{29} The mood dropped when the came to pay the bill. After funding both the monument’s construction and the “preparation and arrangement of the celebrations,” the municipal administration was reduced to begging left and right for subsidies with which to pay off its soaring debts. Asking the local population for more “contributions” after they had already spent a lot of money decorating their homes for the occasion was out of the question.\textsuperscript{30}

Instead of erasing all memories of the imperial past, the unification monument built at such great expense to the provincial administration invited constant comparisons with the monument to Austria that had once stood in its place. From these comparisons, the Romanian administration never came off well. The new statue of a large ox trampling a double-headed eagle under its hooves symbolically represented Moldova defeating the Habsburg empire “that tore from [its] body the most beautiful part and the richest in precious memories 150 years ago, to keep it in the darkest and most oppressive slavery.”\textsuperscript{31} But the imagery struck many locals, particularly non-Romanians and imperial nostalgists, as ridiculous. Meant to serve as a reminder of Romania’s victory, the ox came to symbolize the tensions between Bukovina’s new rulers and the local population who considered them culturally inferior. The Catholic press wrote “about the lack of tact and absurdity” of the the monument, described in the Jewish press as a symbol of “these years of transition” and “days of illness” marked by the “boiling over of nationalism [and] paroxysms of anti-Semitism.”\textsuperscript{32} The Romanian ox became everyone’s favorite object of ridicule. In her memoir, one local Ukrainian writer recalled that not long ago after the monument was built “Ukrainian students paid an old man so he would bring and throw around the ox a cartful of hay, which the old man diligently did: ‘The gentlemen paid, so I had to,’ - he explained to the

\textsuperscript{29} DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 2732, Desvelirea monumentului unirii la 11 Noiembrie 1924, l.3; l.115.
\textsuperscript{30} DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 2732, 22 November 1924, l.33.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., l.62.
police.” 33 The monument was, apparently, no more popular with the Romanians. A few years after its inauguration, a Romanian friend of the German-language poet Georg Drozdowski who was “a bit drunk” at the time got into trouble with the police after he mounted the “little ox” and pretended to ride it. An Austrian patriot who had never quite gotten over the empire’s collapse, Drozdowski saw in the incident a sign that “old Austria had resurrected in the heart of his friend and wanted to remind him of her.” 34

These were the invisible traces of empire - the “unseen Austria” that “remained in our midst,” as one nationalist poet put it -, more difficult to remove and replace than the inscriptions, monuments, and portraits of the Emperor. The fact that they were still present when “all the visible remains” of empire had disappeared, their “roots hidden in so many souls” in Bukovina, disproved nationalists’ claims that Austria “did not leave any durable traces” because it was “foreign and without organic ties to the national past of this land.” 35 It also suggested that imperial rule had been, in fact, about more than oppressing and being oppressed. From Austria-Hungary, Bukovina’s population came into the Romanian nation-state with a baggage of assumptions and expectations about how politics and society worked, and a Weltanschauung and way of life derived from their experiences under Austrian rule. These imperial mentalities and habits came into conflict with the national administration’s own plans for Bukovina. On joining Romania, Bukovinans exchanged the inferiority complexes they had suffered from under Austrian rule with the self-assurance of a people who felt culturally more advanced and politically superior to their new rulers. Proof of the Romanian administration’s “Balkan”-like backwardness and corruption abounded. They could be seen in the “impenetrable chaos,” “the

33 Odarka Iliuk Maidans’ka, Chernivtsi, moi Chernivtsi, unpublished manuscript.
35 Ion Nistor, Calendarul Glasul Bucovinei, 1937.
corruption imported from the Regat,” and the “epidemic of bribes” that seized the province as soon as it was incorporated into Romania.  

As members of this young and supposedly corrupt nation-state, former Austrian citizens felt underemployed. This was especially the case with professionals “brought up and developed in an atmosphere that is completely foreign today.” On joining the Romanian administration, they lost both the money and prestige associated with their former positions. On seeing the many “doctor” titles inscribed on every office door, one Bucharest official who arrived in Cernăuți to inspect a financial institution was said to have exclaimed: “Is this a hospital then, or why are there so many doctors here?”

Romanian officials and nationalists faulted the defunct Habsburg administration and its most loyal subjects in Bukovina - the Jews - with sowing the “seed of mistrust (…) inside the tortured souls of its Bukovinian subjects towards everything Romanian and especially towards the Romanian state.” Together with the Ukrainians, whose dreams of a united Greater Ukraine had not yet been fulfilled, Bukovina’s Jews were the most mistrusted and feared segment of the population. It was no secret that Austrian Jews “of all political and religious persuasions” had “assumed and hoped for the continuity of Austria-Hungary” to the bitter end. In the summer of 1918, one Austrian newspaper observed that the Jews were “in fact the only Austrians loyal to the state in the Monarchy.” And this was no surprise for, as long as the monarchy existed, Austrian Jews knew they were protected from the surrounding sea of anti-Semitism that had

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36 “Mizeria zilei,” Czernowitz Morgenblatt, 5 June 1920, I 14, copy in DAcH, fond 12, op 1, d 1549.
37 “Die Schicksalsstunde der Bukowiner Beamten,” Czernowitz Morgenblatt, 14 April 1921.
38 Ion Nistor, Zece ani dela unirea Bucovinei: 1918-1928 (Cernăuți: Tiparul Bucovinei, 19??), 3.
40 Rozenblit, “The Dilemma of Identity,” 150.
engulfed their co-religionists in the Old Kingdom and Russian Empire. But all this was well known and remembered now when the empire was no more. The Romanian authorities kept a close eye on the Jews who were, in the words of one nationalist, “sick with nostalgia for the unwritten privileges that Austria had offered them.” Local officials blamed Jewish merchants of raising food prices deliberately to avenge the empire and make Romanians “suffer the consequences of [their] reckless wishes” - that is, of Bukovina’s unification with Romania. They also feared that, given the poor economic conditions, Jews who went around complaining that “Romania is the poorest and dirtiest country” would soon be joined by non-Jews and possibly even Romanians. Whether these were the words Jewish merchants used to describe their new fatherland is hard to ascertain, but what is clear is that most complaints about the Romanian administration’s backwardness found expression in the German-language Jewish press. The Czernowitz Morgenblatt noted, for instance, that “beatings were formerly unknown here. Today, unfortunately, there are beatings here far too often.” The editors also pointed out that, while the Romanian authorities sought to destroy the cultural life of minorities, the “German-language population of the city Czernowitz remained conscious of its cultural mission” and “encouraged the young Romanian national theater and all Romanian cultural events” in every way they could.

But Cernăuți’s Jews did not hold a monopoly on feelings of superiority. Ethnic Romanians also considered themselves above their co-nationals in the Old Kingdom.

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42 Dragos Vitencu, Cernăuțiul Meu (Suceava: Complexul Muzeal Bucovina, 2008), 66.
43 SANIC, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1/1920, 9 January 1920.
44 Ibid.
historian Ion Nistor blamed this on the Habsburg policy to alienate the nationalities from their motherlands and merge them into one “exotic Bukovinian species with German language of conversation.” The product was the so-called *homo bucovinensis*, “the type of renegade devoid of national convictions,” ready to switch nationalities and political orientations from one day to the next. The Romanian prototype was the legendary Baron Mustatza, a Romanian aristocrat from Bukovina who once famously addressed the Romanian King Carol I in German, for no other reason than that “Majesty! We were brought up in the German language.” Another *homo bucovinensis par excellence* was the notorious Coco von Wassilko, an ethnic Romanian turned Ruthenian to win more votes. Even those who did not exactly fit this description, including Romanian nationalists who supported the unification with Romania, believed Bukovinian Romanians had something special to offer the nation-state. In his newspaper *Bucovina*, Bukovina’s first minister Iancu Flondor urged readers to disbelieve rumors about the inferiority of Old Kingdom Romanians. But at the same time, Flondor argued that “the newly annexed territories” could improve the Old Kingdom by breaking “the power of the political clientele” and reorienting politics away from petty conflicts and corruption. Flondor was not the only Romanian who thought Bukovina (and Transylvania) should play a civilizing role within Greater Romania. Before a gathering of Romanian notables who had come to Putna from all corners of the country to commemorate Prince Stephen the Great in June 1922, the Romanian prefect - a man by the Ukrainian name of Maciovischi - proudly proclaimed that “our culture was gained from the West (Vienna), Bukovinians (Romanians) drank from the well of Viennese culture and yet they esteem Romanian culture, keeping Romanian souls and transplanting this culture [the

48 “Ce trebuie să rețină Bucovinenii?,” *Bucovina*, 9 September 1919.
Viennese one] also to the Romanian people.”\textsuperscript{49} The gaffe did not pass unnoticed. Maciovischi received a thrashing from a university professor from Cluj, who pointed out that “the real culture cannot come from Vienna, which should no longer be mentioned, given that it is foreign to the Romanian soul.” To make amends for his faux pas, Maciovischi later kicked out the Jewish owner of a glass factory who sponsored the festivities, for “he had no right to serve at the table since he was Jewish” and this was a “national manifestation and foreigners should not be there.”\textsuperscript{50}

For months and even years after the unification, many Bukovinans could not come to grips with the new cultural and political geography. Why would they? Over the course of the previous four years, Bukovina had changed hands numberless times. Moreover, there was reason to believe that the new order would not be permanent either, for it defied the principle of national self-determination proclaimed by the Great Powers at the Paris peace conference. Though state borders were now supposed to coincide with ethnic and cultural boundaries, “tens of millions of people” were still living “outside their own national territory.” A new “triangular configuration” had emerged between minorities, the states in which they were living, and their external national homelands.\textsuperscript{51} For quite a few years after the unification with Romania, non-Romanians in Bukovina thought it only a matter of time before Bukovina would change hands again. Nationalist Poles waited to be liberated by the Polish army “from the Romanian yoke.”\textsuperscript{52} One woman “of Polish origin” from Cernăuți was reported to the police for telling her tenant that “here is not Romania, go back to the Old Kingdom, the Romanians are thieves and shitty

\textsuperscript{49} SANIC Direcția Generală a Poliției, copie raport 1922, 56/1919, 46.
\textsuperscript{50} SANIC, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 56/1919, June 1922, 46.
\textsuperscript{52} DACHO, fond 118, op. 4, d. 1978, 116.
people.” Before the treaty of Trianon nipped their dreams in the bud, some Hungarians in Bukovina expected to be “saved” by Hungarian troops. Not long after the Romanian army had occupied Bukovina, a rumor spread in the Hungarian village Andrasfalva that “the Romanians are defeated and soon the Hungarians will come to Bukovina to save them from the yoke that oppresses them.” The Ukrainians, who did not yet have a unitary nation-state of their own, could either resign themselves to Romanian rule or hope that neighboring Poland would annex northern Bukovina to Galicia. To most Ukrainians in Bukovina, Romanian rule seemed like the lesser evil at that point. Poles and Ukrainians in Galicia had been engaged in violent conflict since 1918. But intellectuals believed that by joining their co-nationals in Galicia, the Ukrainians would come closest to achieving a Greater Ukraine, for they would “have more autonomy because they will form a considerable force.” Others clung to the past. A former policeman of uncertain “Ukrainian or Polish” nationality from Cernăuți was arrested in 1921 for regretting the Austrian administration and insulting the Romanians: “damn you all, there are still Austrian laws here, Austria still exists, I will show you Bolsheviks.”

The comparisons Bukovinans frequently made between the current Romanian and former Austrian administrations seldom worked to the Romanians’ advantage. According to one official who visited the Ukrainian village Zastawna in 1927, locals did not think the Romanian administration worthy of respect because Romanian soldiers walked around “in torn clothes” and worked for money “on the estates of Jewish proprietors around there,” while the Austrians “had not allowed (…) imperial soldiers to become the slaves of Jews.” Of course, locals had brought the same accusations against the Austrian administration both before and during the war. But in

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53 Ibid., l.11.
54 DACHO, fond 6, op. 1, d. 36, 12.
55 SANIC, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1/1920, 34.
56 DACHO, fond 118, op. 4, d. 390, 14, 18 August 1921.
57 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 396/1927, 10.
retrospect, the Austrian authorities seemed to have possessed something the Romanians lacked: the stature of a great power. In the eyes of former Austrian patriots, the young Romanian administration could never match up to its imperial predecessor. Decades later, the German-language Jewish poet Alfred Kittner, a teenager at the time of Austria-Hungary’s collapse, would remember watching with tears in his eyes as the “pathetic Romanian troops” made their entrance into Cernăuți and “the beloved Austrian army withdrew.” 58 From this, Romanian officials concluded that a more intensive Romanization policy was needed to regain the minorities’ respect. Power differences, it seemed, threatened to vanish into thin air if they were not adequately displayed and performed. By the same logic, if Bukovina’s minorities were restless and dissatisfied with the Romanian administration, it was not because they were disadvantaged but because they enjoyed too many rights and freedoms. The national authorities feared losing credibility and authority by not being assertive enough towards the minorities. By the late 1920s, there were already rumors that many Ukrainian state employees in Bukovina had been allowed to keep their jobs because the state “does not have the courage to replace them.” 59 Here was the beginning of a vicious circle of minority rights infringements that would lead to yet more dissatisfaction and an ever more repressive romanization policy, in turn.

Bukovina’s imperial legacies continued to be felt long after the province’s administrative and legal unification with Romania was officially completed in 1922. They were perpetuated not just by the institutions, laws, and material culture Bukovina inherited from Austria, but also by language - a force both more intangible and more difficult to contend with. What remained of the empire when all its state structures and institutions had dissolved was the German language of mediation and imperial Kultur, still widely spoken despite the Romanian administration’s

59 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 396/1927, 10.
dogged efforts to expunge it from public life. The German language, the national authorities feared, held Bukovina’s minorities captive in the past and kept them from becoming completely loyal to the nation-state. Because Bukovina’s German speakers were so numerous, no language decrees - no matter how strict - could keep the German language completely out of the school system. Students and teachers in both “fully Romanian” and ethnically mixed schools were found to “speak and write Romanian with great difficulty” even after Romanian had become a compulsory language of instruction.\(^{60}\) This was the case not only in Cernăuți but also in areas that were considered more ethnically pure and “sacred for Romanism,” such as Southern Bukovina. Even there, “the compact masses of Germans” could not be isolated from the Romanians so many Romanian schools had to provide special German classes in order to accommodate German-speaking students.\(^ {61}\) In Cernăuți, many German-speaking Jews and Catholic Germans sent their children to private confessional schools as opposed to public, Romanian-language ones so they could continue studying in German. The authorities took note of this and objected that, for as long as the minorities enjoyed full citizenship rights, “it follows that their children should be attending Romanian schools.”\(^ {62}\) But even those who attended them came out speaking a peculiar Romanian that had more in common with German than with the literary language spoken in the Old Kingdom. This was because the men and women who taught them Romanian had been educated in German too and spoke Romanian only awkwardly, “translating into [it] constructions [typical] of the language in which they received their education.”\(^ {63}\) The results were demoralizing. After studying Romanian in school for ten years, the Jewish poet Ilana Shmueli could “understand almost everything but do not utter one word

\(^{60}\) SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 39/1922, 5 June 1922, 1.

\(^{61}\) SANIC, MIA, 11/1922, 95.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 95.
Having served as the main language of mediation among Bukovina’s nationalities for decades under Austrian rule, German did not magically disappear in 1918 only because somewhere in Paris the great powers had decided to endorse the principle of national self-determination. The momentous transformations proclaimed from on high occurred much more slowly at the street level. With the exception of a few committed nationalists, Romanians in Cernăuți did not alter their language practices to suit their new status as Bukovina’s ruling nationality. Instead, they continued to speak a mixture of German and Romanian, defying the principle of linguistic purity that nationalists and the Romanian administration championed. Years after the unification, school inspectors sent from Bucharest to review Cernăuți’s schools were amazed to discover that children and parents with Romanian names “actually cannot speak Romanian well.” If their family names were all that was left of their national origins, could these people still be considered Romanian? This was where the historian Ion Nistor’s theory of “de-Romanization” came in. Nistor claimed that the number of ethnic Romanians in Bukovina exceeded that of Romanian speakers because many Romanians had forgotten their native language after being subjected to oppressive Austria’s de-nationalization policies for so long. If things were indeed as he claimed, then the liberal administration’s efforts to romanize Bukovina’s minorities did not violate the Minority Protection Treaty because most of those who were counted among the minorities were in fact ethnic Romanians. This story was also meant to disprove the preconception - shared by many nationalists in the Old Kingdom - that Bukovinian Romanians were nationally indifferent and disloyal. Painful as it was to admit it, the nationalist 

Glasul Bucovinei noted in January 1923 that Romanians were just as responsible as the

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65 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 5/1924, 23.
minorities for the fact that Bukovina’s “towns do not even look Romanian on the outside.”

“Instead of speaking constantly and insistently only Romanian,” both in conversation with each other and with “foreign co-citizens” they continued to employ “foreign languages” - whether to accommodate non-Romanian speakers, out of habit, or because German still was the more prestigious language.66

The German language’s stubborn resilience in Bukovina revealed the helplessness of the Romanian administration in the face of social inertia. In Bukovina, the former language of empire and Kultur had a way of turning up where one expected it the least, its domain including not only the cafes, shops, and private apartments of former Austrian patriots in Cernăuți, but also institutions that were supposed to promote Romanian culture, such as the university. A former bastion of German Kultur, the university had been converted with great pomp and ceremony into a Romanian-language institution in September 1919. As late as 1927, however, one Bucharest official on a visit to Cernăuți reported that he “did not even hear ten Romanian words” spoken in the halls of the university, as “almost all students were speaking German, Ruthenian, Polish, or the Judaic jargon.” While the traditionally rural Romanian population still had a lot of catching up to do in terms of education, the non-Romanians (German-speaking Jews especially) continued to dominate the institutions of higher learning. At the university, “foreigners” could be seen strutting around in “German medieval costumes of the former student corporations from the Austrian era” under the eyes of the Romanian authorities, unable to “impose on the students of these corporations no longer to appear at festivities in German uniforms which offend our national feeling.”67

67 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 396/1927, 19
Empire’s Children

Whether or not Bukovina had once been purely Romanian, as nationalists claimed, by 1918 it was anything but ethnically pure. One had to be blind not to notice it. A police report from 1926 described the recently incorporated Austrian crown land as an “ethnic mosaic” with a population that was only 46.7% Romanian, according to the latest census of 1919, while the remaining 53.3% consisted of Ruthenians (28%), Jews (10.9%), Germans (8.4%), Poles (4.2%), and others (1.8%). But even these figures, likely manipulated to tilt the ethnic balance towards the Romanians, were likely too optimistic. According to the census the Austrians conducted in 1910, the Romanians made up only 34% of the population, while the Ruthenians numbered 38% and the Germans (including Jews) 21%. In short, the province was “inhabited by a strange mixture of races, even at the present day.” The report ascribed this to Bukovina’s location “on the great highway of migration from the east to the west.” If and when they recognized that Bukovina was “the least ethnically Romanian province incorporated” into Greater Romania, local nationalists blamed it on the empire. Both of these arguments were correct. Bukovina could never embody the nationalist ideal of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity because it was a borderland par excellence. But the Austrian administration had played no small role in increasing its ethnic diversity through migration and colonization policies that made Bukovina the empire’s most multinational crown land. The “foreigners,” as non-Romanians were now referred to, were especially numerous in the towns and in the former provincial capital Cernăuți. The same police report that drew attention to Bukovina’s large “foreign contingent” pointed out that 80% of the province’s urban population was in fact Jewish. At least one third of Cernăuți’s residents were

68 SANIC, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 69/1926.
Jewish according to the 1910 census.

Bukovina’s “foreign” character was most visible in the towns because non-Romanians formed the majority of the province’s intellectual and professional elites both under Austrian rule and for a long time after the unification with Romania. Although ethnic Romanians were by no means “the most oppressed nationality” in Bukovina, they were still an overwhelmingly rural population, with an incipient middle class of teachers, clergy, merchants, and civil servants formed in Austrian schools and universities.\(^71\) Though less numerous than the Romanians and Ruthenians, the Germans and Jews dominated the civil service, the educated professions, and the merchants’ and manufacturers’ class. A study on Bukovina’s “population and social classes” published in 1916 in response to the “growing interest in Romanians in territories under the Habsburg crown” by a Romanian nationalist who had fled to Bucharest, pointed out that “although we are 40% of the population in this land and the Jews are 14%, our functionaries and lawyers and doctors are mostly Jewish.”\(^72\) Though Bukovina’s Romanians were three times as numerous as the Jews, the study also noted, “the total number of Romanian merchants is twenty times smaller than the Jewish ones.” In other sectors, such as “commerce and industry,” the Romanians cut an even more pathetic figure, their presence amounting to a mere 4%. These numbers were, in this author’s opinion, clear signs that Bukovina’s Romanians were “not a people who lives, but one who vegetates.”\(^73\) The study blamed the imperial administration for causing this imbalance by importing “functionaries from the west” and favoring even poorly qualified Germans and Jews over Romanians. But this was still 1916 so the study concluded on an optimistic note, with the hope that these “problems will be solved in Greater Romania.” This would not happen for at least another decade. Bukovina’s professional elites would remain

\(^{71}\) Livâzeanu, Cultural Politics of Greater Romania, 53.
\(^{72}\) Ilie Torotiu, Poporația și clasele sociale din Bucovina (București: Editura Lupta, 1916).
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 316.
largely “foreign” at least until the 1930s, despite repeated attempts to forge a Romanian middle class. In this respect too, the effects of a century and a half of imperial rule were hard to reverse.

From the imperial administration, the Romanian authorities in Bukovina inherited a civil service staffed overwhelmingly by non-Romanians. When the provincial administration was subordinated to Bucharest in the fall of 1918, the central authorities found themselves in command of a bureaucracy that felt a bit like a colonial domain where no one spoke the metropole’s language except for the people in charge. Many locals, especially the minorities, viewed their relationship with Bucharest in similar terms. In an interview with Bukovina’s minister-delegate Ion Nistor published in March 1919, the major German-language newspaper Czernowitzer Tagblatt opined that “Nistor is almost like an ambassador of Bukovina.” Of course, Nistor emphatically denied this, insisting that “he is in no way an ambassador but a minister in a Romanian ministry” and that “Bukovina is completely incorporated into Romania, the borders have fallen.” But the borders had not fallen yet. Too numerous to be dismissed en masse without causing an administrative crisis, Bukovina’s civil servants went on living and working as before - that is to say, in the German language. A steady stream of official correspondence in “foreign languages, unknown to the authorities in the Old Kingdom” flowed into Bucharest until 1922, when the central authorities ordered all “chiefs of departments and services” in Bukovina to “start carrying out their internal and external correspondence only “in the official language.” These admonitions gave no results and in 1923 the ministry of interior once again reported that “some external authorities continue to send (…) documents written in the Hungarian and German languages.” Adding insult to injury, Bukovinian civil servants wrote

74 “Interview with Minister Dr Nistor,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 9 March 1919.
75 DACHO, fond 12, op 1, d 1678, l. 39.
76 DACHO, fond 43, op 1, d 1163, 27 April 1922, l.2.
77 DACHO, fond 15, op 1, d 4415, l.3.
their German-language correspondence on Austrian stationery and sealed it with Habsburg
double-headed eagle stamps, “damag[ing] the prestige of the country”\textsuperscript{78} in so many ways. This
time, a more severe order was issued to suspend all paperwork from the newly annexed
territories until “it has been translated into the Romanian language”\textsuperscript{79} and to eliminate
completely “the language, inscriptions, effigies, and stamps reminding of the old regime.”\textsuperscript{80} But
as late as 1937, the Bucharest authorities still had to threaten functionaries who “conduct
correspondence or use seals with a different symbol or language than the official ones, of the
Romanian state” with “merciless disciplinary sanctions.”\textsuperscript{81}

Acting on the assumption that Bukovina’s “foreigners and Jews” were the greatest
obstacle to the development of a Romanian middle class of civil servants and functionaries, the
liberal administration set out to remove the “foreign” competition in order to free up space for
ethnic Romanians. They managed do so without openly violating the Minority Protection Treaty
and incurring criticism from the great powers through a series of language decrees that gave
Romanians a clear advantage over non-Romanian speakers competing for administrative
positions. Issued in February 1919, the new language regulations held that “for every definitive
naming [in the position of] state employee in Bukovina, as well as for the confirmation in such a
position, proof will be required of knowledge of the Romanian language.”\textsuperscript{82} In practice, this
meant that all civil servants - whether they were just applying for a position or trying to keep the
one they already had - had to pass a Romanian language exam consisting of “free composition or
translations (…) without a dictionary” and an oral exam in which “the examiners may choose
what questions to ask.” Only graduates of Romanian-language middle schools and individuals

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., l.74.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., l.3.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 18 July 1923, l. 76.
\textsuperscript{81} DACHO, fond 38, op 2, d 10187, l.1, 4 February 1937.
who were “known to be able to speak fluently” would be granted exemptions from the examination on the condition that they petition Bukovina’s minister-delegate directly. Non-Romanians interpreted this last provision quite liberally, offering no more proof of their language skills than vague assertions of competence such as: “in my childhood I had the best opportunity to learn Romanian” or “the undersigned knows the language in writing and speaking and thinks himself capable of passing this exam and aspiring to a good grade.”

A series of language classes were organized on Bucharest’s orders to prepare “public, administrative, and juridical functionaries who do not know the state language” for the language examinations. The intention behind this was not so much to accommodate non-Romanian speakers, as to prove the government’s good will towards the minorities and give the appearance that non-Romanians could enjoy equal opportunities in the nation-state as long as they were willing to adjust to the new circumstances. Of course, no class could actually make non-Romanian-speaking functionaries “who had grown old at their posts” fluent in the new “state language” in only a few weeks. But to the Romanian administration, it was worth paying for these courses because they kept minority civil servants busy with grammar books and dictionaries long enough to make their replacement less difficult.

Different administrations approached the problem of Bukovina’s “foreign”-dominated professional class from different angles. Non-liberal governments such as that headed by General Averescu and later the National Peasant Party advocated a more gradual approach to the

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83 DAChO, f 6, op 1, d 255, 24 March 1919, l 1. According to the law, only those candidates who obtained a grade of one, two, or three would be allowed to keep their positions; candidates who obtained a grade of five would be promptly dismissed, while those who got a four could retake the exam six months later.

84 SANIC, Casa Școalilor, 10/1921, 5 January 1921, p 5. The costs for these classes were borne by the government, which compensated language teachers with “an increase in their salary of 100 lei per class per week” while also providing “students” with subsidized textbooks through the Casa Școalilor.

85 “Der Schicksalstunde der Bukowiner Beamten,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 14 April 1921.
language regulations, in part because they hoped to mobilize the minorities’ support against their liberal opponents in this way. In 1920, General Averescu’s government replaced the former Bukovinian ministry in Bucharest headed by Ion Nistor with a newly created institution: “the liquidation and unification commission,” presided over by Dori Popovici. As the former leader of the ‘radical popular’ nationalist faction *Apărarea Națională*, Popovici prided himself on knowing Bukovina well.\(^87\) Putting the province’s needs before the ‘romanization’ imperative, Popovici pushed for a longer transition period to allow the non-Romanian civil servants to learn the new state language. “We must admit,” he claimed in June 1920, “that we have very good functionaries who know the Romanian language insufficiently and whom we cannot otherwise use unless we let them work for now in the German language.”\(^88\) But the liberals, who were in power throughout most of the 1920s, prevailed. Their policies achieved their intended goal of discouraging “foreigners” from pursuing careers in the civil service. Already in 1923, the *Czernowitzer Allgemeine* announced that “the civil service is now attractive only for citizens of Romanian nationality. The top positions are set aside only for them, today perhaps rightly so, as they are the only ones who master the state language sufficiently.”\(^89\) This policy threatened to throw the provincial administration, staffed largely by non-Romanian speakers, into complete disarray. Bukovina’s bureaucracy already started coming apart at the seams when non-Romanian civil servants who had not yet passed the language exam began enlisting the services of “translation offices,” making the bureaucratic process even more cumbersome than it already was. At the same time, the openings created by dismissing ‘foreign’ functionaries expanded the market for civil servant positions, offering Romanians in the former Old Kingdom new

\(^{87}\) *Din viața aventurierului Dori Popovici: fost șef al organizațiunilor Partidului Poporului din Bucovina: acte și documente – facsimile si autografe (1900)*, 5.

\(^{88}\) DACHO, f 24, op 1, d 6, l 15.

employment opportunities. Many capable civil servants who failed the examinations lost their
jobs to functionaries who were fluent in Romanian and who, in the opinion of some, had
“nothing to recommend them except for the fact that they were not from Bukovina.”90 But many
more were allowed to keep their jobs because they were too difficult to replace.

The liberal administration deviated from its intransigent language policies more than it cared to admit. Of the 39 candidates who took the language exam in October 1924 in Cernăuți, only one failed it.91 Were these geniuses who mastered the Romanian language to perfection? Unlikely. More probably, the examination commissions lowered their standards to accommodate the civil servants the administration wished to keep. Although they were originally designed as a one-time measure, the language examinations had to be repeated every couple of years to give non-Romanian state employees who failed the examination the first time around the chance to “reclaim their posts if they pass.”92 Language examinations were still being held for all “minority functionaries” in Bukovina as late as 1934.93 One year later, however, the “Disciplinary Commission For Communal and District Councillors” in Cernăuți was instructed to bring all minority functionaries who had obtained insufficient “grades between 1 and 5 before the local disciplinary commission” so they would be dismissed for having “neglected an elementary duty towards the Romanian state through a condemnable indifference.”94 But at the local level, many institutions preferred their linguistically challenged former employees to less experienced candidates. According to the decree of 1935, according to which all ‘state employees’ who had not yet passed the language exam would be promptly dismissed, even firefighters who had not

90 “Die Schicksalstunde der Bukowiner Beamten,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 14 April 1921.
91 DACHO, fond 15, op. 1, d. 4345.
92 Ibid., l.26. The decision as to which “administrative political functionaries” would have to take the exam lay with the local prefects, who were required to publish the candidates’ names beforehand in the local press.
93 DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 6777, l.2.
94 DACHO, fond 43, op. 1, d. 7231, l.5.
yet received “a sufficient grade” were in danger of losing their positions. Although in this line of work, experience likely mattered more than language skills, firefighters were subjected to the same rules as civil servants. Because they were appointed by the city hall, they were technically considered “state employees.” When the time came to sack the six firefighters in Cernăuți who had still not passed the language exam by 1935, their superiors went out of their way to prove that these employees were “irreplaceable” because they knew the city “in its smallest details” and possessed invaluable work experience.95

If the Romanian administration was more or less willing to temper its language policies to keep the civil service up and running, such compromises were out of the question where the justice system was concerned. In a study from 1911, one Romanian nationalist from Bukovina reported that only 14 of the 96 lawyers who were registered in Czernowitz at the time were Christian, while the remaining 82 were all Jewish.96 Romanian nationalists feared that by allowing these “foreigners” who “diabolically persisted in using a foreign language that is not even the language of their nationality but also not the language of the state in which they live” to keep their positions under Romanian rule, they would compromise the national cause.97 But the legal careers of these men were already compromised, for they were specialists in the laws of a state that no longer existed. Their experience - no matter how vast and rich - became irrelevant once Bukovina’s legal system was linked up with the Romanian one. As though this were not enough to bring the non-Romanian lawyers to their knees, the ministry of justice delivered yet another blow in May 1922, with a decree requiring all lawyers in Bukovina “who are not

95 Ibid., I 3, 5 March 1935.
96 Ilie Torotiu, Românii şi clasa intelectuală din Bucovina (Cernăuți: Editura societății academice ‘Junimea,’ 1911), 14.
97 “Evreii între ei,” Glasul Bucovinei, 30 April 1930.
Romanian from birth” to pass an examination in the Romanian language.\textsuperscript{98} “For many lawyers,” the Czernowitzer Morgenblatt objected in July 1922, “this decree amounts to the end of their career because if one takes away their language, one also takes away their means of survival.”\textsuperscript{99} That was precisely what the Romanian authorities had in mind. But the leaders of all major non-Romanian parties in Bukovina happened to be lawyers themselves, so they conflated the attack on the lawyers with the general violation of minority rights in Bukovina.\textsuperscript{100} None of their interventions and requests for “a longer transition time for the language switch” were effective, but they did reveal something crucial about the national administration.\textsuperscript{101} What the authorities promised, they invariably delivered - except always in reverse. Shortly after minister-delegate Ion Nistor reassured Mayer Ebner that the language decree would be postponed for at least another year, the Morgenblatt reported that everywhere in Bukovina, court rooms were already rejecting petitions written in the German language.\textsuperscript{102} The Bucharest authorities had a similar modus operandi. In August 1922, for instance, Mayer Ebner left a meeting with prime minister Brătianu convinced that “the language decree has been suspended,” only to discover shortly afterwards that the minister of justice in Bucharest was unwilling to extend these concessions to

\textsuperscript{98} “Gegen den jüngsten Sprachenerlass,” Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 13 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{99} “Der Sprachenerlass tritt doch in Kraft?” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 4 July 1922.
\textsuperscript{100} In a protest meeting they organized in June 1922, the head of the Party of Jewish Union Mayer Ebner, the leader of the National German Party Alfred Kohlruss, and Vasyl Duchak, a prominent member of the Ukrainian party, on the character of a general protest against the violation of minority rights in Bukovina. This protest meeting was headed by Mayer Ebner, Alfred Kohlruss, and Duchak in the German house. “Gegen den jüngsten Sprachenerlass,” Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 13 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{101} “Der Sprachenerlass - eine Versammlung der Advokaten,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 15 August 1922. In an audience with the minister-delegate Ion Nistor in July 1922, a delegation of the Bukovina ‘chamber of lawyers’ requested that the language decree be implemented immediately only in those cases “where both participants in a trial are of Romanian nationality.” For all courts in the Czernowitz ‘circle,’ they requested a 5-year transition period. Failing that, non-Romanian representatives resolved to take the matter directly to Bucharest. “Der Sprachenerlass,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 12 July 1922. There was a gathering again on August 12, 1922 in Cernăuți to “fight with every legal means against the illegality of the language decree,” a group of non-Romanian lawyers summoned by Jasienicki and Mayer Ebner sent prime minister Ionel Brătianu a memorandum requesting “a longer transition time for the language switch.” “Der Sprachenerlass,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 15 August 1922. “Der Sprachenerlass - eine Versammlung der Advokaten,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 15 August 1922.
\textsuperscript{102} “Der Sprachenerlass - Wo liegt die Wahrheit?,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 20 July 1922.
German speakers in Cernăuți.103

From Austria, the Romanian administration also inherited an educational system staffed by a large number of non-Romanian teachers who were now seen as a major threat to the national project. More will be said about the struggle to purge the primary school system of “foreigners” in the following chapter. The German-speaking intellectual elites employed by the university in Cernăuți were less numerous than the mass of non-Romanians who taught in the province’s primary and secondary schools, but they played a more symbolic role. Unlike the civil servants, whose careers had been tangled up with the empire but who could be recycled by the nation-state at least for a while, the German-speaking professors at the university in Cernăuți were believed to be beyond redemption. This was perhaps a sign that Austria’s cultural project was still taken seriously. The cultural elites were now identified with the empire, faulted for all its sins, and believed to be more dangerous even than the imperial bureaucrats. The German-speaking professors were allowed to keep their positions only if they agreed to teach in the Romanian language. In practice, of course, everyone knew that “it is impossible to master the language to the point that we can teach in it in just a few months.” The new head of Bukovina’s provincial administration Iancu Flondor floated the idea of opening a German-language university in Transylvania, but other than that, he could only suggest that the professors “have their lectures translated into Romanian and try to learn as much of the language as possible.”104 All those who refused to learn Romanian lost their jobs and petitioned for “repatriation” to German-Austria. When two professors from Cernăuți attempted to retrieve their positions in 1921, rumors about their potential return caused an uproar among local Romanian nationalist

103 “Beim Justizminister Florescu,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 3 October 1922.
104 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5 C/ZI 12231/1919, Beilage I: Bericht über die gegenwärtige Lage der deutschen Professoren, wissenschaftlichen Hilfskräfte und Beamten an der Universität in Czernowitz und über die Notwendigkeit ihrer Übernahme nach Deutschösterreich.
students. Vowing never to “admit at any price the reinstitution of the old Austrian spirit in Cernăuți’s university,” the students threatened to drive “these two individuals out by force” and show them “the way to their much-coveted fatherland” should the authorities take their side.\(^{105}\) The “two knights of Austriacization”\(^{106}\) were Adolf Last and Eugen Ehrlich: the first, a Jew who “pretends to be Romanian” and the second a “baptized Jew” - as the nationalist press made sure to mention.\(^{107}\) Even more than their Jewishness, it was Last’s and Ehrlich’s disloyalty to Bukovina that made them so reviled now. Because both men had supported the plan to move the university in Cernăuți to Salzburg during the war, they were now accused of sabotaging the ‘autochtonous’ population’s efforts to educate themselves.

The empire’s military and political elites fell together with it, sinking that much lower for having reached greater heights under imperial rule than most other people. From the Romanian administration’s point of view, dismissal seemed too soft a punishment for these individuals, now held responsible for the empire’s worst injustices and crimes against its Romanian subjects. Eduard Fischer, the former commander of the Austrian gendarmerie in Bukovina and Galicia,\(^{108}\) had to pay dearly for the “patriotism [that] did not let him rest” during the war.\(^{109}\) As soon as they took over Bukovina, the Romanians captured Fischer and imprisoned him in a hotel room in Jassy, setting him free two years later on the condition that he be immediately put on trial as a war criminal in German Austria. Fischer’s acts of patriotism during the war had almost won him the empire’s highest military honors: the Military Order of Maria Theresia, promised him by Emperor Franz Joseph himself.\(^{110}\) After the Austrian army retreated from Bukovina in August


\(^{108}\) Eduard Georg Fischer biography, AT-OeSTA/KA NL 8 B: 1, fol 1-53

\(^{109}\) AT-OeSTA, Abschrift V, Wien 24 April 1920, Tisliar, KA NL B/8: 2, p 79.

1914, Fischer “assembled battalions, procured weapons, munition, food, sanitary materials, money and other necessities for the war (...) set the transportation system back into motion, organized train transports for the wounded, a hospital for 200 patients,” and conducted a military offensive against the Russians with no military and weapons, but only an improvised volunteer corps.\(^{111}\) Thanks to Fischer’s improvised attack and brief reconquest of Czernowitz in October 1914, the Austrians were able to evacuate the state officials and some of the state property they had left behind in their hasty retreat, as well as to “bring to safety patriotic persons pursued by the enemy.”\(^{112}\) Fischer’s operations were, technically speaking, a breach of military discipline. The general had not only made decisions independently of Vienna, but he had also resorted to unorthodox practices such as smuggling cattle, “winter grains” and “agricultural products” across the Romanian border to keep the province well supplied with food during the war.\(^{113}\) But the Viennese authorities could ill afford to punish a man who had gone out of his way to make up for their own incompetence. In Fischer’s defense, one of his superiors noted that his deeds gained him “the right to the deepest gratitude on the part of the entire population.”

After the war, however, Fischer was indicted not for defying regulations but for following them too closely. During the war, Austrian military officials of his rank were invested with the authority to arrest and deport suspicious elements for security purposes. These practices were especially common in the empire’s most multiethnic territories, where officials had reason to suspect non-Germans of siding with the enemy. In Eastern Galicia, “many innocent Ruthenians were caught up in the waves of arrest of Russophiles,” while in Bukovina the victims

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\(^{111}\) AT-OeSTA/KA, NL B/8: 2, Abschrift V, Wien 24 April 1920, Tisljar, 79.
In April 1915, Bukovina’s Russian governor Evreinov put a price on Fischer’s head: 50,000 rubles to get Fischer dead or injured, and 100,000 rubles plus a position in the state administration in exchange for capturing him alive. AT-OeSTA/KA NL 8 B:1, fol 1-53, Abschrift, 1 April 1915

\(^{112}\) AT-OeSTA/KA NL B/8: 2, Abschrift III, by Rudolf Graf von Meran, kk Staatshalter, May 1917 most likely.

\(^{113}\) AT-OeSTA/ KA NL 8 B:1, Letter from Präsident des Landeskulturrates Bukowina, 15 May 1917.
were both Orthodox Ruthenians and Romanians. Romanian nationalists accused Eduard Fischer of waging an “internal war” against Bukovina’s nationalities and causing hundreds of ethnic Romanians and Ruthenians great suffering through requisitionings, arrests, and deportations. That Fischer had fulfilled his duty with zeal is beyond doubt. But when Romanian nationalists accused him of orchestrating thousands of “arrests, deportations, confinements in internment camps, confiscations, and the destruction of private property,” Fischer firmly denied responsibility for any of these crimes. The Swiss Legation in Bucharest repeatedly warned the Romanian government that Fischer’s confinement “did not correspond in any way to the treatment the authorities are obliged to give prisoners according to international conventions.” But the Romanians refused to set him free, for Fischer “is known for his inhuman treatment of the Romanian population, in addition he was an organizer and leader of Austrian espionage in Romania. His release before the definitive peace treaty with Romania is impossible.” Fischer’s most unforgivable sin was to have served as an “instrument in the hands of the Jews.” The Bukovinian Aurel Morariu, the man who formally indicted the General in the Bucharest parliament, accused him of colluding with “Jewish agents” to deport hundreds of Bukovinian Romanians suspected of espionage. He claimed that one Romanian priest and his daughter on their way to the internment camp Thalerhof were “mocked by Jews who spat on them and kicked them until they were bleeding.” Another Romanian priest was supposedly chained to a gypsy and assaulted by “a huge crowd of Jews and foreigners” who waited for him at the train station from where he was deported.

114 Mark von Hagen, War in a European Borderland, 11.
116 OeSTA/KA NL B/8: 8, fol 21, Abschrift der Bucarester Antwort an das Oesterreichische Staatsamt des Aeussern, 3 November 1919, 171.
117 OeSTA/KA NK B/8: 8, Fol 21, Note, 600.
Fischer’s internment succeeded only in giving the Romanians the sweet taste of revenge, for the general remained as convinced of his innocence as ever. When he was finally released in November 1920, the nationalist Glasul Bucovinei described the event as “even more monstrous than the cruelty and injustices of the cruelest hanger of innocent people.”

On arriving in Vienna, Fischer expected to be welcomed as a national martyr and awarded the military honors he had been promised during the war. Instead, he was taken captive once again, this time by his own fatherland. While waiting to go on trial as a war criminal, Fischer was not allowed to travel anywhere outside Austria. For as long as the charges that had been brought against him were not disproved, his “military honor” also remained tainted. After living in this state of limbo for almost three years, the general wrote the Austrian chancellor Ignaz Seipel, requesting to be put on trial as soon as possible so he could have his freedom back. Fischer’s petition nonchalantly mentioned that the Romanians had accused him of “having condemned 60 Romanian families to death through hanging” and having shot 600 Romanians. “These are inventions,” Fischer wrote, “for I did not hang any person during the war (…) In the first frenzy of national chauvinism I was taken to Jassy and these investigations were carried out about me, [but they] did not give any results.”

The two years Fischer had spent locked up in a hotel room in Jassy, “completely isolated, cut off from the world,” and left to rot away with “no sheets, no clothes, everything torn and barely usable,” had left him ill-disposed towards the Romanians and convinced of his own victimhood. “Gravely ill,” “close to insanity,” and impoverished after paying for his own food

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118 “Ce-i cu generalul austriac Fischer?,” Glasul Bucovinei, 10 December 1920.

Finally, in November 1920 Bucharest agreed to have Fischer released and the general was finally allowed to leave the country, first escorted by a “representative of the state security” to the Swiss embassy and then by a Swiss representative to Vienna, “where the Swiss embassy will place him at the disposal of the Austrian Ministry for External Affairs.” Fischer may have been released but he did not leave Jassy a free man. The one precondition for his liberation had been that Fischer be immediately put on trial on reaching Vienna.

and “lodging” during the previous seventeen months of confinement, in July 1920 the general declared himself ready to “prepare a soldier’s end for myself” in the event that the Austrian authorities would not release him soon.\textsuperscript{120} When they left Jassy a few months later, Fischer and his wife lost both their homeland and their valuables, including carpets and a coin collection the Romanian authorities confiscated from them and turned into “state property.”\textsuperscript{121}

Tainted by their association with the defunct empire, Bukovina’s old Romanian political elites did not have it any easier under the Romanian administration. From its earliest days in print, the newspaper \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} - a mouthpiece of Ion Nistor’s party - called for a new kind of national politics based on moral reform and “purification” to put an end to the “opportunism and individualism that characterized the spirit of the former generation.”\textsuperscript{122} This was the generation of politicians who had made their careers before the war by mastering the rules of the Austrian parliamentary game - an altogether different style of politics than that championed by the younger nationalists who rose through the ranks after the unification. Under imperial rule, national politicians often promoted the interests of their own national group while also cooperating and negotiating with representatives of other nationalities. This was not only possible, but even inevitable in places like Bukovina, where no one national group was large enough to dominate the political agenda. Another common occurrence was that national politics was dictated more by the temporary alignment of non-national interests than by a steady commitment to nationalist ideology. As the radical nationalists around \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} put it, “in yesterday’s Bukovina political parties were only associations of co-interested people,” with

\textsuperscript{120} In a letter to his superior General Tisljar, Fischer wrote that “my wife is gravely ill and I likewise, close to insanity; have not left the room for 17 months, I have become a skeleton.”

\textsuperscript{121} OeSTA/KA NL B/8: 3, Letter from Josephine Fischer, an das hohe Bundesministerium für Aeusseres, January 1921, Vienna; OeSTA/KA KA NL B/8: 3, Letter from Directoratul general pentru interne secția personalului și contenciosului, 11 October 1922.

\textsuperscript{122} “Drumul nostru,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 1/14 January 1919.
politicians “making promises” and “moving from one camp to another.” A unique species of politician thrived in this environment: the national chameleon who switched colors according to convenience. The archetype of the national renegade was Coco Wassilko, a Romanian who left his tribe and became a Ruthenian politician only because his chances of winning elections were higher in the Ruthenian districts. In addition, many national politicians under imperial rule were loyal at once to their nationality and to the empire. After 1918, radical nationalists treated this as a symptom of moral degradation that could only be remedied by dissolving “our old political parties” and creating a new kind of Romanian politician who would no longer bow “to insults brought upon the Romanian people.” The young nationalists who proposed this had a vested interest in turning the Romanian authorities against their senior colleagues. For only when the older elites were removed could these formerly marginal politicians assume full authority.

The radical nationalists who came to power in Bukovina after the unification drew legitimacy not so much from the past itself, as from the act of breaking with past traditions. Until World War I, when this small group of Romanian nationalists defected from Austria-Hungary to join the anti-Austrian war effort in the Old Kingdom, most Romanians in Bukovina had operated within the frameworks of empire. Though they too emerged from the same imperial world where “Greater Romania” was only a distant dream, the younger generation completely repudiated the “accommodationist” practices of the older nationalist elites. In the process of purging Bukovina’s past of national opportunists, however, the radical nationalists threw the baby out with the bathwater. The man who practically invented Romanian nationalism in 19th-century Bukovina, Eudoxiu, fell into oblivion after 1918, his grave “neither cared for, nor decorated,” and visited only by “a group of admirers who (…) remember the memory of he who tried the hardest to preserve Bukovina’s Romanian character.” Educated in Vienna, Hurmuzaki had

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returned to Bukovina in 1848 to write a memorandum demanding administrative autonomy from Galicia. It was his belief that incorporating a predominantly Romanian and Orthodox province into a heavily Polish and Catholic one amounted to “locking up inside one room two beings that hate each other.”\footnote{Teodor Bălan, Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi: Discurs festiv rostit la 23 martie 1923 cu prilejul serbării semicentenarului morții sale în sala Teatrului Național din Cernăuți (Cernăuți: Societatea pentru cultura și literatura română în Bucovina, 1924), 6.} Together with the metropolitan bishop of the Romanian Orthodox church in Transylvania Andrei Saguna, Hurmuzaki also wrote a “General Petition of the Romanians,” proposing that all territories inhabited by ethnic Romanians be merged into one administrative unit under Habsburg rule. This was, no doubt, a form of Romanian nationalism, albeit one that did not seek to bring about the empire’s demise so much as to pursue national goals within the frameworks of empire. What most nationalists calling for greater autonomy had in mind at the time was a “Greater Austria” organized along federal lines, and not secession. Hurmuzaki, who once described his native crown land as “a Romanic branch grafted on the powerful German trunk,” could not even imagine Bukovina anywhere outside the Habsburg Empire.\footnote{Ibid., 8.}

The nationalism embraced by the Romanian political elites that remained in power at the time of unification resembled Hurmuzaki’s mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century beliefs more than those of contemporary radicals like Nistor. The foremost exponent of this view was Aurel Onciul, a Romanian lawyer who returned to Bukovina to begin a political career after studying law in Vienna and working in Bruenn. In February 1903, Onciul founded the new Democratic or Peasant Party on the basis of a political program he had first laid out in his Bruenn publication \textit{Privitorul} [\textit{The Observer}] and then developed in the Cernăuți periodical \textit{Voința Poporului} [\textit{The People’s Will}]. Although Onciul’s party was certainly nationalist, its priority was to serve the social and economic interests of the Romanian peasantry, teachers, and students even if this
meant coming into conflict with other Romanian parties. Its arch-enemy was the National Popular Party, representing the old landowner elites, led by George Popovici and Iancu Flondor. The antagonism between these two factions had reached such proportions that “the leaders of both parties did not spare anything, not even the family sanctuary of their adversaries, and were ready to ally themselves with the bitterest enemies of Romanianism only to defeat their adversary in the other Romanian camp.”

Except for the very brief period of time when his party fused with the National Popular party under Iancu Flondor’s leadership, Onciul was constantly making and breaking political associations. To keep him in a position of power after the unification was to risk perpetuating the spirit of factionalism that had always plagued Romanian politics in Bukovina before the war. But Onciul’s greatest sin was to have remained faithful to the empire to the bitter end, in the belief that the Romanian nationality could only survive for as long as Austria-Hungary existed. His career as an Austrian loyalist had reached its peak during the war, when Onciul countered Romania’s anti-Austrian propagandistic efforts by mobilizing peasants into loyalist demonstrations, organizing a volunteer corps “as proof of loyalty to the Kaiser,” and penning articles which proclaimed that “to us Bukovina Romanians any meddling of the [Romanian] Cultural League in our affairs is absolutely unwelcome and undesirable.”

Even when the empire’s collapse began to seem inevitable, Onciul still did not see a common future for Bukovina and Romania. As the imperial administration in Bukovina prepared to hand over the reins, Onciul began negotiating with the leader of the Ukrainian Radas Omelian Popowicz the possibility of governing the province jointly.

As soon as the rumor of an impending Romanian military intervention reached him,

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127 OeSTA/AVA Inneres Präsidium A 2096, Z1 17501/7 December 1914
128 „Ein österreichischer Rumänen gegen die Kulturliga, Äusserungen des Reichsratsabg Dr Aurel Ritter von Onciul,” *Bukowiner Post*, 5 April 1914.
Onciul rushed to Jassy to prevent a Romanian occupation. On arriving, he was immediately arrested and put in confinement in the same city where the head of Bukovina’s Austrian gendarmerie Eduard Fischer would also come to spend two years under arrest. Once the fantasy of a Greater Romania came true, it seemed inconceivable that a Romanian politician “could not believe even in November 1918 that the Danube monarchy was collapsing” and that he should go to such great lengths to prevent Bukovina’s annexation to Romania.¹²⁹ In Aurel Onciul, the younger nationalists who fled to the Old Kingdom during the war saw an absurd figure, a national traitor, and an exponent of an older generation of Romanian politicians whose views had been warped by the experience of living under imperial rule to such a degree that they came to “despise all creations of the Romanian spirit” and “could not imagine that this country is capable of huge efforts to achieve its historic mission.” If treason meant loyalty to Austria-Hungary, then Onciul was definitely a traitor. But this was neither how he saw himself, nor how he had been perceived by Romanians in Bukovina before the war. While Nistor and his acolytes were largely unknown outside their immediate circle of intellectuals, Onciul was by far the most prominent and popular Romanian politician in Bukovina at the time of his arrest in the fall of 1918. Here was the supreme irony of Onciul’s fate. Though he himself stemmed from an old Romanian-Moldavian family, his father a professor of Hebrew and “Old Testament” at the theological seminary in Czernowitz and his mother the president of the Romanian Ladies’ Club in Czernowitz, Onciul took up the cause of the Romanian peasant masses and burgeoning lower middle-class of teachers and professionals.¹³⁰ The political movement he spearheaded called for a “politics on national foundations and without meddling in foreign affairs on the basis of the right of self-determination” but it also had a strong social component, defending the economic

and social interests of the masses neglected by the older Romanian parties in Bukovina.\footnote{Aurel Constantin Onciul, \textit{Aurel Ritter von Onciul}, 11.}

Although after the war Onciul was dismissed for being out of step with the times, Flondor’s politics was in many respects more retrogressive and less populist. A member of the landed gentry, Iancu Flondor had always associated more with the Romanian landowner elites than with the large peasant masses.

Although the upsurge in national chauvinism after the war made Onciul’s politics of compromise in the name of social progress seem reactionary, he was in fact no less of a nationalist than Ion Nistor. Rather than blindly defend the empire, as his critics accused him of doing in 1918, Onciul had always called for thoroughgoing reforms to reconcile the empire’s “four-hundred-year-old territorial tradition” with the nationality principle, which he took for granted. In this sense, Onciul was even more committed to the “national idea” than the nationalists in Nistor’s circle, who took credit for the ‘national awakening’ of Romanians in Bukovina after a long period of slumber under imperial rule. For him, nationalism was not a recent development but a natural impulse “as old as the Austrian peoples themselves,” while the nation-state preceded the empire as the most spontaneous if not necessarily efficient form of political organization.\footnote{Aurel Ritter von Onciul, \textit{Das österreichische Problem} (Wien: Verlag von Carl Konegen, 1905), 2.} “The foundation for all the states that emerged in the Danubian basin after the migrations,” Onciul wrote in a study on the \textit{Austrian Problem} in 1905, “was therefore the natural cohesion of people of the same origin and language, or in other words, the national idea.”\footnote{Ibid.} Thus divided among many small national states, the “peoples of the Danubian basin” were in danger of losing their independence at the slightest attack from outside. For both security and economic reasons, the nationality principle could not remain the sole basis for political organization in the Danubian basis. And thus the Habsburg empire emerged, as naturally as
nationalism itself, when the “national idea as the exclusive foundation for state building failed and was replaced by the idea of unification of all peoples of the Danubian basin for defense purposes.” But this was not the final stage in the development of these territories, for the nationality principle not only did not disappear but grew so strong as to endanger the empire’s integrity and stability. For Aurel Onciul, the solution was not to devolve to the earlier, national form of organization but to re-organize the empire so as to afford its nationalities a maximum of autonomy by supplementing territorial representation with “national organs for individual peoples.” In this way, Onciul predicted, “the national principle would lose its aggressive quality.”

As his views did not correspond at all with the realities of 1918, Onciul would have likely fallen by the wayside of post-war politics even if his co-nationals had not removed him by force. Convinced the Habsburg monarchy could survive any trial because it has “overcome the greatest catastrophes and risen from its own ashes,” Onciul could not get over the shock of its sudden collapse in 1918. A stranger in a world he had never imagined possible, Onciul resolved to give up his political career once and for all, for “now that Austria is dead, with it my politics has also died. Any kind of resurrection is out of the question and my personality does not allow me to change faces.”

From Jassy, where he was interned in the winter of 1918, he wrote his old political rival Iancu Flondor, now “president” of Bukovina’s provincial government, letter after letter begging him to intervene with the Bucharest authorities to obtain his release. Like Eduard Fischer, Aurel Onciul experienced Austria-Hungary’s collapse as a personal tragedy that deprived him of both his career and his honor, leaving him impoverished and depressed. “Whatever I build over decades collapses overnight,” he concluded in a letter to Flondor: “while

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134 Aurel Onciul, Das österreichische Problem, 10.
135 SANIC, Iancu Flondor 11, 9 December 1918, 58.
others have enriched themselves through politics, I am a poor man. I have no fortune. The war took away even my last savings.” Should the Romanian administration set him free, Onciul vowed to stay as far as possible from politics, earning his keep in typical middle-class fashion, by means of a family business “to bring wine from Ardeal [Transylvania] and using my friendly relations with Romanian leaders in Transylvania, even food, if possible.” That was all his connections with the empire’s old political elites were good for now that Austria-Hungary was no more. Little did Onciul know when he wrote this that he would soon be summoned back into the heart of politics, to serve as a prompter to Bukovina’s new leading actors in Bucharest. At Flondor’s suggestion, Onciul was asked to put his “legislative faculties” at the service of the Romanian state, revising “all current administrative laws and [indicating] the modifications that seem to him necessary.” Barely a couple of months into his new job in Bucharest, Onciul begged Flondor to have him sent back to Bukovina because “I feel like a complete foreigner here and I am becoming melancholy.” Alienated by the “blind chauvinism” and an undeserved sense of “infallibility” of his co-nationals in Bucharest, Onciul suffered all the more “as I cannot recognize to people here the right to judge me because they have no idea about our circumstances and do not even have the will to get to know them.”

_Fatherlands, States, Citizens_

On May 12, 1924, the _Ostjuedische Zeitung_ published a poem entitled _Heimatlos_ - “Homeless.” This was not the usual lamentation about the trials of “homelessness,” but a celebration of freedom and mobility: “Where there are people, I am no longer lonely/ And I will be at home everywhere/ Where my life’s fast train stops/ For my _Heimat_ is the entire world.”

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_136_ Ibid.
_137_ SANIC, Iancu Flondor 11, 11 February 1919, 77.
The author was a young Jewish woman who had become involved first with the Social Democratic and then the Communist movement while living in Vienna as a war refugee. Though she was living in Cernăuți at the time, Clara Blum would soon leave Bukovina again, this time for the Soviet Union. “The Feeling of home is only a foreign word to me,/ My childhood was already like that, now here, now there,/ I am a restless wanderer,/ Unrest refreshes me, change does me good/ My entire being strives only forward, forward …” - Blum wrote. After spending eleven years in the Soviet Union, the poet moved again to France and then to Shanghai, where she took the Chinese name of Dshu Bai-lan and earned her living teaching German at the universities of Fundan and Nanking. The uplifting tone of her ode to “homelessness” was likely lost on the readers who came across her poem while searching for the latest news on the perpetually changing citizenship regulations. While Clara Blum had communism to keep her spirits up, most of her readers had only memories of a time, not too long ago, when they had enjoyed full citizenship rights. Soon to become “stateless persons,” these individuals contradicted the fundamental assumption that in the new national order, every individual belonged to no more and no less than one national community and one nation-state. The emergence of the stateless person after the collapse of empires was not only, as Hannah Arendt put it, “the clearest sign of the disintegration of European national states,” but also a clear reflection of how the successor states dealt - or failed to deal - with the most difficult legacy of empire: the imperial citizens they absorbed along with the newly incorporated territories.

As they proceeded to “homogenize the commingled population,” the national authorities ran up against almost insurmountable obstacles.138 The greatest difficulty was determining which segments of the population to include into the unified national community and what status to

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give those who were denied admission; to ensure some measure of coordination between the many successor states that faced this problem, the great powers agreed upon the following solution: all former Austro-Hungarian citizens who had their “right of domicile” in a territory that did not currently belong to the German-Austrian republic would automatically become citizens of the states “which now exercised sovereignty in the territory of their Heimatkommun[139]e” [home community]. Former imperial citizens would be allowed to take citizenship in another successor state only on the condition that they “speak the same language and belongs to the same race” as the population of the state to which they wished to relocate.[140] The Romanian authorities cringed at these regulations that forced them to extend equal citizenship rights to “foreigners” in the newly annexed territories. By making national citizenship dependent on the possession of the Austrian “right of domicile” or Heimatrecht in Bukovina and then introducing slight modifications to this rule, the Romanian authorities made national citizenship increasingly restrictive without openly violating the Minority Protection Treaty. The German-Austrian republic similarly required applicants for Austrian citizenship who did not have the “right of domicile” within the republic’s frontiers to prove that they were of the same nationality as the majority of German-Austria’s population, in accordance with the Optionsrecht. At first, showing that one was “completely adapted to Austrian conditions in one’s family and civic life” was enough. But in 1921, the Greater German members of the Austrian coalition government shifted course, redefining the concept of “German nationality” in terms of race as opposed to language.[141] The purpose of these restrictive citizenship policies was to keep elements deemed

140 Hirschhausen, “From Imperial Inclusion to National Exclusion,” 560.
undesirable from inserting themselves into the national community and siphoning off the precious resources of the nation-state.

The shift from an imperial to a national citizenship model left individuals whose loyalties and identities did not map neatly onto the new territorial arrangement suspended between state borders. The first to fall between the cracks were the ethnic Germans and Jews living outside the German-Austrian republic; both groups had benefited tremendously from Austria’s inclusive citizenship laws. Equating “the entirety of nationals (…) with the population of the state’s territory,” the Austrian Constitution of 1867 had guaranteed Jews legal protection and equal citizenship rights.\(^ {142}\) This made Austria-Hungary an attractive destination for Jewish immigrants from the neighboring Russian Empire, where Jews remained unemancipated. More than one third of the 6,500 individuals who were naturalized as Austrian citizens every year after 1900 were Jewish.\(^ {143}\) The two crown lands that bordered directly on the Russian Empire, Galicia and Bukovina, became home to the empire’s largest Jewish population as a result. But Jewish merchants, professionals, and students from Galicia and Bukovina could be found also in Vienna and Graz. Because they could exercise their citizenship rights anywhere on Austrian territory, imperial citizens did not have to live and work in the same places where they had the “right of domicile” or Heimatrecht. This became a problem after 1918, when national and territorial affiliations were expected to coincide. A second group of persons who fell between the new state frontiers were the Christian Germans who, together with the Jews, formed the largest national minority in the successor states. They too were spread out across East-Central Europe, some

\(^{142}\) Benno Gammerl, “Subjects, Citizens, and Others: The Handling of Ethnic Differences in the British and Habsburg Empires,” *European Review of History* 16, no. 4 (2009), 526. Even before that, the Austrian Civil Code of 1812 extended citizenship rights to anyone who was descended from Austrian parents, married an Austrian, or became naturalized by joining the civil service, setting up a business, or by residing on Austrian territory for at least ten years. A law from 1849 made naturalization conditional on the acquisition of Heimatrecht or “right of domicile” on Austrian territory.

\(^{143}\) Hirschhausen, “From Imperial Inclusion to National Exclusion,” 555.
living as far away from the empire’s German-speaking core as Bukovina. They were more fortunate than the Jews in that they could claim protection from German-Austria. But Austrian officials were so concerned to rid themselves of the Jewish refugees who had streamed into Vienna during the war that they were even ready to give up on the ethnic Germans stranded in the empire’s eastern provinces. In the words of one German-Austrian official, “that the 200-300 German civil servants (from Bukovina) will be denied the suffrage is regrettable, but not catastrophic…It would be a much bigger disaster if the Galician Jews who have come here as refugees and whose legions are being strengthened by the Jews fleeing from Bukovina were to stay here indefinitely.”

Unlike the empire’s material possessions, which the successor states were only too happy to claim, the people Austria-Hungary had left behind were both an asset and burden for the new administrations. Rather than compete for new citizens, as one might expect, the successor states sought to limit their responsibilities towards the population that vied for national citizenship rights. The new national order rested on a paradox. Insofar as the ideal of a ‘national whole’ justified territorial expansion, successor states eagerly championed it. After World War I, Romania incorporated territories that more than doubled its size - all in the name of restoring the unity and coherence of the national community. But the idea that the nation knew no boundaries also laid larger responsibilities on the states that claimed to embody it. Few were the ones that had either the will or the resources to live up to this ideal. The German-Austrian republic, for instance, was eager to play the role of Austria-Hungary’s most direct successor for as long as this entailed material advantages. Shortly after the imperial collapse, German-Austrian officials staked a claim to the material legacies of empire in territories that now fell outside the borders of the rump state. In November 1918, the German-Austrian State Council declared “the German

144 Quoted in Hirschhausen, “From Imperial Inclusion to National Exclusion,” 555.
university in Prague, the German technical schools in Prague and Brünn, as well as the university in Czernowitz property of the German-Austrian state.”¹⁴⁵ Before they were able to reap any benefits from their association with the empire, German-Austrian officials found themselves burdened with new liabilities. As the “nation-state for the Germans of the former monarchy,” German-Austria became responsible for the fate of the German “culture bearers” strewn all over the empire’s former territories. Before long, the Viennese authorities became swamped with requests for protection and financial assistance from former Austrian citizens now trapped inside non-German-speaking nation-states. From the university in Cernăuți, the German-Austrian republic was able to recover not even one brick, for the Romanian administration conveniently claimed the institution as property of Bukovina. The German-speaking professors and staff who lost their positions when the university was converted into a Romanian-language institution were the only imperial inheritance that German-Austria could reclaim in Bukovina.

Even though they qualified for Austrian citizenship according to the St Germain treaty, these former imperial citizens were no longer the priority of any one state. For all their professions of loyalty to the “Austrian idea,” the German-speaking university professors and staff who lost their positions because they refused to learn Romanian were little more than a financial burden on the German-Austrian state at a time when resources were scarce. After spending the war years away from home as refugees in the west or soldiers at the front, the professors were summoned back to Czernowitz in 1918. On arriving, they found both the university and their own homes plundered and damaged. The university’s collections had been “completely carried away by the Russians,” while the physics institute was “in a state of total disorder and filth.”¹⁴⁶ While the university library had remained pretty much intact “except for

¹⁴⁵ OeSTA-AVA Unterricht 5 C/ Zl 12230/1919.
¹⁴⁶ OeSTA, AVA Unterricht, 5D1/Zl 1136/1918.
those books that were loaned out during this time and kept in private apartments” that were plundered, the seminar rooms required extensive repairs.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} As one official reported, the “glass windows are broken, (...) the rooms that served the Russians as a hospital have still not been disinfected. Tables and especially chairs are missing (...) [and] supplies such as paper, ink etc are not available.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} On returning from the Serbian front in November 1917, one physics professor discovered that “all of his belongings except for his piano and badly damaged furniture had been robbed by plunderers.” By the end of the war, he had become so impoverished that he could not even afford to buy himself a new set of civilian clothes. The former rector of the university in Cernăuți, professor Karl Zelinka, was reduced to begging the German-Austrian ministry of education for financial support because “out of my six-room apartment, only the scattered furniture was left behind, for everything I had in terms of bed clothes, linens, clothing, shoes, hats, porcelain, glass objects, works of art and so on were robbed.”\footnote{\textit{OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5 C, ZI 17751/1920, p 3.}} It is not difficult to see why these men, whose careers and livelihoods had been ruined first by the war and then by the empire’s collapse, should have felt entitled to German-Austria’s protection.

But instead of welcoming them with open arms, the Austrian rump state treated the professors in Cernăuți as second-class citizens. This was a fate shared by many ‘imperials’ who, on returning to the metropole after spending a lifetime in the colonies, were regarded as one with the “natives.” Austrians from the empire’s German-speaking core held similar prejudices against those denizens of the periphery who now appealed to Vienna for support. Not even one of the universities on the German-Austrian republic’s territory agreed to take on the professors in Cernăuți in any other capacity than as private lecturers [\textit{Privatdozenten}], and only on the
condition that they be paid directly out of the state’s pocket. The most frequently cited reason for denying them employment was that the professors were poorly qualified to meet the departments’ needs. Kurt Kaser was turned down by the university in Vienna, for instance, not only because his “specialization is in a field that is well represented in Vienna” but also on the grounds that “ever since he was named Ordinarius in Czernowitz, Kaser has published nothing more.”

Another reason - just as openly acknowledged - was anti-Semitism, for the German-language university in Czernowitz was known to have a large Jewish faculty and student body. Leon Kellner, a specialist in Shakespeare, an active Zionist, and the founder of a new Jewish party in Bukovina was denied a position at Innsbruck university on account of his Jewish origins. “Jewish professors,” the rectorate openly admitted, “cannot be taken in by this university because in the event that they are hired it cannot be guaranteed that they will be able to teach undisturbed.” The professors had already foreseen that finding employment in German-Austria would be difficult, for “based on our knowledge of the German-Austrian universities, we know very well that we will not be received with open arms.” Given that none of the universities would have them, in February 1920 the Austrian Cabinet Council ordered that all “those professors, scientific workers, civil servants, and staff of the Czernowitz university who belong to the German nationality” be absorbed into the German-Austrian civil service. From then on, Leon Kellner - the English literature scholar - would earn his keep as a privy councillor...

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150 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5C/ Zl 13559/1919.
151 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5C, Zl 5645/1920, 22 March 1920.
152 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht, 5C, Zl 6154/1920, 26 March 1920.
154 Anna Kellner, Leon Kellner, 1936. Even as civil servants, the Cernăuți professors cost the German-Austrian republic more money than it could afford to pay. For this reason, the State Office of Finance decreed in 1920 that all professors and staff for whom it was impossible to find other positions should be immediately retired after being admitted into the Austrian civil service because “the financial conditions of the state do not allow for the compensation of all unemployed professors with a full salary over the long term.” OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5 C, Zl 26637/1919, 16 February 1920.
in the Austrian president’s office.

Beyond fulfilling such basic duties, the German-Austrian authorities did not go out of their way to accommodate the Bukovinian professors. Even though the professors were sure to lose their jobs, for the longest time the Viennese authorities sent them vague instructions to stay at their posts. Each one of us should know where he is supposed to go,” the professors wrote in a collective letter in May 1918, ”We are coming with our possessions and families; traveling haphazardly to Vienna is out of the question given the current housing conditions (…) not to mention the costs.”

When the Viennese authorities finally got in touch in June, it was only to inform the professors that they would have to “move to Vienna at their own risk and responsibility, and to secure their own transfer and that of their goods.” Why this careless, neglectful attitude towards men and women who had put their careers on the line for the sake of Kultur? From a purely logistical point of view, the professors did not qualify for state support under the new German-Austrian administration. As German speakers, they could apply for German-Austrian citizenship according to the Optionsrecht clause of the St Germain treaty, but since they had not been expelled from Romania but they themselves had chosen to leave the country, they were not considered “political refugees.” As such, they were not entitled to free housing and storage space in Vienna, nor did the Viennese authorities feel obligated to relocate them immediately.

Moreover, even while claiming a new German-Austrian identity, the professors held on to an older conception of “Austrianness” that brought them into conflict with the Austrian authorities. This is not to say that they were totally oblivious to the changes around them or that they did not try to adjust. As soon as the empire collapsed and its nationalities proclaimed their

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155 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5C, ZI 12230/1919, 2 May 1919, 45.
156 OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5C/ZI 12196/1919, 17 June 1919.
right to national self-determination, the Cernăuți professors began toying with the language of nationalism. To give the new Austrian authorities an idea about the difficult circumstances with which they had put up in Bukovina, they wrote that the “Ruthenians, Romanians, and Poles, not to mention Czechoslovaks were never really happy about the university in Czernowitz.” They presented themselves as victims of both the non-German nationalities and the former imperial administration that had left them stranded among “foreigners.” But when faced with the choice of taking Romanian or Austrian citizenship, most German-speaking professors in Cernăuți opted for the latter not out of nostalgia but because they believed it was the German-Austrian republic’s duty to pay off the empire’s debts. This was, in their words, “not only a matter of the heart but also a raison d’etat” for the German-Austrian republic, for which state would abandon its “missionaries abroad” and force them to “knock on foreign doors, only to be thrown out sooner or later”?\textsuperscript{157} Although German-Austria had no need for cultural missionaries, the professors kept invoking the sacrifices they had made to serve the empire by living “far from their own Heimat, which could be reached only at the end of a 18-20-hour-long trip by train, and was very costly.” From all these petitions and memoranda, some of them written in an exceedingly “temperamental tone,”\textsuperscript{158} the Austrian authorities could only conclude that “the professors in question seem not to be clear about the fact that the Austrian republic has a duty to take them on only in a moral sense.”\textsuperscript{159}

The much more numerous non-Romanians who stayed behind did not feel any more at home in Bukovina for, even though they were not physically dislocated, their place in the world changed radically after 1918. In theory, this should not have been the case, for according to the Paris peace treaties all successor states were obligated to extend equal citizenship rights to all

\textsuperscript{157} OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5 C, Zl 12230/1919, Denkschrift ueber die Lage der deutschen Professoren.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} OeSTA, AVA Unterricht 5 C, Zl 5656/1920.
former Austrian citizens living on their territories. As a prerequisite for gaining diplomatic recognition of their new boundaries, the newly created or expanded states were also required to sign Minority Protection treaties guaranteeing equal cultural, religious, and linguistic freedoms to all minority groups. Though cloaked in universalist rhetoric, the treaties perpetuated a discriminatory politics in which the successor nation-states continued to defer to the great powers not only in matters of foreign policy but also in domestic affairs. In the post-imperial order, the power differential between ‘great powers’ and ‘small states’ was supposed to have disappeared, for all states had equal sovereignty rights over territories that “rightfully” belonged to them. In reality, the great powers did not recognize the smaller successor states as equal partners at the negotiation table. Instead, they took on the role of patrons or arbiters of these states, championing sweeping reforms to the extent that these did not disturb their own supremacy. The minority protection treaties bore the stamp of this power dynamic, for they were imposed exclusively on the successor states even though the great powers also boasted large minority populations. Since they were never consulted on the question of minority rights, the states that had to sign minority protection treaties at the Paris peace conference never stopped viewing them as violations of their “absolute independence” and blows to their “national pride.”

As one of the two successor states with the largest minority populations, Romania was also required to grant citizenship to “any person residing on any territory that is part of Romania at the date of this treaty, including the territories annexed through the peace treaties with Austria and Hungary.” The Romanian government reluctantly signed a minority protection treaty in December 1919 but only after the liberal Prime Minister Ion C Brătianu had walked out of the Paris peace conference and resigned in protest.

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161 Constantin Kiritescu, Societatea națiunilor și școala (București: Cartea Românească, 1927), 10-11.
Even with the minority treaty in place, non-Romanians in Bukovina never escaped the condition of second-class citizens of the nation-state. As the representative of the German minority in Bukovina Alfred Kohlruss put it in 1924, “the so-called equality between [all] Romanian citizens does not actually exist.” At fault was not only the hypocrisy of the great powers, which de-legitimized the treaties by failing to implement them themselves, but also the contradictory nature of the concept of “minority rights.” In the nationalist worldview the great powers implicitly endorsed, one could not be a citizen of a nation-state while remaining outside the national community represented by that state. As the official unification newspaper *Unirea* put it in November 1920, “in Greater Romania there should exist neither a majority, nor minorities, but only Romanian citizens united by warm feelings of love towards the Fatherland, the Throne, and towards themselves.” From this point of view, “minority rights” made no sense except as a pretext to keep non-Romanians in a privileged position they did not deserve. “The minorities have thus far had a privileged situation,” the *Glasul Bucovinei* wrote in March 1919, “unmotivated either by their number, or by their rightful historic titles, or by the impulse they supposedly gave the national life of the indigenous population through their cultural, economic, and political activity.” In this view, doing away with minority rights was necessary to redeem the injustices Romanians in Bukovina had supposedly suffered under Austrian rule. So as not to jeopardize their own claims to the province, the Romanian administration pushed for a territorial conception of citizenship that also allowed them to admit “foreigners” into the national community selectively. While the Jews were promptly dismissed as “foreigners,” Ruthenian speakers in Bukovina were encouraged or rather, pressured to assimilate. Because they were

163 „Cuvântul nostru,” *Unirea*, 6 November 1919.
Orthodox rather than Uniate like their counterparts in Galicia, Ruthenians in Bukovina lent themselves more easily to ‘romanization.’ In fact, the historian Ion Nistor - and other nationalists besides him - were convinced that Ruthenian speakers in Bukovina had Romanian origins and could be “recovered” for the Romanian nation if they re-learned the language. According to a school law from July 1924, these long-lost Romanians were obligated “to instruct their children only in public schools or private ones with Romanian language of instruction.”165

Conclusion

The transition from an imperial to a national model of citizenship was neither smooth nor sudden. With the principle of national self-determination reinforced by the collapse of empires in 1918, national citizenship was defined in terms of historic rights rather than in universal or political terms. It was not cultural superiority that gave one the right to conquer or reconquer a territory now but one’s historic ties with that territory. The group that had arrived in a territory first and lived there the longest had “historic rights” to it. This concept set new parameters not only for political discourse, but also for how ordinary individuals claimed citizenship rights. National groups all across former Austria-Hungary’s territories fought over territories each one of them considered to be their own because in their national memory, they all had arrived there first. Bukovina’s Jews also tried to appropriate this language of “historic rights” to make themselves understood. Zionists likened their own project in Palestine to what the Romanians were trying to achieve in the newly annexed territories. But the language of imperial citizenship was never completely superseded by the new language of ‘historic rights.’ In their appeals for citizenship rights, the minorities did not limit themselves to invoking the minority protection treaty but spoke of national citizenship as something they deserved by virtue of having been

imperial citizens. To prove that they were entitled to more institutions in their native language, Ukrainians reminded the Romanian administration of the great number of schools and institutions the Austrians had granted them before 1918. Neither did older arguments about cultural superiority and civilizing missions suddenly disappear with the transition from imperial to national citizenship. German speakers employed them with predilection. When they lost the cultural freedoms they had previously enjoyed under Austrian rule, ethnic Germans in Bukovina protested that “we have given this land so much Kultur that one cannot erase our traces for centuries even if no German will still be living in this land.” Even Zionists were not fully on board with the new language of ‘historic rights.’ For when the Romanian General Petala asked him whether or not the Jews recognized the Romanians’ “historic rights” to Bukovina, the Zionist leader Mayer Ebner insisted that all nationalities had equal rights to the province because “all of them contributed to the cultural progress of this land.”

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166 By the outbreak of World War I, there were 218 Ukrainian primary schools in Bukovina with 800 classes, 3 gymnasiums in Czernowitz, Kotzman, and Wisnitz, one seminary for teachers in Czernowitz and professional schools in four different towns, not to mention the Ukrainian language chair at the university. Ukrainian primary schools, for instance, were required to teach all disciplines including religion “exclusively in the Romanian language, although [the children] do not understand the Romanian language and the Ukrainian language is not taught even as a subject of study.” The Ukrainian language was withdrawn from church as well and replaced exclusively with Romanian.

167 “Um das deutsche Schulwesen,” Die Heimat, 1 October 1922.

In November 1924, two days before the new monument to Bukovina’s unification with Romania was inaugurated in Cernăuți, the historian Nicolae Iorga gave a public lecture about Bukovina’s contributions to Romanian culture. What followed was not the congratulatory speech his audience expected to hear, but a simple argument: that Bukovina’s contributions to Romanian civilization were in fact minimal. “Is this an inferior country?” - Iorga asked. “Did the people who lived here have fewer good traits than those who lived in other Austrian territories?” The historian’s answer was that “Austrianism” was mainly at fault for Bukovina’s cultural shortcomings, for it “was a thing that withered [everything] away, that dried [everything] up.” As an artificial creation of “Austrianism” lacking coherence and permanence, Iorga insisted, “Bukovina has no reason to continue as Bukovina. It must first begin by being very Bukovinian within Romania in order to end up not being Bukovinian at all.”

Brought up on a diet of German romantic philosophy - the likes of Herder and Fichte - Iorga believed that every nation had a “spirit” of its own, defined largely by the space it inhabited. Different “spirits” could not mingle and any attempt to do so would result in ‘deformations.’ Bukovina’s backwardness was, in his view, the result of the “deformation of the Latin spirit and the diminution of Romanian intellectual energy through unnatural development in a different environment, in an environment foreign and hostile to our race.”

This view was common among Romanian nationalists at the time. Ion Nistor, another advocate of the ‘unification’ and a professor of history at the university in Czernowitz who had

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1 Nicolae Iorga, *Aportul Bucovinei la cultura Românească* (Cernăuți: Editura Librariei La Marca Tarii, 1925), 5.
fled to the Old Kingdom during World War I, claimed that even though Bukovina had been an imperial possession for a century and a half, from a cultural point of view, it had always belonged to a non-imperial space: “the cultural ties, broken for more than 150 years, communicated deeply, spontaneously, and longingly over the course of the last two decades before the Unification by means of literature and the exchange of ideas and feelings in the angelic form of art.”3 “Habsburg rule was and remained,” in his words, “eternally foreign to this country, to its old cultural and artistic traditions.”4 In short, no matter what happened on the political plane, since Bukovina’s cultural ties with Romania had remained intact, the old course of Romanian history could now be effortlessly resumed. In the nationalist view, culture was by definition not rootless or cosmopolitan - nor could it ever borrow, combine, and transcend various ethnic and national particularities. For this reason “Austrian culture” was merely a “surrogate” - an incoherent amalgam of national cultures doomed to extinction because of its placelessness.5 Culture could not be manufactured in one place and then transplanted into another, as the Austrians had attempted to do in Bukovina, where the result was a “foreign literature, one of tortuous fabrication (…) a literature of infinite complications.”6 As nationalists soon discovered and as we have already seen, this wasn’t really the case. Their view of culture is nevertheless worth examining more closely, especially since after 1918 nationalists in positions of power were able to act upon it, confident as they were that Bukovina’s Romanian character could be restored through a strong infusion of national culture.

This chapter recounts one episode in a larger narrative of nation-building and political instability in interwar East-Central Europe, of national administrations struggling to forge unitary

3 Calendarul Glasul Bucovinei, 1937, 102.
4 “Conferinta dlui profesor universitar şi fost ministrul Ion Nistor,” Glasul Bucovinei, 30 November 1928.
5 Pamfil Seicariu, “Convorbire cu dnnl N Iorga,” Bucovina, 2 September 1919.
6 Nicolae Iorga, Aportul Bucovinei in Cultura Româneasca (Cernăuți: Editura Librariei La Marca Tarii, 1925), 23.
nation-states out of diverse territories after the war and minorities getting the short end of the stick in the process. Joseph Rothschild’s and Irina Livezeanu’s well-known works on this subject have highlighted the challenges of nation-building in interwar East-Central Europe and the voluntaristic, political, and state-driven nature of nationalism in the newly formed or newly expanded nation-states that sprung up on the territory of vanished empires.\(^7\) Like them, other historians of East-Central Europe have also linked the often insurmountable challenges to these nation-building projects with the increasing appeal of extreme nationalism and right-wing movements.\(^8\) The main thrust of these works has been to contrast nationalist ideologies and aspirations with the unanticipated challenges nationalists and national administrations were faced with after the war, and the unexpected outcomes of their policies.

This chapter examines what it was like to live at the periphery of a nation-state rather than a multinational empire, in a world where the principle of national self-determination had emerged triumphant. It shows what role the periphery played in the Romanian administration’s plans to forge a unified Romanian nation-state and how former imperial citizens experienced distance and peripherality after Austria-Hungary’s collapse. What did this remote and ‘foreign’-looking territory bring the nation-state and how did the Romanian authorities and local nationalists negotiate Bukovina’s new position within the nation-state? The chapter then offers an analysis of the cultural project the new Romanian administration undertook in Bukovina. Faced with an ethnically and linguistically diverse territory that did not easily submit to nationalist ideas about culture, the Romanian authorities had to leave some of their assumptions at the door and build almost from scratch the ‘national culture’ they were hoping merely to


recover. Here the chapter takes up the problem of defining national culture and differentiating it from the ‘foreign,’ showing how fear of ‘foreign’ contamination drove the administration’s efforts to drive non-Romanians out of positions of economic and cultural power, and replace them with a Romanian middle-class. The chapter then explores some of the paradoxes of this nationalization process, revealing how the Romanian administration, while celebrating the village and idealizing the peasantry, condemned rural backwardness and resorted to coercive measures to break the peasants’ resistance to its cultural project. It also shows how under Romanian rule, just like under the Habsburgs, culture could serve as an instrument of both nation-building and disenfranchisement. Finally, the chapter goes on to explore how the transition from a world of empires to one of nation-states affected nationalist movements - how the mental universe of nationalists changed once the empire collapsed and they were accountable only to each other. A sharp divide emerged between national majorities and minorities. But even then, nationalists in different camps continued borrowing from each other. Minority nationalisms were now the greatest enemy of the nation-state, yet the different nationalist movements - including the state-backed Romanian one - needed each other in order to thrive.

A New Political Geography

Before the war, a trip from Czernowitz from Vienna would last eighteen hours. By 1919, it took at least twenty-seven hours, nine of which travelers typically spent waiting around various state borders to have their baggage and documents checked by employees of at least four or five different nation-states. Bukovina had always been an imperial periphery, a frontier province par excellence. Yet visitors who arrived in Czernowitz from the West after a long and tiresome trip across Galicia had always been struck by the city’s modern and cultured aspect. With its
Western, Austrian architecture and omnipresent German language, Czernowitz was like a mirage in the middle of the desert: “the higher Kultur and greater level of education of the population that prevails here are in comparison with Galicia - which is still on a culturally low level - already visible on the outside.” With this great distance came the dubious privilege of living in Austria’s remotest ‘cultural outpost,’ at the tip of the arrow of German Kultur. When the future head of Bukovina’s Zionist party Leon Kellner received his letter of appointment to the university in Czernowitz in 1898, his wife cringed at the thought of leaving Vienna and heading for this provincial backwater. A romance languages professor who had been living in Czernowitz already for a few years warned the couple “to bring a maid from Vienna because the only ones available here are Ruthenian women who have nothing but a shirt and coat on and who celebrate all the festive days together with you, apart from their own holidays.” Professors like Kellner came to their posts full of apprehension, for the university had the unenviable reputation of an “academic penal colony” while Bukovina was known mostly for financial scandals and a dysfunctional economy consisting almost exclusively of wood exports. Czernowitz was the sort of place that drew people at the early stages of their careers and professionals who couldn’t get positions elsewhere. Locals complained day in, day out about Vienna’s remoteness and the empire’s indifference to their fate. They called themselves ‘step children of the Three Graces.’ Yet now, after the war, the city seemed to be shifting even further away from “the West.”

Distance was not just a marginal issue locals occasionally grumbled about but a matter of consequence for Bukovina’s cultural and economic development. Like Galicia, Bukovina had been incorporated into the Habsburg Empire relatively late. First kept under military administration, it had been integrated into Galicia and then given the status of autonomous crown

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10 Anna Kellner, Leon Kellner.
land with a provincial parliament of its own only in 1848. But even then, Bukovina felt like an Austrian peninsula in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by different states on every side: Hungary in the West, Romania in the South and East, and Russia in the North. Its only connection with the west was the Czernowitz-Lemberg-Vienna railway line, first opened in 1866. Isolated as it was from the rest of the empire, Bukovina could not compete with the western crown lands on the domestic market because of the high costs of transportation. Together with Galicia and Dalmatia, it remained one of Austria’s poorest crown lands, “an absolute frontier territory (...) with only one line of communication with the trade and sales regions and greatly disadvantaged from an economic point of view.”

Culturally, the province was also not very advanced. Sure enough, it had a German-language theater and a statue of Schiller in Czernowitz, but compared to the more industrialized and urbanized western crown lands, Bukovina’s veneer of modernity was rather thin. Czernowitz was one of the very last Austrian cities to receive a university. The city where ‘books and people lived,’ as the poet Paul Celan described it, was certainly not devoid of cultural and literary activity. Theater companies came in from neighboring Lemberg and occasionally from abroad, from Italy and Russia. In 1847, Franz Liszt gave a memorable guest performance at the “Hotel de Moldavie” in Czernowitz. Local notables - the Romanian nobility - opened a public library and published literary journals. Bukovina avidly took in the newest cultural fashions from Vienna and the West, but it never spearheaded any cultural movement of its own. Its literary circles were dominated by bureaucrats and state officials whose writings were seldom original or provocative. The periphery occasionally gave literary and artistic talents but it could not retain them. The singing career of Joseph Schmidt - a Jewish boy from a village near Storozhynets, later to become

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Austria-Hungary’s most renown tenor - may have begun at the synagogue in Czernowitz but it
did not end there. As soon as he was discovered, Schmidt moved to Berlin. The same went for
the young writer Karl Emil Franzos, who left Czernowitz as soon as he finished gymnasium to
start a writing career in Vienna and later Berlin. But once Bukovina’s ties with Vienna had been
broken off, many locals looked back to this period with nostalgia. How extraordinary that once
upon a time Czernowitzers would sit down in the Cafe Restaurant Central, “with Viennese
cuisine,” or the Cafe Corso in the Herrengasse to leaf through one of the many German-language
newspapers published in the city or read the volumes of German classics sold at the Eckhardt
bookstore just down the street!

Romanian nationalists were hopeful, however, that once Bukovina returned to its
‘natural’ state, as a sub-region of the old Romanian principality of Moldova, its cultural and
economic life would be revitalized and all of its former problems would solve themselves
naturally. They believed that the province - like the missing piece in a great national puzzle - fit
naturally only within one cultural-economic configuration: that of the nation-state. Any other
arrangement would be to its detriment. As the province shifted from an imperial into a national
economic realm, with shorter and more manageable distances, they believed Czernowitz would
evolve from a remote, half-forgotten city into a regional commercial center that would thrive
economically as the only “point of passage” for Moldavian goods on their way to “Danzig,
Czechoslovakia, and Germany.12 The province’s transfer from Austria to Romania was indeed
seamless. The Romanian troops simply marched into Czernowitz and proclaimed Bukovina
Romanian, acting like its de facto rulers well before the annexation had been officially
recognized by the great powers. Bukovinans suddenly found themselves inhabiting a very
different kind of space: they were still the periphery of a polity, but the province was now a

12 G Rotică, “Die Rolle der Stadt Czernowitz in Grossrumänien,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 8 May 1924.
national frontier. The radical spatial reconfiguration nationalists called for would never have occurred so quickly and smoothly without the war, which destroyed the nervous system of European empires, leaving their different members disconnected from each other and from the center. By destroying the network of railways and roads that had kept all the different crown lands together, the war blocked the circulation of people and goods between Austria-Hungary’s eastern and western halves. Czernowitz no longer received mail from Vienna after the first Russian attack in the fall of 1914, and locals who wished to keep up with events at the front had no choice but to pay exorbitant prices for a few smuggled copies of an old Austrian newspaper.13

“We cannot allow ourselves to be stamped as the last village that has never had a newspaper of its own,” the editors of the Czernowitzer Tagblatt protested in January 1919.14 By breaking off old pathways, the war allowed the new national administrations to retrace borders and redirect the movements and flows of people, ideas, and culture that had once been the lifeblood of the empire’s economy down national channels. The war also facilitated the new governments’ nation- and state-building projects by allowing them to take drastic, often violent measures radical nationalists would have been unable to resort to before 1914 without causing a scandal. All they had to do now was continue the wartime practices and strategies employed by imperial administrations, this time for a constructive purpose: to consolidate the freshly traced national borders and foster national unity.

To many locals, however, Bukovina felt even more remote and isolated as the northernmost periphery of a nation-state than it had been as Austria’s ‘step child’ in the East. “A trip from Czernowitz to Vienna today,” one local journalist wrote in January 1919, “is an enterprise a bit like the exploration of Tibet by Sven Hedin or of the dark part of the world by

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13 According to the Czernowitzer Tagblatt, in 1919 one issue of a newspaper from Vienna was sold in Cernăuți for 200 crowns.
Livingstone and Stanley. Above all one never knows where and how one goes forward, for unexpectedly the most peculiar obstacles arise.\footnote{15} There were blown up bridges, broken railway lines, and fuel shortages. There were also new state bureaucracies to navigate - border guards who demanded to see travel documentation and inspect luggage. People who only a few years earlier could travel freely across the vast expanses of Austria-Hungary were now stopped at every border and made to wait for hours while “one nation-state represented in the person of a sergeant assumes the right to confiscate a traveler’s Schnaps and tobacco.”\footnote{16} This new bureaucratic maze was especially difficult to navigate because it continued to change as new states emerged and others extended their borders “at the expense of another state.” The greatest nuisance of all was the national passport, now required to enter any state including the German Austrian republic.\footnote{17} Since passports were compulsory, former imperial citizens who still had family or business connections elsewhere in the empire needed to acquire them immediately to be able to resume their travels. A new trade emerged: “the manufacture of false permits with false seals, and then the commerce with real permits issued to existing persons, which are put at the disposal of other persons in exchange for even greater sums of money.”\footnote{18} Bukovina’s peripherality felt very different as distances became more unsurpassable and spaces shrunk, demoting Bukovina from an outpost of Kultur in the East to a meager administrative sub-division of Romania. The urban Jewish classes, most of them Austrophiles who had not yet reconciled themselves to the empire’s dissolution, feared that once it had been cut off from Vienna, Czernowitz would lose its urbanity. Everywhere around them they saw signs that Czernowitz had already begun degenerating into an overgrown village. Already three years after the unification

\footnote{15}“Wenn einer eine Reise tut…,” \textit{Czernowitzer Tagblatt}, 26 January 1919.  
\footnote{16} Ibid.  
\footnote{17} DACHO, fond 6, op. 1, d. 134.  
\footnote{18} “Passwesen in der Bukowina,” \textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung}, 3 September 1919.
with Romania, Cernăuţi still had no public transportation system and no street lighting. The city hall square - formerly known as Ringplatz - was becoming inundated with “vegetable and fruit remains” from the farmers’ market and covered in thick clouds of dust. “No, I do not like Czernowitz,” one newspaper wrote in 1927, “no, I do not like it at all, this city of half-measures…neither fish, nor frog, neither city nor small town. Because: Czernowitz has an excellent Corso but people know each other just like in a village. Everyone knows everyone else’s secrets.”

As soon as Bukovina’s old ties with the western crown lands were cut off, the local economy plunged into crisis. Due to the shortages in food and other basic goods traditionally supplied through exchanges with the West, prices went through the roof. Bukovina was now part of a smaller and more manageable economic space, but the province could not act independently because for the past century and a half its economy had been specialized in complementing what the other Habsburg crown lands produced. Without this link to the West, Bukovina could no longer continue its old exporting and importing habits. Moreover, the national administration was not as fast at building new economic networks as it was at breaking older, imperial ties. By February 1919, Bukovina’s only existing economic links with the nation-state were with the capital Bucharest. The province “will not blossom economically,” the Allgemeine Zeitung observed, “unless there is a plan to connect Bukovina and the city Czernowitz also with the other regions of Greater Romania and in addition to establish an adequate connection with the West.”

“The misery in this land is very great,” the Tagblatt also reported in January 1919, “and the population is desperate because of the rise in prices and the impossibility of continuing

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commercial relations with the West.”

Although there was plenty of food in the province, Bukovina experienced a terrible food crisis after the war. In 1919 the American Red Cross brought emergency supplies of flour, sugar, meat, and condensed milk into Cernăuți. The poor economic situation caused a lot of resentment among the local population. In the meantime, however, the administration continued to export cattle from Bukovina - and let “wagons filled with grain and corn that is spoiling away” lie around various train stations. “We have no political economy, but only corruption and permit commerce,” the local press complained, “and all the rest is dilettantism.”

It was not just the food that came in short supply, but also basic goods such as paper and construction materials needed to rebuild damaged residences. The price of paper and ink increased so much that many newspapers in Czernowitz came close to shutting down. In March 1919, the editors of the Allgemeine Zeitung went to Bucharest to buy paper at a price nine time higher than six months before and sixty times higher than before the war. Their funds were completely depleted, as they had already paid to have large quantities of paper imported from Vienna. “If this [crisis] continues, it has the potential to simply kill off our entire economy and to turn us into beggars,” the Allgemeine observed. The lack of materials, money, and labor force also aggravated the housing shortage in Cernăuți, caused by the sudden inflow of civil servants and functionaries from the Old Kingdom. Locals who got hold of the necessary materials hoarded them “in order to obtain higher prices” so everything “beginning with the nails” had to be imported from the west.

To remedy the housing shortage, the authorities began redistributing residential space in Cernăuți in ways that seemed to put certain national and social categories - typically non-Romanians and “proletarians” - at a clear disadvantage. “When you,

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21 “Kriegsschaeden-Kriegsleistungen,” Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 18 January 1919
23 Copy of translation from Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, “Überfluss und Not,” in SANIC Direcția Generală a Polițiiei, 43/1921.
24 SANIC, Iancu Flondor 16, 27 March 1926.
dear reader, stretch comfortably in your bed and enjoy the joys of your home,” the Zionist politician Mayer Ebner wrote at the time, “then comes this sinister guest in the person of a census organ of the city housing office and who knows if tomorrow your things won’t be thrown into the street so another person can control and preside over your house.”

Many Bukovinans were dissatisfied with their new status not only because they experienced so many new economic problems, but also because they felt neglected and looked down upon. In the Romanian national imagination, Bukovina had always occupied a secondary place to Transylvania. It was in Transylvania that the Romanian nationalist movement had come into being, with the idea - put forward by the Transylvanian intelligentsia who received their education in Western universities and went on pilgrimages to Rome- that the Romanian people were the descendants of Romans and heirs to Latin civilization. By contrast, Bukovinan Romanians were said to be everything Transylvanian Romanians were not: nationally indifferent, opportunistic, arrogant and smug, all too eager to assimilate into foreign cultures. Their language practices turned nationalist assumptions about language, culture, and national identity upside down. There were all kinds of national ‘aberrations’ in Bukovina’: men and women with Romanian names who spoke Ruthenian and Polish; children who went to Romanian schools but could read and write in their national language only with great difficulty. Almost a decade after the unification, Romanian peasants in the Cernăuți region were still ‘disfiguring’ their national costumes with foreign clothing or ‘abandoning them altogether.’

27 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 39/1922, 1.
28 DACHO, fond 213, op. 1, d. 3739, 13, 17 October 1928.
Hungarians, the province had failed to produce a strong nationalist movement. Even among those Romanian nationalists in Bukovina who called for an all-Romanian union, there was little agreement on what this union should look like. After Emperor Karl issued his manifesto to the nationalities in October 1918, Romanians in Bukovina formed two different national councils. The first, presided by Iancu Flondor, proclaimed itself “the only legitimate representative of the national will of the Romanian people in Bukovina” and advocated unification with Romania. The second national council, formed in Vienna, consisted of Romanian delegates in the Viennese parliament who proposed that Bukovina should join the other Romanian territories within the Habsburg monarchy to form a compact national unit within a future federalized Austria.29 Moreover, Romanian nationalists in Bukovina were of a different breed than their Transylvanian counterparts. They were more moderate and had closer ties with the imperial administration. People like Aurel Onciul, whom we have already met, were ready to compromise with the other national leaders to achieve their political goals. But after the unification, this kind of behavior was frowned upon and dismissed as treasonous.

That Bukovina occupied such a marginal place in the nationalist imagination, that there were so many negative stereotypes about Bukovinans, was a problem first of all for the Romanian nationalist elites in Bukovina, who felt they nation-state did not reward them properly for their hard work and sacrifices. While Transylvania was always the main topic of conversation in Bucharest, Bukovina remained a negligible quantity. It was a territory Romanians were unwilling to give up yet also one they knew as well as they did “distant Patagonia” - or any other foreign country for that matter. When the Ukrainian politician Nikolai von Wassilko went on a visit to Bucharest, the press in the capital greeted him as a “great Romanian and Bukovinian

political figure” - even though back home Romanian nationalists saw him as a traitor and renegade who had gone over to the Ukrainian side for purely mercenary reasons. Gavril Rotica likened his native Bukovina to “a real Cinderella in the history of the nation,” protesting that “Bukovina saw with jealousy how all the love of its mother country (…) turned toward its proud and praised sister Transylvania.” Nationalist irredentists in Bukovina worked hard to change the province’s image from a national deviant to an embodiment of the national idea. This was not so easy given all the negative prejudices Romanians in the ‘Regat’ held against their co-nationals across the former imperial border. The pressure to assimilate Bukovina into the nation-state as fast as possible thus came not only from Bucharest but also from Bukovina itself. For obvious reasons, the national administration had every interest in attaching the newly incorporated provinces firmly to the national core. But the nationalist elites in the province were also eager to see Bukovina definitively united with Romania so they could finally achieve the recognition they felt they deserved. When the National Congress of Bukovina convened in November 1918, Dionisie Bejan - the Orthodox priest who presided over the gathering - assured the military authorities in the audience that the Congress wanted “to fulfill the wish and aspirations that Bukovina’s soil has been nurturing and guarding for a century and a half.” Although most evidence pointed to the contrary, local nationalists claimed that Bukovina had always had a “purely Romanian heart and a purely Romanian soul” and that “the population of Bukovina did not lose national consciousness even for one moment.” They solved the problem of Bukovina’s foreign character by claiming that non-Romanians were in fact Romanians in disguise: “scratch a

30 Gavril Rotică, Bucovina care s-a dus: Articole despre oameni, locuri, ști fapte (București: Alcalay & Co), 4.
31 Ibid., 49.
32 DACHO, fond 6, op. 1, d. 3, 1918.
33 DACHO, fond 6, op. 1, d. 13, ll 1-2.
Bukovinian Ukrainian and you will find a Romanian.” They insisted that Romanians in Bukovina had in fact suffered a much worse fate than those in Transylvania. They were the true national martyrs, for while Hungary’s aggressive tactics had the unexpected (and unwanted) effect of strengthening the national consciousness of Romanians, Austria’s benevolent measures completely alienated Romanians from their national culture and language. “Cultural Vienna, protector of the nations,” the poet Rotica wrote, “could not admit that people from the ruling race be imposed upon us by force; it could avail itself of so many other means of stifling the sound of our pain.”

The annexation of Bukovina was both a gain and a great risk for Romania - for now the nation-state bordered directly on the Soviet Union and Communist Hungary. It was not just its proximity to the “Bolshevik” sphere of influence that made the frontier province seem especially dangerous, but also its ethnically mixed character. The new administration felt that Bukovina’s vast non-Romanian population could not be relied upon - and that the only way to ensure that the province would not turn into a liability for the nation-state was to secure its borders firmly and to keep potentially dangerous local elements from spreading subversive ideas into the rest of the nation-state through a firm mobility regime. The Romanian authorities were especially afraid that the Bukovina’s Ukrainian population would go over to the Soviet side, for the Soviets could offer them what the Romanians could not: a unified Ukrainian state. In September 1920, the official unification newspaper *Unirea* reported that “Ruthenians from across the Pruth are mocking our administrative organs and our national sentiments,” while “tens of them are

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35 Gavril Rotica, *Bucovina care s-a dus*, 89.
36 DAcH O, fond 4, op. 1, d. 21; fond 15, op. 1, d. 5, 22 February 1919.
crossing the river Dniester to fraternize with the Bolsheviks.”37 To keep the Bolshevik danger at bay, the administration proclaimed a state of siege in Cernăuți and in the territory stretching from “the Pruth to the Dniester and the districts Vînița, Vascauti, Siret, Rădăuți, and Storojineț.”38

When news came in from Vienna that “a great many individuals are departing for Bukovina, in order to do Bolshevik propaganda there,” the local authorities were instructed not to allow anyone in or out of the province unless they had an official authorization “written and issued by the bureau of information” of the 8th Romanian military division in Bukovina. Refugees who were beginning to return home to Bukovina were also not to be admitted unless they offered proof that “they lived in Bukovina before the war,” while “foreigners coming on business will not be received under any circumstances.”39 The state of siege prolonged the atmosphere of suspicion and fear that had prevailed during the war, and exacerbated Bukovina’s economic problems by further restricting the freedom of trade and commerce. Because travel was allowed only after six in the morning, peasants from the neighboring villages “prefer[red] to stay home with their goods for fear of doing something against the state of emergency and being fined.” Cafes and restaurants closed down because it did not pay to stay open for so few hours “and many loyal guests, who used to rush into the coffee houses early in the morning to have their breakfast found the doors closed and wandered around the streets hungry and frozen.”40

Although it incapacitated the province economically, the state of siege was kept in place for a few years after the unification. For the administration, it presented several advantages. First of all, it allowed them to get away with drastic measures in the name of keeping Bolshevism at bay. Moreover, while the state of siege was in place, the authorities could target the non-Romanian

38 S Griseanu, “Jos masca!” Czernowitz Morgenblatt, 1 September 1920.
39 DACHO, fond 12, op. 1, d. 1.
population in Bukovina without appearing to violate their citizenship rights. By November 1918, 60 Ukrainians in Bukovina had been arrested and interned in political camps on suspicions of collaboration with the Bolsheviks. Bukovina’s new minister Iancu Flondor reported that “we will have to continue arrests” and that, in the event that “Bolshevik bands invade the territory of Bukovina,” in “rebellious localities all masses of men between 18-45 years old will be picked up and placed in internment camps.” \(^{41}\) Just as important, the state of siege allowed the new administration to tighten its hold on the population in the newly annexed province by limiting their movement and making them increasingly visible to the state. “We are living deep inside a police state,” the Czernowitzer Morgenblatt complained in January 1921, “wherever we look, our freedom is limited by a police order of some kind.” \(^{42}\)

What the Bucharest authorities perceived as a threat, local nationalists insisted was an opportunity for the Romanian nation-state to reassert its mission in Europe. They claimed, for instance, that Bukovina was the outer limit of Latin civilization, the last bastion of Christianity in Europe. So rather than treat it as a foreign body, the Romanian administration should acknowledge its special role and defend it at any cost. Their language did not differ much from the old rhetoric of civilizing missions, outposts, fortresses, and cultural frontiers. They used the same imperial concepts in a new national context to persuade the national administration - and perhaps themselves - of Bukovina’s strategic significance for the nation-state. Nationalists now dismissed the former “bulwark of German Kultur in the East” as an “artificial fortress” built on “Romanian soil.” Yet they retained the notion that Czernowitz - now renamed Cernăuți - was destined to play a special role simply by virtue of being a frontier city. From a bastion of German civilization, Cernăuți was to transform into a bulwark of Romanian culture - and its residents.

\(^{41}\) SANIC, Fond Iancu Flondor, 32/1919, 14-15.
\(^{42}\) “Personallegitimationen für die Bevölkerung,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 28 January 1921.
were reminded they had a duty to “defend the Latin spirit” for they were living at “the border of Latin civilization.”

Bukovina was to have not only a strategic role but also a symbolic one. In prewar days, Austrian officials and local Austrophiles would proudly describe the crown land as a miniature replica of the Habsburg Empire - because almost all of the empire’s ethnicities and languages were represented here, as were all of its problems. Now Romanian nationalists argued that Bukovina’s condition reflected the Romanian nation-state’s position in Europe as the continent’s first line of defense against Bolshevism. Like Bukovina, Romania was a borderland par excellence - a frontier state at the crossroads of civilizations and cultures. This meant two things: that cultural and political developments in Bukovina reflected those in Romania as a whole; and that the Romanian administration’s work in Bukovina would decide not only the fate of the province, but also that of the nation-state it was now part of. This was, of course, a perfect way for the nationalist elites in Bukovina to draw attention to themselves. It was naturally in the interest of people like Ion Nistor to play up the importance of their province and their own role in it. In a speech before the Cultural League in February 1937 Nistor argued, for instance, that “the Romanian contribution to the work of human civilization” was to defend rather than create culture, to serve as a guardian of Europe or “gendarme of the East.” “We stayed in this place,” Nistor said, “in order to be guardians of Latin civilization and we successfully fulfilled this task.”

But the central authorities also moved quickly from talking about national oppression and self-determination to claiming a larger civilizing role for the nation-state. In his October 1922 coronation speech, King Ferdinand stressed that “I want that, throughout the duration of my rule, through an extended and high cultural development, our fatherland should fulfill the civilizing mission that behooves it after the Orient’s rebirth after so many decades of terrible

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43 Gavril Rotică, “Die Rolle der Stadt Czernowitz in Grossrumaenien,” Czernowitz Morgenblatt, 8 May 1924.
This was also the argument that delegates to the Paris peace conference invoked to justify Romania’s territorial annexations after the war. “Romania proceeds to the reconstitution of this province,” they said, “ensuring its security and stopping at the frontier with the Dniester the expansion of the anarchy that threatens this whole part of Europe. At the price of military sacrifices that are nowhere near the end, Romania watches over Bukovina and at the same time asserts its solidarity with the general interests of civilization.”

Claiming a civilizing role for themselves similar to that once claimed by the Austrian Empire in “the East,” the first Romanian administration in Bukovina also made cultural policy its top priority. This did not stop them, however, from criticizing Austria’s Kulturmission for seeking to impose a fabricated, non-national culture upon a diverse people, with languages and traditions of their own and with deep roots in the land they inhabited. They insisted that Austria’s mission to civilize the ‘land of bears and wolves,’ as some used to refer to Bukovina, was predicated on an egotistic, rapacious desire to colonize and de-nationalize this territory. But the nation-states that emerged in Austria-Hungary’s place - while not imperialist in the same sense - also took upon themselves larger-than-life missions and cultural projects that required and justified territorial expansion. In many ways, nation-states often emulated their imperial predecessors. The nationalist Gavril Rotica pointed to Greece, Rome, and Byzantium to persuade the authorities in Bucharest that culture was a more powerful instrument of power than politics alone could ever be. For this reason, he urged that “anything that can embody Romanian culture, in all its aspects, or lend our city the proper physiognomy (...) must be created here, at any price and without any hesitation.”

Alongside this idea, there was also the deep-rooted belief that in

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45 Calendarul Glasul Bucovinei, 1923, 5.
47 Gavril Rotica, “Ce trebuie să devie Cernăuţii,” Glasul Bucovinei, 2 August 1921.
order to be respected by other nationalities - now ethnic minorities in the nation-state - the Romanians would have to play the role of a cultural leader. To prove that Bukovina indeed belonged to Romania, Ion Nistor not only invoked the historic rights of Romanians to this ‘lost’ corner of the Moldavian principality, but also insisted that the Romanians had played a crucial cultural role here: “they conquered it for culture and civilization and they were the ones who adorned it with its wonderful monuments of art…”48 So while these nationalists denied that Austria had in fact civilized the province, they still believed that culture was the main source of legitimacy for a nation-state. “Everything that has been preserved in Bukovina as monuments of art,” Nistor wrote, “emanated from the vigor of the creative spirit of our Moldavian ancestors. Their architectural monuments with their frescoes, admired by the whole world, and with their artistic treasures prove the vigor and skill of our ancestors. Habsburg rule was and remained eternally foreign to this land, to its ancient cultural and artistic traditions.”49 This view spanned political divisions. It was shared both by Ion Nistor and his adversary Iancu Flondor - both Romanian politicians from Bukovina who occupied positions of leadership after the unification. After he was forced to resign in favor of Nistor as sole minister of Bukovina in April 1919, Flondor launched a press war on his political opponent. His sharpest weapon was the claim that Nistor’s administration was failing in its duty to act as a cultural force in Bukovina. Instead of “getting the other nationalities to see in us culture bearers,” Flondor’s supporters complained, Nistor was holding the door open for corruption to enter Bukovina from the Old Kingdom and for non-locals to squander the province’s resources.

“We must confess,” the Romanian newspaper *Glasul Bucovinei* wrote in September 1922, “that in our country, large masses of people and the peasantry above all and manual workers are in a great state of cultural inferiority compared to the cultures of the west.” This was especially the case in Bukovina, where there was practically no Romanian middle-class to speak of and where most intellectual and economic elites were still German-speaking. Together with the Ruthenians, Bukovina’s Romanians formed the bulk of the province’s rural, illiterate population. This became a serious problem after 1918, when Romanians found themselves promoted from the position of national minority to that of ruling nationality. It was not just that the low level of culture of Bukovina’s rural Romanians did not befit their new status. This reality also contrasted with the idealized image of a profoundly European and civilized state that Romania wished to put forward in the early 1920s. Even the most impassioned nationalists agreed at the end of the day that Bukovinian Romanians had quite a bit of catching up to do both with the “cultures of the west” and not least, with the other nationalities in the province. An important part of the nation-building project in Bukovina would thus be “to offer cultural education for the Romanian masses so that from an economic, political, and cultural point of view they can be ahead of other peoples.” This would not be easy for sure, but Bukovina’s Romanian administration was hopeful that the new postwar conjuncture would make such transformations possible. Greater Romania’s liberal political elites, who governed for long stretches of time in the interwar period, favored cultural and educational policy as a means to achieve both moral uplift and national integration. The “cultural offensive” they launched in Bukovina mainly targeted the province’s rural hinterland. Together with other measures like the

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agrarian reforms, the “cultural offensive” in the villages was meant to serve both as a reward and a preventive measure.\textsuperscript{52} Nationalist politicians felt that the peasantry in “alienated” regions like Bukovina deserved some kind of compensation for saving “our traditions, mores, and the language of our ancestors” - both in the form of land and education.\textsuperscript{53} Through such programs they hoped to keep the peasantry from falling prey to the lure of Bolshevism and communism. “The propagandists of utopias impossible to achieve,” the liberal \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} warned, “find their best allies in the ignorance and lack of knowledge of the masses, so combatting this ignorance is as a result the most efficacious remedy against subversive influences.”\textsuperscript{54}

The Romanian cultural offensive in Bukovina was prompted by the belief - perhaps naive in retrospect - that ignorance could be combatted and Bolshevism kept at bay simply by giving the peasantry an appetite for reading. Making peasants literate seemed so important to the liberal administration - for nationalist reasons above all - that they continued to have schools rebuilt and popular libraries opened in Bukovina’s villages even in the depths of economic crisis. Cultural initiatives were considered a special priority in ‘alienated’ areas with a majority of non-Romanian speakers, although these areas had also suffered grave damages in the war and lacked even the most basic amenities.\textsuperscript{55} In the village Valea-Putnei, in Northern Bukovina, local authorities had trouble putting together a public library because only three houses were still standing by the end of the war.\textsuperscript{56} In most villages where “reading cabinets” had existed before the war, one school inspector from the Cernăuți district reported, nothing was left as a result of

\textsuperscript{52} By 1918, it had become clear that the issue of land could no longer be postponed or ignored, since by the time the agrarian laws were formally promulgated, many peasants had already started to grab land from landowners.
\textsuperscript{53} SANIC, Teodor Bălan 55/1918, Declaration of Iancu Flondor concerning the distribution of land among peasantry, given in the meeting of the National Council on 25 November 1918, 7-8.
\textsuperscript{54} Dr I Ionașcu, “Biblioteci populare,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 24 September 1922.
\textsuperscript{55} On 1 April 1920, \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} appealed to the public to subscribe to state loans. The newspaper reported that “the most difficult problem today is the financial problem” and urged readers to contribute to the economic rehabilitation of the state and thus do their “citizens’s duty.” “Sprijiniți Țara!,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 1 April 1920.
\textsuperscript{56} SANIC, Casa Școalelor 914/1928, 60.
the destruction.57 Throughout the early 1920s petitions for book donations came pouring in to the Casa Școalelor [House of Schools] in Bucharest from officials in villages that lacked libraries or could not afford to purchase books. Local officials appealed for financial support by stressing their proximity to the frontier or their location in a region with a pronounced non-Romanian character.58 In one case, school officials requesting free books emphasized that their school was “the only institution of Romanian culture in this alienated part of the country that is successfully propagating the idea of state and nation.”59 Even in those areas that had not been so severely affected by the war, the culture-building project was complicated by the fact that the existing cultural substratum could not be recycled. Schools that still possessed working libraries complained that their books were either inaccessible to the peasantry, or that most of them were in non-Romanian languages. One high school in Gura-Humorului reported, for instance, that its library consisted of “no Romanian books at all.”60

In addition to schools and school libraries, village cultural homes [camine culturale] were also supposed to teach peasants to want an education. Their responsibilities included, among other things, to “guide the people down the path of work and progress” and “maintain national consciousness through the power of national culture.” These lofty goals were to be achieved through “festivities with conferences, songs, fireworks, theater, cinema” and Sunday lectures given by “honest speakers, learned people, priests, and teachers.” In addition, the cultural homes were also to raise the peasants’ political and civic awareness, and initiate them into the ways of the law and the state. They were, in short, meant to mediate directly between the village population and the state: teaching people how to raise children, deal with disease, keep their

57 SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 316/1923, 30 May 1923, 235.
58 SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 632/1933, 22 December 1932, 189.
59 SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 481/1925.
60 SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 481/1925, 6 March 1925, 1.
homes clean, and respect the rules of hygiene and at the same time, passing on information about any “great needs of the crowd, or any kind of social danger” to institutions like the House of the School and People’s Culture in Bucharest. Unlike the moral uplift and social transformation projects forced upon Eastern European populations by occupation forces in World War I, this project of remaking the peasantry came from Romanian political and intellectual elites who believed that education and culture were necessary to improve the nation and prepare it to compete on the international scene. As the old Society for Romanian Culture in Cernăuți [Societatea pentru cultura si literatura romana] noted in a handbook for “the activity of cultural societies in villages,” modernizing the peasantry and altering the physiognomy of Romanian villages was not the point. But guiding the peasantry “towards everything aesthetic [and] moral,” while encouraging them to keep their traditions, definitely was.

Even after this cultural infrastructure had fallen into place, the administration continued searching for the right path into the hearts and minds of the peasantry. Preserving Romanian culture between the pages of literary journals was easy enough. Keeping it alive and meaningful for the rural masses was a more challenging task. Nationalist activists looking for ways to fill the gap between themselves and the peasant masses alighted upon a seemingly new solution that was in fact as old as the hills. From publishing literary journals, nationalists went to publishing journals for the peasantry. One such initiative came from the student society Junimea in Cernăuți in 1921, when its members published Deșteptarea [The Awakening], a journal that sought to bridge the rift between those learned Romanians “who come from the people” and their “brothers who were not lucky enough to go to school.” Every issue featured at least one article about the value of education and numerous appeals to the peasants to start sending their children to school.

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61 SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 394/1921, 7-8.
To convince their audience that education was valuable, the editors promised that, as educated people, Romanian peasants would no longer “allow themselves to be cheated by foreigners who are getting increasingly naughty.”\(^{63}\) Excessively optimistic and ambitious, the young editors of Deșteptarea hoped to lure peasants away from the tavern and into the reading rooms by promising them books and magazines, a clean place to gather, and “experienced people” who could offer advice. Turning\(^{64}\) Romanian peasants against their neighbors of other nationalities was an equally important objective of this national awakening project. Readers were encouraged, for instance, not to tolerate the complaints of “foreigners” about having to learn Romanian because “in the old Austrian state any child had the duty and was forced to learn the German language, which was the language of the state and all rulers in those times would have hanged us if we even dared to speak against this…”\(^{65}\) Traditional institutions like reading rooms, some nationalists concluded, were “exotic plants transported here in a region with a climate that was too rough for them.”\(^{66}\) Because most Romanian peasants in Bukovina were illiterate, whether a village received one more reading room or not did not matter in the end. The real source of the problem was the fact that peasants lacked an appreciation for culture and education. To remedy this, there were efforts to break out of classic cultural propaganda patterns and adopt more effective models of mass communication. One of the most successful forms of organization that had been adopted in Bukovina before the war was the arcășie, a firefighters’ society modeled after the Czech Sokol and the Ruthenian Sich societies and designed especially for Romanians.

The real purpose of these societies was not firefighting but nation-building by means of activities such as theater performances and rituals like ‘the sanctification of the flag.” It may seem curious

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63 Ibid.
64 Mihai Vlaicu, “Societăți de cetire sau Cabinetele de lectură,” Deșteptarea, 1 January 1922.
65 Serban Grigorovici, “Să luăm aminte,” Deșteptarea, June and July 1922, 82.
that the Romanians should pick the Ruthenians, their arch-rivals, to emulate in such matters. For all the antipathy they felt towards them, Romanian activists were convinced that the Ruthenians were doing a much better job of nation-building than themselves. Even larger propaganda institutions such as the *Liga Culturală* in Bucharest looked beyond Greater Romania’s borders for models. In a meeting in 1931, the *Liga* admitted, for instance, that the Hungarians had developed a mass culture that “is well above our own.”

Through these measures, nationalists hoped to do justice to the peasantry, a population that had been supposedly disenfranchised and kept in a subservient position for a century and a half under Austrian rule. But what if the peasants did not want justice to be done? In February 1919, barely a few months after the Romanian troops had entered Cernăuți, a group of Romanian teachers met in the city to draw up plans for rebuilding Bukovina’s school system along national Romanian lines. At the end of the meeting, they declared that before long not even one Romanian household in Bukovina would remain without Romanian magazines and books.\(^67\) They blamed the Austrian school system for marginalizing the Romanians and keeping them in a subordinate position to others. Both at the primary school and gymnasium level, Romanian students had received their instruction in the foreign German language, in subjects that were completely irrelevant and disconnected from their lives. Nationalists like the head of the Romanian school association *Scoala Romana*, George Tofan, believed it was high time to reform the school system so it better fit the needs of the peasantry. “The school system,” he wrote, “must stem from the life of the people, from the depths of its being.”\(^68\) Now that Austria was gone, Romanians would be free to learn how to read and write. All this was easier said than done, for whatever measures were taken to make schools more accessible to the peasantry, they

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\(^68\) George Tofan, *Viitoarea școală primară II: Ce școală ne trebuie,”* *Glasul Bucovinei*, 10 February 1919.
never seemed to be very effective. The main obstacle - the German language - was removed from primary schools in Bukovina in January 1921. Gradually, most foreign-language schools were also converted into Romanian-language ones. And yet, Romanian peasants remained unconvinced that reading and writing were truly beneficial. As one local school official complained in 1924, peasants in Bukovina were still in the “very bad habit” of hiring their children to work in the fields of Moldavian nobility or using them to help with agricultural work in the summer. “School attendance,” the official wrote, “is good during the winter months but during summer absolutely horrible.” While in purely Romanian villages many children skipped school, in those where Romanians were living side by side with Germans, Poles, and Ruthenians, they all attended school regularly. The difference in literacy levels was embarrassing. Only a few decades earlier, Romanian periodicals overflowed with complaints about Austria’s school Schulzwang law. Now that the Romanians were in charge and struggling to raise literacy levels, they had to resort to similarly severe measures. The initiative to use similar forms of punishment to compel peasants to send their children to school came from local officials who could not improve school attendance rates otherwise. In February 1924, one such official proposed that a special “school tax” be levied on all adults who had still not learned how to read and write by a certain age.

Even more than the low literacy levels, it was the perceived immorality of Bukovina’s population that drew the authorities’ attention. An inspector freshly arrived from Bucharest observed in 1928 that many schools in Bukovina were in a sorry state, lacking heating and teaching materials. In Putna, taverns outnumbered schools by far, while the “churches are lying

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69 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucționii și Artelor, 129/1924, 3 December 1924, 77.
70 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucționii și Artelor, 214/1924.
empty.”71 In many places, Romanians disenchanted with Orthodox priests who seemed “more interested in politics and money” had gone over from Orthodoxy to Adventism. The Romanian population in the area had also taken to wearing “Jewish clothes” and dancing “tango and other modern dances” at parties and balls they attended every Saturday, such that “the following day, on Sunday, smashed tired, locals sleep until the afternoon and the church preaches to nobody.”72

The truly wild and uncivilized parts of Bukovina were, in this inspector’s view, the mountain districts inhabited by the Hutzuls who “think the loss of a cow much greater than the loss of a woman” and “also exchange wives amongst each other and rent them out for a few months.”73

Ten years after the unification, Bucharest officials like this one still viewed Bukovina as a new and untamed colonial possession. This image of moral degradation and cultural decline was upheld by local intellectual elites as well. Promises of cultural transformation and progress under Romanian rule went straight to the heart of the village intelligentsia. After waiting for twenty years to see his village transformed through culture, one local journalist decided to take the matter into his own hands. In 1939, he wrote the ministry of interior requesting that the authorities in Bucharest send delegates to his village, which was “dying…in the chaotic mud of all evils, it is sinking deeper and deeper every year and every hour, increasingly frighteningly and apocalyptically.”74 Complete forgotten “by the love and care of all leaders,” his village was still without a public library, reading rooms, public organizations, and cultural societies.

The architects of the unification believed that cultural work would not only make Romanians worthy of their new leadership position in Bukovina, but also solve the province’s “minority question.” For the one year that it was in power before Alexandru Vaida-Voevod’s

71 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 10/1928, 180.
72 Ibid., 181.
73 Ibid., 181-182.
74 DACHO, f.26, op.1, d. 411, 12.
government took over, the liberal government made it clear that it saw culture as the key to achieving unity among Greater Romania’s nationalities. The liberal leader - and prime minister - Ion I C Brătianu insisted that “the complete and definitive solution of the minority question” depended entirely on cultural work, and not minority rights, which would deepen existing differences and create new conflicts before the act of unification could come into its own.\(^7^5\) A shared culture, on the other hand, could forge spiritual unity not only between Romanians and non-Romanians but also between intellectuals and the illiterate masses, and between members of different classes, bringing together ethnic Romanians from provinces with very different pasts as well. The idea of bridging national differences through culture was not new. As we have already seen, the Austrian administration in Bukovina invoked similar ideas to define Austrian power as a *Kulturstaat* relying primarily on culture rather than violence to conquer and expand.

Bukovina’s new Romanian rulers set themselves a similar goal. In a speech he gave on a visit to Cernăuți in May 1925, Prince Carol said that “it is our duty (...) to strengthen through our good understanding with those of another language and religion this spiritual unity of the entire country by forming a culture to which all elements of the country can contribute.”\(^7^6\) On various occasions, the liberal minister-delegate Ion Nistor also insisted that Greater Romania’s unification should occur not through “xenophobia” and “barbarian intolerance,” but by spreading the light of Romanian culture to other nationalities.\(^7^7\)

Generous as this cultural project sounded, it was in fact riddled with contradictions. Its universalist ambitions ran up against the fact that the culture the national administration set out to build was profoundly national and particularistic. The only way to experience the “beneficial

\(^7^5\) So adamant were liberal officials about this that in late 1919, Ion I C Brătianu’s cabinet in fact chose resignation over signing the minority protection treaty at the peace settlements in Paris.

\(^7^6\) “ASR Principele Carol in Bucovina: Mari serbări culturale şi sportive,” *Glasul Bucovinei*, 16 May 1925, 10.

rays” of Romanian culture was to learn the Romanian language - an idiom confined to a limited territory and spoken by very few non-Romanians. Getting a population used to speaking German to switch over to Romanian was no easy task. And yet the Romanian authorities believed they could pull it off. The plan to avoid “barbarian intolerance” and push non-Romanians to assimilate into Romanian culture of their own will began with a set of coercive measures that were meant to put the Romanian language in a dominant position. The first institutions to switch over to Romanian were the church and the schools. In both cases, the new language policy had both a positive and a negative dimension. On the one hand, it opened up Romanian culture to the minorities by making the language more accessible. On the other hand, the language policy was directed against particular ethnic groups that were perceived to be a special threat to the national project. In the church, the switch from Romanian and Ruthenian to Romanian as the only official language of communication had a vindictive quality to it, as the Romanians had never reconciled themselves to the Austrian legislation that gave Ruthenians equal rights to the religious fund and entitled them to use the Ruthenian language in church. Already in December 1919, the Romanian priesthood in Cernăuți insisted that Romanian be formally declared the only official language in church.78 In the sphere of education and cultural organizations, the Romanian language expanded at the expense of Ruthenian as formerly Ruthenian schools were converted into Romanian-language ones and Ruthenian cultural organizations were gradually dissolved.79

The other target of the new language policy was Bukovina’s large German-speaking Jewish population. If the Ruthenian language threatened to delegitimize the Romanian cultural project by making Bukovina’s multinational character manifest, the German language - spoken even by many ethnic Romanians - was an embarrassing reminder of Bukovina’s imperial past.

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78 SANIC, Iancu Flondor 20, Rezoluțiunile adunării preoțesti din 13/26 December 1918.
79 DACHO, f.15, op.1, d. 2156, I 7.
Beginning with 1920, all non-Romanian secondary schools were required to conduct all their official and internal communication in Romanian, such that “no official paper or note will be written in any language other than Romanian.”\(^80\) That fall, Jewish, German, Ruthenian, and Polish high schools in Bukovina were also informed that they would have to start teaching more Romanian-language classes.\(^81\) Both primary and secondary Jewish schools were required to begin teaching in Romanian in the fall of 1921, while also making sure to accommodate “a sufficient number of classes of Hebrew language and religion.”\(^82\) “It is not true that we are dumb (…) we too, Bukovina Jews, speak a language and that is primarily German. It is not the same for us as for the German people, it is ultimately indifferent to us, for us Jews all languages are sacred (in contrast to all other peoples of the earth, to whom only their own language is sacred,” read an article published in the *Czernowitzer Morgenblatt* in July 1921. Even so, a new language could not be mastered overnight.\(^83\) The minimal concessions the authorities were prepared to grant Jewish schools were the worst of both worlds for the Jewish students. Some Jewish schools in Cernăuți had to organize additional Romanian classes because a new ministerial order stipulated that “even if a student knows a discipline well but makes big mistakes in the Romanian language, the grade he will receive has to correspond to his insufficiencies in the Romanian language.”\(^84\)

The new language policy turned many non-Romanian teachers in Bukovina into students. No matter how old and experienced they were, non-Romanian teachers who wished to keep their positions were required to pass a Romanian language examination first. For many, the examinations put an end to their careers. Yet others, still young and eager to work, agreed to

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\(^{80}\) SANIC Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 423/1921, 18 November 1920, 156.

\(^{81}\) DACHO, f.213, op.1, d. 515, 19, 2 October 1920.

\(^{82}\) DACHO, f.213, op.1, d. 1542, 12.

\(^{83}\) “Die Bukowiner Schulreform,” *Czernowitzer Morgenblatt*, 2 July 1921, 2.

\(^{84}\) DACHO, f.325, op.1, d. 2128, 11.
move to the Old Kingdom for a few years to take language courses there. In turn, teachers from the Old Kingdom were invited to come to northern Bukovina, in “territories where national consciousness has been lost or is endangered,” where they would be compensated for their efforts with higher salaries.\textsuperscript{85} Whether one already spoke Romanian or not did not matter: as a member of a national minority, one had to take a language exam. Some, who claimed to be already fluent in Romanian, requested exemptions.\textsuperscript{86} At the university, where most professors were German speakers who refused to take the Romanian language test were fired, this policy had dire consequences. For lack of better alternatives, the Romanian administration had to replace the faculty with high-school teachers, whose only substantial qualification was that they could speak Romanian. State employees and civil servants who could not speak Romanian were the first to lose their jobs.\textsuperscript{87} A decree from July 1922 required all legal employees to conduct their written and oral communication only in the Romanian language.\textsuperscript{88} Since the new language decree threatened to put quite a few people out of jobs, there were public demonstrations against it. “If you take away their [the lawyers’] language,” the Morgenblatt complained, “you also take away their means of survival.” Without some accommodation to non-Romanian languages, the courts threatened to fall apart as lawyers stuttered and stumbled to look for words in pocket dictionaries, while the judge sat “practically barricaded with dictionaries, Romanian grammar books and textbooks.”\textsuperscript{89}

The language regulations were a deliberate strategy to make Romanians in Bukovina more visible by removing “foreigners” from all key institutions in the province, from schools to state offices. Substituting linguistic competence for professional competence was the key to

\textsuperscript{85} SANIC Ministerul Instrucțiunii și Artelor, 423/1921, 17 May 1921, 187.
\textsuperscript{86} DACHO, f.213, op.1, d. 530, 4 May 1920.
\textsuperscript{87} SANIC, Casa Școalelor, 10/1921, 5 January 1921, 5.
\textsuperscript{88} “Der Sprachenerlass - Wo liegt die Wahrheit?,” Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 20 July 1922.
\textsuperscript{89} “Der Sprachenerlass tritt doch in Kraft?,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 4 July 1922.
reshuffling social and economic hierarchies in a territory where the minorities were so dominant. Even Iancu Flondor, Bukovina’s first minister and the man who invited the Romanian troops to cross the border into Bukovina in November 1918 and urged Bukovinans to accept the unification unconditionally, came under criticism for having the interests of “foreigners” too close to his heart. In the spring of 1919, “several true Romanians” from Bukovina complained to the king that Flondor’s administration had staffed all public offices with foreigners.\textsuperscript{90} The word spread quickly that Flondor had surrounded himself with Austrian civil servants who were enemies of the Romanian national idea. In vain did Flondor’s supporters try to persuade the central authorities that not all foreigners were traitors and that “these are most capable functionaries that both Bukovina and Romania need.” Flondor eventually had to resign. The dissatisfaction with Bukovina’s perceived “foreign domination” grew only deeper in the 1930s, when the country plunged into the depths of economic crisis. The xenophobia took increasingly alarming forms, moving beyond the political sphere and finding its greatest enthusiasts among university youth. On December 10, 1930, five hundred “Christian students” convened in Cernăuți to proclaim that “our duty now is to make this a Romania of the Romanians.”\textsuperscript{91} “The Jews and the Ukrainians have settled here in Cernăuți,” one of them complained, “not only numerically but also politically and economically.”\textsuperscript{92} When it was mentioned that the district council still conducted meetings in the Ukrainian language, the crowd started booing and the police had to intervene to keep them from taking the district council by assault.

Romanian nationalists turned to violence in the 1930s not because they had too much power, but because they lacked it. None of the Romanization measures implemented since the unification had made Bukovina look and feel thoroughly Romanian. The “foreign” element

\textsuperscript{90} SANIC, Iancu Flondor 32, 47.
\textsuperscript{91} CAHJP, HM3/277.22, 3.
\textsuperscript{92} CAHJP, HM3/277.22, p 35.
continued to dominate and the non-Romanian languages refused to disappear. Almost ten years after the unification, one school inspector reported, “the progress towards Romanization beginning with Cernăuți, a revoltingly alienated city, and until the northern shore of the Dniester is going in the rhythm of a tortoise.” In April 1922, the general directorate for internal affairs in Bucharest warned the authorities in Bukovina that “various authorities and organs under your orders continue to carry out official correspondence in the German language.” When the warnings failed to bear fruit, the Bucharest authorities threatened that all state employees who continued to communicate in non-Romanian languages would suffer disciplinary measures. From Transylvania and Bessarabia, Bucharest also received documents in Hungarian and Russian, often on paper stamped with the seals of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. The schools were doing no better in this regard. There too, Ruthenian and German teachers (even those who passed the language examinations) reverted to using their native languages both “at home and in the teachers’ room.” Not even Romanian teachers could speak the language well, “due to the culture and education they received in the German language.” The state had even less control over language practices in the private sphere, where even ethnic Romanians continued to speak in foreign languages. Over time, the authorities found themselves compelled to resort to increasingly radical measures such as fines, taxes, and punishments against those who broke the language regulations. In 1939, the Jewish owners of one “liquor store” in Cernăuți were forced to close their shop for three days straight when the police caught them speaking

93 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucţiunii şi Artelor, 396/1927, 16.
94 DACHO, f.43, op.1, d. 1163, l 1, 28 April 1922.
95 DACHO, f.15, op.1, d. 4415, l3.
96 DACHO, f.12, op.1, d. 1678, l39.
97 Biblioteca Academiei Române, Arhiva Constantin Angelescu, X, Varia 10.
98 SANIC, Ministerul Instrucţiunii şi Artelor, 11/1922, 95.
99 “Graiti Româneste!,” Glasul Bucovinei, 30 January 1923, 1.
Yiddish to each other.\textsuperscript{100}

Long after Bukovina’s annexation to Romania, Cernăuți’s theater continued to perform in German, as there was no Romanian-language theater company to speak of yet in Bukovina. Every evening, the public crowded into the Schiller theater to watch German-language plays, blissfully unaware that soon they and their theater would come under assault. On December 29, 1921, a group of Romanian students stormed the theater, demanding that all German-language performances be banned and the theater be instantly nationalized. On September 14, 1922, by the start of the new Romanian season, the monument to Friedrich Schiller had been already moved from the front of the theater to the backyard of the German national home. It was now the Germans’ business to keep him from casting his shadow on Romanian culture. But Schiller’s influence continued to be felt in Cernăuți and Romanian students demonstrated again on January 1, 1923. The performance scheduled for that evening, with the symbolic title of \textit{Lebender Leichnam} [The Living Corpse], had to be relocated to a different venue. Was this perhaps the corpse of imperial culture that refused to die? Yet another conflict broke out the following day, during a performance of Schiller’s \textit{Robbers} in German which happened to coincide with a meeting of the Romanian nationalist association \textit{Arboroasa} that had also been scheduled to take place in the theater that evening. As the Romanian public gathered in front of the theater, they were told that Schiller’s play had two more acts to go.\textsuperscript{101} Infuriated, nationalist hotheads stormed the theater again. When the former Austrian police director Tarangul (now president of the liquidation commission in Bukovina) attended a performance the following evening, the students booed him so much he had to leave the building. Only towards the end of the month, when minister-delegate Ion Nistor returned to Cernăuți, did the administration begin to tackle the

\textsuperscript{100} DACO, f.26, op.1, d. 401, l 3, 17 January 1939.
\textsuperscript{101} “Gewaltsame Besetzung des Stadttheaters,” \textit{Czernowitzer Morgenblatt}, 3 January 1922.
theater problem. Although Nistor’s fellow nationalists pressured him to ban all German-language performances at once, the minister proposed a compromise solution. After negotiating with representatives of the German theater ensemble, he resolved that both German- and Romanian-speaking publics would be best served if the theater were to host German and Romanian performances alternately. A few days later, however, the ministry of culture in Bucharest officially renamed the theater “National Theater,” making it state property. “Finally,” the new director exclaimed, “real cultural work can be done.”

The battle over the theater was not just about language, but also about ownership of culture in a newly expanded nation-state that incorporated both the material culture and cultural institutions of empire. Who had a right to Cernăuți’s imperial theater now that the empire was gone? How could the Romanians replace German-language, imperial culture with a national Romanian culture if the culture of the defunct empire continued to dominate? The educated German-speaking public in Cernăuți was of the opinion that Cernăuți’s theater did not belong to any one national group but to the city as a whole. Claiming the theater for the Romanians was, in the opinion of the Czernowitzer Morgenblatt’s editors, as absurd as claiming the city hall for an exclusive group of citizens, for “the theater is the property of the whole city’s population.”

The nationalists around Glasul Bucovinei had a very different view. To them, the conflict was about “reconquering” the city for the Romanians. “Having to conquer a Romanian national theater for the Romanians in the capital of Bukovina in Greater Romania,” one author wrote, “may seem like something strange, odd, even impossible. And yet this national theater of Cernăuți had to be conquered and was in fact conquered against the fists, whips, swords,


revolvers and hooves of the police in Cernăuți."\(^{104}\) The question of cultural property resurfaced almost a decade later, when another conflict broke out over the theater. As before, the target was a theater director who deviated from the theater’s national mission. To dissuade him from staging any more foreign-language plays, a group of nationalist Romanian students threatened that “if you wish to leave Cernăuți whole, without at least 2 weeks in hospital, then leave on your own and willingly in 24 hours since when you receive these lines.”\(^{105}\) On November 11, 1932 around 300 protesters gathered in front of the National Theater, taking the guards by assault and forcing the doors open. According to the police, “all the time that they kept the theater occupied, the students made noise, rang some bells (...), shouting that the bells are rung in eternal remembrance of Misu Fotino [the director], they broke the window of a hydrant while trying to spray the police forces, they broke into the chocolate and candy buffet, dividing the chocolate between themselves.”

Even though their official propaganda continued to stress the rural character of Romanian culture, the liberal administration was especially keen to transform Bukovina’s urban spaces. Fond as they were of the rural myth, the Romanian administration understood that the Romanians could not compete in the modern world without a solid urban society. Even Nicolae Iorga, a great champion of village life, urged Romanians to conquer the towns and move into commerce and industry.\(^{106}\) The conquest of Cernăuți began with the renaming of city streets in early 1919.\(^{107}\) The official impulse for this came in July 1920, when the Council of Ministers in Bucharest disposed that all street signs and public inscriptions in the newly annexed provinces be only in Romanian and, optionally, also in the language spoken by the majority of the local

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\(^{105}\) DACHO, f.38, op.1, d.7833, l.6, 27 October 1932.

\(^{106}\) “Iorga und das rumänische Städteproblem: Wie leicht man sich verstündigen könnte!,” *Ostjüdische Zeitung*, 5 May 1925.

population under the condition that both the Romanian and foreign-language script be the same font and size.\textsuperscript{108} Though largely inefficient, these dispositions did alienate the minorities by making it increasingly difficult for them to navigate public spaces. Already in 1919, the \textit{Ostjuedische Zeitung} complained that citizens were having trouble performing basic tasks like paying taxes because they could not read any signs. For many, living in Cernăuți became more and more like navigating the seas with a broken compass. In addition, the new administration proceeded to replace old Habsburg monuments with national symbols. On November 11, 1924, they inaugurated a new monument to Bukovina’s unification with Romania on the former Ringplatz.\textsuperscript{109} The monument, depicting a bison trampling a double-headed eagle under its hooves, soon became an object of mockery. The local Austrophile historian Emanuel Turczynski recalls how a group of Jewish, German, and Ukrainian students tied a bag of hay around the bison’s head to remind passers-by that the animal that killed the eagle was perpetually hungry - an allusion to Romania’s poor economic situation and the then popular saying “Romania mare, mamaliga n-are!” [Greater Romania has no polenta].\textsuperscript{110}

\textit{Nationalisms in the Nation-State}

When the General Congress of Bukovina convened on November 28, 1918 in the synodal hall of the metropolitan’s residence, the Romanian troops were already in Cernăuți. The head of the eighth Bukovinan division General Zadik was seated in the audience together with members of the Romanian National Council, representatives of the Romanian clergy, the metropolitan, and other guests from Bessarabia and Transylvania. Deciding whether Bukovina should join

\textsuperscript{108} DACHO, f.12, op.1, d. 76, -4, 9 July 1920.
\textsuperscript{109} DACHO, f.43, op.1, d. 2732, 133.
Romania or not was not the point of this congress. Its aim was, rather, to lend a unanimous, collective, and ceremonial character to a decision that had been already made by a small group behind the scenes. Romanian nationalists who convoked the congress envisioned it first and foremost as a Romanian celebration - the crowning moment of decades of Romanian national work and development in Bukovina. In his opening speech, the consistorial counselor Dionisie Bejan greeted “leaders of the Romanian people in Bukovina who came with pure souls and impassioned hearts from all corners of the land to put in place the first fundamental rock on which Greater Romania will be built steadily.”\footnote{SANIC, Iancu Flondor 20, 15/28 November 1918, 30.} But the Romanians did not make up the entirety of the audience. For Bukovina’s unification with Romania to be recognized by the Great Powers at the upcoming peace treaties, it was crucial that not only Romanians - who were not very numerous in Bukovina - but other nationalities as well be willing to join Romania. Although no Jewish and Ukrainian delegates could be persuaded to attend the congress, both the German and Polish National Councils in Bukovina were present and voted for unconditional unification with Romania in exchange for promises of language rights, cultural and church autonomy, and proportional representation within the administration. With Austria-Hungary’s collapse, the battle for national autonomy and independence seemed to have come to a happy denouement. Now that the principle of national self-determination had triumphed, all national groups could claim national recognition and develop freely along national lines. No longer at the mercy of arbitrary powers, the nationalities could also appeal to an impartial arbiter, the League of Nations, to protect their rights. For Bukovina’s large minority population, however, the principle of national self-determination was a bittersweet gift.

In a world where nationalism had emerged victorious, national recognition proved to be only one short step away from isolation and discrimination. The Jews were the first to discover
that. Pressured by the Great Powers to extend citizenship rights to “all Jews living in all territories of Romania and who cannot claim a different nationality,” the Romanian authorities at first recognized Bukovina’s Jews both as Romanian citizens and as members of a distinct and autonomous national group.\footnote{Vasile Dutceac, \textit{Minimul drepturilor minorităților naționale în România} (Cernăuți: Editura autorului, 1926), 30.} On the face of it, this was a step up from the past, for the Austrian administration had never recognized them as a separate nationality, but only as a religious group. The nationalist Romanian press made much of this, anxious as they were to prove that Bukovina’s Jews - far from being persecuted and discriminated against - were in fact doing better under Romanian rule than ever before. In the months leading up to the peace treaties, it was imperative to mend the negative reputation Romania had acquired abroad for treating the Jews with “intolerance and barbarity.”\footnote{George Tofan, “Încetățirea evreilor din România,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 17/30 January 1919, 1.} The official unification propaganda newspaper \textit{Unirea}, for instance, boasted that Jewish students under Romanian rule “can declare their nationality openly” and engage in national and political activities freely.\footnote{“În chestiunea minorităților,” \textit{Unirea}, 30 November 1919, 2.} Another benefit of living under Romanian rule was, supposedly, the creation of a separate gymnasium for Jewish students in Cernăuți, staffed by Jewish teachers and headed by a Jewish principal. “Now under the Romanian administration,” the \textit{Unirea} boasted in November 1919, “the biggest gymnasium in the center of the capital is in the hands of a Jew.” The new Jewish gymnasium in Cernăuți was indeed the first institution to cater separately to Jewish students and the biggest of all five national gymnasiums in Cernăuți. Before long, however, even committed Jewish nationalists like Mayer Ebner understood that national autonomy came at a very heavy price. In a school system segregated by nationality, Bukovina’s Jews could pursue a national education but they could also more easily become a target of discriminatory policies. Little by little, everything Jewish about the gymnasium - with the exception of the students attending it - was removed. From a nation-
building site, the gymnasium turned into a “ghetto for Jewish middle schoolers,” where a very
large number of students were crowded into an increasingly small number of classrooms.115
Once achieved, national autonomy not only did not guarantee the Jews greater national freedoms
but was very adeptly used against their national interests.

For the minorities, the disadvantages of living in a nation-state that drew legitimacy from
the principle of national self-determination quickly came to outweigh the advantages of
achieving national recognition, as national differences quickly became grounds for exclusion.
Even though after World War I, national governments were limited in the policies they could
pursue by the fact that minority rights were protected by the League of Nations, national officials
had more leeway to restrict national freedoms than the former imperial administration. For the
Romanian authorities, clamping down on the minorities was a way of asserting autonomy and
sovereignty at a time when foreign powers and international institutions were meddling too much
in their domestic affairs. “Can we as an independent state enjoying complete national
sovereignty admit the direct or indirect meddling of the League of Nations in the organization of
our public education system?,” the Bucharest daily Universul complained.116 The Romanian
authorities never reconciled themselves to the minority protection treaty. Even the prime minister
who signed the treaty in Paris on Romania’s behalf in December 1919 feared that, by placing
national institutions within the purview of the League of Nations, the minority protection treaty
would destabilize still young and vulnerable nation-states like Romania and Poland. Most of all,
Romanian nationalists worried that the minorities might form “a state within a state” with the
help of the League of Nations. “For us Romanians,” Vasile Grecu wrote, “this treaty was useless
and somewhat offensive as well, for we consider it to be a mark of honor for our race not to

116 „Ce urmăreşte Societatea Naţiunilor în materie de învăţământ,” Universul, 14 January 1927, 1, in SANIC,
Ministerul Instrucţiunii şi Artelor, 406/1927.
oppress anyone.”

Although they could not violate the treaty openly without incensing the Great Powers and drawing the League of Nation’s attention, the national administration worked around it, making it increasingly difficult for minorities to keep the citizenship rights they had enjoyed under imperial rule. A law issued in September 1920 automatically extended Romanian citizenship to all former Austrian citizens in Bukovina but a new law from 1924 stipulated that only individuals whose Austrian Heimatsrecht had been in Bukovina could keep their Romanian citizenship. As it was not uncommon for Austrian citizens to reside somewhere and have their Heimatsrecht elsewhere, many individuals who lived in Bukovina but did not have a Bukovina Heimatschein lost their Romanian citizenship. But the Austrian Heimatsrecht did not guarantee citizenship rights in a different successor country so the “unfortunates, who as a result of the old monarchy’s collapse have remained without a country” lost their adoptive country as well, for the ostensible reason that “they are at home in a different country, where their birthplace is.”

According to the Morgenblatt’s estimate, around 10,000 people in Bukovina had become stateless by 1929. Among them was the Jewish poet Alfred Margul-Sperber, whose family had lived in Bukovina for at least ten generations, but who missed the deadline for submitting his Heimatschein because he was working in the United States at the time. On returning to Bukovina, Sperber was surprised to find that he was no longer a Romanian citizen and that, without his citizenship document, he could also not return to America. Those who were in possession of the required documentation and submitted it on time did not fare much better either. During the months and years that the High Court in Cernăuți took to process their

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118 “Wer ist Staatsbürger?,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 24 February 1924, 1.
petitions for citizenship, applicants were as good as stateless.\textsuperscript{120} In interwar Romania, statelessness entailed much more than the loss of citizenship rights. Stateless persons were also pursued by the police and threatened with expulsion. In a meeting of the Senate in Bucharest from April 1930, the Jewish deputy Mayer Ebner protested that such threats were in fact in vain, for stateless persons in Bukovina enjoyed no citizenship rights in any other country and no other state was willing to take them in anyway.\textsuperscript{121}

Bukovina’s transition from empire to nation-state posed very similar challenges to Romanian and non-Romanian nationalisms in the province, for all national communities were equally distant from the ideals of national self-determination and national unity that were proclaimed a fait accompli after the empire’s collapse. Indeed, it was not only the Romanians who faced the challenge of forging a coherent and unitary national community out of a diversity of political and cultural experiences after 1918, but the national minorities as well. They too came into Greater Romania as a highly diverse group, with very different backgrounds, ideals, and traditions that now had to be somehow melded together into one coherent national entity. Ironically, the national unification process underwent by both Romanians and non-Romanians further deepened older political, cultural, and religious divisions between co-nationals by creating new opportunities for conflict between them. Although they all agreed that unity was the key to national preservation, different national factions advocated very different paths to unification. As the conflicts between them gained the upper hand, the ideal of national unity receded further and further into the distance. The German minority, one of the least numerous national groups in the province, was among the first to initiate contact with co-nationals in other provinces. In November 1922, German representatives from all over Bukovina met in Cernăuți

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{120} “Staatsbürger, die es nicht werden können,” \textit{Ostjüdische Zeitung}, 23 November 1928.
\item\textsuperscript{121} “Für die Staatslosen in Rumänien,” \textit{Czernowitzer Morgenblatt}, 15 April 1930, 5.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to proclaim their desire to unite with their co-nationals in Transylvania, Banat, and Bessarabia “irrespective of party and political orientation,” thus “prov[ing] that we are not fragmented and torn.”122 The other nationalities looked up to the Germans as a model of unity and consensus, for they had succeeded in creating an all-Romanian representative body and gaining lobbying power in the Romanian parliament before everyone else. In reality, the Germans were no more unified than other nationalities in the province and the unification process exacerbated their religious and political differences. Even after the German National Council was formed in 1918, the community remained torn between the Protestant progressives and former Christian Socials, who now organized in a separate Catholic party. The Catholics saw in the unification process an opportunity to cut off old ties between Germans and Jews, and to redefine German national identity along religious lines.123 The Protestant progressives, on the other hand, sought to gain ground against the Catholic German faction by playing on the national authorities’ suspiciousness of double loyalties to turn them against the Catholics.124 Factionalism within the German community continued to be a problem well into the 1930s, when a new periodical titled Die Abwehr called for unity, for “the vigor of our national community must necessarily suffer on account of such divergences.”125 Such calls for unity reinforced differences because they could be easily dismissed as politically motivated attacks against one national faction or another. For Die Abwehr, the factions in question were the new national socialist grouping in Bukovina and “Catholic agitators.”126

The unification process revealed similar tensions within the Jewish community in Bukovina, where the pressure to form a coherent and unified national entity was even higher

123 “Erkenntnis und Umkehr,” Die Heimat, 4 June 1922.
after 1918, and disunity even more of a problem than in the German camp. In a nation-state that operated with clear-cut national categories, nationally ambiguous were perceived as illegitimate. The fact that Jews in Bukovina spoke several different languages - allegedly, none of them distinctly Jewish - disqualified them from claiming minority rights. It was not merely their lack of a national language that made the Jews suspicious in the eyes of the national authorities, but also the fact that many of them spoke the language of a different national minority and the official language of the former Habsburg empire: German. Jews in Bukovina had great incentives to conform to a neat and coherent national model, but the high stakes of achieving national unity exacerbated pre-existing differences as different factions wrestled to impose their own ideas on the entire community. Old disagreements between groups who advocated Yiddish and others who opted for Hebrew as the national language of Bukovinian Jews resurfaced after 1918. The language question moved from the sphere of theoretical debates into that of practice, gaining unprecedented urgency as the Jewish community faced the choice of picking one national language to use in Jewish schools or losing their language rights altogether. The language debates brought into conflict Jewish Social Democrats, who insisted that Jewish primary and middle schools should teach in Yiddish, with the Poale Zionists, who called for a compromise between Yiddish and Hebrew, and liberal Jews and Zionists, who opted for a bilingual program with classes in both Hebrew and Romanian. When the Romanian administration dissolved the separate Jewish school inspectorate in 1920, different factions began blaming this unfortunate outcome on each other: Zionists blamed it on Yiddishists, while Social Democrats blamed the situation on the “fight between Hebreists and Yiddishists, an injustice and a danger for their national school.”¹²⁷ Not even the loss of national rights could persuade rivaling political factions to make peace. From the dissolution of the Jewish inspectorate, the Social

¹²⁷ DACHO, f.38, op.1, d. 334, l 4, 14 November 1920.
Democrats did not conclude that a compromise with the Hebreists was now in order, but on the contrary, that they should “not stop fighting until we have achieved a secular school with Yiddish as the language of instruction.” As the Jews seemed unable to decide on any one national language, the Romanian authorities decided on their behalf. Beginning with the fall of 1921, the Jewish gymnasium in Cernăuți was required to teach first- and fifth-grade students exclusively in Romanian. “The fact that the Jews are divided between Hebrew and Yiddish supporters,” the Czernowitzer Morgenblatt protested, “does not give the administration the right to claim Romanian as their mother tongue.”

These disagreements within the Jewish community were, of course, only a pretext for imposing the Romanian language. Even when the Jewish National Council officially opted for Hebrew later, the Romanian authorities insisted that Jewish private schools should teach in Romanian because “the Hebrew language is just like Latin a dead language.”

Minority groups were diverse and fragmented enough that the push towards national uniformization and homogenization did not impact them uniformly. For some national factions, the national unification process was an unprecedented opportunity to expand in ways that would have been unthinkable only a few years before. The Zionist movement was a case in point. Previously modest in size and limited in appeal, Zionism gained ground on other, more popular options quite rapidly after the unification. As they were increasingly marginalized and excluded from public life, Jews in Bukovina became more and more disenchanted with assimilation and increasingly preoccupied with Jewish national life. While Romanization policies made the

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128 Ibid., l.12, “Rezolutie.”
129 One of the few other viable options for Jewish students who did not wish to study in Romanian was to attend a German school, but that too became impossible. Jewish students were explicitly denied entrance into the German parallel classes at the Staatsrealschule, which were now set aside exclusively for Catholic and Protestant Germans.
130 “Die Minoritäten und die Schulfrage. Ergebnis der Schulkonferenz,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 1 August 1921.
Jewish public more receptive to Zionist ideas, the movement would not have expanded so much had Zionist politicians not taken advantage of the push for national unity to impose their ideas on the Jewish community as a whole. The same program that Zionists promoted so successfully in the 1920s had been previously regarded as impractical, fanciful, and irrelevant to the situation of Bukovinian Jews. Bukovina had never developed into a stronghold of Zionism before the war and its Jewish community contributed little to the Zionist project in Palestine. “Given the great significance that Czernowitz, as one of the biggest Jewish communities in the East, has for all Jewish questions,” the provincial Zionist committee in Bukovina wrote, “it must be certainly be considered from every point of view a very sad symptom (…) that in our community, a provincial center of the Zionist movement, there could not be a Shekeltag, nor could the collection of Shekels achieve the same successes that other smaller communities can achieve.”\textsuperscript{132} For a community as deeply involved in Austrian politics as Bukovina’s Jews were, the Zionist idea held little appeal. Zionism also did not catch on before the war because Jewish politics in Bukovina had been dominated by a man who was more Austrian than Jewish in his political strategy and commitments. Benno Straucher, a hot-tempered politician and a master of political alliances, made his dislike of Zionism clear by “[forbidding] collections [of money] for the [Palestine] national fund in public student gatherings.”\textsuperscript{133} Unsurprisingly for a man who had to navigate many sea changes, Straucher later reinvented himself into a Zionist. In 1913, he even managed to get himself elected as Bukovina’s representative at the Zionist congress in Vienna in 1913, although members of the provincial Zionist committee in Cernăuți “[saw] him as an enemy of Zionism” and thought with horror that he would be “greeted in the ceremonial opening of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[132] CZA, Z2\389-132.
\item[133] CZA, Z3\787, 25 August 1913.
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congress publicly and celebrated as a great representative of Austrian Jewry.”

The Zionist project was also not helped by Bukovina’s chronic instability during the war years. As the frontline shifted repeatedly and the province slid back and forth between Austrian and Russian occupation troops, local Zionists had to drop their work and flee westward. Even then, the central bureau in Berlin continued scolding the provincial committee for failing to send higher contributions, which shows how ignorant Zionists abroad remained of Bukovina’s extraordinary wartime circumstances.

After the unification, Zionists in Bukovina sought to gain advantage over their political rivals by closely identifying their goals with those of the Romanian administration. Although the Romanian authorities remained deeply suspicious of them, local Zionists insisted that their program was fundamentally compatible with the Romanian nation-building project, as both revolved around a national worldview and nationalist ideas. From a practical viewpoint too, Zionists assured the administration that their movement would work in the Romanians’ favor, for their main aim was to cut former Jewish ties with German culture and bring the Jews over to national life, thus making “the spiritual change [also] wanted by the Romanian state.”

The sensibilities of a nationally conscious, Hebrew-speaking Jewry, Zionists insisted, were perfectly compatible with the Romanian nation-building project. Learning Romanian went hand in hand with learning Hebrew, for both languages were vehicles for nation-building. The Zionists were indeed the only Jewish political faction in Bukovina to call for Romanian instruction in Jewish schools, side by side with Hebrew classes. “That we resurrect the Hebrew language as our old national language, which was never dead, to a new life, the Romanians will understand, because

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134 Ibid., 20 August 1913.
they have a feeling for the historical,” the Ostjuedische Zeitung wrote.137 These arguments were part of the Zionist campaign to promote Hebrew not only as the main language of instruction in Jewish schools, but also as “the language of life, family, and the street.”138 Denigrating Yiddish was part and parcel of this campaign. “Yiddish is in the main a German [language] on an earlier level of development,” the local Zionist Mendel Kinsbrunner wrote in the Ostjuedische Zeitung, “augmented by a considerable number of Hebrew and Slavic expressions.”139 When the Jewish National Council rejected a petition to introduce Yiddish as the main language of instruction in Jewish schools in August 1919, Mayer Ebner similarly observed that “Yiddish is not yet a language of its own, it can develop into a language but only on a confined territory with predominantly Jewish majority.” By taking advantage of the push towards national uniformization and monolingualism, Zionists were able to put into practice previously unachievable dreams, such as identifying the Zionist program - previously associated mainly with emigration to Palestine - with Jewish nationalism as a whole.140 “Zionism is not limited to the question of who wants to go to Zion,” Mayer Ebner wrote, but it resembles “glasses through which we see all other questions.” Zionism and local politics, he insisted, were not mutually incompatible, nor did loyalty to Palestine exclude loyalty to Romania. As Ebner assured the Romanian authorities, “many of us will dream of the palm and cedar trees of Lebanon, but we will also feel good in the shadow of nordic [Fichten]. Palestine is spatially and spiritually too narrow for a people who spans the entire world.”141

And yet, Bukovinian Zionists remained profoundly shaped and deeply connected with the

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137 “Die nationale Schule,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 6 May 1921.
culture, mentality, and values against which they defined their movement. theirs was a strange kind of nationalism. In its eagerness to break with the imperial past and assert national difference, the Zionist movement was perfectly in step with the times. The ways in which it sought to do so, however, fit only uneasily on the new mental map of nation-states. Zionists in Bukovina set out to wean Jews off German culture and the German language, “liberating” them from the mentality that stood in the way of acquiring national consciousness and developing national life.  

142 “We can no longer be pioneers of Kulturdeutschum,” Mayer Ebner declared, since “everywhere we hear Hebrew being spoken and German will soon disappear from the Jewish home.”  

143 When the Germans reproached Jews in Cernăuți for failing to defend the German-language theater and for having “abandoned the cause of German culture,” Ebner claimed that “we have not abandoned the Germans, for we never belonged to them, just as they were never ours.”  

144 But this was not exactly how things stood. Even decided anti-assimilationists like Ebner did not completely part with the ideas and ideals that permeated the world of the Austrian Bildungsbürgertum they had inhabited before the war. Without a doubt, Zionists like Ebner chose Hebrew over Yiddish and German because they believed it to be a better marker of national difference: a language distinctive enough to set the Jews apart from other national groups both in the eyes of non-Jews and in their own consciousness. Through Hebrew, Zionists were hoping to cure Jews of their national indifference and the ease with which they “threw their Jewishness overboard on the first occasion that it became uncomfortable to them.” And yet Hebrew was also chosen because - unlike Yiddish - it had the potential of becoming a world language. This was not a local dialect confined to a small territory and small group of people, but an old language with a great literature and respectable tradition. In short,

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142 "Unsere nationale Schule,” Ostjüdische Zeitung, 11 March 1921.  
Hebrew was the only plausible replacement for the German *Weltsprache.* It was a language well suited to a particular kind of national life: one that continued to revolve around humanist ideals of mobility, *Kultur,* and universalism. “The eternal Jew wanders through the world,” Ebner reflected in 1919, “no people in the East travels as much as the Jews (...) the Jew will and should master a world language.”

The Zionist movement transgressed the very national boundaries it claimed to uphold in more than one way. While stressing their commitment to nationalization at the provincial level, Zionists in Bukovina defended regional identity and opposed centralization at the national level. In Bukovina, the trend towards national uniformization worked to their advantage because it gave them a chance to expand their influence over the Jewish community. On the national stage, however, the Zionists stood to lose from the centralization process, which placed them in a subordinate position to the more powerful and politically dominant organization of the Old Kingdom Jews, *Uniunea Evreilor din Romania* [UER; the Union of Romanian Jews], presided by the Jewish lawyer Wilhelm Fildermann. The meanings of Zionist nationalism and the forms it took changed with the setting and scale. In some contexts, staying true to one’s nationalist convictions entailed upholding a distinct regional identity. This was how Ebner’s Zionists reacted to the UER’s attempts to absorb them into an all-Romanian Jewish organization modeled on the Old Kingdom organization. For Zionists in Bukovina, the invitation to subordinate themselves to an organization they held to be assimilationist was nothing short of an insult. Ebner could only envision joining a unitary, supra-regional Jewish organization if this allowed Bukovinian Zionists to continue pursuing their separate interests and retain their specificities.

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147 CAHJP, RM/134, 26 April 1928.
As Fildermann refused to compromise on his idea of a unitary and centralized organization, the disagreements between him and the Zionists in Bukovina escalated into a full-blown conflict. Sparks flew when Fildermann came to Cernăuți in April 1929 to urge the local Jewish community to join Jews in other provinces, “shoulder to shoulder, against the enemy of the entire Jewry.” When Fildermann told his audience that “I come now for the second time in order to speak to Jews as a Jew,” they started booing and heckling. To calm them down, Fildermann assured them that “we consider this part of Romania the most highly standing intellectually in the entire country. We hope that we are not wrong about that. We are intellectuals and wish to speak to intellectuals.” Ebner’s party were not convinced. The following day, they too summoned a meeting in the Jewish national home to protest the UER’s gathering. “These practices of the Jewry in the Old Kingdom,” one speaker said, “can and should not be allowed to penetrate here (…) We need no assimilation, we will fight for the rights that we ourselves deserve.”

Much like the Bukovinian Romanians, who tended to look down on their co-nationals from the Old Kingdom, the Jews in Ebner’s camp were reluctant to join hands with Jews from the Old Kingdom because they believed they were both more politically mature and culturally superior to them. “It is not proper for us Bukovinian Jews to assume the nationally weak mentality of the Union of Romanian Jews,” Ebner wrote. Instead he argued that “we should rather bring the Jews from the Old Kingdom to our national idea.”

The Zionist movement owed its appeal not so much to its national political content as to the opportunities it offered of transcending, both intellectually and physically, the narrowly circumscribed space of the nation-state. If newspapers like Ostjuedische Zeitung had a limited readership and Zionist party meetings could reach only a small audience, Zionist youth

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148 “Vier bewehte Versammlungen in zwei Tagen in Czernowitz,” Czernowitzer Morgenblatt, 4 April 1929.
149 Ibid.
organizations were much more successful in recruiting a large number of members. Organizations like the Hanoar Hazioni or the Hashomer Hazair expanded the horizons of Jewish youth otherwise marginalized and excluded from Romanian circles by allowing them to live - as it were - double lives: one, as second-class Romanian citizens and the other, as Palestinian pioneers-to-be. Eli Rottner, who moved to Cernăuți after the war and joined the local branch of the Hashomer Hazair, recalls in his memoir that members of the youth organization never “took [politics] seriously even when they talked about it.” In Kolomea, where Rottner and his friends started a pioneer group in the spring of 1919, the Hashomer circle set up shop in a former agriculture school of the Jewish Colonization Association. There they passed their days working in the garden and forest, and their evenings reading biographies of Zionist pioneers and philosophical and scientific works including Spinoza’s *Ethics* and Marx’s *Das Kapital*. In Cernăuți, where Zionist youth groups were especially popular, the movement seemed to be bound up more with Vienna than Palestine. The historian Zvi Yavetz, who also joined the Zionist youth movement in Cernăuți in the 1930s, remembered that young Zionists in Bukovina continued to look up to Vienna. Few Zionist sympathizers seriously considered leaving Bukovina for Palestine. Many more joined the movement because they relished the thought of transcending increasingly narrow and stifling borders through camaraderie, physical work, and intellectual exchange.

How much leeway different national groups in Bukovina were given depended on their size, whether or not they had a nation-state of their own, and whether they were concentrated in

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compact pockets or scattered. While no minorities were welcome in the nation-state, some were considered to be more dangerous than others. In Bukovina, the national administration felt most threatened by the Ukrainians. Their policies towards the Ukrainian population rested on a very particular understanding of Ukrainian identity that bears some explanation here. Romanian nationalists - and the administration, by extension - believed that Ukrainians in Bukovina were of two kinds. Some Ukrainians had come to Bukovina in the early modern period, during the wars Moldavian voievods fought with Polish princes. Most of them had become assimilated into the national community and lived side by side with the Romanians in peace. Other Ukrainians had arrived more recently from Galicia and taken advantage of Austria’s liberal nationality policies to retain their separate language and customs. Instead of becoming assimilated into the Romanian-speaking community, as their predecessors had, they acted as an assimilating force. They worked hand in hand with the imperial authorities, who “received orders to falsify statistics and Slavicize names,” to absorb Romanian peasants and get them to speak Ruthenian and Ruthenize their names. This was how Romanian nationalists explained why such a large number of Ruthenians were living on the territory of Bukovina. To discredit Ukrainian territorial demands, they claimed that Ukrainian irredentism was not an expression of national self-determination but merely an echo of Austrian imperialism with no foundation in reality. “In olden times,” one Romanian author claimed, “Ukrainian leaders and their exponents never demanded territorial rights of the kind they do today” and “these two neighboring peoples, the Romanians and the Ukrainians, had lived side by side for centuries.” Another common argument was that Ukrainians living on the territory of Bukovina were in fact “Ruthenized” Romanians (that is, ethnic Romanians who had lost their language through exposure to the large

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population of Galician migrants). This theory provided the Romanian authorities with a convenient reason to reject requests for Ukrainian-language classes and dismantle already existing Ukrainian schools. Beginning in 1934 Ukrainian-language classes were taken out of the school curriculum in Bukovina and “Ukrainian teachers as well as other minority teachers were compelled to take Romanian language exams and those who failed were kicked out (…) and gradually replaced with young elements from all over the country.” By 1939, even schools with a majority of Ukrainian students no longer offered Ukrainian classes - supposedly because “the greatest part of the population who used to speak Ukrainian is actually not a Ukrainian population, but a Ukrainianized Romanian population, which one can deduce from the Romanian family names, the Romanian dress and customs. It would be very difficult to establish exactly which part of the population is truly Ukrainian.”

Like its Austrian predecessor, the Romanian administration had to perform a fine balancing act between the demands of different national groups vying for attention and resources. But the rules of the old nationalities game had changed, for the arbiter of the game was now also a player. Overall, Poles and Germans fared better than the other national groups in Bukovina. They got to keep their schools longer and were allowed more freedoms, mostly because they had nation-states to represent them and intervene on their behalf. Poles in Bukovina were granted a lot of concessions, as Poland was Romania’s anti-Bolshevik partner in the first years after the war. Before the unification, there were 16 Polish-language primary schools in Bukovina and 5 mixed German-Polish ones supported by the state. The Poles managed not only to maintain this network of schools but even to expand it. By 1922, there were 28 Polish primary schools in Bukovina with a total of 2500 students and 73 classes. Unlike the Jews or the Ruthenians, the Poles had powerful institutions advocating for them. Founded in 1928 in

SANIC, 40/1933, 17 May 1939, 5.
Cernăuți, the Polish School Association of Romania opened and maintained schools for Polish children in Romania. By 1938 the Association had opened one Polish-language gymnasium in Cernăuți, eight private primary schools, and two kindergartens all over Bukovina. They had also gained approval from the Romanian authorities to introduce Polish-language classes (two hours per week) into several state primary schools with Polish students.\(^{156}\) “We insist on observing that no minority in this territory enjoys as many rights as the Poles,” one Romanian official observed.\(^{157}\) Moreover, Poles kept pressuring the Romanian administration to grant them the same rights that Germans enjoyed. Polish and German representatives were now jostling for space and resources just as the Romanians and Ruthenians had once competed for primary schools and gymnasiums under Austrian rule. Whenever the Polish School Association petitioned for additional Polish-language teaching in villages that consisted “almost exclusively of Poles,” they always framed their requests “in comparison with the situation of German-language education in Romanian state schools.”\(^{158}\) The Association once insisted that the administration should allocate more schools to the Polish population because the current number “doesn’t correspond to the ratio of populations which is 8:5.”\(^{159}\)

After 1918 the competition between nationalities was complicated by the fact that all national groups were now seen as representatives of foreign states - as extensions of the international realm into the inner affairs of the nation-state. The overlap between the domestic and the international had always been a trademark of empire. In an imperial borderland like Bukovina, every single act of governance, every policy and measure implemented by the Austrian administration had international ramifications. Austrian officials knew that their

\(^{156}\) DACHO, fond 26, op. 1, d. 33, l. 15, 1938.
\(^{157}\) Ibid., l. 6.
\(^{158}\) SANIC Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, 59/1934, 10 September 1934.
\(^{159}\) Ibid.
policies towards ‘Ruthenians’ impacted not only Austria’s relationship with Russia and Romania, but also the dynamic between Ruthenians and other national groups in neighboring states. Imperial nationality policy could never be contained. But now that national governments were in place, the same thing happened on an even larger scale. Every nation-state encompassed national minorities that other nation-states recognized as their ‘people.’ Many of these states also reserved the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of their neighbors if the rights and freedoms of their ‘co-nationals’ were at stake. Some took liberty with the concept of ‘rights,’ using ethnic islands in neighboring states as a springboard for territorial expansionism. But there were also mixed or ethnically undefined populations that were claimed not by one but by multiple nation-states. And so, national governments that were otherwise at peace (and sometimes formally allied with each other) fought battles on the territories of third-party states with minority populations. The ‘battle for children’ flared up again in Bukovina when, after signing a convention with Romania in 1936, Czechoslovakia reclaimed some locals who had been previously classified as Polish. The Polish School Association appealed to the Romanian authorities to keep these Poles from becoming de-nationalized by re-introducing Polish-language teaching into schools that started teaching in Czech and Slovak. But since Romania had a formal understanding with Czechoslovakia, the school authorities could “not prevent the teaching of the Slovak language in cases where parents have submitted written declarations that they are Slovak.”[160] The most they could do to appease the Poles was to fire a teacher “who is suspected of exceedingly affectionate sentiments towards the local Slovak cause.”[161] The people in question became a kind of shuttlecock between Polish and Slovak national activists playing their game on Romanian territory on behalf of the Polish and Czechoslovak governments. “The

[160] DACHO, fond 26, op. 1, d. 33, l 7, 31 December 1938.
[161] DACHO, fond 26, op. 1, d. 33, l 12, 9 December 1938.
population,” one Romanian official reported, “completely disoriented, oscillates between the two sides, according to which side has the stronger and more persuasive propaganda. There were also cases when members of the same family found themselves some in the Slovak camp and others in the Polish camp.” Interestingly, people’s national affiliations could still change from one day to the next. By the end of 1939, thanks to Polish national propaganda, only one person in a village with a former Slovak population still called himself a Slovak. In another village, “the problem wasn’t even raised in the first place and all the Slovaks considered themselves Poles.”

This was the second time this nationally ambiguous group were being reclaimed and redefined. Brought into Bukovina around 1815 as colonists from the Tatra mountains, these people had been classified by the Austrian administration as Polish and assigned to Polish-German schools even though they spoke a non-Polish language that was “a kind of dialect, with a Slavic basis, with Slovak and Polish elements and various infiltrations from German, Ruthenian, [and] Romanian.” As successive generations of former Slovaks went to Polish schools, their dialect became increasingly polonized - which did not bother anyone until Czechoslovakia set out to clarify the “ethnic question” and the battle for souls resumed.

Romanian nationalists similarly reclaimed Ruthenians in Bukovina as long-lost Romanians that had become Ukrainianized but could recover their national identity with a little outside help. It was mainly for the sake of these people that Romania claimed to have incorporated Bukovina after the war. It was therefore not enough that the Romanian administration came to Bukovina and proclaimed it Romanian. ‘Romanians’ who had become more or less Ruthenized under imperial rule also needed to participate actively in the nationalization process. Officials at the local level mobilized communities to send collective

\[162\] Ibid., 114.
\[163\] DACHO, fond 26, op. 1, d. 33, l 270.
petitions to Bucharest, demanding that Ruthenian schools in their villages be closed down or transformed into Romanian ones to put an end to the “various machinations” through which Ruthenians “were trying to attract our children to the Ruthenian school.” The school authorities in Bucharest welcomed such petitions because they demonstrated that the demand for Romanization came from the grassroots - and was not simply an imposition from above. All the petitions were sprinkled with pearls of nationalist language and assurances that “now that Bukovina is once again united with Moldova as it used to be before it was broken off by Austria, we wish to be once again close to our old fatherland, to which we are tied through the same faith in God, the same traditions, and the same love for the nation.”\textsuperscript{164} To prove their commitment to the national cause, the petitioners often went even further, requesting that the authorities close down all Ukrainian-language schools. One communal committee even insisted that the former Ruthenian teacher be removed from their village because “he has become dispensable.”\textsuperscript{165} To make such requests one had to be much more militant than most Romanian peasants were. Although they most likely did not initiate this wave of petitions, the peasants could certainly be mobilized to support them. They had their own reasons to go along with the nationalization project. Under the Austrian administration, Ruthenians in Bukovina had been allowed to open schools in their native language if enough students were willing to attend them. In some villages, where the Ruthenians outnumbered the Romanians by much, Romanian families had to send their children to the Ruthenian schools as well because the closest Romanian-language ones were inaccessible. This was problematic for the nationally-minded intelligentsia and above all inconvenient for the peasants, who preferred studying in their mother tongue if they were given the choice. This was the case in Petriceanca, a village with a Ruthenian-language school and a

\textsuperscript{164} DACHO, fond 213, op. 2, d. 6, l 20, 25 January 1919. 
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., l 7, 5 May 1919.
private Romanian school that shut down during the war. Since the closest Romanian-language school was miles away, Romanian families complained that “our children are growing like weeds, stupid and wild” and requested, after the unification, that a new public school in the Romanian language be opened in the village.\footnote{DAChO, fond 213, op. 2, d. 5, l. 52, 20 December 1918.}

Ukrainian and Romanian national activists were the bane of each other’s existence yet they also needed each other to gain popular support and thrive. This had been the case under imperial rule as well. Often Romanian nationalists would express admiration towards their Ruthenian counterparts, who seemed to be doing a better job of mobilizing the population and getting what they wanted. After the empire’s collapse, the competition between Romanian and Ruthenian activists became an all-or-nothing game. With every gesture of integral nationalism, Romanians pushed Ukrainian activists towards increasingly defiant forms of national irredentism. In turn, the Romanian authorities became increasingly uncompromising towards Ukrainian activists, whom they perceived as a great danger to the fragile national consciousness of Romanians in Bukovina. Yet rivaling nationalists needed each other to become convincing to an otherwise indifferent population. Once the Romanian administration began closing down Ukrainian schools and banning Ukrainian cultural societies, even the most passive Ukrainian speakers were likely to find some appeal in the activity of nationalist activists who were petitioning for Ukrainian schools and organizing self-defense societies. The irredentist propaganda had a self-reinforcing quality to it: the more Ukrainian nationalists engaged in it, the more reason they had to continue doing it, as the Romanian authorities clamped down on them with increasingly harsh measures. By the 1930s, Ukrainian cultural societies in Bukovina had once again become so active that the administration deemed them truly dangerous to the Romanian cause. “In North-Western Bukovina,” one Romanian school inspector reported in
1932, “Ukrainian propaganda has become a real danger to the state.” Because the irredentist propaganda was disseminated mainly through cultural channels, it seemed unusually insidious to the Romanian authorities who were monitoring it. They all felt that what Ukrainian priests, teachers, and activists were doing “was no longer just cultural propaganda but a subversive activity that undermines not only the Romanian element as an ethnic entity but the actual structures of the political state.” Moreover, they had the sense that Ukrainian nationalists had stepped up their game after the unification so much that they had in fact managed to neutralize the Romanian cultural project completely. This was indeed the case even though many Ukrainian schools and cultural societies had been abolished. When the Romanian authorities closed down their institutions, Ukrainian activists re-opened them secretly, turning reading rooms, cooperatives, and choir societies into national shrines with a “purely Ukrainian aspect”: “on the walls are hanging pictures of Ukrainian scholars, [and] from place to place there are small paper flags with the yellow and blue Ukrainian national colors.” These were the creations of a small group of nationalist elites. But they did not remain without consequence, for they were able to mobilize the peasant population with the help of nationally-minded teachers and priests. When the Romanian ministry of education announced that schools in the Cernăuți region would be teaching fewer Ukrainian-language classes, local officials were taken by assault by peasant delegations coming to demand their rights as a “result of the movement on the part of teachers and Ukrainian priests who agitate the population, showing that they were deprived of a right that the previous government had given them.” By the 1930s, Ukrainian cultural societies (the Narodnyi Dim and the Chetalnya Rus’koi Besedy) in northern Bukovina were organizing “theater

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167 Biblioteca Academiei Române (BAR), Arhiva Constantin Angelescu, X, Varia 11, 6.
168 BAR, Arhiva Constantin Angelescu, X, Varia 11, 6.
169 SANIC Ministerul Instrucţiunii şi Artelor, 80/1934.
170 SANIC Ministerul Instrucţiunii şi Artelor, 7/1934, l 13, February 1934.
performances with allegoric scenes showing Ukraine in chains being saved by the Cossacks” and distributing “even candy in the Ukrainian national colors.”\textsuperscript{171} To offset the effects of this irredentist activity, the authorities encouraged Romanian activists and cultural associations in Bukovina to step up their game. “To this movement,” one official urged, “we must counterpose a Romanian cultural movement by the Societatea pentru cultură, the choir society Armonia, Liga Culturală, etc.” But the two national movements seemed incomparable. Even though they had the state’s backing, the Romanians did not “have a unitary plan and are very divided.”

There was, however, a lot more cross-pollination between the Romanian and Ukrainian nationalist camps in postwar Bukovina than either party was willing to admit. First of all, the two movements constantly shaped each other. The further along the Romanians got with their national project in Bukovina, the more threatened Ukrainian nationalists felt. The Romanization campaign offered them a wonderful pretext to mobilize themselves in new ways. Though conflicting, these two nationalisms came to resemble each other almost to a fault, as they both grew in strength and appeal by developing chauvinistic dimensions. Both Ukrainian and Romanian nationalists railed against the perils of “foreign” infiltration and urged their co-nationals to turn inwards. For the Romanians, the “foreigners” were the national minorities, especially Jews and Ukrainians. But the Ukrainians, the scourge of Romanian nationalists, also complained about “foreigners” - in their case, the Romanians and the Jews. It was around this time that a new Ukrainian nationalist party emerged in Bukovina under the presidency of Volodymyr Zalozetskij. As soon as the old liberal government of Brătianu was replaced with a Peasant Party-dominated government after the elections of 1928 (the first truly free elections held in Romania), minority leaders began demanding greater national freedoms. Zalozetskij’s party requested that the new government remove the ban on Ukrainian books and put the

\textsuperscript{171} BAR, Arhiva Constantin Angelescu, X, Varia 11, 6.
Ukrainian language on the same level with Romanian, thus allowing children in districts with a Ukrainian majority to study in their mother tongue. In their new press organ *Chas*, they also proceeded to publish a complete list of directives for “every honorable Ukrainian” to follow. In turn, Ukrainians were urged to use only the Ukrainian language “at home and outside of it and in front of all institutions” and “in all public matters to be always firmly on the Ukrainian side,” as well as to “strive to found Ukrainian stores and other popular institutions” and to “invest in building theater performances and concerts in Ukrainian in villages.”

“So foreigners don’t swindle our people, we must take the whole commerce in our hands and only then can we be sure of our progress,” the party’s press organ *Chas* urged. Readers were encouraged to learn from the Czechs, “who have very elegantly done away with foreigners” by sending their children to learn trades, forming special commercial organizations, and generally following the slogan “down with the foreigners!” (*khet’ z chuzhymi!). In the meantime, contemporary Romanian periodicals were hurling almost identical invectives at ‘foreigners’ who had taken Bukovina’s economy from Romanian hands.

Carried out in a context of political instability and economic crisis, the unification process also reinforced political and regional differences between Romanians in Bukovina and beyond. Not all Romanian politicians who voted for the province’s unconditional unification with Romania saw Bukovina’s new place on the national map with the same eyes. Iancu Flondor, the nationalist who summoned the Romanian troops to Czernowitz in November 1918, regarded the unification not as the culmination of Romania’s nation-building project but as the beginning of a process of reconstruction of the Romanian state on more solid foundations. Flondor also shared the view that Bukovina and the other newly annexed provinces had something important

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172 “Domahannya Ukrains’koi Natsional’noi Partii,” and “Shcho povinen robyty kozhdyi chesnyi Ukrainets’” *Chas*, 16 November 1928.
173 “Shlyakhom drugikh,” *Chas*, 6 January 1929.
to offer the Romanian nation-state, as they were superior both culturally and politically to the Old Kingdom. Under the beneficial influence of the new territories, Flondor hoped, the state would undergo much-needed reforms. For as long as Bukovina’s position within Greater Romania was not definitively settled, Flondor tried to persuade the Bucharest authorities to grant Bukovina some measure of administrative autonomy and take a more gradualist approach to its integration.\textsuperscript{174} By March 1919, when one of Flondor’s envoys went to Bucharest to discuss future plans for Bukovina’s administration with the King, the central authorities had already decided to take a different path to unification, favoring rapid centralization policies over Flondor’s gradualist approach. At the end of his audience with the King, Flondor’s messenger was told that the administration should work “so that Bukovina may fuse with the Old Kingdom” as soon as possible, by carrying out reforms in exactly the same manner as in the Old Kingdom.\textsuperscript{175} Ion Nistor was the perfect man for this program, as he believed that no attempt should be made to accommodate non-Romanian speakers because Bukovina had always been a Romanian province and only Romanians had the right to decide its fate. Having lost Bucharest’s support, Flondor was made to resign in April 1919 but his conflict with Nistor came to a peak in June 1919, when Flondor convoked a meeting in Cernăuți to open up public debate on Bukovina’s administrative and political organization. According to Nistor’s account of the event, the meeting was attended mostly by socialists, Germans, and Jews, and took place in German. Apparently, Flondor argued that Bukovina should have remained “independent, autonomous, isolated from the rest of the Romanian country” by a \textit{cordon sanitaire}, and that its current

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\textsuperscript{174} Before April 1919, Bukovina was ruled by two ministers: Iancu Flondor, the head of the local government in Cernăuți, and Ion Nistor, who mediated between the local government and the central authorities in Bucharest. At the time, only the railroad and post administration, military, finances, and external affairs were partially centralized; all other services and institutions were managed at the provincial level, through a series of state secretariats with headquarters in Cernăuți.

\textsuperscript{175} SANIC, Iancu Flondor 5, 20 March 1919, 288.
administration should be supplemented with a council consisting not only of Romanians but also of representatives of other nationalities and parties.\textsuperscript{176}

For as long as these plans were linked with minority rights, Nistor and his supporters would not even hear of them. Nistor’s main argument against the \textit{cordon sanitaire} was that it posed a security threat to the nation-state. “Romania is a nation-state,” the \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} reminded readers in 1925, “and it cannot tolerate an autonomous province at its margins.”\textsuperscript{177}

Even more importantly, Nistor believed that Bukovina had no identity of its own and that, as an artificial creation of imperial politics with no basis in reality, Bukovina could not exist independently of Moldova. The main intellectual force behind these ideas was the historian Nicolae Iorga. In 1919, Iorga set out on a journey through Bukovina, stopping in Cernăuți and other major towns to give lectures about Bukovina’s past. In his speech in Cernăuți, Iorga assured his audience that Bukovina was not meant to lead a separate existence because it had no natural geographic borders but only arbitrary ones that could be removed just as easily as they were put into place. The idea of protecting Bukovinian culture from the backwardness of the Old Kingdom through a \textit{cordon sanitaire} was, in his opinion, completely nonsensical. Iorga’s other point was that, even though the Old Kingdom was less developed administratively than Austria, it had the undeniable advantage of still being alive while Austria had been doomed to extinction from the very start. The nationalists around \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} made a similar argument, that Bukovina was an ethnic medley, a chaos of institutions and peoples with no coherent identity and no distinctive characteristic other than its incoherence. Because Bukovina defied their theories, nationalists viewed it as a deviation from the national course, devoid of logic and unable to stand on its own. “There is no homogeneous classical type of Bukovinian culture,” Ion Nistor

\textsuperscript{176} DACho, fond 6, op.1, d.29, ll. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{177} V Gr., “Unire fără autonomie?,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 1 December 1918.
proclaimed in December 1918, for Bukovina was only a “shapeless amalgam” inhabited by a “species of bipedes developed in the political greenhouse of the former Austrian regime,” “renegade[s] without national convictions” incapable of speaking any language correctly.\footnote{Ion Nistor, “Homo Bucovinensis,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 11 December 1918.} What Nistor failed to grasp at the time, however, was that Bukovina’s shapeless amalgam may constituted enough of a distinction between the province and the former Old Kingdom for Bukovinians to develop a distinctive sense of identity and a desire for autonomy within the nation-state.

While the liberals were in power and Nistor and his supporters enjoyed Bucharest’s support, they had a vested interest in upholding centralizing policies that removed Bukovina’s traditional, German-speaking elites in order to make space for Romanians like themselves. There was no more impassioned advocate of centralization and Romanianization measures than Ion Nistor in the 1920s. Thanks to the exigencies of unification, Nistor quickly advanced from the position of a little-known Romanian history professor in a remote city to the main mover and shaker of Bukovinian politics. In the brief intervals when the liberals were replaced by oppositional governments that departed from their aggressive centralization program, Nistor’s nationalists refashioned themselves into guardians of the nation, claiming to defend the state’s sovereignty from the reckless policies of Romanian parties that privileged political competition over cultural work. When General Averescu’s government dissolved the position of minister-delegate and created a new institution titled “the unification and liquidation commission” and headed by the Bukovinian Romanian Dori Popovici, Nistor and his supporters had to make way for a new group of politicians and officials eager to take over the ropes. Popovici and his staff, which included not only Romanians but also representatives of the minorities, changed course from Nistor’s rushed unification program to a more gradualist approach. Since the minorities
were involved in these changes, Nistor’s group immediately accused Popovici’s administration of subordinating the interests of Romanians to those of other nationalities. “Is it normal to reduce the Romanians’ role in public affairs to zero in the capital of Bukovina?,” Nistor asked rhetorically. And his answer was in the negative, purportedly because an administration that relied too heavily on minorities could not be tolerated in a province like Bukovina, located at the margins of the state.179 Popovici’s administration was not the only one to draw attention to Bukovina’s specificities and particular interests. The call for de-centralization became a powerful weapon in the contest for power between different Romanian parties. For as long as regional interests and minority rights remained intertwined, the liberals accused regionalists of disloyalty to the nation.

This changed when the liberal monopoly on power was broken in the 1930s and Nistor’s nationalists found themselves displaced by new Romanian elites sent to Bukovina from elsewhere. When the National Peasant Party presided by the Transylvanian politician Iuliu Maniu came to power in 1928 on a platform of concessions to regional interests and minority rights, liberals in Bukovina accused them of placing Transylvanian priorities above the needs of other regions: “Maniu is a regionalist at home, but not when it comes to other people’s regional interests.”180 In fact, the peasantists appealed to the newly annexed provinces displeased with the “disastrous centralizing policies” pursued by the liberals, with the promise to de-politicize their administration and grant the minorities the rights they clamored for. In a speech he delivered in the Bucharest parliament in January 1929 on “Bukovinian problems,” the peasantist deputy George Alvirescu criticized the former liberal administration for neglecting Bukovina’s transportation and mail infrastructure, and argued for a more regional-oriented policy, for

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180 “Ce a fost și ce a ajuns Bucovina,” Glasul Bucovinei, 3 September 1930.
“Bukovina is a province with a glorious past, with an old culture, with good institutions which, even though they were made by others, even so, the population there got used to them and appropriated them.”\textsuperscript{181} By the time Nicolae Iorga became prime minister in 1931, Nistor’s group had gone full circle from advocating rapid centralization to defending regional interests. Although the historian Iorga had been a source of inspiration and support for nationalist movements in the newly annexed provinces, the politician Iorga trusted people and institutions from the Old Kingdom more than local Romanians. “A Bukovinan,” the \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} wrote in September 1931, “can now become neither a financial administrator, nor an agricultural counselor, nor a director of a secondary school, nor a school inspector anymore.”\textsuperscript{182} Now ousted from their former positions of power, local nationalists began to voice the same complaints the minorities had earlier brought to the attention of Nistor’s administration to no avail. When Nicolae Iorga accused \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} of regionalism, its editors complained that Bukovinians were being treated “as though we were step children” by a government that did not recognize their particularities and strengths: “this Bukovina with its abundance of specialized intellectuals in all administrative branches, with its national traditions and battles, with its progressed cultural and economic life has ended up being treated in the worst of ways.”\textsuperscript{183} A memorandum published in November 1931 by the \textit{Glasul Bucovinei} objected that the central administration had no sense of local needs because locals were no longer involved in governance.\textsuperscript{184}

By the 1930s, regionalist ideas in Bukovina were no longer confined to any one group, but cut across national and political divides. Bukovinians of all ethnicities and political

\begin{footnotes}
\item[182] „În Bucovina au drept de viață și Bucovinenii,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 20 September 1931.
\item[183] „Turcul te bate - Turcul te judecă: Reflexiuni critice asupra pretinsului nostru regionalism,” \textit{Glasul Bucovinei}, 20 October 1931.
\item[184] \textit{Memoriul Bucovinei} (Cernăuți: Institutul de arte grafice si editura Glasul Bucovinei, 1931), 6.
\end{footnotes}
orientations who felt increasingly marginalized within the Romanian nation-state had come to articulate a distinctive Bukovinian identity and claim shared interests even if they failed to agree on what that identity and those interests was all about. In 1933, a new publication called *Viata Bucovinei* [Bukovina’s Life] proclaimed that Bukovina was indeed a distinct entity, “Romania’s Little Switzerland,” a place where twelve nationalities got along and “ethnic harmony is a reality.”¹⁸⁵ The Romanian editors of this journal claimed that Bukovina’s population was “superior to that in many other regions of our country” and that the province’s ethnic complexity should therefore be acknowledged and accommodated by its institutions and administration. This was how the ideal of a cosmopolitan, multinational Bukovina emerged from the province’s difficult transition from an imperial to a national world. Unlike the Jewish minority, who pined for their lost imperial citizenship rights and *Kultur*, the Romanians who embraced the idea of a Bukovinian “Little Switzerland” projected on this image a vision of a peasants’ and workers’ paradise, where “there was nothing but unity of class and interest.”¹⁸⁶ For the editors of *Viata Bucovinei*, paying attention to Bukovina’s regional interests meant above all rehabilitating the peasant and worker substratum of the province which, they complained, the new administrations had “left to their own devices.”¹⁸⁷ Their objections to Romania’s neglect of Bukovina’s “geographic and economic distinctiveness” were the same as their arguments against Austrian rule. “The culture that flows abundantly from the center, sometimes as a product of (…) abstract mentalities,” one author explained, “cannot and is not allowed to be imposed as a universal recipe.”¹⁸⁸

This was Austria’s post-mortem gift to Romania. The empire’s project to achieve supra-

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¹⁸⁶ Dr T Cristureanu, “15 ani dela Unire,” *Viata Bucovinei*, 1 November 1933.
¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸⁸ Dr T Cristureanu, “Regionalism?!,” *Viata Bucovinei*, March 1934, 228.
national unity through shared *Kultur* had seemed like a complete failure before World War I, when different nationalities looked to other states and territories to defend their interests, and dreamed of transcending Bukovina’s borders to unite with co-nationals or co-religionists elsewhere. Long after the empire had gone to its grave and these other territorial configurations came into being, former imperial citizens in Bukovina - from Austrophiles to nationalists - began to feel uneasy and stifled by the narrow frameworks of the centralized nation-state. The pressures of unification did more to bring out the imperial core that distinguished Bukovinians from their co-citizens in the former Old Kingdom than any of Austria’s former propagandistic efforts.

**Conclusion**

What role did Bukovina play as a periphery both in the nationalist Romanian imagination and within the newly expanded Greater Romanian state? What did it mean to live at a national periphery, as opposed to an imperial one? Romanian nationalists in Bukovina spoke of the province’s unification with Romania in terms of territorial “conquest” and “recovery.” They imagined Bukovina as a cradle of Romanian civilization, indispensable to the newly formed Greater Romanian nation-state, and one that had to return to Romania in the name of historical justice. Even more, they had high hopes that Bukovina could breathe new life into Romania by enacting - albeit on a small scale - the civilizing mission the Romanian nation was meant to play in Europe. Bukovina contradicted these narratives in every possible way. Its ties to the “motherland” from which Austria had “kidnapped” it a century and a half before did not regenerate naturally. Its links to the empire of which it had been a part of for so long did not simply wither away in 1918.

Before long, the Romanian authorities in Cernăuți understood that the province’s
Romanian culture and national life were something that needed to be manufactured or built. Building a modern, Romanian culture in a province dominated both culturally and socio-economically by “foreigners” (as non-Romanians came to be called) was no easy matter. The authorities committed themselves to demonstrating that the Romanians were now in charge. The liberal administration in Bukovina sought to build a Romanian middle-class with which to replace the minorities, while also raising the cultural level of the Romanian peasantry through mass culture. Since Cernăuți proved less conducive to these Romanization efforts than the rural hinterlands, the city acquired the reputation of a dangerous, nationally impure place. The authorities directed their attention to the countryside but there they met with the same kind of resistance that once prevented Austrian imperial officials from increasing literacy levels in rural Bukovina.

There were many obstacles in the way of Bukovina’s integration into Greater Romania. From the war, many Bukovinians drew the conclusion that the province’s fate was to keep shuttling back and forth from one state to another. To the exasperation of the new authorities, many non-Romanians did not regard Romanian rule as permanent even after the conclusion of the peace treaties, but continued to view rule over the territory as contestable. These expectations exacerbated the atmosphere of instability that resulted from frequent changes in government and policies in Bucharest. Perceived differences in mentality and mutual prejudices were another source of friction to the nationalization project. As they came face to face with Romanians from other territories, not only minorities but also ethnic Romanians in Bukovina began to articulate a separate identity centered around their common imperial past. As former imperial citizens, many Bukovinians felt entitled to better treatment and a more privileged position within the nation-state. The German-speaking Jewish elites in Cernăuți, who together with the Ukrainians were the
group most negatively impacted by Romanization policies, went from suffering from an inferiority complex toward Vienna to feeling culturally superior to Bukovina’s new Romanian rulers. From the perspective of much of Bukovina’s population, especially non-Romanians, the province’s incorporation into Greater Romania felt like another form of imperial conquest, but one where the colonizer was culturally and politically inferior to the colonized. By the 1930s, even those Bukovinian Romanians who had participated with enthusiasm in the unification were expressing some doubts. Regionalism, however, was no longer encouraged or even tolerated.

What was national life like in a world in which the principle of national self-determination had emerged victorious? Ironically, the national organization and cultural life of both Romanians and non-Romanians in Bukovina suffered a severe blow after Austria’s collapse. Prestigious Romanian nationalist organizations in Cernăuți went into decline as the focus of national leaders shifted from national preservation to the fulfillment of political ambitions. The non-Romanian nationalities, even those groups who had considered themselves victims of imperial oppression once upon a time, began to look back to the Austrian days with nostalgia and regret. Living as a non-ruling nationality within a nation-state turned out to be much more difficult than living in a multinational empire. The fact that Bukovina’s new rulers had once been a minority themselves did not make them more accommodating but more intransigent. The consequences of Bukovina’s transition from empire to nation-state for the nationalities were, however, not all black and white. On the one hand, the shift from empire to nation-state gave some groups (most notably the Jews) the national recognition they had longed for but never achieved under imperial rule. On the other hand, national recognition could easily blur into discrimination and persecution. The other corollary of the triumph of national self-determination was that national ambivalence and ambiguity were no longer tolerated. Anyone
who identified with one group but spoke the language of another - as many did in Bukovina - came under suspicion. More interestingly, the same process of uniformization launched from Bucharest was also replicated at the level of individual national communities. Some national factions, most importantly the Zionists within the Jewish community, took advantage of the pressure to form unitary and homogeneous national groups in order to impose their own views on a variegated group where these ideas had held little traction before.
Chapter 6

The Soviet Gift to Ukraine

On a bright summer afternoon a “foreign plane” cruised the skies above Cernăuți. It circled around a few times and then, as it descended, the “red star with five points” painted on both its wings became visible to onlookers on the ground. With a deep dive, the plane turned towards Sadagura, until “the sound of its engine” receded into the distance. The sky fell silent again and Cernăuți returned to earthly matters. The plane had come from the Soviet border, only a few kilometers away. An official radio announcement on the evening of June 27 informed locals that the Soviet Union had presented the Romanian government with an ultimatum requiring the “Romanian military to clear” Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia “within four days beginning with 2 in the morning Moscow time on June 28.” Even before the ultimatum had become public, the civilian and military authorities who “already knew the Soviets had territorial pretensions but did not know the deadline and the extent [of them]” had already begun evacuating the city. The announcement threw the entire city into panic. Civil servants and workers congregated in the streets, blocking traffic as they tried to make up their minds whether to leave or stay. Carts loaded to the brim made their way through the frantic crowds and rolled down the hill to the train station, from where the “last passenger train was leaving Cernăuți at 11 at night.” By the morning of June 28, almost all means of transportation had been requisitioned by the army and police. Around 11, two hours before the Romanian troops began their

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2 Pepe Georgescu, 265 de zile la Cernăuți 28 iunie 1940-20 martie 1941 (București: Imprimeriile Fratia Romaneasca, 1942), 6-7.
3 Ibid., 10.
withdrawal according to the provisions of the ultimatum, news came through that the Soviet army had just crossed the Ceremus river.\textsuperscript{4} Within a few hours, the Soviets would occupy Cernăuți too, catching everyone by surprise. The road from the train station to the center of the city had never been busier. Down went refugees’ carts. Up went the Soviet tanks. “The horses began sliding on the cobblestones,” one Jewish refugee recalled, “and there was some risk that the driver might lose control and slide into a tank.”\textsuperscript{5}

It was 1940, almost one year since Stalin and Hitler, “having discovered their commonality of interests,” had signed a non-aggression pact. This marriage of convenience had allowed Germany to expand into Poland virtually unopposed. The advantages for the Soviet side were not negligible either, as the pact staved off a possible German attack that the Soviets would likely not have been able to withstand at the time. The pact not only gained the Soviets time but also allowed them to negotiate with Germany from a position of strength. In exchange for its neutrality, the Soviet Union demanded Bessarabia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and “the better part of Poland” - all territories that had broken from the Russian Empire in World War I.\textsuperscript{6} These demands were spelled out in a secret protocol approved by Hitler on August 20 and signed by Ribbentropp and Molotov in Moscow on August 23, 1939. Barely one month later, on September 17, the Soviet Union invaded and occupied the eastern half of Poland, later to be incorporated into the Belorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR. These territories, however, were only one part of what the Soviets considered to be rightfully theirs. While Nazi Germany attacked the Low Countries and France in June 1940, the Soviet troops moved to recover the other lost pieces of the empire: Estonia, Latvia, and Bessarabia. Issued on June 27, the ultimatum to Romania was

\textsuperscript{4} Nicholas Dima, \textit{Bessarabia and Bukovina: The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute} (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982).
\textsuperscript{5} Leo Baeck Institute (LBI), Felix Andermann, \textit{Czernowitz Memoirs 1900-1940}, 25.
preceded by a note effectively accusing the Romanian government of taking advantage “of Russia’s military weakness” in 1918 to “forcefully take away from the Soviet Union a piece of its territory Bessarabia, which was mainly inhabited by Ukrainians.” Because the Soviet Union had “never made peace with this,” the note read, the Soviet government considered it “obligatory and opportune to start solving as soon as possible the question of Bessarabia’s return to the Soviet Union” by peaceful means. What this peaceful solution of the “conflict between the USSR and Romania” over Bessarabia would entail was spelled out at the end, when the Romanian government was urged to “return Bessarabia to the Soviet Union” and “transfer to the Soviet Union the northern part of Bukovina according to the map.”

The Bessarabian question had been an old bone of contention between the Soviet Union and Romania. It was over Bessarabia that the two states had broken their diplomatic ties in 1924, when Romania refused to honor the Soviet Union’s request to hold a plebiscite in the newly annexed province. And though the two countries exchanged ambassadors once again in 1934, the Soviet Union never reconciled itself to Bessarabia’s loss. Unable to achieve its territorial ambitions through official foreign policy channels, the Soviets resorted to indirect actions such as founding a Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic shortly after they broke relations with Romania, in October 1924. By contrast, Romania’s annexation of Bukovina in the fall of 1918 had almost entirely escaped the Soviet Union’s notice. Unlike the Russian Empire, whose Soviet successor set out to reconquer lost imperial possessions during the Russian Civil War, Austria-Hungary had no descendants with comparable imperial ambitions. Ukrainian

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7 Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1967). No 1 Nota Uryadu SRSR Rumyn’s’komu uryadovi pro provedeniya Bessarabii ta peredachu pivnichnoi Bukovyni radyans’komu Soyuzu 26 June 1940.
8 Ibid.
9 Dima, Bessarabia and Bukovina, 26.
10 Ibid., 22-23. Comprising a strip of land adjacent to Romanian Bessarabia and inhabited mostly by Slavs, the newly created Moldavian republic was meant to create a distinct Moldavian identity and get Moldavians in East Romania to agitate for incorporation into the Soviet Union.
nationalists excepted, no claims to Bukovina after 1918 were as serious as the Soviet Union’s pretension to Bessarabia. In fact, the secret protocol to the non-aggression pact did not mention Bukovina at all. When the Soviet government informed Germany of its intention to annex both Bukovina and Bessarabia, even the German ambassador in Moscow was taken aback. What was this if not proof of the Soviet Union’s unabashed expansionism? Through his intermediary in Moscow, Schulenburg, Ribbentropp tried to persuade Molotov to renounce his claims to Bukovina. The province “had a large German population” and seemed too much a part of Central Europe for the Germans to consent to its incorporation into the Soviet Union. As a result, by June 25, the Soviet Union had limited its territorial claims to the northern half of the province, up to the river Pruth and including the city Cernăuți.

Why did the Soviet Union hold on to this piece of land, so small and so distant from Moscow? What good were northern Bukovina’s 8,200 square meters to an empire as vast as the Soviet Union?\(^{11}\) Molotov’s answer to the German ambassador in Moscow was that “Bukovina constitutes the last part that is still missing from a unified Ukraine.”\(^{12}\) Northern Bukovina, where Ukrainian speakers outnumbered Romanians, was what kept Soviet Ukraine from becoming the Greater Ukraine coveted by Ukrainian nationalists. If the Soviet Union could unify Ukraine under Soviet auspices, communism could thumb its nose at nationalism and discredit it once and for all. In his first Soviet note to the Romanian government on June 26, Molotov thus emphasized that Bukovina was “tied to Soviet Ukraine both through the unity of historic fate, and through common language and national composition.”\(^{13}\) The same argument was hammered

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\(^{11}\) DACHO, fond R-3, op.1, d.35, l1.
\(^{13}\) Radyans'ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1967). No 1 Nota Uryadu SRSR Rumyns'komu uryadovi pro provedeniya Bessarabii ta peredachu pivnichnoi Bukovyni radyans'komu Soyuzu, 26 June 1940.
home in the Izvestiya’s special issue celebrating “the new victory of the USSR’s politics of peace,” which noted that “as a matter of fact, the northern part of Bukovina in its historical and national composition is a typically Ukrainian oblast.” Northern Bukovina was thus desirable as a way of harnessing Ukrainian nationalism and making it work to Soviet ends. But the Soviets also regarded it as a reward to which they felt entitled in compensation for the “heavy losses” inflicted during “twenty-two years of Romanian rule in Bessarabia,” both on Bessarabia’s population and the Soviet Union as a whole. On June 29, the Izvestiya triumphantly announced that “before the peoples of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina a great socialist path has opened up now.”

For Romania, the Soviet Union’s dealings with Germany were a painful reminder that its fate was still determined by the great powers. Molotov’s ultimatum, delivered on June 27 and followed by military occupation the next day, shattered whatever illusions of independence Romania still had following its stroke of fortune in World War I. It also became clear that, without the backing of either Germany or Russia, Romania’s conventions and alliances with its neighbors were worthless. The Briand-Kellogg pact, the 1933 London Convention guaranteeing the inviolability of its territory, the Balkan Entente all amounted to nothing if Germany could not be counted on to support Romania against Soviet aggression. And much as the Germans disliked the prospect of the Soviets expanding further into Central Europe, they could not say no to their territorial claims. So, when Molotov announced that the Soviet government had “decided to employ force if Romania did not wish to solve the [Bessarabian] question peacefully,” Nazi Germany grudgingly gave the Soviets the green light to occupy Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

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Bukovina.\textsuperscript{17} From the German ambassador in Bucharest, Wilhelm Fabricius, the Romanian government learned that “in order to avoid a war between Romania and the Soviet Union, we [Germany] cannot do anything else but urge the Romanian government to sign the requests of the Soviet government.”\textsuperscript{18} Left to confront the Soviets on its own, the Romanian government tried to delay the inevitable by inviting the Soviet Union to a “friendly discussion” on the topic of Bessarabia.\textsuperscript{19} But friendly discussions are only possible among friends. Molotov dismissed the invitation as an “imprecise answer” and issued the ultimatum requiring Romanian troops to withdraw behind the border marked on an attached map “with a thick line drawn in red,” which happened to include Romanian territories beyond the Pruth river (the Hertza territory) not mentioned in the ultimatum. On June 27, the Romanian minister of exterior Constantin Argetoianu officially “accepted the ultimatum in order to avoid war.”\textsuperscript{20} Before the Romanians had even had a chance to evacuate, the Soviet troops crossed the border into Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina the following afternoon.

It was now the Soviets’s turn to remake the political and cultural map of Eastern Europe in their image. The story I present in this chapter is part of this larger process, well documented by a vast and rich literature on “sovietization.” Most of this literature focuses on two key moments. Some studies focus on the early Bolshevik expansion into the western borderlands of the former Russian Empire and Central Asia, showing how the Bolsheviks brought modernity to the peoples they encountered by dividing them up into neat national-ethnic categories and setting them on the path to urbanization and industrialization.\textsuperscript{21} Francine Hirsch, Yuri Slezkine, and

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\textsuperscript{17} Denys Kvitkovs’kyi, ed., \textit{Bukovyna — ii mynule i suchasne} (Parizh, Filiadel’fia: Zelena Bukovyna, 1956), 392.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 393.
\textsuperscript{19} Hacman, “Aspecte Diplomatice ale Problemei Basarabiei și Bucovinei în relațiile internaționale (1940),” 618.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 619.
\end{footnotesize}
Terry Martin reveal astonishing institutional and demographic continuities between the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, while also emphasizing that the Bolsheviks were in fact innovators in matters of nationality policy. The second body of literature on “sovietization” focuses on the postwar period and the making of the so-called ‘Eastern bloc.’ These works tend to revolve around two questions. First: to what extent was the “sovietization” of Eastern European societies an endogenous, self-propelled process? At stake here is whether “sovietization” was an occupation or a revolution - whether and how ‘locals’ collaborated or participated in making Eastern Europe a part of the Soviet empire. And second: how much diversity was there within the Soviet bloc and to what extent did national differences and local specificities result in different experiences of “sovietization”? This question gets at the larger issue of whether the Soviet experiment succeeded in transcending the national differences and particularism by forging a universal civilization. One subset of this literature especially relevant to this chapter focuses on the impact of ‘sovietization’ on Ukrainian culture and identity. In a book on Soviet nationality policy and urban growth in the Ukrainian SSR, George Liber argues that the Soviets redefined Ukrainian identity so it was no longer centered on the countryside but on the city. David Marples looks at a later stage of sovietization in Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s, in which he shows how the collectivization process reshaped Ukrainian identity by bringing Western and Eastern Ukraine together within the framework of one state.

This chapter comes into dialogue with two books on the sovietization of the East European borderlands in World War II. The most powerful study on the ‘sovietization’ of Eastern Europe to date is Jan Gross’s Revolution from Abroad. In this book, Gross offers an in-
depth analysis of the Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia in 1939, which was the first time these populations ever experienced the Soviet regime. Gross’s work reminds us that the ‘sovietization’ of Eastern Europe did not begin after World War II, as most studies suggest, but during the war, when the Soviet Union incorporated vast swaths of territory to its west following the Ribbentropp-Molotov pact. Consequently, what the Soviet occupation authorities did then and how they did it reflects both the nature of Soviet power, and how and when the so-called ‘sovietization’ process began in this part of the world. The book’s most important argument is that the essence of Soviet power was “not the destruction of the private sphere and replacement with the public and political, but rather the privatization of the political and instruments of coercion.”

In a nutshell, this meant that ‘locals’ were agents in the destruction of their own agency - that they were made complicit in the sovietization process. This chapter is to a large extent a response to Gross’s book - or rather, a sequel to his story. A more recent book also concerned with the 1939/1940 moment is Tarik Amar’s *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*, which studies Lviv’s encounter with “Soviet Communism, Soviet nation shaping, nationalism, and Nazism” during World War II, showing how Ukrainian Lviv was in fact a Soviet creation. Paradoxically, the Soviets came into Western Ukraine intent on wiping nationalism out of existence, yet they ended up achieving the nationally homogeneous utopia that Ukrainian nationalists had always dream of but never accomplished. Unlike Gross, who calls the Soviet Union a “spoiler state” to reflect “its lack of creative dimensions and its great destructive potential,” Amar argues that sovietization was “an authoritarian socialist mission of modernity making, giving meaning to internal transformation as well as conquest and expansion.”

From Lviv’s experience of sovietization, Amar concludes that the Soviet experiment in Eastern Europe

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was profoundly shaped not only by the desire to deprive others of power, but also by the belief that the Soviets had a civilizing mission to fulfill here. When Gross looks to the borderlands, he sees the totalitarian dimensions of Soviet power. When Amar looks at Soviet Lviv, he sees a kind of Soviet cultural imperialism with unexpected and paradoxical effects.

In this chapter, I show what the incorporation of Northern Bukovina - a small and remote territory with no apparent significance for the Soviet Union - meant to the Soviets in 1940, what they were trying to accomplish here, and what consequences their project had on the local population. The context is slightly different from Gross’s and Amar’s because Bukovina was occupied much later, in the summer of 1940, when the ‘sovietization’ of Western Ukraine and Eastern Poland had already been accomplished and the Soviet authorities had become well versed in the techniques of conquest and occupation. Another one of Bukovina’s specificities was its legacy of Romanian rule. This shaped to a large extent how the local population reacted to the Soviet occupation and whether they participated in it or not. However, here too the Soviets waged a ruthless battle against Ukrainian nationalism while also empowering the Ukrainian population in ways nationalists had not even dreamt of. The Soviets also looked upon Bukovina as a backward place in need of civilizing and a dangerous terrain bordering on the capitalist world. This chapter does not contradict Amar’s and Gross’s findings, but rather underlines similarities between the Bukovinan experience and the other two cases. In Bukovina, the Soviets basically employed the same methods and achieved very similar results. That their strategies required such little adaptation and proved equally effective in Chernivtsi as they did in Lviv and in the Polish countryside is truly remarkable. Is this an indication that the Soviets actually managed to erase particularisms and achieve the supranational community other empires had attempted to forge here? The similarities, I would argue, are due not so much to the Soviet
This chapter focuses on three aspects of the Soviet occupation of Northern Bukovina. First, it shows how the Soviet troops and accompanying administration set out to transform a previously ‘capitalist’ province into an outpost of the socialist world by building new institutions and political elites. Like the Habsburgs and the Romanian nationalists who governed Bukovina in the interwar period, the Soviets also believed they had a civilizing mission to fulfill here. However, to manage difference and rebuild the province into a bastion of Soviet civilization, they resorted to very different strategies. Taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by the war, they managed to transform the province radically in a very short time. When the Romanian administration returned to Bukovina in 1941, they were taken aback by how deep an imprint the Soviets had left on the province. The chapter then goes on to show how deeply committed the Soviets were to involving the local population in the state-building process - even at the risk of absorbing politically unreliable elements. Next, the chapter discusses what kind of culture and civilization the Soviets set out to build in Northern Bukovina and how they went about it. They too pronounced Bukovina hopelessly backward and regressive, and promised to heal its illnesses with a strong dose of modernity - in the form of schools, cultural institutions, and an industrialized and collectivized economy. In theory, for the Soviets - just as for the Habsburgs - nationalism was something to overcome rather than celebrate. But the key to their ‘civilizing’ project in Bukovina was in fact putting the Ukrainians in positions of power and ‘restoring’ Bukovina’s Ukrainian character by cultivating the Ukrainian language and a variety of Ukrainian national culture compatible with the Soviet idea. Finally the chapter shows how the Soviet project was both facilitated and threatened by population shifts during the war, and how
destabilizing mass migration from the borderland Chernovitskaya oblast’ became for the regime. Like their Habsburg predecessors once upon a time, the Soviet administration could not settle down to work because the people and places they had gotten their hands on in Northern Bukovina were constantly changing, perpetually on the move.

**Encounters**

When the Soviet troops entered Cernăuți on the afternoon of June 28, it had been raining for days and “the roads were soaked and the water in the Prut had grown black.” The tanks slogged through mud. From the first villages they entered as soon as they crossed the border to Cernăuți, Khotyn, Kishinev, and Akkerman, everywhere they went the Red Army were “met happily, with flowers.” Not even the rain could keep the crowds from welcoming “the Red Army in an organized fashion.” In reality, of course, not all these professions of love were spontaneous. In Northern Bukovina, just as in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, Soviet troops were likely sent ahead to “organize friendly receptions for the incoming Soviet army” and lay the ground for success. Sometimes, local authorities hoping to gain favor with the Soviets also mobilized the population. In some instances, locals were coerced into feigning enthusiasm, such as when a Soviet military correspondent in Cernăuți stopped two frightened women and gave “one of them a bouquet of flowers, and the second one a red flag” so they could be photographed welcoming the Soviets. In the miraculous hands of Soviet propagandists, fear turned into feelings fit to print. But in many cases, the enthusiasm was genuine. The Soviets

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25 “Solntse nad Bukovynoi,” Radyans'ka Bukovyna, 3 July 1940.
26 “Sovetskie voiska vstupili v Kishinev, Chernovtsy, Akkerman,” Izvestiya, 29 June 1940.
27 “Po doroge na Chernovitsy,” Izvestiya, 30 June 1940.
28 Jan Gross, Revolution from Abroad, 30.
29 Liliana Corobca, Dumitru Covaciuc, eds., Golgota românească: mărturiile bucovinenilor deportați în Siberia (București: Editura Vestala, 2009), 32.
were popular with those segments of the population that had little to lose from switching loyalties. In the words of one Romanian witness, Cernăuți’s occupation began with the “Jews impatiently waiting to see their dream come true” and culminated with the “diabolical happiness on the faces of Jews and Jewesses (…) and [their] fixed looks in the direction from which the tanks were coming.”30 Carl Hirsch, a Jewish engineer from Cernăuți, also recalls that “in our attitude and that of most Jews from Czernowitz there were two elements in the positive approach to the coming Soviet rule in Bucovina, one was sympathy to the Soviet experiment (…) and the other the fact that this way we were saved from the coming German rule.”31 To the minorities disenchanted with the Romanian administration, the Soviets seemed like the better alternative because, unlike the Germans and Romanians, they proclaimed national equality and emancipation.

Whether staged or genuine, the friendly encounter with the local population was a crucial element in the Soviet repertoire of power. The new system could not be set up until its legitimacy had been confirmed - until it had been proved, in Jan Gross’s words, that “the political justification of the invasion was correct.”32 When the Soviet troops crossed the border into Bukovina, peasants were said to have welcomed them with revolutionary red banners they had prepared while “waiting for the liberation for many years.” The welcoming crowds were supposed to convey that the Soviet Union was a new kind of power, one driven not by force but by the “moral-political unity” of its population. With the advent of this new system, power would return into the hands of locals. Under the Soviet regime, Bukovinans who had been alienated by every other system would once again be masters over their own land. Unlike their

30 Georgescu, 265 de zile la Cernăuți 28 iunie 1940-20 martie 1941, 10-11.
32 Jan Gross, Revolution from Abroad, 30.
predecessors, the Soviets would not take from the local population but would instead bestow on them land, citizenship, freedom. Moreover, the Soviets would not have to resort to violence to unleash these radical transformations, for unlike all previous regimes they operated through the agency of locals. Less than a week after the invasion, the first Soviet newspaper in Chernivtsi, *Radyans’ka Bukovyna*, reported that Bukovinans were willingly handing over “revolvers, firearms, pistols” left over from the Romanian army because they “understood that a life of peace had begun.” They were also said to be approaching Red Army soldiers with interest, curious to hear from them what life was like in the Soviet Union. One peasant woman from Zastavna who collaborated with the regime later recalled that “we wanted to give the Red Army food, we brought them milk, but they told us ‘we don’t need anything, we have plenty of everything and can even feed you with it.’” Under the doubtful eyes of Bukovinans who had seen it many times before, the newly-appointed Soviet authorities threw themselves into the work of building a new life here.

But what they were doing was in fact quite new. Unlike the regimes that preceded them, they followed a well-rehearsed script. Having swept into the province, the Soviets set up ‘the system’ with the confidence of experienced surgeons who knew exactly what instruments to use. Together with the Soviet troops came the party organization and the “soviet” or state “organs of power” - pre-fabricated and ready to be assembled on the spot. It took only a few days for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (TsK KP/b/U) to assemble a party organization for the newly conquered territory out of a group of twenty-two communists from

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34 “Krasnyi flag nad Chernovitsami,” *Radyans’ ka Bukovyna*, 2 July 1940. “The streets are full of people. Crowds of workers are gathering around every group of Red Army soldiers. They listen to stories about life in the Soviet country with great interest.”
35 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d.15, l 21.
the eastern oblasti of Ukraine.\textsuperscript{36} By July 9, little more than a week after the conquest, the Chernivtisi party aktiv was already hard at work “forming cadres of Soviet power.” Village soviets of peasants and workers’ deputies (sil’rady) had already been organized in over 205 villages in Northern Bukovina, while the city soviets (mis’rady) of Chernivtsi and Storozhynets were already functioning smoothly.\textsuperscript{37} The Soviets expanded this network of party and state institutions at great speed. In their first five months in power, they reorganized Northern Bukovina into an oblast and provided it with the standard institutional structure: oblast’, raion, city, locality (selyshchina), and village-level soviets and a similarly stratified party organization.\textsuperscript{38} The institutional network could expand so rapidly because the high-level party cadres who came to Northern Bukovina in 1940 had already tried their hands at building socialism in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. One such figure was Ivan Samilovych Hrushetsky, a Communist from the Zaporizhska oblast’ in Soviet Ukraine who had first made a career in the Dnipropetrovskaya oblast’ and then accompanied the Red Army into Western Ukraine where he became a “deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR” in the Stanislavskij oblast’.\textsuperscript{39}

The Soviet leadership used the same system in Northern Bukovina as in Western Ukraine to quickly build and consolidate a first layer of institutions. The key factor here - as elsewhere - were popular elections. Scheduled to take place on January 12, 1941, the elections were meant to

\textsuperscript{36} Volodymyr Mykhailovych Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne (Uzhhorod: Karpaty, 1969), 132-133.
\textsuperscript{37} Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1967), 9 July 1940.
\textsuperscript{38} Bukovyna — ii mynule i suchasne. The legal situation of Bukovina was settled at the 7th session of the Supreme Soviet USSR on 2 August 1940 when the Khotynskij povit and Gertsaevskij raion were attached to Bukovina, as well as a piece of Dorohoiskij raion. In this way the Soviets created the Chernivetskaya oblast. Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne, 135. On 11 November 1940 according to an order by the Presidium of Supreme Soviet URSR the povity of Chernivetska oblast were liquidated and raiony were formed instead. From November 1940 to June 1941, the “primary party organizations” in the oblast multiplied from 216 to 319, and the number of “candidates and members of the party” grew from 2400 to 3500.
\textsuperscript{39} DACHO, fond P1, op.1, d. 15, 132.
produce a body of local delegates to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR. But since the results were pre-determined, the elections mattered more as an exercise in state-building that allowed the regime to mobilize, expand, and test its organs of power, and at the same time to gauge the mood of the local population. The pre-election campaign began on November 12, two months before the scheduled event, with a “multipronged propagandistic offensive” that targeted the entire population and reached into Northern Bukovina’s most distant corners. The campaign was waged by a coterie of organizations and individuals mobilized specifically for this purpose: agitators’s collectives (agitkolektivy), commissars (dovireni osobi), executive electoral commissions, circles for studying the Stalin constitution. These institutions were also responsible for dividing the territory into electoral districts and precincts, setting up voting centers (dil’nytsi) and voting cabins, assigning agitators to groups of voters and training them in seminars, as well as recruiting local workers, peasants, and the working intelligentsia into the organizational work. Of the 143 individuals who belonged to electoral commissions in November 1940, the vast majority (123) were ethnic Ukrainians, while Romanians, Russians, and Jews were poorly represented. Periodic updates on the status of the pre-election campaign allowed the party leadership to test the efficiency of its organizations. This was what building “freely and with great enthusiasm a happy life without landowners and boyars” looked like: a frantic process that took place not only at the top but everywhere: “in the factories, enterprises, villages, and farmsteads of the oblast.”

The job of laying the system’s foundations had to be done by politically experienced people like Hrushetsky and his team of Communists who had been dispatched to Bukovina by

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40 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 28, 130. 13 electoral circles were created and the electoral commissions working in them included 143 people: 123 Ukrainians, 8 Russians, 7 Jews, 2 Romanians and 3 Moldavians.
41 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 8, Postanova Biuro Chernovetskoho Obkomu KP/b/U, 3 December 1940.
42 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, 13.
the CC of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Around 5000 people, “out of them 3145 members and candidates of the party,” arrived in Bukovina from the eastern oblasti of the Ukrainian SSR.\(^\text{43}\) But once the core institutions were put in place, the Soviets proceeded to recruit cadres from the local population. By February 1941, no fewer than 13,853 Bukovinans were working for the Soviet regime.\(^\text{44}\) “The question of creating the aktiv here in the conditions of Chernivetskaya oblast’ is more difficult than in the eastern oblasti because we don’t know the people,” one party official observed at a meeting of the obkom in August 1940.\(^\text{45}\) Bringing locals into the apparatus when the leadership knew so little about them was inviting trouble. Communist officials who did not bother to check the history of their employees accidentally allowed politically unreliable elements into important institutions. All over the Chernivetskaya oblast’, members of the Cuzist, Peasantist, and Liberal parties, and Zionists staffed electoral commissions and worked as agitators.\(^\text{46}\) In one village, a “former landowner,” a merchant “who served the Zionist party,” and even “a certain Grinberg who was a big millionaire” were all recruited to work for the regime.\(^\text{47}\) Sometimes “sons of kurkuly” and Cuzists were admitted into the Komsomol to fill out the organization.\(^\text{48}\) As a result, it is no surprise that “counterrevolutionary incidents” happened at the very heart of power, where the heads of soviet organizations “violated work discipline and engaged in absenteeism.”\(^\text{49}\)

Still, the Soviet leadership insisted on “get[ting] to know the local population and

\(^{43}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, Zvitna Dopovid’ on the work of Chernovitskyi obkom KP/b/U in first Oblast conference KP/b/U, 9 February 1941.

\(^{44}\) DACHO, fond P1, op.1, d. 44, Zvitna Dopovid’ on the work of Chernovitskyi obkom KP/b/U in first Oblast conference KP/b/U, 9 February 1941.

\(^{45}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 55, August 1940.

\(^{46}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, Spetssoobshchenie o khode podgotovki k vyboram v Verkhovnye Sovety SSR i USSR po Chernovitksoi obl., 8 January 1941.

\(^{47}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9.


\(^{49}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58.
push[ing] them forward” because the regime drew legitimacy from putting “the people” in power. A state and party bureaucracy composed entirely of foreigners would have suggested that the Soviets were no different from Bukovina’s other ‘conquerors.’ And there were already quite a few complaints to this effect during the January elections to the Supreme Soviet, when locals protested that the Soviet authorities denied them the right to pick their own candidates. One resident from Storozhynets, for instance, was overheard saying: “Whoever knows who Hrushetsky is, and why don’t they put forward [someone] from among our local people?”

But it takes two to tango, and the initiative to recruit local cadres came not only from the Soviet leadership but also from locals who eagerly placed themselves at the Soviets’ service. A large number of local cadres were recruited from among the former national minorities. With the Soviets in power, Jews and Ukrainians in Bukovina were able for the first time in many years to climb into leadership positions previously closed to them. The regime created new positions for them by nationalizing factories and businesses and “removing” their owners. To those who benefited from the vacancies at the time, these methods did not seem quite so brutal as they do in retrospect. “Sure, there were a lot of victims like the owners of the expropriated factories and shops and also apartment houses,” writes Carl Hirsch, “but this didn’t touch us directly, we saw it as social justice that these shops and industrial plants now belonged to the people, as we were told.”

Writing from the perspective of an educated, middle-class Jew, Hirsch also recalls that local Ukrainians often “aligned themselves with the new administration and got some good leadership positions.” Indeed, up to 69.6% of the local cadres “drawn into the Soviet apparatus” by February 1941 were Ukrainians, for the Soviet leadership remained committed to recruiting

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50 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 5.
cadres from the national majority.52 This fact is unacknowledged by nationally-minded Ukrainian historians, who assure us that “among Ukrainians only a minimal number participated in the new administration because the majority of the position were occupied by Jews.”53

The Romanian viewpoint is very similar, with the crucial difference that many Romanians evacuated Bukovina with the Romanian army and those who stayed behind were distrusted by the Soviets. Nevertheless, the consensus among Romanians has been that the Soviet occupation was brought on by local Jews. “All good functions were held only by Jews,” Pepe Georgescu wrote about the Soviet occupation, “all difficult work is carried out only by Christian workers.” Another local Romanian recalled, however, that some ethnic Romanians sided with the Soviets. One such collaborator, a man by the name of Lazar Lehun, “used to wear the three colors [of the Romanian flag] and a turkey feather on his hat. But selling himself to a people that invaded Bukovina, he forgot all about Romanian brotherhood and turned from man to beast. Without a fatherland, without God and without a home, he only knew how to dance to the music of his Bolshevik masters.”54 Bukovina’s Ukrainians, Romanians, and Jews were all victims of the Soviet occupation – perhaps even those who derived temporary benefits from the regime at the heavy price of losing their freedom. But it would be dishonest to claim, as many partial observers do, that only one group ‘collaborated’ while the others stood by or suffered the consequences.

Getting locals to cooperate with the Soviet administration was not as tricky as making sure that they were in it for the right reasons. Quite a few people were willing to join the Communist cause - both committed local Communists and less politically engaged individuals

52 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 40. Zvitna Dopovid’ on the work of Chernovitskyi obkom KP/b/U in first Oblast conference KP/b/U.
53 Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna: ii mynule i suchasne, 398.
54 Golgota româneasca, 35.
who nonetheless identified their personal goals with those of the regime. This was a mixed blessing, however, because the more locals the regime attracted, the more difficult it became to control them. An official report from February 1941 noted that “the army of agitators grew very fast especially in the period of preparations and during the elections,” reaching a total of 14,266 agitators “most of whom are from among the local population.”

The rapid growth in the number of local activists who “carried out mass agitation” during the electoral campaign made Soviet propagandists giddy with excitement, for it seemed to indicate that “the people of Bukovina liberated by the Soviet Army are now very involved in political life.” This was not exactly how things stood in reality. Behind the record-breaking numbers and ebullient reports, few local cadres were actually doing their job, and the little work they did was of such low quality that it could be easily dispensed with. Many locals who joined the party-state apparatus did so either because they were pressured to do so or because they hoped to gain something from it. Many agitators did not even know what the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR were.

One old Communist party member confessed to having “only looked through the first chapter” of the short course history of the CPSU “two years ago.” When asked what he knew about the Petersburg Union for the Liberation of the Working class, the poor fellow answered: “there were many different unions, how can one tell them apart?”

The local cadres were not only ideologically weak but indolent as well. Instead of ‘working on themselves’ to better serve the party-state, they were making the regime work for them. Empowered by their new positions to do whatever they pleased, many local cadres stopped going to lectures and studying the history of the Communist Party. When faced with problems,
they preferred to accept less-than-ideal conditions rather than lift a finger to change things. Agitators in the Vashkivskij raion, for instance, were content to share their work space with pigs - an “absolutely exasperating” situation that threatened to compromise “the cultural work of the Soviets.” The only thing local cadres excelled at, it seemed, was evading their responsibilities. When taken to task for not showing up at his electoral precinct, the president of an electoral commission in the Gertsaevskij raion serenely explained that he was also “president of the village soviet and is busy with other work.”

The Soviet authorities took pains to discern between the ideologically inept and the politically corrupt. For even though it was imperative to hunt down the “enemies” among the local population, this could not be done at the expense of consolidating the party-state organization. To strike a balance between these imperatives, the authorities adopted a two-pronged solution. On the one hand, they set out to purge the Soviet apparatus of obvious “enemy” elements such as kurkuly (kulaks) and former members of bourgeois parties. The leadership felt this was a high priority and instructed Communists on the ground not “to forget even for one minute that our oblast’ is a frontier one.” But locating and removing “enemies” was no easy task, for the Soviet authorities were still poorly acquainted with the population and could not distinguish between seriously dangerous and politically tainted but salvageable individuals. While removing anti-Soviet elements, it was important not to sacrifice those segments of the local population that could potentially be converted into supporters of the regime. To avoid that, the Soviets were willing to make some compromises. “We cannot build a Chinese wall between the Komsomol youth and the rest,” one party official concluded at an

59 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 48, Stenohama zasidannya bureau Chernivets'koho Obkomu KP/b/U, 26 September 1940.
60 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 2, Spetssoobshchenie o khode podgotovki k vyboram v Verkhovnye Sovety SSR i USSR po Chernovitskoi obl. na 8/1-1941.
61 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 34.
obkom meeting from March 1941. Whether or not komsomoltsy were religious, he argued, was “not the most important unit of measurement, what counts are social origins.” One raion Komsomol had in fact admitted new members “who were wearing crosses on their chests and they did very well because in the future they will stop praying.”62 Purging the Soviet apparatus of all questionable elements was highly unrealistic in places where most residents fit the description of “enemy,” however. One party official conceded that “there are villages where 75-80% of the population once belonged to various bourgeois parties.”63 Higher-ups in Chernivtsi also worried that a drastic approach to purifying the apparatus would alienate the local population at a time when its support was crucial. Examples abounded of Communists who, instead of gaining the locals’ trust, terrorized them into submission. One overly-zealous agitator, for instance, refused to give his political lectures in a house where “icons are hanging” and ordered the owner to “take away the icons” first.64 Communist agitators in another raion turned a peasant out of his house without offering any explanation, after which the peasant “went around the village saying that he had been chased out of the house so they could give lectures about the elections.”65

Tempting as it was to blame counterrevolutionary elements, the regime’s failures were largely due to flaws inherent in the party-state apparatus. These became evident during the preparations for elections to the Supreme Soviet, which were, in the words of one local official, “as much of a test” for the Soviet apparatus as they were for the local population.66 Inspections carried out during the electoral campaign revealed that many institutions which existed on paper were in fact nonexistent. Party and soviet organizations in the countryside worked in a haphazard

62 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 186.
63 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7.
64 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 172.
65 Ibid.
66 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 121.
fashion, following no plans and keeping no records of their activity. One village soviet official who was reprimanded for failing to put together a plan and fill out the required forms innocently declared that “he has no idea what a plan is.”  

The poor record keeping was a symptom of a much graver illness. Sloppy employees staffing village and city soviets, Communist party committees, and even state institutions such as the procuratorship and the courts made mistakes that were even more dangerous than the so-called counterrevolutionary plots the Soviets feared. Armed to the teeth against “enemy” elements, the Soviet authorities were undermined by their own people. When left to their own devices, Communist agitators in the countryside organized lectures irregularly or not at all.  

One month before the elections, Chernivtsi officials reported that “the lists of voters are still not ready (…) and are not under the control of the party organization,” while a good number of streets and households were not included in any electoral precincts. In some raiony hundreds of voters were omitted from the lists, while in other places some voters were recorded twice. Mistakes were all the more problematic when they happened in the highly volatile Romanian-speaking districts. Only four days before the elections, the head of the oblast’ NKVD reported that in many Romanian villages voting centers were still unprepared: “there are no slogans, no literature on learning the Stalin Constitution, the voters’ lists were not verified.” Voting centers in 22 electoral precincts around the oblast’ were not even provided with electric light but were “dirty and cold.”  

Blunders committed during the elections made a lasting impression on the population. In one memorable instance, the electoral

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67 Ibid., l 120.  
68 DACHO, fond R-3, op. 1, d. 11, l 4, 27 September 1940.  
69 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 87, Stenograma zasedannya biuro Chernovitskovo obkoma KP/b/U, 3 December 1940.  
70 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, Spetsoobshchenie o khode podgotovki k vyboram v Verkhovnye Sovety SSR i USSR po Chernovitskoi obl. na 8/1-1941. In the same raion around 212 people were omitted from the electoral lists; and in another village 39 voters were put down twice on the list.  
71 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d.70, l 3.  
72 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 6, l 112.
commission in Rosha - a suburb of Chernivtsi - failed to record a number of people who had already voted; when agitators went into their homes to take them to task for not showing up to vote, the people complained: “you want me to vote a second time, but I already voted once.”

Whenever problems were detected at any level of the party and state hierarchy, officials blamed either those above or below them. Everyone agreed, for instance, that the “house of propaganda” in Chernivtsi left much to be desired. Already a few months into the occupation, this important “center of political-educational work in the entire oblast” was still inadequately equipped and poorly functioning. It did not organize any circles “for lack of literature” and the only exhibition it put up on “what Soviet power gave Northern Bukovina” was wretched. Its library contained only one copy of the complete works of Lenin and not even one copy of the Soviet encyclopedia which “could have been bought even in Kiev at the bazaar.” But when the time came to fix the problem, officials pointed fingers at each other. The head of the Dim propahandy refused to shoulder responsibility for these failures and blamed the city and raion party committees (gorkom and raikom partii). Away from Chernivtsi, in the deep countryside, party and soviet officials did not have to worry about coming face to face with the authorities and so sat back and waited. Raikom secretaries were in fact so seldom at their offices that they could almost never be reached by phone. From the comfort of their positions, officials at the top dispatched instructions to those below but seldom offered them real support. “The party obkom has every right to expect things from us,” one raikom head complained, “but it must also help us practically.” When the Sadogurskij raikom petitioned the obkom in Chernivtsi to assist them in building a cinema in the raion, they were sent “theoretical instructions” on how to set up

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73 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l. 3, 16 January 1941.
74 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l. 47. In the Khotynskij raion, one official reported that “on the day in which the primary party organization was form not even one party meeting was held” and the party organization could happily go on without fulfilling any orders from above because “nobody is checking whether they are fulfilled.
a cinema instead of money. The obkom’s response was not only inadequate but by the time it arrived, the raion cinema had already been working for three months. The raikom secretary in question could not help but conclude that “up there they don’t know very well what the situation is like in the raiony.”

At every level of the party-state hierarchy, officials who were supposed to embody the Communist ideal violated every tenet of ‘Communist ethics’ in practice. Instances of criminal behavior on the part of Communist party and soviet staff were constantly brought before the obkom, and the party obkom secretary’s job became, in part, to police the apparatus. In October 1940, it came to the obkom’s attention that one candidate for membership in the Communist Party, a certain Evdokimov who was a well-regarded activist, had raped his neighbors’ three-year-old daughter. The authorities decided to ban Evdokimov from the party organization and put him on trial but, even with this one criminal safely behind bars, the incident threw a “shadow on the mass-political work that is being carried out among Komsomol members and Communists.”

Evdokimov’s offense was not the only incident that made one wonder about the virtues of the Soviet apparatus. There were plenty more like it, and they gave the unfortunate impression that ideological commitments had no significance at all - individuals could hold functions in the Communist apparatus and yet behave in ways that were completely at odds with party regulations. Party and Komsomol members were often caught drinking and engaging in “hooliganism.” Their positions allowed them to break the laws and cover up punishable behaviors. The gravest violations took place not outside the apparatus but within it. Feeling exempt from the obligations that simple mortals with ordinary jobs had to fulfill, raikom

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75 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 64. Zvitna Dopovid' on the work of Chernovitskyi obkom KP/b/U in first Oblast conference KP/b/U, 9 February 1941.
76 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 35, Sokrashchennaya stenohrama zasedannya biuro Chernovitskoho Obkoma KP(b)U, 14 October 1940.
secretaries wrote themselves down “in the party ticket as having paid [party] membership dues” when in fact they hadn’t.\textsuperscript{77}

Dishonest and corrupt officials were more often than not in collusion with the rest of the population. On June 26, 1940 the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a new order “concerning the transition to the eight-hour-long work day and seven-day-long work week.”\textsuperscript{78} The point of this law, which effectively increased the total amount of time workers were legally obligated to put in, was to raise productivity by “strengthening work discipline.” By August, however, it had already become evident that the order was being “fulfilled very badly,” for nobody - not even the procuratorships and other administrative bodies responsible for punishing violations - was taking it seriously. The higher-ups, seeing no point in over-exerting themselves, followed a more pleasant schedule, showing up late for work or sometimes not showing up at all. Soviet officials may have been lazy but they were anything but ungenerous. The head of the Chernivtsi city housing department (mis’kij zhytlovyi viddil), for instance, was found to “shamelessly cover up” the absences of the department’s employees, while some procurators regularly pardoned people who were found guilty of absenteeism.\textsuperscript{79} A similar form of solidarity emerged between party and state workers and officials who were plundering society. Communist apparatchiks had a soft spot for pocketing nationalized property - and it was hard not to succumb to temptation when it was so easy to lay one’s hands on state property. Soviet officials did not even try to hide acts of theft.\textsuperscript{80} The greatest thefts occurred while accounting for property left behind by the Romanian regime. Suddenly the Soviets found themselves with an enormous amount of abandoned property

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., l 87.
\textsuperscript{78} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 38.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 45, 11 December 1940. In one raion, it was common knowledge that the head of one sil’rada was stealing from the institution because he would periodically close the shop and hand goods over to a merchant who would sell them and with whom he would later share the profits.
on their hands. Their task was to measure and register all of it, and then transfer it into “the care of the state.” It was like trusting the wolf to do a good job counting the sheep. Having little incentive to be honest, Communist officials on the ground put off “accounting for” the property left behind by evacuated Romanians. These delays allowed Communists “whose heads started spinning on seeing all the blesku to do wheelings and dealings with that property.”81 The apparatus seemed to be turning into a mafia-like organization that converted political capital into money and resources through cunning and intimidation; Naturally, this caused resentment among those who weren’t in the position to enrich themselves.

Beneath its veneer of ideology, the society the Soviets had set out to build in Northern Bukovina continued to exhibit the flaws that were supposed to disappear together with the capitalist system. It turned out, for example, that workers, peasants, and the working intelligentsia - the backbone of the Soviet regime - lacked political consciousness and even harbored “counter-revolutionary” sentiments such as anti-Semitism. One post office employee, a Communist who got hold of one of the apartments abandoned by the Romanians, assaulted the concierge and called him a “bloody Jew.” When the man went to complain to a procurator, “he was told to sort out the situation by himself.”82 Moreover, workers continued to resort to all kinds of subterfuges for private gain. The authorities discovered that mekhtorg workers who instructed officials “responsible for state procurements to buy goods without writing down when and what” they bought had appropriated over 9,000 rubles in this way.83 People who owed their status to political favoritism could be found everywhere. The director of the sausage factory in Chernivtsi, a renown “drunkard, egoist, and stupid person,” had not been replaced with a

81 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 41.
82 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 84.
83 Ibid.
competent person only because he was a Communist “although he doesn’t do his job properly.”

Bureaucrats and civil servants never quite understood the concept of power to the people, and so they went on treating citizens with contempt. In December 1940, a member of the obkom who went to inspect several police divisions in Chernivtsia discovered policemen sitting at dirty tables, surrounded by “frightful filth,” screaming at people as though they were “cattle,” as though “this were not the police but some tavern.”

These weaknesses within the apparatus were due to the fact that all Soviet institutions were simply imported into Northern Bukovina, ready-made and imposed upon society rather than developed organically. The Soviet authorities knew exactly what institutions to build, and so did not have to engage in lengthy deliberations, but this haste ultimately proved their undoing: the apparatus expanded very fast but lacked stability. It did not have a firm grip on society so could be undone very easily. The Soviet authorities at the top discovered this very soon after the elections. The purpose of the elections was to provide the regime with a pretext for mobilizing the entire population in a concentrated effort to ‘install’ the Soviet system and have it running at maximum capacity within just a few months. The elections also served as a stress test for the regime - an opportunity to see whether its institutions were functioning properly and what could be done to improve them. The period leading up to the elections was, in the words of one party official, a “period of great schooling, of great and productive mass-political work.”

The elections were representative of the regime’s modus operandi and exposed both its virtues and flaws. The regime’s success rested upon such extraordinary moments as the elections: the apparatus worked and grew in short but intense bursts followed by longer periods of inactivity and often decline. Both the party organization and the Komsomol in the oblast’ expanded rapidly

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84 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 112.
85 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 183.
86 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 46.
prior to the elections: by December 1940, the Komsomol organization consisted of 1,920 members and the party organization of 2,574 Communists, 1,945 of whom were full members of the party.\footnote{DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 32.} The network of political agitators expanded just as rapidly during the electoral campaign, and some of these new recruits remained with the state after the elections were over. Something remained also of the institutional framework they created.

The pre-electoral mobilization had visible consequences, especially in the countryside, where no previous regime had penetrated so deeply. Far from Chernivtsi in the remotest raiony one could still find theater clubs and circles for studying the history of the Communist party. But once the elections were over, the foundations of the regime began to decay. The number of political agitators working in the Novoselitskij raion, for instance, declined from 2,218 during the elections to 1,460 shortly afterwards. “One of the problems in our work,” the raikom’s first secretary said, “is that some of the Communists cut down on their work in the field” and “we are working little with agitators from among the local population.”\footnote{DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 123.} This rapid decline in the level of party-state activity suggested that the Soviet regime did not yet have a firm foundation in Northern Bukovina. As soon as the agitators went home and the party relaxed its grip, things went awry. “We tolerated the weakening of mass agitational work after the elections,” one official Vykhrov reported, “and as a result in a number of villages we had moments in which some people declared they wanted to exit the kolkospy.”\footnote{Ibid., l 124.} What is most striking is that, even though the Soviet regime came to Northern Bukovina ready-made, the Soviets were committed to giving it the feel of a system that had developed gradually and organically. This was why the Soviet leadership insisted involving locals in its operations, despite the drawbacks of this strategy.
This reliance on local support - paradoxical, given that this was an occupation in which the locals did not actually have a say – also manifested itself in Soviet attempts to reshape the relationship between the local population and the state. In Bukovina, promises of enlightenment and civilization flew like leaves in the wind, landing on the hard reality of rural poverty and backwardness. The Soviets claimed they could change this: “our power is in our relationship with the masses,” obkom secretary Hrushetsky said, “and this is what we must cultivate.”90 The idea that a new kind of relationship could exist between the masses and the state was both a promise and a lesson the Soviets set out to teach the local population as part of their work of transforming the province. Getting the peasants to see the state not as an exploitative and remote institution but as a representative body took some effort. Accustomed to seeing regimes come and go, they could not be easily persuaded that the new regime was there to stay. Peasants remained aloof even after they were given land, for they “fear[ed] that it will be taken away” – as did in fact happen.91 As a result, the authorities intensified their propaganda assault, recruiting agitators from among the peasantry and teaching villagers about the new regime by defining it as the opposite of Romanian rule. One bidnyak agitator from the Storozhzynetskij raion recounted how under the Romanians no minister would take a peasant’s complaints seriously but “would all come to our villages and make promises.” Everything would be different under the Soviets, for “comrade Hrushetsky will help us so that the poor peasants and those who have no land will be able to live differently.”92

The time when voters could be persuaded with bread and sausage was over. Voting against the Bolshevik candidates was, of course, not an option, and those who did it met their punishment. But this was the supreme paradox at the regime’s heart: it vested the masses with

90 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 50.
91 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 31.
92 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 31.
greater agency than they had ever enjoyed before and at the same time stripped them of the most fundamental freedoms. Local authorities were in turn encouraged to get to know the “masses” and learn about the “political-moral structure of the village.”93 When they failed to do so they were severely reprimanded, for nothing could be more dangerous than to be out of touch with the regime’s main source of legitimacy. The state could not become indifferent to the population. This meant the distance between Chernivtsi, where power was centered, and the surrounding countryside would have to be bridged. But officials on the ground rarely practiced what the leadership preached. And so it turned out that “in Chernivtsi, the peasant still feels the same way he did before.” Wandering from one office to another among clean-shaven gentlemen in suits, the poorly dressed and half-literate peasant come to the city to petition the authorities still cut a strange and awkward figure.94

Here, as with the institutional set-up, the preparations for the elections of January 1941 were crucial. They were an opportunity for the regime and the population to get to know each other and create a new kind of relationship. Concretely, this encounter occurred in two ways: through the practice of compiling voters’ lists and through intense exposure to propaganda and agitation. Because the process of drawing up and verifying voters’ lists was one of great “political significance,” the Soviet leadership hesitated to leave it entirely up to the locals and felt the need to put someone trustworthy “in charge of supervising them.”95 Even so, the process did not run smoothly but suffered from the usual organizational problems caused by sloppy officials. Delays in “the writing of the lists of voters” were one serious problem,96 but an even graver issue was that voters’ lists were incomplete and full of mistakes, which meant the Soviets

93 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 19, December 1940.
94 Ibid., l 43.
95 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 74.
96 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 6.
were getting only partial and often misleading information about the locals.\textsuperscript{97} The other lever used to bring the masses face to face with the state was the pre-electoral propaganda, the purpose of which was not merely to play up the regime’s virtues but also to educate the population to make politically correct choices. There was, for instance, no doubt that Ivan Samoilovych Hrushetsky would be elected deputy to the Supreme Soviet, for this had already been decided when the leadership in Kyiv sent him to Northern Bukovina to set up the regime, but the Soviets truly believed that their power derived from their relationship with the masses and so set out to educate “the people” to make sure that they knew why and for whom they were voting. Endless propaganda meetings and lectures urged locals to study the Stalin Constitution and the biographies of Hrushetsky and other candidates. In the words of one party comrade from Klishkovtsi, “we and the agitators have to tell voters everything about the biographies of deputies, about their life and work so everyone knows these are the sons of working people, defending the interests of workers.”\textsuperscript{98} Over and over again, voters were told that the elections they were about to participate in were nothing like what they had experienced before: “we are no longer electing a small group but we are electing everyone to make sure that everyone will do well.” That was to say that comrade Hrushetsky, unlike his predecessors in Bukovina, was a true representative of the masses, a son of the people from a poor Ukrainian family, who “will defend the interests of the workers and peasants of Bukovina.”\textsuperscript{99} To hammer this message home, Hrushetsky visited electoral commissions \textit{incognito}, astonishing local officials who did not expect him to “simply walk in like that but to drive a car with security behind him and music

\textsuperscript{97} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 74. The lists hadn’t been done correctly: they included only names and surnames and nothing else - only year of birth but not the date and month.

\textsuperscript{98} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 14.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., ll 6-7.
etc.**100

When they spoke about “the masses,” the Soviets really meant everyone. The regime aspired to encompass the entire population and elicit its complete support. The Soviets expected no less than a 100% participation rate in the elections and an almost equal if not identical percentage of votes in favor of the Bolshevik candidates. To this end, they launched a propaganda offensive that aimed to reach into every household and touch every individual. On the ground, the offensive was carried out by agitators recruited from the local population, given some political training (they usually attended courses a few times a month), and then sent into the field to educate the masses “in the spirit of internationalism, to fight against nationalist deviation and anti-Semitism.”**101 This was accomplished through meetings, lectures, and “circles” on the history of the Communist Party, Stalin’s Constitution, or the Ukrainian language. By August 1940, there were 106 such circles in Chernivtsi: 36 of them were studying the VIIth session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 23 were learning Ukrainian, and 47 were studying the Constitution. To ensure maximum effectiveness, the propaganda offensive had to be carried out with the utmost precision. In the Vashkivskij and Vizhnitzkij raiony, one official calculated that 720 agitators would be needed to cover all 12,000 households, “if we group 15-20 houses per agitator.”**102 Raion officials were also to report periodically on the progress of their work, as reflected in the number of circles they had founded and the percentage of the population who attended them. Some raion officials reported staggering numbers - such as a 90% participation rate in propaganda circles.**103 In reality, these numbers were often inflated. As one obkom official readily admitted, “even in cases where we have opened circles for studying the constitution, they

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100 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 75.
101 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 28, 24 August 1940.
102 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, 23 October 1940.
103 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
are working poorly or are not working at all because we don’t have adequate leaders.”

In addition to being incomprehensible to non-Ukrainian speakers, this kind of propaganda took up precious time. Workers who lived “in villages 6-7 kilometers away” from Chernivtsi did not see the appeal of traveling back to their factories on Sundays only to study Stalin’s Constitution. To offset these shortcomings, agitators were urged to “use all possible means” - cinemas, theaters, and school - to enlighten the masses politically. They could step in before a movie screening to remind audiences “that on the 12th of January everyone has to come to vote.” They could visit classrooms before the elections and send schoolchildren home to “tell their parents that they have to vote the next day.”

Why did the Soviets try so hard to contact every single person? One could say this was because the Soviet regime was profoundly non-democratic and aspired to total power over its subjects, yet this is only part of the story. The Soviets also felt they could not afford to loosen their grip on the local population because they were still too vulnerable. As one local official put it, “Soviet power has existed [here] only for nine months [and] this gave the enemies plenty of opportunities for their own work.”

The aspiration to mobilize the masses totally was more than a symptom of the regime’s megalomania. It was a deliberate strategy to reduce the appeal of nationalism and anti-Semitism - both well grounded in local society - by creating a shared political vocabulary across ethnic and religious divides. The hope was that, by learning about Stalin’s Constitution and the benefits of Soviet citizenship, Bukovinans would forget their differences and live together peacefully under Soviet rule. Agitators in the “Moldavian” districts were explicitly instructed to carry out “explanatory work on the national question” in addition to the usual political propaganda. Yet the Soviet authorities unwittingly ended up reinforcing national and linguistic differences.

104 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 28, l 12.
105 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 78.
106 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 128.
because they were poorly prepared to deal with Bukovina’s linguistic diversity. With the exception of the “Moldavians” living in the former Moldavian Autonomous Republic, no substantial Romanian-speaking population had lived in the Soviet Union before Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were incorporated in June 1940. Very little Romanian-language propaganda was readily available as a result, so agitators working in “Moldavian” border districts like the Glubokskij, Sekurianskij, and Gertsaevskij raiony had no materials to distribute among the population. Special Moldavian editions of various electoral posters and biographies of the candidates had to be printed especially for Northern Bukovina, but even so, the Romanian-speaking districts lagged behind in propaganda work.\footnote{Radyans'ka Bukovyna, 14 December 1940, 77.} One obkom official reported in November 1940 that in the Novoselitskij raion “not even one lecturer from the local intelligentsia gave any lectures so far.”\footnote{DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 78, November 1940.} In the absence of propaganda materials, agitators in many Romanian-speaking villages simply quit - almost as if they had been waiting for the slightest hindrance to lay down their tools.\footnote{DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 3, 8 January 1940.} An additional problem was that an overwhelming number of Soviet officials and cadres in Northern Bukovina were Ukrainian and Russian speakers. Of 3,080 agents or “trusted persons” (dovirennye osoby) in the oblast', 2,344 were Ukrainians and only 408 “Romanians and Moldavians.”\footnote{Radyans'ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1967), No 59, 14 December 1940, 79.} As a result of this disparity, Ukrainian speakers were often put in charge of largely Romanian-speaking districts. Of the 107 Communists who were working in the Glybokskij raion in December 1940, “not even one speaks the Moldavian language, and this plays a great role.”\footnote{DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d.15.} As long as Ukrainian-speaking officials needed translators to make themselves understood, the “Moldavian” population would view the regime as a foreign
imposition. Out of fear of losing the Romanian-speaking “masses” to “Guardists” and other counter-revolutionary elements, the Soviet authorities called for a more “aggressive” propaganda campaign targeting the “Moldavian population” and especially youth “in border raiony and national Romanian villages.” They also admitted that the “leading cadres” in Romanian-speaking raiony had not been well chosen and that “we should have asked some comrades who knew the Moldavian language to come from the Moldavian republic.”

Yet despite these difficulties, the Soviets came very close to mobilizing the entirety of Northern Bukovina’s population in preparation for the January elections - a “brilliant victory” in comrade Hrushetsky’s words. That Hrushetsky and the other Bolshevik candidates were eventually elected deputies to the Supreme Soviet is no surprise, but the fact that 99.54% of the oblast’s population took part in the elections and 98.31% voted for the “communist and non-party bloc” is truly astonishing. As Jan Gross shows in his account of the first Soviet elections held in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia in 1939, the outcome of Soviet elections in the newly annexed territories was largely determined by a combination of propaganda and coercion. During the pre-election campaign, locals were persuaded “of the benefits of participation” in the elections and at the same time given to understand - in no unclear terms - “that abstention would be injurious.”

The elections were a success not only in the sense that the population was persuaded to vote for the Communists, but above all because the authorities “managed to know and monitor the whereabouts of just about every adult citizen in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia.” That a very small percentage of people did not vote for the “right” candidates was not so

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112 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58; fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 100, 9 February 1941.
113 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 64, Zvina Dopovid’ on the work of Chernovitskyi obkom KP/b/U in first Oblast conference KP/b/U, 9 February 1941.
114 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 11, 16 January 1941.
115 Jan Gross, Revolution from Abroad, 74-75.
important as the fact that the authorities knew who they were and where they lived. The same holds for Northern Bukovina: here too, agitators and raion officials went to great lengths to get as many people as possible to go to the polls. By noon on January 12, 67.76% of the oblast’s population had already voted; by four in the afternoon, 92% of Chernivtsi’s residents had been to the polls. The Gertsaevskij raion, a problem district with a large Romanian-speaking population, pulled off an astonishing 99.64% participation rate. Yet the leadership still felt compelled to explain why the Communist candidates had not received 100% of the vote. According to Hrushetsky, this was because some voters “were still used to voting techniques from Romanian times.” The elections in Northern Bukovina were a great success because they were a replay of the elections in eastern Poland. The Soviet authorities were, from the outset, determined to “avoid such episodes as happened in the western oblasti” and took measures to prevent them. Well before the elections, Soviet officials surveyed the population for “cases when someone is sick or where a house is situated in the forest and the man comes to vote but the woman cannot because she can’t leave the children by themselves,” making special arrangements to accommodate these individuals. From the elections in Western Ukraine, they also learned that “anything can happen at the voting centers, they can cause a fire and even steal the bulletins,” and so they sent policemen and NKVD-men in civilian clothing to voting centers to keep an eye on the population. To preempt “enemy incidents,” the authorities also pushed people to vote as early as possible, during the day. “We shouldn’t wait until the people themselves come to vote,” one obkom official decided, “but agitators should come to an agreement with the ten households they are responsible for and come in an organized manner to vote.”

The Soviets set out to build socialism in Northern Bukovina after two decades of Romanian and one-and-a-half centuries of Austrian rule. On the one hand, this made Soviet

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116 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 79.
promises of equality and peace appealing to people for whom the Romanian years had not been the best of times. The Soviets did not even have to do or say much to find sympathizers among local Ukrainians and Jews - it was enough that they were neither Romanian nor German. But Northern Bukovina’s recent history also complicated the task of building socialism. Because the entire institutional and cultural framework of the province was profoundly capitalist, the Soviet regime could not simply assimilate it, but rather had to transform everything - from industry to agriculture and education - along Soviet lines. This was a more difficult task than building a new society from scratch, for the Soviets were not merely adding a new layer to a pre-existing foundation but instead trying to scrape away decades worth of accreted practices. The other major disadvantage of “constructing and strengthening Soviet power where only two months before there had been capitalism” was that locals took a non-Soviet regime as their reference point. When compared with the former Romanian administration, the Soviet regime seemed to fall short in many ways, especially in the opinion of Romanians who thought “the laws were better under the Romanians than under Soviet rule.”

The task of transforming a formerly “capitalist” society into a socialist one was further complicated by Northern Bukovina’s frontier location. Here, the Soviet Union’s imperial dimensions were thrown into sharp relief. “We should be voting for three candidates, representatives of three states,” one local teacher was overheard saying, “the first one should represent those people who want Romania, the second one [those] who want Germany, and the third one [those] who want the USSR.” Others insisted that the Soviets had no business staying in Bukovina because this territory “was German and therefore the Germans and

117 DACfO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 4.
118 DACfO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 9.
119 Ibid.
Romanians have to come and liberate the country from Soviet power.\textsuperscript{120} People accustomed to frequent regime changes took an unsentimental view of the Soviet occupation and found it hard to believe that the Soviets had come to Bukovina for good. Rumors of an impending Romanian invasion circulated well before the Romanian and German troops reconquered Northern Bukovina. Already in January 1941, one peasant from the Storozhynetski\textsuperscript{ij} raion spread word that the Romanian army was “at the border with the Germans and is thinking of attacking the USSR.”\textsuperscript{121}

To make themselves heard, the Soviet authorities had to drown out a number of competing voices. While there was no organized anti-Soviet propaganda to speak of in Northern Bukovina, plenty of people had reasons to complain about the regime. The Soviets referred to them as “counter-revolutionary” or “enemy” elements, “Trotskyites” and “Cuzists” - but in reality they were a very diverse group. Many of them had enjoyed authority under the Romanians and quite a few found themselves once again in positions of power under the Soviets. In December 1940, for instance, Hrushetsky reported that in one village in the oblast’ both the school principal and the head of the sel’sovet were spreading anti-Soviet propaganda, while in another village the teacher was “an active member of the Peasantist party” who also carried out anti-Soviet agitation.\textsuperscript{122} In a moment of sincerity, one school principal in Khotyn who worked as a Soviet agitator said during the preparations for elections: “Look how they torture us to carry out propaganda. As though anyone will fulfill it and pay attention to it. Everyone knows the party sets its own candidates and each person goes and votes for them so they won’t be under suspicion.”\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} DAC\textsuperscript{O}, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 129.
\textsuperscript{121} DAC\textsuperscript{O}, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 9.
\textsuperscript{122} DAC\textsuperscript{O}, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 52, 24 December 1940.
\textsuperscript{123} DAC\textsuperscript{O}, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 14.
Many priests were ill-disposed towards the Soviets because they were closing down the churches, nationalizing the property of monasteries, and making clerics pay high taxes. When a priest told his parishioners that “from now on he can no longer be their priest” because the Soviets had asked him to pay an absurdly high tax, locals got so upset that the raion authorities had to bring the case to the obkom’s attention. So-called kurkuly or kulaks – “wealthy” peasants who were more often than not not so much as wealthy as hard-working and respected in their communities – were supposedly telling people not to vote for the Communist candidates because “after the elections, they will take everyone into the army, life will become bad.”124 As the ‘class struggle’ between the bedniaki and kulaki had not yet begun in many villages, peasants were more likely to trust what other peasants said about the regime than the hollow propaganda of agitators in suits and ties. In some cases “Cuzists” - as the Soviets referred to any Romanians who were against them - set up their own lists of candidates and urged locals to vote for them. While some met illegally in private apartments to “scheme” against the regime, many more used the same channels as the Soviets to spread their own propaganda - a good number of “Cuzists” and kurkuly had been accidentally recruited into the army of local agitators.125

Many “enemy” agitators were simply locals who figured out that the elections were a sham and were not ready to play along without first putting up a fight. “If there were five or six people in the village like myself,” one peasant said, “then we would say that these elections aren’t right, that we must vote not only for those who are put forward but those we want.”126 As these words suggest, few people were ready to speak their minds if that put them in any danger. Instances of opposition to the regime and the elections were rarer here than in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. Certainly, there were some attempts to sabotage the elections by urging

124 Ibid., l 10.
125 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 36.
126 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 56.
voters to destroy the bulletins and drop empty envelopes into the urns (not knowing that the Soviets did not use envelopes in their elections).\textsuperscript{127} There were also cases where “bourgeois nationalist enemy elements” did damage to Soviet “machinery and water canals and electrical stations” and Soviet propaganda meetings were interrupted when “someone threw a stone into the window.”\textsuperscript{128} Tempting as it might be to romanticize the anti-Soviet “opposition” in Northern Bukovina, one has to recognize that anti-Soviet agitators were also not beyond reproach. What is one to make of a “resistance” that protests the illegality of the Soviet regime by throwing into the urns pieces of paper saying “down with the communists, long live national-socialist Germany, long live Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler” - or portraits of the Nazi official Rudolf Hess?\textsuperscript{129}

Above all, the “anti-Soviet agitation” was more effective than the Soviet propaganda because it resonated with people’s experiences of the Soviet regime. Ordinary men and women complained that under the Soviet regime life had become difficult, indeed intolerable. “Under the Romanians,” said one merchant from Khotyn, “I lacked nothing and now under Soviet rule, under the Bolshevik constitution, you can die of hunger, there is no bread and no clothing.” Desperate locals who, even if they had money, could not find anything to buy with it in the stores, protested that “the bandits” and “tramps don’t let us live, there is no work, it’s hard to get bread, the meat is getting more expensive by the day, you want to end your life directly through suicide.”\textsuperscript{130} The food supply problem was especially bad in the remote mountain districts and in frontier areas inhabited predominantly by Romanians - bad luck for the Soviet authorities, for these were also the regions least exposed to Soviet propaganda due to language difficulties.

Villages in the Glybokskij, Gertsaevskij, and Putylivskij raiony lacked even basic goods “such as

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{127} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{128} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 6, l 113.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid., l 7.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
gas, salt, bread.”

As usual, the Soviet authorities hoped to cure all problems with a strong dose of propaganda. Soviet slogans, however, could not substitute for bread and sausages. “We will vote for the communists,” one peasant was heard saying in the Vyzhnytskij raion, “but let them also give us bread and produce.” Far from pacifying the population, the propaganda only angered them further. What kind of regime was this that droned on about the merits of its revolutionary Constitution, that dragged voters to endless political meetings, but then failed to supply the population with basic goods? As one Nikolai Rotar from Sekuryany put it: “they chase us here to learn about the Constitution but they don’t give us firewood, bread, salt, we know what they are doing to us, we can do without their constitution.” The shortages were not a deliberate strategy to force the population into submission. On the contrary, Soviet officials made it a priority to “increase the quantity” of basic goods and encourage small merchants so prices wouldn’t go through the roof. They were also keen to demonstrate that their industrial cooperatives and nationalized stores could offer a “better assortment” of goods than private stores. The shortages - so they insisted - were an inevitable consequence of ‘building socialism’ in Northern Bukovina and it was only a matter of time before living conditions would improve again and Bukovina could finally catch up with the rest of the Soviet Union. But then word arrived that life in the rest of the Soviet Union was no better. 70 workers from the Romanian-speaking Glybokskij

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131 DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
132 DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 6.
133 Ibid., l 10.
134 DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9.
135 Ibid., l 72. Like everything else, the industry and economy had to be stripped of their capitalist baggage and remodeled along Soviet lines. The transition from capitalism to the planned economy involved a lot of fumbling in the dark, for planners were no match to the ‘invisible hand’ and their blunders resulted in a sudden spike in food prices and a severe shortage of basic goods. In their meetings, the Soviet authorities acknowledged that “the supply of agricultural products is not going satisfactorily” because those in charge of the food supply “come from other places and oblasti and did not learn about the particularities of work in our oblast.” In August 1940 they were in the middle of nationalizing ‘commercial enterprises’ and still had about 1000 such enterprises left to nationalize. They also admitted that they didn’t have enough goods in the stores and therefore couldn’t open them all because if they did then all of them would sell in a few days.
raion who were working in the Urals region wrote in their letters home that “we are living in barracks, it’s cold, the work is hard, what we make isn’t enough to buy food and if you want to flee home they don’t let you, those who didn’t go did well.”

Locals who knew nothing about the challenges of nationalizing the economy could not help but conclude that “the Russian people, led by Satan, doesn’t recognize humanity. You think that after all, they want to do the people good, but no, they do only evil because in them Satan is working.”

Why did the Soviet authorities worry so much about the rumors launched by the so-called counterrevolutionary elements when no number of kulaks and former Cuzists could overthrow the regime? Complaints about the regime brought its legitimacy into question and exposed its lack of control over the population. This was particularly the case when people voted against the regime with their feet, as many began to do in the fall of 1940. The destination was Romania and the journey short but dangerous. The emigrants were mostly Romanians from villages along the frontier, but they also included Ukrainians and Jews - kurkuly who feared losing both their property and their lives in the nationalization and collectivization campaigns, youth of military age, and members of bourgeois-nationalist parties,” but also ordinary people who were dissatisfied with the living conditions in Northern Bukovina. The border crossings were typically organized by locals from frontier villages where the passage to Romania was easiest, people whom the authorities usually identified as “Iron Guardists” although they included not only former members of the Iron Guard party but also ethnic Ukrainians and other locals unaffiliated with any party. For example, in the village Ostrytsia - where a group of emigrants

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136 DAChO, fondo P1, op. 1, d. 28, l 42.
137 DAChO, fondo P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 7.
138 In November 1940 a group of emigrants were caught while crossing the border - only one of the participants was captured, and he provided details about the preparations for the crossing. All the villagers who were crossing the border were from Ostrytsia, Mahala, Boian, Mamornytsya, Lukovytsya.
139 DAChO, fondo P1, op. 1, d. 28, l 41.
were caught while crossing the border in November 1940 - all the organizers identified by the authorities as “Iron Guardists” had Ukrainian names: Dmytro Tkachuk, Andrij Tsurkano, and Andrij Saprovych.\footnote{140} Since these individuals made a living by transporting emigrants across the border, they went from village to village trying to persuade as many people as possible to emigrate - just like in the old Habsburg days, when Galician emigration agents went around the Bukovinian countryside advertising trips to America and Brazil.

This time locals did not have to be promised riches to leave Bukovina. As former Romanian citizens, they knew exactly what was on the other side of the border. What they were told instead was that, if they stayed in Northern Bukovina, the Soviets would take away their land, make them pay heavy taxes, force the youth to join the Red Army, and prohibit them from speaking their mother tongues (Romanian and Ukrainian). Sneaking across the border in the middle of the night and exposing oneself to the danger of getting arrested or being shot by border guards took courage. Why did people do it? Most emigrants came from border areas that suffered from severe food shortages and who felt neglected by and alienated from the regime. These areas were also not as well exposed to Soviet propaganda as the rest of the province due to the aforementioned language barriers. The Soviet authorities were the first to admit that their cadres “didn’t know the political-moral disposition of our villages, didn’t have connections to the aktiv in those villages” where emigration was a serious problem.\footnote{141}

Based on their own experiences and from what they heard or remembered about the Bolshevik occupation in World War I and in the absence of convincing arguments to the contrary, locals drew pessimistic conclusions about the Soviet system. Their fears were magnified by two decades of anti-Bolshevik propaganda under the Romanians and a recent

\footnote{140 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 31.}
\footnote{141 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 31.}
encounter with Polish refugees fleeing the Soviet occupation. As a result, hundreds preferred to go into exile than risk starving to death or being deported to Siberia. The emigration movement tarnished the Soviet regime’s image as a workers’ and peasants’ paradise and exposed its lack of control over the porous frontier. It also created significant material problems such as a drop in the labor force and a worsening of the food crisis in border areas - which in turn made emigration even more appealing to the population living there.142

All these complaints and all the anti-Soviet agitation were inconvenient to deal with in the early months of rule and gave the authorities quite a headache, especially around election time. Things like the emigration movement were embarrassing, but on the plus side, the regime - still quite unfamiliar with the population and suspicious of ‘enemy elements’ - was able to locate and remove “enemies.” All of this happened during the elections, when the authorities identified and monitored everyone who voted against the Bolshevik candidates or disseminated any anti-Soviet propaganda. In the end, it all contributed to the consolidation of Soviet power, because the authorities were more easily able to pinpoint and neutralize dangerous elements. That these anti-Soviet attitudes rose to the surface was inconvenient and sometimes embarrassing, but it was a necessary part of getting to know the population. The pre-election campaign accelerated this process - the Soviets were able to detect pockets of resistance ahead of time and neutralize them before they became a serious threat. The first months of rule thus allow us to see not only how the Soviets set up the regime and mobilized the masses, but also what kinds of opposition were possible and how the regime dealt with those who did not wish to play along. None of the “anti-Soviet” agitation they encountered in Northern Bukovina surprised the Soviets in the least. The authorities came to Bukovina prepared for a confrontation with the “enemy.” Like their predecessors, the Soviet authorities looked to the frontier with both excitement and trepidation.

142 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 28, l 42.
Here, they could demonstrate to the entire capitalist world just what Soviet power could accomplish. They gladly took on the challenge to do what no state had ever accomplished in Bukovina: do away with the poverty and backwardness, build an industry and urbanize the province, bring justice and equality to a territory where national and linguistic differences had always been a sensitive issue.

On the other hand, they were also afraid because Northern Bukovina was situated at the westernmost border of the Soviet Union and, having never been under Soviet rule, was likely swarming with enemy elements. The head of the oblast NKVD, comrade Martynov, described the Chernovitskaya oblast’ as “the basis of all intelligence operations” and estimated that “almost 1000 people are members of anti-Soviet organizations here.”\textsuperscript{143} Although they expected to encounter a fair amount of opposition in Bukovina, the Soviets were still taken aback by how many people voted against their candidates in the elections. It was a very small percentage of the population - shockingly small if we judge by non-Soviet standards. The 8960 votes against “the bloc of communists and non-party people” didn’t affect the outcome of the elections in any way, but they did have one important consequence: they allowed the Soviet authorities to size up the opposition. By January 1941, the Soviets had already determined how the anti-Soviet elements were distributed by raiony. Comrade Hrushetsky reported that “in the Kitmsanskij and Zastavniaskij raiony we had a nest of Trotskyites who hadn’t yet been killed off and in the Sadogurskij raion Cuzists are carrying out their own work and in the Vashkivskij raion we have Ukrainian nationalists and in Glybotskij we have a small settlement of Ukrainian nationalists and Romanian Cuzists.”\textsuperscript{144}

The authorities were even able to match the rumors and anti-Soviet propaganda that

\textsuperscript{143} DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 118.
\textsuperscript{144} DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 4, 16 January 1941.
locals or officials on the ground reported with specific individuals who were then arrested. None were to be forgiven - not even those locals who were simply voicing their dissatisfaction with the poor living standards. The local NKVD noted down all the complaints and then looked into the individuals to whom they were attributed to check if they had spread those rumors and “if it is confirmed, we will hold them responsible.”145 Two culprits in the Kel’menetskij raion - one a former liberal and the other a Ukrainian nationalist - were arrested on the day of the elections for spreading rumors that “after the elections peasants will be forced into kolkhozy.” The local population participated in this process of identifying and eliminating the opposition on both sides of the barricade. Some were persecuted by the Soviet authorities, while others helped the authorities track down ‘enemy elements’ and punish them. Locals made up a large part of the Soviet police in Northern Bukovina - and the ‘revolutionary order’ could have been introduced into the region without the police’s help.146 “Enemy incidents” during the elections gave Soviet officials a good idea of where the regime was still fragile and where they would need to concentrate their propaganda efforts “The task of the party organization and the raikom partii now is to pay special attention to those villages where we had the most votes against our candidates and to increase mass-political work there and make sure that enemy agents are liquidated,” Hrushetsky announced soon after the elections.147

From their encounters with “enemy elements,” the Soviet authorities learned they could not afford to close their eyes for even a moment. “Counterrevolutionary” incidents continued to happen well after the elections. In June 1941, the UNKGB discovered “counterrevolutionary papers in Romanian, Ukrainian, and Russian” in several raiony and detected “an enemy plane”

145 DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, 8 January 1941.
146 DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 73. By 1 October 1940 there were 567 people but by 1 January 1941 there were already 1067. The greatest mass of people taken into militia had been demobilized from the Red Army – from the Western Ukrainian, Finnish, and Bessarabian fronts.
147 DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62.
that dropped fliers with anti-Soviet propaganda over the Glybokskij raion. That same month, 70 “anti-Soviet elements” were arrested including 4 active members of the OUN, 11 individuals who were suspected of espionage, and 4 “Siguranta agents.” These incidents genuinely worried the authorities, for they were convinced the regime would not be safe as long as “counter-revolutionary” elements continued to walk the earth. In another sense, though, the permanent (and real) danger of ‘counterrevolution’ and ‘capitalist encirclement’ gave the Soviet regime in Northern Bukovina coherence and a justification for continuing to keep a tight grip on the local population.

**The Cultural Revolution from Abroad**

In March 1941, the Soviet press proudly reported that the regime had just spent 6,000 rubles purchasing books for the Vyzhnitsia raion, including “the works of Lenin, Stalin, literature, art, science, and agriculture books.” Even Putila - the remote mountain raion where the Ukrainian writer Yurij Fedkovych was from - now had a library filled with books. Apparently, ever since the Soviets had come to power in Northern Bukovina, “public interest in newspapers, journals, and books has grown beyond belief.” While basic goods like bread, salt, and gas were missing - even in Chernivtsi, not to mention the remote mountain districts - the authorities bragged about spending “colossal sums on cultural needs, public instruction, rest, and health for the population.” In June 1941, they even appealed to the local population to subscribe to a “state loan” for 9.5 billion rubles that would be used “for economic and cultural development in cities, villages, and raions.” This, at a time when living conditions were deteriorating significantly. That the regime should take such pride in building libraries in the

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148 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 76, 27 June 1941.
149 “Raspandirea cartii in mase,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 7 March 1941.
150 “Toti cetățenii trebuie să subscirie la noul împrumut,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 4 June 1941.
mountains and spending on ‘cultural needs’ when people were going hungry is striking, but if we are to understand the essence of the Soviet project in Northern Bukovina and the Soviet system as a whole we must unravel this paradox. Though Marxist theory held that the economic basis determines the cultural superstructure, the Soviet regime in operated on the reverse assumption: that culture was a prerequisite for all other developments. The Soviet authorities in Bukovina consciously made culture a priority because they were explicitly instructed to do so. At the 18th Party Congress, Georgy Malenkov urged Communist cadres to build culture for “without elementary culture it is impossible to fulfill the great tasks that are before our country.”

Culture was also seen as a “front” where teachers, theater directors, librarians, and heads of reading rooms fought to displace the remnants of the old regime and build a new society on healthy foundations. This explains, in part, why the Soviet authorities in Northern Bukovina were more concerned with purchasing library books than with supplying the local population with food. While this emphasis on culture as both a means and an end in itself characterized the Soviet system as a whole, another idea shaped the specific policies the Soviets adopted in Bukovina: that the Soviet Union had a civilizing mission in East-Central Europe. The reader will no doubt be surprised to hear the Soviet authorities speaking of ‘civilizing missions.’ Surely, this concept scented too much of imperialism for the anti-imperialist Soviets to embrace it. Yet embrace it they did. Northern Bukovina served the idea of a Soviet civilizing mission in the same way it served the Austrian notion of a Kulturmission. Well into the 20th century, Northern Bukovina was still a rural and “backward” territory inhabited by an overwhelmingly illiterate peasant population. The Austrians had blamed these problems on lack of Kultur and the Romanians on national oppression; the Soviets subsumed these explanations under the category of ‘malfunctions’ of bourgeois society - such as the fact that “the Romanian system of public

151 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 22.
Their solution to these problems was “cultural revolution” - a complete transformation of local society through cultural development. It was a like a magician’s trick: a backward place with a benighted population went into a box, the box was shaken, and out came politically conscious Soviet citizens who watched movies, read newspapers, and sang in village choirs. But what was in the box? The residents of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia had already gotten a peek: first, there were schools, cinemas, theaters, libraries, hospitals, and maternities; then there were kolgospy, tractors, and factories; and finally, there was Ukrainian culture, “national in form, socialist in content.”

The notion of a Soviet ‘civilizing mission’ contradicted the local population’s deeply held prejudices against Russia and the Bolsheviks. To properly play the role of a civilizing force, the Soviet occupation troops had been instructed to speak highly of the Soviet Union and always answer locals’ questions positively. Yet when they came face to face with the ‘capitalist way of life’ in Bukovina, they behaved in ways that confirmed locals’ suspicions. In his memoir of the occupation, Pepe Georgescu - an actor from the National Theater - recounts how Soviet soldiers would buy up everything and then strut down the streets “biting a piece of salami and one of chocolate” and stuffing their rucksacks with “candy and cakes.” The restaurants offered another memorable sight: “both officers and soldiers would order at once two or three big glasses of beer and just as many soups, steaks, and dishes with sauce. (…) They would never use knives. If they had to eat a bigger piece of meat they would grab it with their hands or stick their forks in it (…). They would spit the bones on the floor and then wipe their hands dirty with fat or sauce on their tunics or on their hair. While eating they would constantly spit on the floor, blow their

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152 “Să se organizeze la sate munca culturală de masă,” *Adevărul Bolșevic*, 16 May 1941.
153 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, ll 7-8, 11 December 1940.
noses, and cough disgustingly into the plates.”\textsuperscript{155} Soviet officers and soldiers would wear fountain pens on their lapels “with the pen on the outside, so it could be seen” while the women who accompanied them “took night gowns and ballroom shoes or slippers from the homes left behind by the refugees” and,mistaking them for formal clothing, wore them in public. Too ill-disposed towards Bukovina’s new conquerors to notice anything decent or even human about them, Georgescu portrayed the Soviets as a savage people who had no business bringing civilization to Northern Bukovina. “The Bolsheviks have no culture,” he wrote, for “their most representative poets only wrote poems for Lenin and Stalin and communist hymns or vulgar songs.” A man like Pepe Georgescu, who blamed the entire occupation on the Jews, should not always be taken at his word, yet his overblown account of the occupation contains a grain of truth, for the Soviets did behave rather unlike a “culturally advanced” people. Some Soviet soldiers, according to another account, even refused to return home after they were demobilized, presumably because they enjoyed much higher living standards and a higher status in Bukovina.\textsuperscript{156} Similar scenes played out in eastern Poland, where Soviet soldiers were apparently in such “awe at the abundance of consumer goods” that they were “feverishly buying up everything,” much to the locals’ amusement.\textsuperscript{157} That locals raised their eyebrows in disbelief whenever Soviet culture was mentioned did not surprise the authorities, for Russia had “always considered itself to be a backward state in an economic and cultural respect compared to the Western countries and America.”

But now that this was no longer the case, Soviet propagandists set out to demonstrate that the ‘civilizing mission’ was much more than a slogan. “In only 23 years,” wrote the Radyans’ka Bukovyna, “the Soviet Union has up to 700 institutions of higher education and 600,000 students

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 15. \\
\textsuperscript{156} Golgota româneasca, 14. \\
\textsuperscript{157} Jan Gross, Revolution from Abroad, 28.
\end{footnotesize}
more than all the students in England, France, Italy, Japan, and Germany together.” In addition, the newspaper noted that the USSR’s population “uses libraries ten times more often than America’s.” Locals were reassured that the Soviet Union was, in fact, so far ahead of the capitalist countries in cultural matters that it could even export civilization abroad, as it had done in “Buryat-Mongolia.” At the touch of the Soviet magic wand, this remote land inhabited by “wild and illiterate people” had transformed into a nation with a culture and theater of its own, with a “98% literacy rate” to boot.\textsuperscript{158}

There were no “wild” Buryat tribes running around Northern Bukovina, but that did not deter the Soviets from claiming that the region had its own backward people - these were the illiterate peasants who formed the overwhelming majority of the province’s population. They were to be the target and main beneficiary of the Soviet civilizing mission, because in the Soviet vision they embodied the worst inequalities of capitalist-bourgeois society: they lived in superstition and filth, they couldn’t read and write, and they were abused and exploited by the “bourgeoisie” who, in the words of one agitator, “would chase after us to go to vote as though we were cattle.”\textsuperscript{159} They also were the bulk of the population - the “people” or the “masses” who awaited emancipation, which the Soviets promised to achieve. The goals of the Soviets resembled those of Romanian nationalist-populists who also believed that the core problem lay in the countryside. While the nationalists idealized the peasant as a repository of national consciousness, the Soviets saw in him the symbol of capitalist oppression. In the Romanian case, it was hoped that the peasants freed from the ‘foreign yoke’ would bring new energy to the national cause and build the foundation of a new nation-state. The Soviets also looked to the peasantry in Northern Bukovina with hopes that these once-oppressed peoples would build and

\textsuperscript{158} M Mykhailov, “Zavoyuvannya sotsialistychnoi kul’tury,” \textit{Radyans’ka Bukovyna}, 14 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{159} DACo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 23.
support the new regime.

Even though the Romanian nation-building project and the Soviet experiment in Bukovina were very different in their aims, they both sought bridge the divide between the countryside and the city. The Romanians tried to have it both ways, the authentic national feeling that only the peasantry possessed because of their remoteness from civilization, but the Soviets completely repudiated tradition and embraced modernity as the cure to all social ills. For them, just as for the Austrians and the Romanians, the key to modernity was culture. But the culture the Soviets sought to build in Northern Bukovina was different from that which their predecessors tried and failed to accomplish in that it promised to be truly democratic. Under the Austrians, *Kultur* worked for some - it uplifted some of the masses - but for many others it preserved and even reinforced language difficulties and inequalities.; Under the Romanians, national culture explicitly excluded those who were not part of the same ethnic and religious community. Now the Soviets promised to build a different kind of culture from which everyone would be able to benefit. The regime measured its progress on the “cultural front” by the total number of movies peasants had seen, the total number of books they had read, and how many more newspaper readers there were since the onset of the occupation. “Noble is the work of giving the peasants culture, of opening their eyes to the world, of helping them develop their abilities and their talent,” wrote the *Adevărul Bolșevic* in Cernăuți after ten months of Soviet “cultural revolution.” Of course, the Soviets made the countryside a priority not only because putting an end to the oppression of the peasantry was a source of legitimacy for the regime but also because the countryside was the main source of grain and meat.

Like the administrations before them, the Soviets took the “growth in the number of people who study in schools and universities” to be the main indicator of cultural growth, so they

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160 “Să se organizeze la sate munca culturală de masa,” *Adevărul Bolșevic*, 16 May 1941.
focused their “civilizing mission” on increasing the size of the educated population in Northern Bukovina.\textsuperscript{161} They shook their heads with disapproval at the high illiteracy rates that prevailed in the province and which, they believed, reflected the fundamental injustices of capitalist society where education was restricted to a small elite, so that they could more easily exploit the uncultured masses. The Soviets opened he “first-aid kit” of institutions and instruments needed to eradicate illiteracy and fulfill their ‘civilizing mission.’ From their first weeks in power, the authorities devoted a lot of attention and resources to expanding the network of schools in the oblast.’ They repaired old school buildings and created new ones out of confiscated private residences.\textsuperscript{162} They boasted about how lavishly they were spending money to make schools accessible to even the remotest settlements in the province. In one instance, which served to illustrate Stalin’s “great care for the culture and enlightenment of the people,” the residence of a former Romanian minister in Chernivtsi was converted into a day school.\textsuperscript{163} Wealth was thus being redistributed from those who had it in excess and invested in the supreme common good: the education of the masses. The goal was to increase the number of school-aged children attending schools - which, when they did, the Soviet authorities smugly offered as incontrovertible proof of the regime’s superiority. By December 1940, attendance in “full and incomplete middle schools” in the oblast’ had risen to 92.2%, “while under Romanian rule, during the better times, it was only 73% and before that 40-50%.”\textsuperscript{164} The total number of students enrolled in schools also increased after only five months of Soviet rule, from 90,000 under Romanian rule to 150,000 students enrolled in schools “in the Ukrainian language, Jewish,

\textsuperscript{161} “Nivelul material cultural al noroadelor Uniunii RSS,” \textit{Adevărul Bolişevic}, 26 February 1941.
\textsuperscript{162} Kurylo, \textit{Pivnichna Bukovyna: ii mynule i suchasne}, 150. On 16 September 1940 began the first Soviet school year. There were 536 general schools - out of them 406 Ukrainian.
\textsuperscript{163} “Esle pentru copchii,” \textit{Adevărul Bolşevic}, 5 March 1941.
\textsuperscript{164} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 22.
Polish, Moldavian, and Romanian,” according to Ivan Samoilovych Hrushetsky’s reports.\textsuperscript{165} By February 1941, the figures had changed, but the point was the same: the network of schools had greatly expanded and was close to encompassing the entire population. This time, authorities reported a smaller figure of 108,570 students - still much higher than the 75,523 students who were attending primary and middle schools at the time of the Soviet invasion - but with an impressive graduation rate of 83%.\textsuperscript{166}

To be fully functional, the rapidly expanding network of schools had to be staffed with qualified teachers. We know from previous chapters that this had always been a problem whenever other administrations had undertaken similarly ambitious goals. Under the Austrians, many schools in the countryside had been run by poorly qualified Hilfslehrer. The Romanians too had had trouble finding teachers who were competent in the Romanian language and also fully qualified - and when these could not be found, they had to make do with individuals whose sole qualification was that they could speak Romanian. The Soviets had a similar problem. Before they could sweep all school-aged children into the schools, they had to provide them with teachers who were not just qualified but also politically reliable. These were in short supply. Most local teachers had been trained under the Romanians or Austrians, and clearly did not understand the principles of Bolshevik education. One teacher was reported to use “bad punishment methods” such as making students sit on their knees or stand in a corner, while another “expected the children to bring grapes in exchange for notebooks.”\textsuperscript{167} The Soviet authorities did have one major advantage, and that was access to a much larger labor force they could draw from and shift around. To staff the new schools, the Soviet authorities retrained around 1,200 local teachers “who worked earlier in Northern Bukovina or were unemployed.”

\textsuperscript{165} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l 33.
\textsuperscript{166} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44.
\textsuperscript{167} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 24.
addition, the People’s Commissariat of Education of Ukraine (Narkomos) dispatched to the 
oblast’ a group of 1,180 teachers from eastern Ukraine.

What was this ‘Bolshevik education’ the Soviet authorities were talking about and what
kind of culture were they trying to build through it? And what was its purpose? One object of the
‘cultural revolution’ was to convert the peasantry into an educated, politically conscious, and
modern citizenry who would be fully integrated into the regime and actively support it because it
offered them social and economic mobility. The other objective was to train cadres and
specialists who were qualified but also politically reliable. This second dimension of the
‘cultural revolution’ came into view when the authorities set out to convert the university in
Chernivtsi from a bastion of bourgeois culture, where social hierarchies were perpetuated
through the production of new elites in the image of the old ones, into a factory for processing
politically reliable students into Soviet cadres.

One of the first steps the authorities took to “reorganize” the university along Soviet lines
was to make Ukrainian the official language of instruction beginning in August 1940.168 This
was intended to empower the largely Ukrainian-speaking peasant population for whom language
had always been an obstacle to attending institutions of higher learning. “Now we need to teach
the broad masses of students literature in the Ukrainian language and revive the language buried
during the Austro-Hungarian and Romanian times,” said the newly appointed Soviet rector of the
university.169 As it turned out, the Ukrainian language requirement still kept the “children of
workers and peasants” away from the university because few of them could speak and write it
properly. “Young people come to the university,” explained the rector in August 1940, “and ask -

168 Dovidnyk dlya vstupnykiv do Chernivets'koho derzhavnoho universytetu na 1941 rik (Chernivtsi, 1941).
According to the Soviet of People’s Commissars of URSR’s order from 13 August 1940 the university in Chernivtsi
would be reorganized into a Ukrainian-language state university.
169 “Velyka podiya,” Radyans’ka Bukovyna, 1 October 1940.
and what language will it be in, - Ukrainian. This is very difficult for them. And indeed, young people don’t know the Ukrainian language because under Romanian rule Ukrainian was taught very little, as a foreign language. And for this reason we have to deviate from the rule.”\textsuperscript{170} In addition, the Soviet authorities actively sought out students from among the worker and peasant population by putting calls for applications in local newspapers and sending agitators around the oblast’ to “show peasant and worker youth the path to the university.” Opening the university’s doors to “the children of workers and peasants” was easier said than done. Although 420 additional spots were set aside for them in the fall of 1940, the university received only 270 applications and “we still have very few children of workers and peasants.”

What kept the peasantry from claiming what was rightfully theirs now that the authorities were practically begging them to do so? Ignorance had a way of reinforcing itself. The candidates the authorities hoped to recruit did not meet the prerequisite for enrollment at the university for, as they lacked even a middle school education, it did “not even cross their minds that they can apply to university.” Many were simply not interested in getting a university degree. Nevertheless, by the fall of 1940 the university had gained 420 new students, including young members of the former Communist underground. For these young men and women, who “weren’t able to finish school on time because they spent time in prisons and were always scorned by Romanian boyars,” the university was only too happy to waive its admission requirements.\textsuperscript{171} Comrade Trofa Liuba, “a typical representative of the revolutionary worker-peasant youth,” enrolled at the university that fall to study Chemistry after spending “three years and a half in Romanian prisons.” Another student who had been “arrested for participation in the underground komsomol” remembered having to drop out of school because she failed a religion

\textsuperscript{170} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l. 51.
\textsuperscript{171} Al Gubar, “Premianții Universității de Stat,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 4 March 1941.
exam with a priest who charged 100 lei for a passing grade.

To make culture truly accessible to the masses, it was not enough to build more schools and push more people to enroll in the university. A much wider array of institutions was needed to build and disseminate “mass culture”- a feat neither the Austrian nor the Romanian administration had managed. This cultural offensive encompassed every area of life, and the array of institutions the Soviet authorities put at its service was truly impressive. It included evening schools for adults, “circles for the liquidation of illiteracy,” popular art schools, “cultural homes,” theaters, cinemas, “village clubs,” libraries and reading rooms. By April 1941, the Soviets could claim to have built more cultural institutions in Northern Bukovina in ten months than the Romanians had “over the course of twenty-two years.” Whether relaxing at home or working at the factory, individuals were to be constantly exposed to movies, radio shows, books, lectures, painting and sculpture, dance, and sports. All forms of mass culture were considered equally important markers of civilization. Soviet officials took pride in the fact that the Soviet government spent “billions of rubles on libraries and books loaned for free every year,” but they were equally delighted to report that “before Soviet power arrived here, there was no stationary cinema anywhere [and] the village population had not seen any movies.”

The line between culture, education, and politics was blurry - indeed, one might argue, it was nonexistent, for the purpose of the cultural offensive was above all to foster political consciousness. The “house of propaganda” in Chernivtsi, for instance, was meant to build culture and disseminate political propaganda at the same time. In addition to an exhibition hall, where visitors could learn about the “achievements of the Soviet Union after twenty-two years,” the budynok propahandy also contained rooms for “working on oneself,” a library complete with

172 M Zacopailo, “Focare de cultură la sate,” Adiurul Bolșevic, 10 April 1941.
173 Ibid.
174 “Bibliotecile raionale din orașul Cernăuți,” Adiurul Bolșevic, 6 April 1941; DAC, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 36.
Lenin’s works, Stalin’s biography, and the short course in the history of the Communist Party, and cabinets for lecturers. One of the main tasks of its propagandists was to deliver speeches and lectures to workers in factories on educational themes such as ‘what is communism and socialism, what Lenin and Stalin have to say about youth,” and teach them about “the foundations of the Marxist dialectic method” and the “October socialist revolution.” Factories were also to become important educational sites, fully equipped with choirs, “dramatic and musical circles for workers,” circles for studying the Ukrainian language and the constitution, and libraries. By June 1941 the Chernovitskaya oblast’ boasted “8 raion houses of culture, 6 raion clubs, 217 village clubs, 78 reading homes, 16 mass libraries, and 206 village club libraries.” These numbers were impressive but - in the authorities’ opinion - unsatisfactory, for “there weren’t clubs and reading homes in all populated settlements yet.” By making culture all-pervasive, the authorities sought to “eliminate illiteracy as soon as possible.” This was such an important problem that it needed to be subjected to planning, much like the economy. It was decided, for instance, that by the end of 1940 “we need to liquidate illiteracy and low literacy levels among the population of premilitary age.”

The Soviet ‘civilizing mission’ was also about modernizing the backward countryside to an extent that none of Bukovina’s previous “western” administrations had managed to. This process had a performative dimension, for the Chernovitskaya oblast’ was a frontier territory and the Soviet authorities felt it was their responsibility to put on display here, under the eyes of the capitalist world, the very best effort the Soviet regime was capable of giving. During the period

175 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 28, l 117, 10 October 1940.
176 Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy, No 64 Z dovidki orhanizatsiyu-instruktors’koho viddilu Chernivetsoho obkomu KP/b/U pro stan roboty partijnoi orhanizatsii panchishno-trykotazhnii fabryki; No 1, 27 December 1940, 91.
177 Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy, 15 June 1941, 177.
178 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 25.
after the invasion of June 28 the Soviet authorities availed themselves of every means at their disposal to signal to the local population the regime’s superiority to every previous form of government. Their favorite selling point was the Soviet Union’s modernity, as manifested in its technological development, military might, and high living standards. This, they claimed, was the ultimate Soviet *coup de grace* to the capitalist world. Soviet modernity, in the form of tanks, planes, medical care, scientific agriculture, - just like the schools and libraries - was considered indispensable to a ‘cultured’ way of life (*zhyt’ kul’turno*). By contrast, high mortality rates and poor living conditions, lack of modern technology, and, the general failure to move in step with the times were regarded as symptoms of a low level of cultural development.

While ethno-nationalist justifications for Northern Bukovina’s conquest did not always convince locals that they were privileged to live under Soviet rule, the sheer might and size of the Soviet Union and the seeming omnipotence of the regime never failed to impress and even terrify them. Special exhibitions were organized for this purpose. Delegations of ‘peasants and workers’ were invited to Kyiv and Moscow to see what life was like in the Soviet Union and report back to their neighbors and friends. One such group left Chernivtsi in the fall of 1940 to attend the anniversary of the October revolution in Kyiv and returned a few weeks later, absolutely stunned. One member recounted how “when we got to Kyiv and saw all those tanks we thought that maybe they will kill all of us on the spot.” Another confessed to having seen things “which we had never seen and could never see under Romanian rule,” such as planes and tanks, prosperous villages where peasants lived like kings, and highly educated people without a care in the world.179

This was the soft side of Soviet modernity, which appealed to people’s desire for prosperity, welfare, and high standards of living. “While before the peasant could see a clock

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179 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 98, 21 November 1940.
only at the pan’s,” one agitator proclaimed, “now in only one week the peasants bought 578 alarm clocks.” Such cravings for the appurtenances of bourgeois life seem like a strange thing to encourage in a population that had yet to be weaned off capitalism, yet the Soviets did it because it provided them with a powerful source of legitimacy. Locals were given to understand in no unclear terms that no one could manage what the Soviets did. Only a truly modern power could, within only a few months, link Northern Bukovina’s remotest corners with the rest of the world through a modern press, or dot the countryside with up-to-date medical facilities. Things like the press, the schools, and the hospitals were part of the Soviet arsenal of power as much as the tanks and airplanes. “The Soviet tanks came to Bukovina,” explained the editor of Radyans’ka Bykovyna, “and together with it came the cavalry, the artillery, and the Bolshevik press.” Already prepared for publication by the time the Soviets arrived in Chernivtsi, Bukovina’s first Soviet newspaper reached 23,000 paid subscriptions by February 1941. This was not necessarily an indication of its popularity, for subscriptions were usually forced on factory workers and members of the party-state apparatus. Even so, at the end of the day many more Bukovinans seemed to be reading newspapers under Soviet rule than ever before. To the Soviets, that was all that mattered.

Did the Soviets deliver on their promise to make Northern Bukovina modern? After almost one year of Soviet rule, the territory was no longer what it had been in June 1940. The regime had left behind a strange mixture of modernity, penury, and backwardness. Everywhere one looked, projects seemed only halfway finished, as though their architects had been chased away in the middle of their work. This was the curse of being an imperial periphery. Either because resources were in short supply, or because the distance was too great to be surpassed, or

180 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15, l. 36.
181 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, 9 February 1941.
in this case because there was not enough time - whatever any regime started here was almost never taken to completion. The strange juxtapositions of modernity and backwardness that prevailed in Northern Bukovina were also due to the fact that everything here was always done in a hurry, in a desperate attempt to catch up with some other part of the world and fall into step with history. This was just as true of the Soviet project to rebuild the Romanian province into a modern oblast’ of Soviet Ukraine. To be sure, the regime did manage in a short span of time to cure Northern Bukovina of its backwardness. The number of hospitals and medical institutions in Northern Bukovina rose from 14 before the Soviet occupation to 225 by December 1940. The health authorities set out, among other things, to discredit the superstitions that kept people from seeking medical help and to eradicate the “social illnesses” and infectious diseases that prevailed in the countryside due to unsanitary conditions.\textsuperscript{182} In the Putylivskij mountain raion, which “did not have even one medical institution before the liberation,” they opened a “sanitary station” and staffed it with doctors and nurses.\textsuperscript{183} They arrested prostitutes sick with venereal disease and reeducated them so “they are now working in factories around the oblast’ and “have given up completely their former profession (...) and are helping fight prostitution” in turn.\textsuperscript{184} As we have seen, the Soviets also sought to bring the villages up to date by opening cinemas, introducing radios and telephones, and founding clubs and theaters all over the countryside.\textsuperscript{185}

Many of these institutions, however, were assembled in a hurry and operated on a very low level—or were in such a state that they could be said to exist more on paper than in reality. Villages did get cinemas for the first time, but they couldn’t enjoy them because they were filthy

\textsuperscript{182} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 71, 12 February 1941.
\textsuperscript{183} Kurylo, 
\textsuperscript{184} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, ll 21-22.
\textsuperscript{185} Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy, 10 July 1941, Z rezolutsii 1-i oblasnoi partiiino konferentsii Chernivetskoi oblasti, 129.
and “don’t have chairs, people have nothing to sit on.” State institutions did reach into the countryside, but they were often located in ramshackle buildings which hardly seemed to symbolize modernity. The contrast between aspirations and realities was tragicomic. In December 1940, the official oblast’ newspaper Radyans’ka Bukovyna announced, with great enthusiasm, that “fires are burning in the mountains, these are the fires of [Soviet] agitators.” Shortly afterwards a reader – either a very literal-minded person or one with a well-developed sense of irony - asked to meet the editor-in-chief. The visitor, a local from the Vyzhnitskij raion, wished to inform the newspaper that “we haven’t had any gas already for a few days” in the mountains. The misunderstanding was all the more embarrassing as it showed that locals took the propaganda seriously and expected the regime to practice what it preached.

The Soviet ‘civilizing mission’ was only deceptively similar to what the Austrians and Romanians had attempted to do in Bukovina, for the regime sought not simply to push Bukovina to a higher cultural level but to create an entirely new kind of civilization. Because the peasantry made up the bulk of Northern Bukovina’s population, the village was where socialism had to be built first. The reader will recall from earlier chapters that the problem of land ownership had always been a thorny one in rural Bukovina. Ever since the 19th century most arable land and forests in the province had been in the hands of the church. A few landowners, mostly ethnic Romanians and some Poles, owned large estates. The vast majority of the peasantry owned little land, usually well below 5 hectares per family. On returning from the front at the end of World War I, some peasants - inspired by the Bolshevik revolution in the east - seized the property of landowners and began dividing it amongst themselves. To keep the situation from spiraling out of control, the Romanian authorities implemented an agricultural reform that transferred land

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186 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 104, 9 February 1941.
187 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 49.
188 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
from old landowners and the conservative elites to the peasantry. Though far from perfect, the land reform managed to pacify the peasantry.

Yet old inequalities persisted, and those who owned little or no land resented the better-off. By Soviet estimates, “66% of peasants under Romanian rule had 1/5 ha each.”189 That said, the Soviets did not find the Bukovinian countryside in a state of ‘class warfare,’ but had to create different “classes” of peasants and pit them against each other. The Soviets introduced the concepts of bednyaki (poor peasants), serednyaki (mid-level peasants), and kurkuly (rich peasants or kulaks) to Bukovina, although - as elsewhere - these categories made little sense. Rural society was certainly differentiated, but the differences in wealth between ‘poor peasants’ and kurkuly were not all that clear. These were political terms, more important for what they created - class struggle - than what they represented. Only one week into the occupation, the Soviet authorities nationalized church property, privately-owned factories, and land and real estate - a total of 191,074 hectares190 - that they confiscated from Romanian landowners, state functionaries, and kurkuly or which they simply took from “the bourgeoisie that left.”191 Once it had been measured and catalogued, most of the confiscated or abandoned land was distributed among peasant households, which in turn had to be catalogued and divided into categories for this purpose.192 As long as they were on the receiving end, most people played along. When the time came to collect the land they had been promised, the ‘poor peasants’ in one village showed up at the village soviet (sil’rada) before the crack of dawn.193 The overly zealous among the local population even put themselves at the regime’s service, helping the authorities “find hidden

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189 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
190 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, 9 February 1941; also fond P1, op. 1, d. 10 on nationalization.
191 Radyanska Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy. 9 July 1940, No 7 Povidomlennya pro stanovysche v m. Chernivtsyah pislya zalozhennya iooho okupantami ta pershi svali radyans'koi vlady, 9 July 1940.
192 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
raw materials and fight against sabotage.”

By some standards, then, the nationalization of private property in Northern Bukovina was a success;

But while some individuals were being robbed by the state, the state was in turn being robbed by its own servants. This perversely symbiotic relationship between the state and its representatives was why the nationalization process appeared to work so seamlessly.

Accountable to no one but themselves, state officials charged with registering nationalized property helped themselves to some of the “people’s property” - for they were people too, after all. Sometimes they made genuine mistakes; in one case, the party authorities in Chernivtsi discovered that a number of private apartments had been repaired at the state’s expense because “we still don’t know how much of the household fund in the city has been nationalized” and some buildings that were still private had been mistaken for nationalized ones. More often, state officials who stood to gain from the nationalization process deliberately deceived “the state.” They either did not register those goods they wished to take for themselves or they reported smaller numbers so they could wheel and deal with the rest. Put plainly, the Soviet state was stealing from itself.

How could this happen? Easily enough. In the Kitsman raion, the nationalization of private property was finished even before the raion executive committee (raispol’kom) had had a chance to form a nationalization commission. Even the laziest local officials could not stand by when such a golden opportunity for personal enrichment presented itself. Eight shops that had not been scheduled for nationalization were nationalized as a result. Among the goods that were confiscated and supposedly handed over to the Raipotrebsoyuz were “old women’s shirts, six

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194 Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne, 137-142.
195 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, ll 97-98, 9 February 194.
pieces of tea spoons, one pair of stockings, bed sheets, a “trenchcoat [and] a blouse.”\(^{196}\) The officials who orchestrated this “took from the nationalized property everything they liked and in addition appropriated things from abandoned apartments as well.” To cover up their thefts, they recorded the confiscated goods in vague and general terms (“took drawer with hats,” “took drawer with household items”/ galanteriya) and “evaluated these goods at comically low prices.”

The stand-in for the Raipotrebsoyuz’s president, a certain Dolgij, came out of the operation with “a suit, two leather jackets, a trench coat, gold watches, a golden ring, a bracelet, not to mention the money he must have taken.”\(^{197}\) Another official took a fancy to—and accordingly took—a “trench coat, a carpet, two golden rings golden watches, [and] a golden necklace.” As for the head of the Raifinotdel department, he too participated in the plunder and, in accordance with his status, “he took more than everyone else,” hiding some of the stolen goods with locals.

The initial redistribution of land from the rich to the poor was not an end in itself but a strategy to ignite ‘class struggle’ in the countryside by turning those who were being dispossessed against those who stood to benefit from their dispossession. Through the “passage of the village household to socialism,” Bukovinans were supposed to reenact and relive the “revolutionary transformations of October 1917.”\(^{198}\) As their class struggle escalated, peasants were expected to join collective farms voluntarily. Entering the collective farm was almost like a rite of passage that could not be rushed. “In the question of collectivization, we have to carry out our work more boldly,” Hrushetsky said in February 1941. “[We] shouldn’t allow any forced endeavors” for the “task of the party organization is to help those who wish to join kolgospy.”\(^{199}\)

The transition from individual to collective farming was a political act, whereby the

\(^{196}\) DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 23 Stenohrama zasedaniya biuro Chernovitskoho Obkoma KP (b) U, 3 October 1940.

\(^{197}\) Ibid.

\(^{198}\) M Gurin, “Numa în colhoz viață îndestulată și culturală,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 7 March 1941.

\(^{199}\) DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 29.
peasantry gradually shed its acquisitive spirit and achieved political enlightenment. But since the regime was pressed for time, the two processes - building socialism and achieving political enlightenment - had to be fused into one. The collective farms had to be created whether or not the peasants were ready. In December 1940, the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the KP/b/U decreed that the authorities in the Chernivetskaya oblast’ should organize radgospy (the equivalent of sovkhozy) “on former landowners’ estates and agricultural land” and supply them with “tractors, agricultural machinery, and inventory” out of their own funds and from the repository that “used to belong to landowners.” Some peasants - usually the good-for-nothings who could not farm on their own - willingly joined collective farms, for membership in a kolkosp allowed them to enjoy the fruits of collective labor on equal terms with their better skilled and harder working colleagues.

Most peasants, however, viewed collectivization not as empowerment but as theft. An army of propagandists and political agitators were sent into the villages to persuade these peasants through “mass-political work” that “kolkhozes are the only way to a plentiful and cultured life” and “the only path out of poverty.” More than 12,000 agitators were instructed to familiarize “peasants with the successes of building socialism in the USSR, the Soviet Constitution, the achievements of kolkosp in Ukraine” and to teach them the foundations of collective agriculture. Above all, Bukovinian peasants were to learn about the benefits of collective farming by attending agricultural exhibits in the Soviet Union and visiting model kolkosp and kolkhozy “in the eastern oblasti” of Ukraine and elsewhere around the USSR. On returning, peasants reported that kolkhozniki were living like kulaks, for they had “cattle and

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200 Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy, No 60 Postanova radnarkomu URSR i TsK Kp/b/U pro orhanizatsiyu radgospiv u Chernivets’kij ta Izmail’skij oblastyakh, 18 December 1940, 81.
201 M Gurin, “Numa in colhoz viata indestulata si culturala,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 7 March 1941.
202 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 42.
203 Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne.
birds of which we could only dream - and no more” as well as “clean sheets and carpets,” and the radios playing in their homes “make you want to dance all night.”\textsuperscript{204} It was the promise a bourgeois lifestyle that most visitors found appealing about the collective farms. This was problematic from an ideological point of view, but nevertheless effective. “We now know that what the Romanians told us about Soviet power being only hunger and toil and fatigue was a lie,” one peasant concluded, “and whoever will lie to us about Soviet power now, we will spit on their face.”\textsuperscript{205}

The collective farms had been designed to fulfill both a political and economic role. They were not only to emancipate the peasantry politically and prepare the “gradual shift of the peasant masses towards socialism,” but also to modernize the local economy. Unlike the primitive individual farm, which “couldn’t achieve the techniques and achievements of agricultural science,” the collective state-owned farm would operate on a larger scale and have access to modern agricultural machinery.\textsuperscript{206} Peasants on collective farms would no longer fumble in the dark but would instead use science to produce harvests “on a high agro-technical level.”\textsuperscript{207} They would draw support from the radgospy, state farms that were supposed to “always be an example of socialist agriculture,” and the MTS (mashyno-traktorny stantsii), which supplied the farms with functional tractors and other agricultural machinery the kolgospy needed.\textsuperscript{208} To raise the scientific level of agriculture in the oblast’, peasants on collective farms were made to attend circles on “agronomic and zootechnical studies,” and special activists were sent into the kolgospy to help farmers “increase their productivity.”

\textsuperscript{204} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 98, Stinohrama Naradi z uchasnikami delegatsii, shcho bula na demonstratsii Zhovtneyk Sviat u Kyivi, 21 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{206} M Gurin, “Numa in colhoz viata indestulata si culturala,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 7 March 1941.
\textsuperscript{207} Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne, 147.
\textsuperscript{208} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
The collective farm was akin to a school in many respects. The peasants who joined the *kolgosp* were to develop politically by learning about the Communist party and the Soviet state, to become civilized through exposure to steady ‘cultural work,’ and to help build socialism through modern agricultural methods. The formation of *kolgosp* proceeded at a slow rate and encountered plenty of obstacles. Like the entire planned economy, the collective farms turned out to be a monument of inefficiency. Because they attracted free riders and repelled productive workers, they failed to raise the standard of living in the countryside. Indeed, many peasants on the collective farms - both in Northern Bukovina and other *kolgosp* in the USSR - experienced a sharp decline in living conditions on joining the *kolgosp*. Shortages of food and basic goods were quite frequent; in some localities, it was said that “wherever there are *kolkhozy* there is not a piece of bread left,” and that *kolkhozniki* were “standing in line for borscht.” When a group of unkempt Gypsies came to the bazaar in Khotyn, “word spread that they were *kolkhozniki* from the other side of the Dniester.”

Rumors about the poor living conditions in the USSR spread rapidly. One local from Rukhotyn who moved to Khotyn told everyone that “I am coming here because over there it’s very bad, work is hard and there is nothing to eat, there is nowhere to buy [food], everything is expensive. In Russia the people are suffering very much, there is nothing, they only work day and night in vain, and then receive only one kilogram of bread and those who work, their children die of hunger.” The collective farms became a kind of scarecrow, the next disaster in a long chain of deprivations and calamities to befall the countryside. Some peasants began looking to Nazi Germany, hoping that “Hitler will come with the German army and take Northern Bukovina away and make it a part of the Ukrainian republic and then we will live well.

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209 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 72, l. 5, 14 April 1941.
210 Ibid.
- under Hitler we won’t stand in line as much as we are doing now under Stalin.”

It is no surprise, then, that many peasants began leaving the collective farms *en masse*. It was enough for one or two households to voice their wish to leave the *kolgosp* for many others to join them. Their exit had a domino effect on the entire collectivization project, for it discouraged others from forming or joining *kolgospy* as well. Some peasants were so opposed to the idea of joining a collective farm that they willingly sold their horses and destroyed their cattle so they wouldn’t fall into the hands of the state and be collectivized. Others decided to exit the *kolgosp* very soon after joining - in one case only one day after they had entered the collective farm. The only explanation for this strange behavior is that the peasants in question had been forced (probably by agitators) to join the *kolgosp* against their will or that they willingly signed on without knowing what they were getting into. Even Soviet officials admitted that many peasants on collective farms “don’t really know what they’re working for, how much they are making, they completely lack a production plan.” The authorities believed such incidents were orchestrated by ‘enemy elements’ and *kurkuly* who had been swept into the collective farms during the initial collectivization drive. “[We] took into the *kolkhoz* anyone, we didn’t respect the class principle,” one official confessed. In some cases, politically unreliable elements were even elected to leadership roles within the farms. The president of one *kolgosp* in the Sekurianskij *raion* was a former “Cuzist,” while in another village two priests who were allowed to form a *kolkhoz* “began working [to get] peasants to exit the *kolkhoz*” soon afterwards. There was no doubt in the mind of the authorities that these elements had to be weeded out as soon as possible.

But most declarations to withdraw from the *kolgosp* were in fact handed in by *bednyaki*

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211 Ibid., 11.
212 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 147.
213 Ibid.
214 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 190.
215 Ibid., l 138, 23 May 1941.
and that was troubling.\textsuperscript{216} The Soviet leadership believed it was above all the task of agitators and officials on the ground to break down all forms of resistance to collectivization by educating locals in the meaning and purpose of collective farming. Ruthless towards the ‘instigators’ who set off the movement to exit the \textit{kolkhozy}, the authorities were equally strict about punishing officials who did not battle enemy elements, for “we can’t allow such a situation in the \textit{kolkhoz} in which we are being harmed because our enemies continue to exist.”\textsuperscript{217} One unfortunate Stepchenko, the president of the \textit{raispol’kom} in the Novoselitskij \textit{raion}, lost his position and his party membership because he allowed “a bunch of political mistakes to be committed,” completely losing control over a \textit{kolgosp}. The trouble started when a number of peasants in his \textit{raion} demanded to exit their collective farm on the pretext that their wives had not been present at the meeting when they signed up for the \textit{kolgosp}. “The wife didn’t know that I entered the \textit{kolkhoz}, I tricked her, the woman wasn’t at the meeting and doesn’t want to enter the \textit{kolkhoz}” they claimed.\textsuperscript{218} Instead of reporting it to the \textit{obkom partii}, Stepchenko swept this incident under the carpet, supposedly allowing poorer peasants to fall under the influence of \textit{kurkuly} who would show up at meetings and claim, without revealing their identity, that “Soviet power distributes land to everyone but they didn’t give land to me.”

The transition to socialism in the countryside revealed the extractive nature of the Soviet state. To peasants used to having their food and cattle requisitioned over and over by this and that occupation force, Soviet officials coming to ‘build socialism’ in Northern Bukovina looked like yet another gang of robbers. The Soviets at first insisted that the passage to collective farming should occur organically and gradually and, most importantly, without resort to violence. At the same time, however, they were adamant not to compromise with “enemies” who

\textsuperscript{216} DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58, l 151.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., l 140.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., l 138.
resisted collectivization. This strategy allowed them to justify the use of violence against anyone who stood in the way of collectivization while also reinforcing their commitment to being “strongly tied to the masses.”219 Any peasant who refused to join the kolgosp could be readily classified as an “enemy” and arrested as a member of “bourgeois nationalist groups that are placing obstacles in the way of our economic measures.”220 This is, perhaps, why a large number of households “expressed the wish to join kolgospy.”221 By July 1941, 7,000 families had requested membership in a kolgosp and 10 collective farms had already been formed in the oblast’.

Most peasants got to keep their individual farms, but they weren’t spared the task of building socialism, for the state required them to pay obligatory taxes in kind. By order of the Radnarkom [Council of People’s Commissars] of Ukraine, beginning with August 1940 all individual farms in Northern Bukovina were to deliver a certain quantity of wheat, soy, corn, and vegetables to the state, calculated to match the size and productivity of their land.222 Like most procedures requiring officials to measure and record things, the deliveries were bungled through negligence and by grave mistakes that detracted from the regime’s popularity.223 Careless officials collected taxes from “households which by law should have been exempt from the bread delivery…” They incorrectly registered poor or mid-level peasants as kurkuly, taxing them well beyond what they could afford, even though the purpose of the tax was to “strike at the kurkuly and strengthen the households of poor peasants.”224 Officials who carried out the ‘collections’ sometimes abused their power, taking from peasants whatever they liked as “tax.”

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219 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 86.
220 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 62, l 86.
221 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, July 1941.
222 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 30.
223 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
224 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9, l 17.
reprimanded, one official who had been caught in the act of “stealing from the cooperative goods for himself and his relatives” indignantly retorted that “I am responsible for the entire village and I work for everyone and I have the right to take (...) whatever I like.” Moreover, delivery norms proved impossible to fulfill because they did not take into account circumstances on the ground, such as the fact that peasants “don’t have the means to complete the thrashing of grain.” The Soviet authorities blamed the low output on the failure of political agitators to explain to peasants “the significance of the Soviet law on agricultural tax.” Yet the real source of the problem was the planned economy itself: the fact that calculations above had very little to do with realities below.

Why should the Soviets preoccupy themselves with the backward countryside when the Soviet regime was, as propagandists never tired of emphasizing, the embodiment of modernity? What about the cities? If we look more carefully at what the Soviets were actually trying to achieve in the countryside, their actions seem less unusual. More numerous than the towns and cities, the villages constituted Northern Bukovina’s main economic force. While Chernivtsi and the other towns had their share of factories, these were neither large nor numerous, and they accounted for only a small fraction of the provincial economy. It was thus in the regime’s best interest to put its eggs in the largest basket - which, in Bukovina, had always been agriculture. The Soviet regime invested heavily in mechanizing and modernizing agriculture to boost productivity and improve economic output. But this was only one reason why socialism had to be built in the villages first. The Soviets were concerned about the countryside for ideological reasons too - though not in the same way that, say, Romanian nationalists and the Romanian administration had been. While the latter saw in the village a repository of national
consciousness, for the Soviets the villages were a diseased organ in the body of the province. They believed that socialism could not be built in Northern Bukovina unless these pockets of backwardness, with their high illiteracy rates and primitive lifestyle, were transformed into bastions of Soviet civilization.

It was the task of modern agriculture to make the village more like the city by turning the impoverished peasantry into an agricultural working class. Even though the regime’s main economic basis and the focus of its civilizing work was in the countryside, it did not completely ignore the city either. Much like their predecessors, the Soviet administration set out to turn Chernivtsi into a bastion of Soviet civilization and “a model Soviet city.” Chernivtsi seemed out of place in this new Soviet universe. It had a a glamorous and coquettish air about it that even the Soviet authorities found hard to resist. Bringing the city “to the same level as its older brothers, the cities of the Soviet Union” was somewhat of a challenge, for Chernivtsi looked anything but Soviet - not to mention Ukrainian. While its urban landscape was dominated by Austrian architecture, here and there Chernivtsi’s streets were also dotted with modern-looking Romanian buildings. How did the administration go about Sovietizing the city? They did not try to erase all traces of previous administrations. Instead, they believed their mission to be modernizing and fully urbanizing a city balanced uneasily between the urban and the rural. The Soviets made it their task to provide Chernivtsi with all the amenities of a modern city - a public transportation system, proper sanitation, public parks and museums - and to be absolutely ruthless towards “dirt and lack of culture.”

The key vehicle for urbanization was industry, for without it Chernivtsi was nothing but a big village with “charming nature” and pretty “streets, squares, and beautiful buildings.” With

227 “Pentru buna orânduire a orașului,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 5 April 1941.
228 Ibid.
their usual triumphalism, Soviet propagandists proclaimed that the Soviet regime single-handedly built Northern Bukovina’s industry, after the Romanian “boyars did everything to prevent the development of productive forces in Northern Bukovina.” In truth, the Soviets did not have to build an industry from scratch in Northern Bukovina, for they inherited an industrial infrastructure from the Romanians. Party officials bragged about having to “repair and restore many factories and enterprises left over from the Romanian period that hadn’t been working for 14-20 years.” Though far from perfect, the pre-existing network of industrial enterprises could be easily recycled and repurposed. All the Soviets had to do was nationalize already-existing private enterprises and merge them into larger units. In this way, the number of factories in the oblast’ increased from 328 enterprises “out of which only 220 were working,” in June 1940, to 318 productive enterprises by December 1940. First purged of unreliable capitalist elements, the factories were then placed in the care of the state. Yet the party could not run every institution single-handedly, because they needed specialists who knew how to work the machinery and run the factories. The problem was that these were typically members of the bourgeois, capitalist classes. The administration solved the dilemma by pairing Communist factory directors with specialists recruited from among former factory owners.

This procedure was as old as the Soviet Union itself, providing the foundation for the double party-state apparatus, but it also posed risks that seemed all the greater in a frontier territory like Northern Bukovina. The main danger was that the party leadership in the factories would come to depend too much on the ‘enemy elements,’” making it easier for them to engage in acts of sabotage and wrecking. In reality, the ‘enemy elements’ were not as dangerous as some of the personnel appointed by the party, who spoiled production plans not by committing

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229 Ibid.
230 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 13.
231 Ibid.
sabotage but by appropriating materials for themselves. For instance, a certain Moskalev, the
new director of the Tiva factory in Chernivtsi, “instead of decorating the Red Corner took the
furniture and other elements of the Red Corner for his own apartment instead of the factory.”

Corruption of this sort was far from new. What was new was the emergence of a working
class in Northern Bukovina. In December 1940, the obkom reported that the total number of
industrial workers in the oblast’ had increased from 8,735 to 19,540 - as much as 224%. The
new working class was not only much more numerous than ever before - for the Soviets set out
to “completely liquidate unemployment” - but it was also supposed to embody a new, Soviet
society characterized by high living standards, a raised cultural level, and great “work
discipline.” Before long, officials reported that “there are cases in which one person is working
at eight different machine tools.” Stakhanovites and udarniki who over-fulfilled their norms
appeared on the front pages of the oblast’ newspaper. Yet in many ways this new world
resembled the old. In Gertsa, the son of a merchant confessed that “I don’t see a difference
between feudalism and the socialist state. Under feudalism man was forced and dependent on
labor, he was almost held captive by it and now, under the socialist state, there is nothing
different, man is just as forced to work and just as dependent on labor.”

There was another important element to the Soviet ‘cultural revolution’ in Bukovina:
recovering the province’s Ukrainian character. As soon as they set foot in Bukovina, the Soviets
proclaimed the province a Ukrainian land - and they acted upon this idea when they formally
incorporated the newly annexed territory into the Ukrainian SSR in August 1940. The culture
they set out to build there was not just any kind - it took the form of Ukrainian culture, to be

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232 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 13.
233 Ibid., l 12, December 1940.
234 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 9.
235 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 70, l 19.
disseminated primarily through the Ukrainian language. The Soviets were not trying to simply reverse the Romanization project - pick out the Ukrainians as the dominant nationality and replace the diversity of Bukovina’s culture with a predominantly Ukrainian note. This was not a simple exercise in nation-building through culture that the Soviets set out to do in Bukovina. The claim that the land was and had always been Ukrainian was a manifestation of Soviet promises to put an end to national oppression and allow all peoples the right to national self-determination. It meant fulfilling what all the nationalities had demanded at the end of World War I and never been given. So what the Soviets aimed to do was fix the injustices that followed World War I - when the nationalities had been freed from the imperial yoke only to lose their freedom once again. In this case, the claim was that Bukovina “became prisoner to the Romanian occupants for 21 years,” for in 1918 the Ukrainian population gathered in Chernivtsi in November had demanded unification with Ukraine – only to have their appeal rejected. This was an interesting aim because on the one hand the Soviets claimed that under Soviet rule all nationalities in Bukovina would be equal and oppression would finally cease. National differences would overcome through a common allegiance to socialism.

But just like the Habsburgs, who also wanted to create a supranational culture out of the patchwork of languages and cultures in Bukovina but could only do so by resorting to one specific language, – so too did the Soviets run into the same problem. Their cultural revolution, despite its universal pretentions, had to be communicated through one specific language: Ukrainian. “The inviolable law of the USSR is the equality of Soviet citizens independently of their nationality and race” - this was the promise that made the Soviet regime attractive,
especially to Bukovina’s minorities. Under Soviet rule, all nationalities would be equal, but at the same time some - the Ukrainians - would be more equal than others. The contradiction was reconciled by claiming that the Ukrainians had been wronged by every other regime before then - that Bukovina belonged to them and that they had been persecuted by both the Austrians and the Romanians.

Making the land Ukrainian again was part of the Soviet project of amending past wrongs and restoring historical injustices. Soviet officials claimed, for instance, that the Red Army had crossed the Dniester and entered Bukovina to fix injustices such as the fact that “the Ukrainian land Bukovina had been unjustly torn out of the body of the great Soviet Ukraine.” This was a bit of an anachronism because at the time Bukovina had been ‘unjustly torn out’ there had been no such thing as ‘Soviet Ukraine.’ This confusion was intentional because what it implied was that the body of ancient Ukraine - the nationalist idea of a Ukraine that reached back into the beginnings of time - was the same as Soviet Ukraine, that the Soviets had finally managed to fulfill the dream of a united Ukraine. This was also how their anti-imperialism manifested itself - it took the form of a nation-building project. Unlike the Austrians and Romanians, who had treated Bukovina as a colony to be exploited and who had kept its predominantly Ukrainian rural population in darkness, the Soviets promised to give back to the Ukrainians what was rightfully theirs. This national dimension to the Soviet project was fused with the social one. The underlying claim was that the backwardness of Bukovina and the social inequalities that had persisted there had clear national dimensions.

There was a clear correspondence between the nationally and the socially oppressed - for

237 Radyans’ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945, Dokumenty i materialy, Nr 8 Rezolutsiya narady holiv ta sekretariv volosnykh vykonkomiv, sil’skich i mis’kich rad pro rozpodil pomishchytyskich ta tserkovykh zemel’ mizh bezzemeľnymy ta malozemeľnymy selyanami Chernivets’koho povitu, 11 July 1940, 19.
238 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 15.
the landowners were usually Romanian and the ‘enslaved’ peasants were Ukrainian. When the Soviets launched their nationalization campaign, for instance, the land they confiscated was ‘nationalized’ in more than one sense. First, it was taken from its previous owners and given away to the state and ‘the people.’ At the same time, the land was also redistributed from the ‘Romanian boyars’ and the church to the Ukrainian peasants. “Even when the land reform was carried out, those territories were taken from the Ukrainian population and given to Romanian colonists.” The backwardness of the countryside was also, supposedly, one manifestation of national oppression. The Ukrainians who made up the majority of the peasant population were backward and poor because the Romanian ‘boyars’ made them so. “Instead of selling medication, the Romanian government sold vodka,” and people “were mostly fed on corn polenta.” But the discrimination against the Ukrainians had also taken cultural forms, for the Romanians had banned the Ukrainian language and eradicated Ukrainian schools and cultural institutions: “the Romanian boyars tortured and ruined our people, they forbade the Ukrainian word, the Ukrainian song, school, press, theater, and even persecuted the Bukovinans for [wearing] national Ukrainian clothes.” Because the Romanians wished to keep them in a state of subordination, the Ukrainians “couldn’t find a Ukrainian book, newspaper, or a Ukrainian school.” So what the Soviets did put forward was the idea that this province fit perfectly within the Greater Ukraine, unified under Soviet rule, like the missing piece of a puzzle. Of course, the composition of the population was a bit more complicated here, and it took some work to demonstrate that this region was no different from the rest of Ukraine. The Huzuls were quickly dismissed as one variety of Ukrainians, no different from their ‘co-nationals’ in the Stalins’kaya

239 DACHo, fond R-3, op 1, d 35, l 34.
240 Radyans'ka Bukovyna: 1940-1945: Dokumenty i materialy, Nr 8 Rezolutsiya narady holiv ta sekretariv volosnykh vykonkomiv, sil'skich i mis'kich rad pro rozpodil pomishchytshkikh ta tserkovykh zemel' mizh bezzemel'nymi ta malozemel'nymi selyanami Chernivets'koho povitru, 11 July 1940, 18.
oblast’ or anywhere else in Ukraine, for “they all speak Ukrainian and differ very little from other [Ukrainians], only based on their way of life.” They Soviets also set out to prove, through statistics, that the province was really had a Ukrainian majority - which was true, especially now that so many Romanians had fled across the border. According to the Soviet census of January 1941, out of 41,866 people in the Chernovitskij raion, 33,872 were Ukrainians. Interestingly enough, the Romanian population was split into two categories: 4,729 Moldavians and 2,749 Romanians, no doubt in order to make it seem like there was fewer of them - for there was essentially no difference between these two groups.

How did the Soviets actually go about building Ukrainian culture in the province? They did in many ways what the Romanian administration had done when they arrived in the province. They sought to reshape the territory to fit their own idea about what it should look like through deliberate policies that amounted to a kind of ‘affirmative action’ for Ukrainians and the Ukrainian language. The Ukrainians had always been an important presence in Bukovina, especially in the north, but they had never dominated its institutions and cultural landscape. They were a large percentage of the rural population but they played a marginal role politically and culturally. The policies the Soviets adopted when they arrived in the province were meant to reverse this situation by pushing the Ukrainians forward. It was taken to be an undeniable fact that “even though the majority of the population of Northern Bukovina consists of Ukrainians - 87% - there were no schools in the Ukrainian language” under the Romanian administration. “The workers” - assumed to be Ukrainian - also didn’t have the right to study at the university. In short, “hatred of Ukrainian culture had led to the complete liquidation of Ukrainian schools.”

Once again, this policy had both a national and a social dimension: it was supposed to bring the

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241 DACHO, fond R-3, op. 1, d. 35, l 117.
242 Ibid.
Ukrainians into positions of leadership they had never been able to afford before, but this was also desirable because the Ukrainians embodied the ideal type of the peasant and worker.

One of the first measures the Soviets took was to make Ukrainian the official language of the oblast’ for the entire party-state apparatus. As part of the Sovietization of the court system, beginning in August 1940 “in all civilian courts all trials were carried out exclusively in the Ukrainian language,” though for a while Romanian and German translators were also employed.243 There were deviations in practice – which, to this day, Ukrainian nationalists cite as proof that the Soviets set out to destroy Ukrainian culture in Bukovina. In reality, it is clear that the intention was to make Ukrainian the dominant language. If we look at the minutes of party organization meetings and official state documents, we see that all of the proceedings are recorded in Ukrainian, with the exception of a small number of conversations in Russian. Party officials were explicitly encouraged to use Ukrainian any time they had a chance, and those who did not yet speak it were urged to learn it. “There are some bad people who say there is no sense in learning the Ukrainian language,” one party official said at an obkom meeting, “and that it is more useful to learn Russian because everyone speaks it, but we need to set this right.”244 In October 1940, it came to Hrushetsky’s knowledge that in the Kitsmanskij raion the leader of the agitation and propaganda department of the raikom would speak only Russian because “I am used to speaking only Russian.” “At some point I decided to check what language is being spoken in our institutions,” reported Hrushetsky, “I began to call to the Narosvita, Oblspozhyvspilka and other institutions. Everywhere in Ukrainian, and they stubbornly respond in Russian. This shows that in our institutions the ruling/dominant language is Russian.”245 The obkom secretary resolved that this could not be tolerated much longer because it was

243 Kurylo, Pivnichna Bukovyna: ii mynule i suchasne, 397.
244 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
245 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l. 53.
disrespectful towards the Ukrainian language. On those rare occasions where a peasant delegate or party representative spoke in Romanian, their speech wasn’t even recorded - presumably because the stenographer couldn’t speak the language.

The intention was to recruit as many Ukrainians as possible, and failures on this front always came to the obkom’s attention. For example, in March 1941, one party official reported that in the Sadogurskij raion the Komsomol organization consisted of 456 Ukrainians and 401 Jews. The problem with this was that the Jews were represented disproportionally to their numbers; while the Ukrainians made up 75% of the oblast’ population, “it turns out that 50% [of the work] is done by the Jewish population.” This violated the main principle of Leninist national policy, which required that the party-state apparatus reflect the national composition of the local population. The Soviets also sought to build Ukrainian culture in Northern Bukovina by making the educational system Ukrainian. Ukrainian was made the main language of instruction in the vast majority of schools in the oblast’ and at the university as well. With this step, the Soviets claimed they had converted the educational system from a tool of national oppression into one of national emancipation.

This measure was also meant to place Ukrainians in leadership positions and cultivate a new body of Ukrainian cadres loyal to the regime. Indeed, under Romanian rule the Ukrainians had been poorly represented at the university. According to Soviet statistics, Ukrainian students made up only 2-2.5% of the total student body. However, this new language policy didn’t actually reflect the language practices of the population, and it soon turned out that many ethnic Ukrainians couldn’t actually speak and write their native language well enough to study in it. Just as in the Austrian days, non-native German speakers would often have to take preparatory

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246 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 58.
247 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 79, 9 February 1941.
classes before attending the German-language gymnasium, now too special “complementary lessons” in Ukrainian were organized in secondary schools and at the university to make it possible for students to pass exams. As the new rector of the university admitted, at the beginning of the school year some of the Bukovinian and Bessarabian students newly enrolled “didn’t know the Ukrainian language but they learned it with our help and when the time came to take the exam they took them all in the Ukrainian language.”248 At first it was difficult to recruit enough Ukrainian students to outnumber the other nationalities, not only because of the language barrier but also because Ukrainians were predominantly rural and less educated. Out of 1,553 students who attended the university during the 1939-1940 school year, only 55 were Ukrainian and the overwhelming majority (1,115) were Romanian - and even those few Ukrainians were apparently the “children of kulaks, priests, landowners.” “[Every] measure should be taken to make sure the Ukrainian nationality is better represented among the students,” the obkom secretary decided in Sept 1940.249

If more Ukrainians were to study at the university in Chernivtsi, the authorities would have to go out of their way to assist them. This they did; the university sent teachers and a student aktiv into the villages and towns to get more village youth “who did not even think of going to university” to consider studying. “We registered more than 300 people who came to us in this way but unfortunately we could not take them into the university because they didn’t have sufficient knowledge,” the rector reported in September 1940.250 In addition, it was decided to organize special courses to help prepare village youth to apply to the university. The university professors were also to be predominantly Ukrainian. The Ukrainization of the faculty body happened “naturally,” for only two of the former professors at the university stayed behind while

248 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 80, 9 February 1941.
249 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 22, 26 September 1940.
250 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 115.
the rest fled to Romania. In a very short period of time, then, the Soviets had to replace 98% of the faculty with “professors and teachers from the eastern oblasti.” 251 These people were all Ukrainian, which led the “inimical elements” to complain that “this is a Ukrainian and nothing more. For them this is enough that he is Ukrainian. When they recommend someone for work, they say, this is a Ukrainian, and this takes clearly chauvinistic forms.” 252

What the Soviets wanted to communicate was that their regime was not antithetical to Ukrainian nationalism but, on the contrary, accomplished the nationalist dream of unifying all Ukrainians into a Greater Ukraine. It was important to the Soviets to get across that they were not breaking with the Ukrainian tradition but were instead bringing to completion what figures like “Oleks Dovbush, Lukijan Kobylytsia, Iosip Yuri Fedkovych, the Vorobkevich brothers, and later Yaryshanska and Kobylians’ka” had begun. 253 As soon as they arrived in Bukovina, the Soviets leapt on the only remaining representative of the Ukrainian literary tradition in Bukovina: the writer Ol’ha Kobylians’ka. Considered one of the greatest Ukrainian female writers, Kobylians’ka was part of that generation of literary stars which included Lesya Ukrainka and Ivano Franko. Active and prolific before the war, Kobylians’ka had been forced into silence after the unification with Romania, when the Ukrainian language was pushed into a marginal role and Kobylians’ka’s ties with other Ukrainian literary circles were severed. Bukovina and Galicia - in many ways the center of Ukrainian culture - were no longer under the same roof, and the new borders separating them made the circulation of ideas and literary material difficult. This was the kind of story the Soviets loved to tell. They reshaped Kobylians’ka from a writer profoundly influenced by her Austrian upbringing (her first writings were actually in German) into a representative of the poor and oppressed Ukrainian nation. The Radyans’ka Bukovyna

251 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 17.
252 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 7, l 20.
253 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 79, 9 February 1941.
named her the “honored daughter of the Ukrainian people” and made sure to mention that Kobylians’ka had gone to school only for four years, as many girls then did, but had avidly ‘worked on herself’ nevertheless as soon as her family moved to Chernivtsi, “using all the possibilities [available] in the city to improve her cultural level.” Kobylians’ka was presented as a victim of imperialism and national oppression, for the “Romanian boyars who stifled Ukrainian culture didn’t allow her to write and publish her works.”

Now that Bukovina was formally incorporated into Ukraine, Kobylians’ka was no longer an unknown writer in the obscure language of a repressed minority, but a literary celebrity. Not only that, but she also had the good fortune of seeing the dream of a Greater Ukraine come true under her eyes – something which could not be said of any of her old literary companions. “She is happy that she lived to see this historic moment: the Ukrainians’ unification with their brothers of the same blood” reported the Radyans’ka Bukovyna, noting that ever since the Soviet troops had arrived in Bukovina Kobylians’ka was “living the best and brightest times of her life.” All of a sudden, the 77-year-old Kobylianska was pushed from obscurity into literary fame. Almost every day the oblast’ newspaper had something to report about the writer. In September 1940, there was an official celebration in honor of Kobylians’ka, a jubilee marking 55 years of literary activity. The regime never missed an opportunity to present Kobylians’ka as a symbol of Soviet power. The authorities emphasized that Kobylians’ka, the old Ukrainian nationalist writer, wholeheartedly approved of the Soviet regime because they were accomplishing what she had always hoped for. Kobylians’ka gradually became the face of the Soviet regime in Bukovina. She let herself be photographed and written about in the newspaper. A letter allegedly written by her, endorsing the Soviet regime in Norther Bukovina, was published in Izvestiya shortly after

254 “Slavna dochka Ukraïns’koho narodu,” Radyans’ka Bukovyna, 8 September 1940.
255 Ibid.
the occupation as proof of local support and to reinforce the idea that the Ukrainian population had been looking east for a long time.

Any time they had a chance to display Kobylians’ka’s support for the regime, the Soviets did it. They even enlisted her to propagandize on their behalf in preparation for the first Soviet elections. In her “greetings to the workers of Soviet Bukovina,” published in the official oblast’ newspaper, Kobylians’ka called upon “the entire people, women and men, of liberated Bukovina to prepare for and carry out the elections peacefully [in complete harmony]: may our native, free land Soviet Bukovina, united with the great family of peoples of the USSR, live and blossom. Long live the creator/architect of people’s happiness, Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin.”

It is likely that her enthusiastic speeches were written by propagandists with or without Kobylians’ka’s approval. By then, she was an old and sick woman living in a “room with big windows because she can’t walk anymore.” One can also imagine that she might have been glad to be receive so much attention after so many years of anonymity. Even once she gave her blessing to the Soviet regime, Kobylians’ka’s living conditions were far from opulent. In the fall of 1940, three komsomolki apparently came to her house, where a family of five people was already living in addition to Kobylians’ka, to reclaim some of the living space for themselves. When they were told that this was where writer Kobylians’ka was living, the girls waved their hands and said “what do we care if she’s a writer. We need the apartment.” This was, in Hrushetsky’s words, proof of the “rudeness and uncultured behavior of our people.” Whether Kobylians’ka’s literary cult was actually effective is hard to tell - it is nevertheless revealing that the Soviets put such a high prize on eliciting her support.

The Ukrainian culture the Soviets set out to build in Northern Bukovina was above all a Soviet culture, meaning ‘national in form, socialist in content.’ This required, among other

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256 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 26, l 12, 20 November 1940.
things, redefining the Ukrainian cultural canon. Sovietizing Ukrainian culture required redefining what it meant to be Ukrainian. A new Ukrainian national identity would emerge from this process, one that was not incompatible with the Soviet project but in fact needed the Soviet regime to come to fruition. It was an identity that was at once nationalist and internationalist. Locals were encouraged to learn both Ukrainian, the official language in Northern Bukovina, and the language of their ‘older sister’ the Russian FSSR. Many took this to mean they could safely speak Russian only and completely neglect Ukrainian, but, as we have seen, the party leadership frowned on that. At the same time, the Russian language became a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools, and special circles for studying Russian were created in factories. These measures were to be welcomed as a great opportunity to “study the language of the great brotherly people in a free manner and according to a well-designed program.”

Lest the local population perceive this as an unwelcome imposition, the press reassured them that learning foreign languages was a desirable manifestation of internationalism: “the language of the great Russian people being the oldest among the languages of Soviet peoples is very rich. Russian culture, the Russian language, enrich the cultures of all other peoples within the USSR. Here is why it is important that the population in our oblast’ learn with the same passion the Russian language, which will allow them to read in original the works of the genius leaders Lenin and Stalin.” So while Ukrainian was placed ahead of other languages in Northern Bukovina, this was not done at the expense of Russian. Ukrainian national identity and Ukrainian culture were redefined in such a way that they would not seem to be incompatible with Russian but they could peacefully coexist. According to this new definition, the Russian language and Russian culture, disseminated alongside Ukrainian, was not just another kind of imperialism.

257 “Să învățăm limbi străine,” Adevărul Bolșevic, 8 June 1941.
258 Ibid.
This transformation also took place within the literary canon. Every major literary figure and national hero, and above all Taras Shevchenko and Ivano Franko, were reclaimed as precursors of Soviet Ukrainian culture. These were major symbolic figures for the nationalists, as they made up the Ukrainian literary pantheon and contributed a great deal to the emergence of a standardized Ukrainian language, a common body of Ukrainian literature, and the emergence of a Ukrainian identity. Now these figures had to be made compatible with the new Soviet Ukrainian culture. Taras Shevchenko, “the genius bard of the Ukrainian people,” was redefined as an internationalist, a poet ‘of the people,’ and a defender of the oppressed - in short, everything a Soviet poet could ever hope to be. “Shevchenko is loved by the entire Soviet Union,” wrote the Adevarul Bolsevic, “because he was an internationalist, and reflected not only the aspiration of the Ukrainian people but also those of all nationalities oppressed in the former tsarist Russia.”

Shevchenko became a poet of the working classes, a revolutionary democrat, and an enemy to both “Ukrainian liberals and nationalists” and “Polish pans.” Like Kobylians’ka, Shevchenko became a celebrated figure. Never mind that that Shevchenko had died almost a century before; the new regime needed to create a new history for itself, and for this purpose the shade of Shevchenko had to be recalled from the great beyond. The Soviets revived the traditional Shevchenko celebrations - a crucial manifestation of the Ukrainian nationalist movement in both Bukovina and Galicia - formerly interrupted and outlawed by the Romanians. This gesture was meant to demonstrate that the Soviets were undoing the ‘crimes’ and national injustices the Romanians had committed against the Ukrainians. Literary evenings with workers in the House of Agitation and Propaganda were dedicated to Shevchenko, the “great revolutionary poet and Ukrainian democrat,” during this celebration. There were also

259 “Cântarețu ghenial a norodului ucrainean,” Adevarul Bolshevik, 11 March 1941.
lectures and recitations of his poems.262 Another literary figure the Soviets chose as a precursor to Soviet Ukrainian culture was Ivano Franko, whom they also defined as an internationalist and a spokesman for the working class. In the case of Franko, this was less of a stretch, for he had worked with socialist newspapers and helped found the Polish-Ukrainian socialist party in eastern Galicia. To convince locals that a Soviet attitude was perfectly compatible with Ukrainian national identity, the local press reminded readers that Franko had always “pronounced himself against Jewish pogroms, [and] defended equally the oppressed of all nationalities.”263

Did this project of building Soviet Ukrainian culture in North Bukovina actually succeed? The Soviet promotion of Ukrainian culture in Northern Bukovina was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Ukrainians clearly benefitted more than any other national groups (with the arguable exception of Jews) from Soviet rule because the Soviets were determined to “restore” the Ukrainian character of Northern Bukovina. Ukrainians now had access to leadership positions, and even though the party-state apparatus often deviated from the correct, Leninist line of national politics, it would be a mistake to think that all Ukrainians were persecuted and the Ukrainian language suppressed. It is true that many Russian speakers in the party-state apparatus never stopped looking down upon Ukrainian culture as a poor relation of Russian. At the same time, however, there was a deliberate attempt to Ukrainize all public institutions, something that definitely benefited ethnic – provided they stayed away from “regressive,” nationalist behaviors the new administration disapproved of. In some ways, though, the Ukrainians lost out in the building of Soviet Ukrainian culture, for even though their language and culture were now promoted, they had no say in what their culture looked like. They could keep the form of their

national identity - the national costumes, the traditional instruments and music - but not the content. The Soviets had a good deal of trouble ‘selling’ this Sovietized version of national identity to the Ukrainian intelligentsia in Northern Bukovina. By building a solid Soviet Ukrainian culture, they had hoped to offer an appealing alternative to the pernicious influence of Ukrainian nationalism on the national-minded Ukrainian intelligentsia.

But the intelligentsia slipped through the regime’s fingers because it had a better alternative: the patronage of the Soviet Union’s German ally, which did not require them to give up their nationalist - even extremist and chauvinist – sympathies. Many Ukrainian intelligentsy and members of nationalist organizations (such as the OUN) left Bukovina together with the Germans, before and during the Heim ins Reich Aktion. Even Ol’ha Kobylians’ka’s relatives had fled only a few days before the Soviet occupation “and even suggested to her that she leave but she refused.”264 The Soviets realized that “in many cases we don’t have the correct approach to the Ukrainian intelligentsia.” Many Ukrainian intelligentsy and writers were living in abject conditions, even those who had given their total support to the regime. One talented artist was unemployed and “living in a basement apartment in Chernivtsi.” A “talented girl” who eventually became a Communist activist and the leader of “theater circles and choirs” was accidentally labeled a kurkul’ka and nationalist and lost her house and dacha in the nationalization process. Another poet who contributed to various newspapers “is living in a small room there, working as a teacher, and supporting her entire family out of that salary.”265 This was the Ukrainian intelligentsia the Soviets hoped to draw to their side. With others, who were less willing to collaborate and less starry-eyed about socialism, they did not compromise at all. OUN leaders were shot on the spot and the more fortunate lower ranks of nationalists who were

264 DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 44, l 110, 9 February 1941.
265 Ibid., ll 110-112, 9 February 1941.
suspected of sabotage and nationalist agitation were deported to Siberia.\textsuperscript{266}

In the opinion of nationalist historians, the Soviet occupation was a tragedy not only for this segment of the intelligentsia but for the Ukrainian people as a whole, for the “number of Ukrainians diminished by 15,000 people.”\textsuperscript{267} While this was certainly true, it is important to emphasize that many Ukrainians were happy to collaborate with the regime for as long as they benefitted from it.\textsuperscript{268} From the perspective of other nationalities - above all, the Romanians, who lost their positions of leadership overnight - the Soviet occupation looked like a definite success for the Ukrainians. For these people, who had been used to speaking Romanian and who thought of themselves as the rightful owners of Bukovina, the real tragedy was their own, for under Soviet rule they were made to subordinate their Romanian language and culture to the language and culture of their old national adversary, the Ukrainians. But even in this camp national martyrs and heroes were in short supply. Most people preferred to make do with whatever fate threw their way. “Once I asked a neighbor who is Romanian why she speaks Ukrainian to her children,” one local remembered, “and she just said: ‘But what are they to do with the Romanian language?’”\textsuperscript{269}

\textit{Black Cars, Empty Homes}

Together with the ultimatum of June 26, 1940, Molotov forwarded the Romanian ambassador in Moscow a map illustrating the Soviet Union’s territorial claims. The expanded Soviet frontier was marked “with a thick line drawn in red.” The line traced on paper

\textsuperscript{266} Kurylo, 	extit{Pivnichna Bukovyna: ii mynule i suchasne}. The Bolsheviks shot the local leader of OUN Viktor Kulishir, Vasyl' Voinovskij took over the underground organization; at end of 1940 Bolsheviks shot in Chernivtsi for nationalist activity student V Poremskij - the revolutionary activity grew more intense in spring 1941 when restored connections with revolutionary centers in order places.

\textsuperscript{267} Kurylo, 	extit{Pivnichna Bukovyna: ii mynule i suchasne}.

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{269} Golgota românească, 40-41.
corresponded to seven miles of land, only a narrow strip of land in the grand scheme of things.

Yet this red line cut through human lives - families were separated by it and fates were completely reversed. After haggling extensively over the villages that had happened to be located along the demarcation line, the state authorities on both sides came to an understanding. Armed guards moved in to defend the new border, observation points were installed, fences were built. It was all part of the work of consolidating the frontier oblást'. As we have seen, the Communist party organization in Northern Bukovina was very much aware that their position at the frontier of the Soviet Union required them to exercise great vigilance, for the security of the Soviet empire depended on how well they protected this vulnerable border. Bukovina’s border had always been permeable and in flux, much to the frustration of state authorities who tried very hard to keep people from moving across it. Sometimes movement across the border became a serious economic vulnerability for the polity that Bukovina was part of, as with the Austrian empire. Sometimes the permeable border reflected a regime’s greatest insecurities. For instance, the Romanians had always looked to the northern border in Bukovina as a bulwark against Bolshevism.

Now that the Soviets traced their border along the Seret river, cutting Bukovina in half, the frontier took yet another significance: it became the meeting point between the capitalist and the communist world. This had more than symbolic significance. It became the place where people made choices about which one of these worlds they wanted to belong to. The Soviet authorities had hoped to stabilize the frontier quickly, for some sense of permanence was needed to build socialism in Northern Bukovina. Locals would never be invested in their work, they would never develop bonds with the regime and with this place if they did not even know if they would be there the following year. But the border remained in flux much longer than the Soviets
would have liked. This was in part through their own fault. Because the Soviet occupation forces had entered Northern Bukovina and Chernivtsi well before the Romanians had had time to evacuate, many families who might have otherwise left to Romania were trapped behind. These people continued trying to cross the border into Romania by every means possible, legal or illegal. In addition, the fluid border was like a barometer indicating how well the regime managed to penetrate this territory and how firm a grip it had on the local population. All throughout their first year of rule in Northern Bukovina, the Soviets had trouble keeping the border under control. Waves of people, mostly prosperous Romanian peasants, crossed over into Romania without the authorities’ permission. From this, they learned something important: that they did not yet have a handle on the situation in the Romanian-speaking border districts and that “we don’t know what is happening in the villages.”270 In addition, the border provided citizens of a non-democratic state with a means of voicing their opinions about the regime. Though locals had no say in who ruled them or whom they elected as candidates to the Supreme Soviet, they could vote against the regime with their feet. This was a risky business that resulted in arrest and imprisonment, deportation to Siberia, or even death. Many did it anyway, a clear indication that the regime was, at least for some, a massive disappointment. Who were the people who crossed the border and why did they do it?

It was the emigration of Romanians from Northern Bukovina across the border into Romania that gave the Soviet authorities the most trouble. This was a thorny ideological problem, for who had ever heard of workers and peasants voluntarily leaving the workers and peasants’ paradise to live in the capitalist world? That so many people were willing to risk their lives to get to the other side of the border was profoundly embarrassing for the regime.

Moreover, the emigration movement destabilized the regime both economically and in terms of

270 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l.116.
border security. People could not leave their villages by the hundreds without causing shortages of labor and economic problems, and the fact that they could slip away through so many border crossing points revealed that the frontier was less impenetrable than the Soviets hoped. This is how the process took place: locals first learned about the possibility of emigrating to Romania from neighbors and ‘emigration propagandists’ - individuals who, just like in the old Austrian times, would make the rounds of villages persuading people to emigrate by telling them that “those who had been involved in political parties [under the Romanians] would be arrested and sent to Siberia.” Since rumors of deportations and arrests abounded, it wasn’t difficult to persuade local Romanians who otherwise had limited contact with the regime to throw in their lot with these people who promised to deliver them from their terrible fate.

The actual border crossings were organized by individuals, usually someone who “could speak Ukrainian well” and who had made the crossing many times before. An NKVD report about one border crossing in November 1940, when 150 people fled to Romania, identified the organizers as “anti-Soviet elements and members of the Iron Guard” Dmytrie Tkachuk, Georgie Tsurkan, Andrei Soprovych and others.271 With the possible exception of Tsurkan, all the organizers had Ukrainian names, making it unlikely that they were actually Iron Guard members, for the Iron Guard was fiercely anti-Ukrainian. It’s more likely they were local Ukrainian-speaking peasants who were happy to stay under Soviet rule while also making some money on the side helping local Romanians cross the border illegally. A certain Dragonush who took locals “out of the villages Ostra, Lukavytsi, and Chagor” across the border in December 1940, was said to have “crossed the border several times.”272 Another man by the name of Mykola Gnatiuk, who was found to be “preparing the crossing of 500-600 people” in March 1941, had already done

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271 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 22, l 4, November 1940.
272 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 72, l 12-13.
this three times before. One was much more likely to make it across the border unscathed with the help of such individuals who knew where it was easiest to cross and who, having done this multiple times, had entered into amicable relations with border guards who were happy to assist them in exchange for “two thousand groshi as a bribe to be allowed to pass.” Knowing better than to wander across the border unarmed, the organizers came equipped with weapons and were prepared to “put up armed resistance against the guards at the border.” The emigrants, on the other hand, were mostly Romanians, typically prosperous peasants who could afford to pay the organizers to deliver them safely to the other side of the frontier.

What drove them to leave? The chief reason was fear: fear of being deported to Siberia, fear of having one’s possessions confiscated and nationalized, fear of worsening living conditions - or the simple realization that life under Soviet rule wasn’t going to get better any time soon. When they went into a village near the border to gauge the mood among the local population, the authorities discovered that peasants feared the Soviets because “they had been told that they would send them into the kolkhozy, rape the women, take the men.” One man by the name of “Bercha” (probably Bercea, in Romanian), who was caught while attempting to cross the border into Romania in November 1940 and was put on trial, complained that he hadn’t been paid for his work in the sel’po (agricultural cooperative) - which, once the authorities looked into it, proved to be true because the raion hadn’t “figured out a system of payment yet and therefore didn’t pay its employees.” When the authorities asked him to return to his workplace, the man protested that “I hate the Ukrainian language, if you want me to continue staying here (…) then it is better to hang a stone on my neck, I won’t stay here, but I will go

273 Ibid.
274 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 22, l 4, November 1940.
275 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 94, 18 November 1940.
276 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 115.
drown myself in the Pruth.”

For those Romanians who had planned to leave Northern Bukovina all along but had not managed to evacuate in time, the illegal border crossings were the last resort. Although an official repatriation commission did exist, it left Northern Bukovina too early to finish its job. Only a very small fraction of the people who would have liked to be ‘repatriated’ to Romania were actually served by the commission. Those who stayed were left in the dark, not knowing when and whether the commission would return, afraid that “all those who had registered to go to Romania would shortly be deported to Siberia.” Occasionally, there were rumors that “a commission will be coming for Romania and picking up all those who wish to go there” and that “either army nor police could do anything against them.”

Pepe Georgescu, the Romanian actor who had not managed to leave Bukovina with the first wave of refugees, having heard one such rumor that “at the beginning of September the repatriation commission would restart its work,” went to the headquarters in Chernivtsi to inquire about it but was told “to go home because no more transports would leave for Romania.” After several futile attempts to cross the border illegally, Georgescu was interrogated by the Soviet police and kept under surveillance. In February, the repatriation commission unexpectedly opened again and Georgescu again petitioned to leave. This time, he was included among the 70 applicants who were admitted and his departure was scheduled for March 1941.

Unbelievable as it might sound, people also moved in the opposite direction, from Romania to the Soviet Union. The main candidates for immigration into Northern Bukovina were Romanian Jews. Some left because Soviet rule seemed preferable to living under a government that would not bring the rabidly anti-Semitic legionaries under control. Others left

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277 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 22, l 1, 24 November 1940.
278 Georgescu, 265 de zile la Cernăuți, 22.
279 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 72.
280 Georgescu, 265 de zile la Cernăuți, 60.
because they were sympathetic to the Soviet Union and believed its promises to do away with national discrimination. Most people left because the Romanian authorities practically expelled them. Northern Bukovina became a kind of Birobidzhan for the Romanian government, a place where the undesirable Jewish population could be sent for lack of a more expedient measure. To be allowed to resettle in the Soviet Union, however, Romanian citizens required proof of birth “in Bessarabia or Northern Bukovina.” This, however, was no hindrance, for the Romanian authorities were willing to issue fake birth certificates “in exchange for 5-10,000 lei.” By November 1940, “10-15 families of refugees” were entering the Chernovitksaya oblast’ every day, “the majority of them being Jewish by nationality.”\(^{281}\) According to refugees’ reports, at least 1,000 more people were gathering in port cities like Galati and Reni and preparing to emigrate. For many of these people, the Soviet Union was a safe haven from anti-Semitic persecution.

The conditions in which they landed were far from ideal and welcoming, however. On arriving in Northern Bukovina, many fell victim to the regime’s uncompromising measures to wipe out ‘counterrevolutionary elements.’ Although this inflow of people from the ‘capitalist world’ could be construed as beneficial to the Soviets, at least politically, the authorities were far from thrilled to receive Romanian Jewish immigrants who were likely to be a burden on the Soviet state. Most immigrants came “without any kind of property, since this was taken away in pogroms.” While some could definitely be classified as progressive elements, such as “workers from revolutionary trade unions (profsoyuzy),” many Romanian Jewish immigrants came from bourgeois families and were suspected of carrying out “espionage work” for the Romanians. The prospect of a wave of Jewish immigration into Northern Bukovina worried the local authorities enough for them to appeal directly to the leadership in Kiev for instructions. In his letter to

\(^{281}\) DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 22.
Nikita Khrushchev, *obkom* secretary Hrushetsky noted that “it is not clear why at the border we are accepting them” and that “in order to keep those who already arrived in the *oblast’* (…) the necessary means have to be set aside for them.”²⁸² Ironically, the situation of these Jews was similar to that of Romanians who left Northern Bukovina to go to Romania. Since they were coming from “Bolshevik” territory, these refugees were not welcomed were put under quarantine and investigated at length before they were set free. Even Pepe Georgescu, a devout nationalist, suffered great humiliations on the way back. Border guards on the Soviet side of the frontier undressed him, sifted through his suitcases, and confiscated things. Things were no better once he arrived in Romania, where he was “disinfected” and quarantined in a local hospital for two weeks. Another emigrant who made it to Romania actually fled back to Bukovina because “when he arrived he was sent to a camp.”²⁸³ There were also rumors that other people who had left were thinking of returning because they were suffering from hunger in Romania. In one case at the border, “an old man was tending his cattle and his grandchildren, whom the parents had taken with them to Romania, were shouting at him grandpa come and take us from here we are hungry and there is no bread.”²⁸⁴ Though one cannot be certain how much of this was true, it is likely that Bukovinian Romanians who crossed the border did not have it easy.

Northern Bukovina’s border with Romania remained fluid long after it was neatly traced on paper. The regime could not tolerate this because a fluid border meant instability and vulnerability. The seemingly uncontrollable movements across the border also cast the regime in a negative light, as one that had both failed to win the local population’s approval and support and that lacked the means necessary to bring this under control. These were reasons enough for the Soviet authorities to take an uncompromising approach to border security. First, they

²⁸² Ibid.
²⁸³ DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10, l 116.
²⁸⁴ DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 94.
resolved to strengthen mass agitation and political work in those Romanian-speaking districts that were most affected by the emigration movement. They were right to conclude that the party did not “know enough about the mood of the local population” because the Romanian-speaking countryside was still in many ways unreachable due to the language barrier.\textsuperscript{285} One Communist party official who was inspecting the Gertsaevskij raion came across a group of suspicious-looking youth but “since we don’t know Romanian we couldn’t ask them anything.” Instead, the official “stopped one of them and we just looked at one another but didn’t understand each other so we had to go.”\textsuperscript{286} This was just one example of the awkward encounters between Soviet authorities and local Romanians.

Few members of the party-state apparatus were Romanian speakers. By November 1940, in the entire party organization in the oblast’ there were “only seven Communists who [mastered] the Moldavian and Romanian languages,” and all of them were already employed “in the border areas with exclusively Romanian population.”\textsuperscript{287} Romanian villages that remained relatively untouched by Soviet propaganda were indeed susceptible to what authorities called “enemy agitation”: rumors about arrests and deportations, complaints about food shortages, and promises of a better life on the other side of the border. To strengthen the bonds between these districts and the rest of the oblast, the Soviets decided to recruit more Romanian-speaking agitators and add “50 local activists who speak the Romanian language well and create brigades that should be sent into the villages” to agitate.\textsuperscript{288} Since it was difficult to find Romanian speakers who were politically reliable, the party leadership in Kiev instructed officials in Bukovina “to take some of our party workers who were sent here from Moldova” and use them

\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., l 93, 18 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{286} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 93, 18 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{287} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 22, l 1.
\textsuperscript{288} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 3, l 1.
as agitators in the Romanian-speaking districts, even though “it is true that these workers are on a very low level, but we don’t have an alternative.” Although the Soviets placed a high value on propaganda, this was not necessarily what made the difference in these border districts.

People ‘fell for’ enemy propaganda not just because it was delivered in Romanian, but very likely because it resonated with their own experiences. Not everything emigration propagandists said was fabricated. As the Soviet authorities admitted, many districts, especially the Romanian-speaking ones along the border, were poorly supplied with food and other basic goods. In the Gertsaevskij raion, for example, there were enough “children’s shoes but they are all in the raitsentr and don’t ever reach the villages.” To neutralize the influence of ‘enemy propaganda’ in these districts, the food supply problem had to be addressed as soon as possible. Though everyone agreed on this, it was far from clear who was supposed to deal with the problem. Raion officials expected material support and close guidance from the obkom, while the obkom made it clear that “the insufficient supply of first necessity products such as salt, kerosene, shoes, is [the] personal responsibility” of raikom secretaries “of the border raiony.” The problem lingered on for lack of coordination and communication between different administrative bodies.

Along with the carrot (if Soviet propaganda can be described as such) came the stick: brutal measures to bring the emigration movement under control. These took the form of deportations, mass arrests, shootings, and forced relocations. With this uncompromising course of action, the Soviets managed in only a few months to alter Northern Bukovina more profoundly than the Romanians had in over two decades. They not only changed its demographics but also transformed the meaning of place. To better track the population’s

\[289\] DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 14, l 91, 18 November 1940.
\[290\] Ibid.
\[291\] DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 3, l 11, 18 November 1940.
movements, the Soviet authorities introduced passports beginning in November 1940. The “passportization” of Northern Bukovina was to be completed by January 1941. Shortly after a group of 150 emigrants made a narrow escape to Romania in November, the local authorities tightened security measures at the border, closing all crossings “everywhere 15-20 kilometers away from Chernivtsi” to deter prospective emigrants. On December 17, barely one month later, the Council of People’s Commissars and the CC of the CP(b) of Ukraine decreed that all households “within 800 meters of the border” with Romania should be relocated. The task of resettling the 427 families - 1,024 persons - living in that area fell to the oblast’ executive committee (oblvykonkom) and the party obkom. It was not an easy task, for it was in the middle of winter and the resettled population could not be left without a roof above their heads. “All resettled persons were provided with warm clothing and shoes” and each family received 400 karbovantsiv (rubles) on its moving day.

The problem of housing was conveniently solved by handing over to the resettled persons residences left behind by evacuated Germans. Officials acquitted themselves well, carrying out the relocation “without any incidents” and according to plan. But for the people who had to resettle against their will, no quantity of shoes and clothing, not even their new houses, could make up for what they had lost: their roots, their home, their land. When the decision to resettle these families was made public on January 15, some people turned violent and refused to move. One peasant said “that he would rather have his head cut off than have to move from Prisaka [his native village] and another that we should all be killed on the spot because we are not going

292 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 10.
293 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 11, l 93, 18 November 1940.
294 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 67, l 11, 29 January 1941.
295 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 6, l 116, 3 December 1940.
anywhere.” In light of the tragedies that lay in store, having to leave one’s home and move a few hundred meters away hardly seems terrible, but for many of these people leaving home was worse than death. Like George Eliott’s Mr Tulliver, who was completely crushed by the loss of his house and mill, these people couldn’t “bear to think of [themselves] living on any other spot than this, where [they] knew the sound of every gate door, and felt that the shape and color of every roof and weather-stain and broken hillock was good, because [their] growing senses had been fed on them.” It is all the more incredible, then, that so many people were eager to leave everything behind and risk their lives to cross the border into Romania.

Whether they emigrated (or attempted to emigrate) or were relocated by force, many Bukovinans lost their homes over the course of one year. Many lost their lives too. In the spring of 1941, several groups of people who attempted to cross over to Romania were massacred by Soviet guards. The most notorious incident took place on April 1, 1941 near Fantana Alba (today’s Bilya Krynytsia), an Old Believer village located on the frontier with Romania. Hundreds of civilians (at least 200 and by some estimates 2,000) were shot while trying to cross the border. According to one survivor, the locals first went to the raion authorities in Glyboka to ask permission to go to Romania and, when they were denied, began marching towards the border anyway. “[All] of a sudden they were surrounded by Soviet guardsmen on horses who asked them to go back,” and then someone at the head of the column shouted “ahead, forward, brothers.” The Soviet guards began firing: “most people were massacred and those who escaped were caught and tortured by the NKVD.” Similar scenes took place along the frontier. Only a few months earlier, in February 1941, almost 400 people had been massacred while trying to

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296 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 67, l 8, 29 January 1941.
297 George Eliott, Mill on the Floss: Scenes of Clerical Life (New York: John B. Alden, 1883), 249.
299 Vasile Covalciuc, in Golgota românească, 41-55.
cross the border into Romania through the village of Lunca. According to one witness, only 57 people survived and “the dead bodies were thrown into pits dug not far from the Pruth.”

Then came the deportations to Siberia, long dreaded by local Romanians. Many who successfully fled to Romania or were caught or killed while trying to cross the border in the spring of 1941 were driven to this desperate act by the fear of deportation.

The deportations were both a cause and consequence of the illegal border crossings. In addition to former members of “bourgeois” and nationalist parties and other “counterrevolutionary elements,” the relatives of people who emigrated to Romania were also deported. Most mass deportations took place in the summer of 1941, always by night. The arrested were shoved into a truck and taken, by way of the NKVD cells in Chernivtsi, to Siberian towns to “build the national economy of the USSR.” Some ended up in Aktiubinsk, others in Kazakhstan, yet others in Karelia. “[They] left behind them their house, their household, their family, precious places, their village. The poor women were having a hard time separating from their nest, their work and their life. They were kissing the walls, the doors, kissing the cattle in the barn, they were crossing themselves, kneeling down, lifting their eyes full of tears up to the sky.”

So wrote Gheorghe Nandris.

If there is any constant in this territory’s history, it is the state of flux that came with population movements. This made nationalists all the more persistent in their attempts to find a kernel of national purity here, to prove Bukovina had deep national roots. The inherent fluidity of this territory undercut all such schemes. Even though nationalists had always dreamed of

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ethnic purity a nation-state had set out to convert this heterogeneous territory into a national one, there were always firm limits to what nationalists and national administrations could do. Before Bukovina was incorporated into Greater Romania, Romanian and Ukrainian nationalists aspiring to restore the province’s “national character” fought for language rights and national education but lacked political and economic capital. To make a difference, a national politician had to make compromises, forge alliances, and compete within imperial institutions. After the war, Romanian nationalists saw their dream come true when Bukovina was incorporated into Greater Romania. Although the great powers sanctioned Romania’s territorial annexations, the Romanian government could not do whatever it pleased in the newly incorporated provinces because it was under the eye of the western powers. The ‘Minority Protection Treaty,’ which compelled the successor nation-states to grant national minorities equal rights with the national majority, constrained their actions. The minority protection treaty was violated in every imaginable way, but even so, it kept nation-states somewhat in check - at least enough to allow national minorities to continue residing within their borders.

The population movements that took place in Northern Bukovina during the Soviet occupation signaled a break with this state of things. The outbreak of World War II made possible changes of a different kind and on an entirely new scale, for there was no one to stop Germany and the Soviet Union from accomplishing what nationalists had always dreamed of. On the face of it, the deportations looked like a Russian specialty. Locals could remember the days when the Russian occupation forces in World War I deported hundreds of people from Bukovina to the East. The Zionist Philipp Menczel ended up in Tomsk; other Austrian notables, including the Jewish politician Mayer Ebner, were exiled to Siberia. But the Soviet Union was not the only great power to use forced resettlements as a tool for population engineering. It was the Germans
who changed the rules of the game at Munich, when Hitler swallowed a piece of Czechoslovakia before the disbelieving eyes of the Western powers and then moved to annex Austria as well. Until then, the official Nazi policy towards ethnic Germans living beyond the Reich’s borders had been to “keep them where they were and use them as fifth columns” - or as a pretext for Germany to meddle in the internal affairs of countries with a substantial Volksdeutsche population.\textsuperscript{302} Once Nazi Germany reached the Italian border, Mussolini had every reason to fear Italy would be next, for Italy had a large German minority population in South Tyrol. Hitler reversed this policy, however, because he needed Italy’s support. In June 1939 he and Mussolini agreed to resettle 80,000 Germans from South Tyrol to the Reich. This measure, which Germany later used to prevent conflict with the Soviet Union, developed into a systematic program to transfer ethnic Germans from areas of Eastern Europe occupied by the Soviets into the German Reich. This Heim ins Reich Aktion program started when Baltic Germans fearing an impending Soviet occupation alerted Hitler to their situation. Since Hitler’s regime couldn’t afford to let this jeopardize Germany’s relations with the Soviet Union, he decided to solve the problem by arranging “to have them brought home.”\textsuperscript{303} The same policy was soon extended to Eastern Poland and then to Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

Although the repatriation of ethnic Germans amounted to a kind of withdrawal from Eastern Europe, in the hands of German propagandists the population transfers became a victory for the German Volk. They did not present these movements as a retreat or a concession to the Soviets but as a success of National Socialist politics: “the greatest work of peace that can be carried out, namely calling the German people home.”\textsuperscript{304} Since the the entire repatriation

\textsuperscript{302} Mark Mazower, \textit{Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe} (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 79.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid.
campaign was founded on the concept of ‘home,’ it deserves closer examination. In the official propaganda, ethnic German settlers from Eastern Europe were referred to as *Heimkehrer* - persons who are returning home - while the entire repatriation program was called *Heim ins Reich* - back home to the Reich. But how could the Reich be a home to hundreds of thousands of Germans who had been born and raised in Bukovina, Bessarabia, the Soviet Union, the Baltics, or Eastern Poland and had never set foot in Germany? Many did not even speak the language, nor did they display the physical characteristics associated with the German-”Aryan” type. Even those ethnic German communities that had preserved their language and traditions had little in common with Germans from the Reich. At the time their ancestors had left the German lands, centuries before, there was no such thing as “Germany.” Having lived away from the German heartlands for generations, the *Volksdeutsche* were now deeply rooted in their adoptive lands, even if they maintained their differences.

When Nazi propagandists talked about “home,” they meant something different. Home was not the land, the soil one labored over, or the memories that tied one to a place, but something more intangible. “Home” was in the blood and origins; one could have forgotten the German language and still preserve one’s blood ties to the great German *Volk*. What the return ‘home’ to the Reich presupposed was that Germans united by blood would no longer live scattered across Europe but would instead become “consolidated” by creating a racially pure zone in western Europe. “In ten years’ time,” proclaimed the Gauleiter of Warthegau, a new German province carved out of western Poland, “there will be no patch of land which will not be German, every homestead will belong to German colonists.” In the Nazi conception, “home” was not a fixed place but something carried in the blood. The *Heimkehrer*, many of whom no doubt parted with their homes reluctantly, were reassured that “you have always carried

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Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 81.
Germany in your hearts even if you have never seen your real Heimat.”\textsuperscript{306} The repatriation of ethnic Germans to the Reich was, in effect, a reversal of the Kultur project. We know how central the notion of Kultur had been to German national identity. The concept reflected the tensions between the particularist dimensions and universalist aspirations of German identity, for Kultur was supposedly universally valid, yet it could only be mediated through the German language. The idea that German national identity was defined by a German civilizing mission in the East, a mission to bring Kultur to other peoples, implied that Germany was everywhere Germans lived and worked. It differed from the Nazi idea of Lebensraum in that Kultur required both limitless space and interaction with non-Germans to move and expand. In the imagination of someone like Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, the German nation was one of emigrants \textit{par excellence}, and welcoming German emigrants was what Eastern Europe was for. Now that foreign policy required it, the Nazis began talking about that “uninterrupted stream of German people [who] went abroad” as “German blood flow[ing] year by year.”\textsuperscript{307} While Kaindl took pride in the mobility of those early German settlers, Nazi propagandists recast this experience as an act of sacrifice on the part of a generation who “emigrated from a land that was in disorder, while now a strong, united Germany is calling you back.” Thanks to the “national-socialist construction of a Greater Germany,” the Germans would no longer be a nation of \textit{Auswanderer} [emigrants] but one of \textit{Heimkehrer} [people who return home].

Did any of this official propaganda resonate with anyone? Almost the entire ethnic German community in Northern Bukovina responded to Hitler’s appeal to go \textit{Heim ins Reich}.\textsuperscript{308} Their main reason for leaving was fear of the Soviets. Northern Bukovina’s \textit{Volksdeutsche} were a predominantly rural population, concentrated in the suburbs around Chernivtsi: Rosha,

\textsuperscript{306} Hans Richter, \textit{Heimkehrer}, 11.
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{308} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 32, l 26.
Kalichanka, Klokuchka. Yet they were prosperous enough that, had they stayed under Soviet rule, they would likely have been classified as *kurkuly* and risked not only having their possessions confiscated but also being deported to Siberia. The effects of Nazi propaganda should also not be dismissed. *Volksdeutsche* were lured with visions of “neat but inhabited farmhouses awaiting new owners” to the west - and Nazi ideology was no less appealing for many members of the German minority in Eastern Europe. Some Germans, particularly the older generation too attached to their land or too tired to embark on new adventures, refused to go ‘home to the Reich.’ A total of “180 family heads” refused to go to Germany.\(^{309}\) At the same time, the repatriation program attracted an unexpectedly large number of non-Germans. The most numerous were the Ukrainians, for whom the *Heim ins Reich Aktion* became an escape route from the Soviets. By one estimate, close to 4,000 Ukrainians, “among them many priests, writers, teachers,” had left with the German evacuation commission by November 1940.\(^{310}\) Some of them lingered in resettlement camps in Schlesien for an indefinite period of time, while others managed to relocate to the General Gouvernement. One would expect this province of occupied Poland to have little to offer to a Slavic people, for this was where the racially impure elements, Poles and Jews in particular, from the western occupied provinces were plundered and murdered.\(^{311}\) But to Ukrainians who had nothing better to hope for than a trip to Siberia, the General Gouvernement was a good place to be, above all because there, on old Galician territory, they could “participate in local Ukrainian life” and go on being as nationalistic as they pleased.

To qualify for repatriation with the Germans, however, Ukrainians had to prove that they had

\(^{309}\) Ibid.
\(^{310}\) Kurylo, *Pivnichna Bukovyna, ii mynule i suchasne*, 399.
\(^{311}\) As *Volksdeutsche* were streaming into Germany, Poles and Jews in western Poland were being turned out of their houses and robbed of their property to make space for the new ‘German colonists.’ The responsibility for “repatriating” almost 1 million ethnic Germans to the Reich fell to the SS and a new institution - the RKFDV (the Reich Commission for the Consolidation of Germanism) - formed in early 1940 and headed by Heinrich Himmler. Their task was to organize “the evacuations, the racial screening of evacuees, and the reception camps,” as well as to supply the German ‘colonists’ with new homesteads and properties.
German ancestry. This was a seemingly impossible task for a Ukrainian, but since the German-Soviet agreement required applicants for repatriation to “present documents according to their possibility,” this could be easily accomplished. Non-Germans who claimed to be German showed up with certificates of baptism attesting to their “Greek-Catholic” or “Roman-Catholic” religion. Obviously, many Ukrainians were Greek Catholic (though the majority of Ukrainians in Bukovina were Eastern Orthodox, recent arrivals from Galicia were more likely to be Greek Catholic), while any number of nationalities (Romanians, Poles, Germans, Ukrainians) could be Roman Catholic.\textsuperscript{312} The German commission, interestingly enough, never required it further documentation. They simply wrote everyone down and shipped them off to the Reich.

This became a major source of friction between the German and Soviet delegations. Unlike the German delegation, which proved exceedingly accommodating to Ukrainian nationalists, the Soviet commission was “very strict about checking documents during registration” and did not hesitate to turn applicants down. More than 4,000 people who registered for evacuation were not only rejected by the Soviet delegation but also had their names carefully noted by the NKVD. In one case, the NKVD tracked down a Ukrainian nationalist by the name of Strateichuk who had been hiding, with the knowledge and aid of the German delegation, in the German House where “sick persons were also being held.”\textsuperscript{313} Strateichuk was promptly arrested, but the incident confirmed the Soviet authorities in their suspicion that the Germans could not be trusted. Jews were less likely candidates for repatriation to Germany, for obvious reasons, yet some applied anyway: those German-speaking, \textit{Kultur}-soaked Jews who were either still dreaming of a world ruled by German humanism or who dreaded the Soviet occupation even more than life under the Nazis. “[The] clearly expressed hatred of persons of Jewish nationality,”

\textsuperscript{312} DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 32, ll 25-26.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., ll 30-31.
Soviet officials commented, “numbers among the most obvious violations of the accord [with the Soviet Union] on the part of the German delegation.”^314 All Jews were rejected without exception, even if they came from mixed families. At the same time, some ethnic Germans were taken against their will. ^315 In one case, a German woman from Chernivtsi with a Jewish husband and a daughter from a previous marriage to a German man was forcefully evacuated with her daughter even though “she didn’t want to register for the evacuation to Germany, wishing to stay in Chernivtsi with her second husband.”^316

The repatriation of ethnic Germans to the Reich was a rare instance in which the Soviet and Nazi authorities interacted peacefully, if not without tension, in Northern Bukovina. The resettlement program was carried out by both the German and Soviet evacuation commissions, but it placed an especially heavy strain on Soviet institutions and infrastructure such as the railway system, financial departments, and medical services. For the repatriation to go smoothly, both sides needed to cooperate. Although the non-aggression pact meant the two countries were officially at peace, each one constantly tried to outdo the other: from keeping or taking more people, to deciding who left or stayed. One day before leaving Chernivtsi for Romania, the head of the German delegation bid his Soviet partners good-bye saying “in the evacuation of Germans from Romania I will be the one to have the first word and not like here, where I am always the second.” In fact, the Soviets were very aware that they were “losing” to the Germans. That many non-Germans were eager to board the trains to the Reich was embarrassing enough, but the Soviets discredited themselves further by bungling their share of evacuation work.

First of all, they did not issue the German delegation the visas they needed to cross the border separating German-occupied western Poland from the Soviet-occupied east on time,
meaning the delegation arrived late, on September 15.\textsuperscript{317} By the time the president of the Soviet delegation, comrade Vasyukov, showed up in Chernivtsi almost two weeks later, the Soviet delegation had already been “spread out among 11 territorial points,” while “four comrades from the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR” had been charged with coordinating transportation, inspecting territorial representatives on the ground, evaluating the property the Germans left behind, and overseeing financial matters. Moreover, the men and women who were brought to Chernivtsi from the eastern oblasti to help the delegation carry out the evacuation were like the cast in a bad comedy: confused, disheveled people who did not fully understand what they were there to do. The nine doctors sent to Chernivtsi to assist the evacuees arrived after “almost half of all Germans registered had been evacuated to Germany accompanied by German delegation doctors.” Moreover, they turned out to be completely useless for the job, for they were “venereologists, gynecologists, dentists.” One doctor was an “invalid who proved incapable of working in the conditions of the evacuation.”\textsuperscript{318} Another doctor, who had not yet caught up with the news that the Germans were no longer enemies, “panicked when she saw members of the German delegation at the train station and said ‘how am I supposed to return when the Germans have already occupied the train station?’” To the German delegation’s amusement, the Soviet doctors “didn’t have the necessary clothing and shoes” and the women among them “came here with torn dresses which invited smiles of irony.”

What the authorities did not know yet was that these men and women had ulterior motives for coming to Chernivtsi. Only a few months into the occupation, Chernivtsi still had the air of a bourgeois city. For Soviet citizens from the eastern oblasti who had been putting up with food shortages for years, a trip to Chernivtsi was a rare treat. Doctors, drivers, and other staff

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., l 2.
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., l 22.
members came prepared to spend what little cash they had in this new western Soviet outpost. Comrade Shershevskij, the head-doctor of the Soviet delegation, spent all his time in Chernivtsi doing “nothing useful but concerned himself only with personal interests (stayed in line at stores, got in touch with black market traders)).” The chauffeurs hired to drive the *Glavnyi shtab* [General Staff] cars showed up in torn clothes and without underwear, so “as soon as they got here they started demanding things.” Concerned about the poor impression this would make on the German delegation, the authorities felt compelled to “provide them with shoes and suits in exchange for cash.”\(^{319}\) The cars were in no better condition than their drivers. One of them “broke down in the very first days because the engine wasn’t good and because of lack of tires and was not fixed until the end of the evacuation” and another three “went out of service” in the middle of the evacuation process, putting the Soviet delegation in the embarrassing position of having to borrow some cars from the German delegation.\(^ {320}\) Even if most of the Soviet cars went out of commission, their underwear-less chauffeurs had to be paid, which was “also a burden on the state budget.” For all the foul-ups on the Soviet side, the evacuation was completed by November 5. After this brief adventure in ‘the wild East,’ the German delegation took the train back to the Reich. Behind them trailed 43 train echelons carrying 44,959 people and one train loaded with horses and cattle.\(^ {321}\) On the way back into the Soviet Union, the empty trains spent up to five days on the road, delayed by technical problems and breakdowns, as if they were reluctant to return.

The evacuated Germans left behind them empty houses, gardens, land, agricultural tools. Whatever feelings of nostalgia locals might have felt for their German neighbors were quickly washed away by the joys of coming into new property. Thefts were more difficult to carry out

\(^{319}\) DACHo, fond P1, op. 1, d. 32.  
\(^{320}\) Ibid., l 24.  
\(^{321}\) Ibid., l 26.
because the Germans had the Reich on their side. They did not drop everything and run off, as
the Romanians had been forced to do a few months earlier. They left in a more or less orderly
fashion, and the property they left behind them was managed according to guidelines laid out in
the Soviet-German agreement. The Soviet state was supposed to compensate the German
evacuees for the property they lost. Before it was handed over to the “local power organs,” the
German property was evaluated by Soviet officials who were, of course, tempted to
underestimate prices so as to save the Soviet state some money and perhaps to draw some
benefits themselves. To encourage officials on the ground to do a good job, the authorities
considered giving out prizes. Sometimes the prices the Soviets were willing to pay were so much
lower than what the German property was actually worth that the owners “went around
evaluating and haggling for higher prices.” By the time the evacuation was completed, 74% of
the German households left behind had been evaluated; 346 houses and 25 factories were
nationalized, and the rest were to be distributed among the peasantry.322

Stealing was (to the disappointment of those peasants who had practiced this sport in
World War I) no longer possible now that the party-state apparatus watched over the spoils.
Peasants who took over households and land from the evacuated Germans were expected to
compensate the state “over the course of seven years, and for cattle and fowl over the course of
five years.”323 Unless they belonged to the party-state apparatus, locals could not snatch property
without being seen by the police [militsionery], who were mobilized “to guard the property of the
local aktiv” and kept on the spot even after the property was formally redistributed. Whatever the
‘peasantry’ did not buy from the state - quite a substantial number of residential buildings and
machinery - was given to the radgospy [sovkhozes], the MTS stations, and other “state

322 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 32, l 27.
323 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 6, l 115, 3 December 1940.
institutions.” 1,028 buildings and 273 hectares of land were used for “educational institutions, cultural and social establishments, industry, and [other] organizations.” Although these goods came at a price (lower than their owners would have been able to charge under normal circumstances) they were a boon to the regime for they could be easily repurposed for the Soviet state-building project.

Bukovina had already begun developing a diaspora in the ‘New World’ in the late 19th century when locals, mostly Ukrainian and Romanian peasants, as well as some Germans, left the province to try their luck across the Atlantic. By the early 1900s, there were Bukovinan ‘colonies’ in all sorts of places, from Argentina and Brazil, to Canada and the United States. Others Bukovinans crossed the border into Russia, driven both by religious considerations and by the hope that ‘the father tsar’ would welcome them with and reward them with land. Bukovinans continued moving around during the interwar period too. Although the Romanian government placed strict limits on the emigration of Romanians, it encouraged ‘foreigners’ who wished to emigrate. During the years of growing anti-Semitic persecution, many Bukovinan Jews left, some to America and others to Palestine. At the same time, ethnic Romanians who had left Bukovina before the war to find land and riches across the ocean were invited to return home and recover what they had lost. Many chose to return, with money in their pockets and a good deal of pride, driving up land prices and creating trouble with their ‘American’ ideas.

When the Soviets occupied Northern Bukovina, locals were once again faced the choice of staying or leaving. After the Ribbentropp-Molotov pact, this choice came down to whether one preferred Soviet or Nazi rule. For some, the answer was obvious. Most Romanians preferred Germany because they hoped that, under Hitler’s patronage, they would at some point recover the territories they had lost to the Soviets. Most Ukrainian nationalists also preferred Germany
because they too hoped Hitler would reward them for their loyalty by helping them create a
Greater Ukraine where they, and not the Soviets, would be in charge. Germans preferred
Germany for obvious reasons. What about Bukovina’s Jews? If anyone was trampled by both
great powers, it was they. Northern Bukovina’s Jewish population was numerous and variegated;
one could find pretty much everything here, from rural and religious Jews to urban
cosmopolitans to Yiddish-speaking proletarians and rich industrialists. As a result, their
responses to the Soviet occupation were highly discordant. Some Bukovinan Jews rushed to
greet the Red Army when they entered Chernivtsi, either because they were convinced
communists or simply because the Soviets were not the Germans. A smaller group picked the
Romanians and Germans over the Soviets. Prosperous Jews who owned land or factories had to
choose between certain deportation under the Soviets and an uncertain fate under an anti-Semitic
government in Romania. It was still hard to tell in June 1940 which of these two evils was the
lesser one.

People agonized over their choices and were often bewildered when they turned out to
make no difference. Out of this confusion and despair came bitter jokes like the following one,
which Carl Hirsch recounts in his memoirs: “two trains meet on June 28 in a station between
Bucharest and Czernowitz, one going South with refugees from Czernowitz, the other North with
returnees to Czernowitz. As they pass one another two brothers (one going North and one going
South) recognize each other and each is yelling to the other: ‘Meshigener’ (You Crackpot)!"324
Pepe Georgescu tells a similar story in his memoirs, about a certain “Jew Fischer,” whose
brother persuaded him to stay in Chernivtsi under the Soviets because “it would be a mistake to
go to Romania, for we won’t have any rights there.” Just when Fischer was patting himself on
the back for a smart decision, the Soviet police “confiscated [his] house and everything, and

324 Carl Hirsch, A Life in the Twentieth Century.
sealed the doors,” arresting Fischer and sending his family to live in a cramped basement apartment. For an anti-Semite of Georgescu’s caliber, this was a happy denouement, for people who had been “exploiting the work of the Romanian peasant to have fun in Ostanda and Nisa and build palaces in London, Paris, Vienna, Bucharest, and Jassy” deserved to be punished. Although Georgescu himself was a victim of the Soviets, he could not sympathize with the Jews because he believed they had brought in the Soviets. Because of such hatreds, victims of the Soviet occupation were never brought together by their shared suffering.

Let us now follow those who left. When the Soviet tanks rolled into Cernăuți on June 28, 1940, Frederick Andermann was only ten years old. Little did he know that he would soon leave his home and wander all around Europe before settling down on the opposite side of the world. That his family was rich proved to be both a curse and a blessing. Unlike other Jews who could hope to go about their everyday lives quietly under the Soviets, the Andermanns were sure to be deported to Siberia. Frederick’s father was the owner of the “Soare” factory in Cernăuți, which operated with “machinery from Germany and employed 300 people.” Of all the property they left behind, the family was able to recover only one sewing machine, which they had given a neighbor for safekeeping. Everything else was nationalized. A successful businessman who had graduated from the Commercial Academy in Vienna and the University in Czernowitz and had served in the Austrian army in World War I, Andermann’s father was not a man to be caught unprepared. He saw trouble coming as early as 1939, when the first “horse-drawn carts carrying refugees” began streaming into Cernăuți from Poland. He made plans to emigrate. After a brief trip to Canada and the United States, where he went to “plan moving with the factory and his partners,” Andermann returned to Cernăuți disappointed because he could only secure four passports - not enough to take his best technicians with him.
But no amount of planning could prepare one for the events of June 1940, for the Soviet ultimatum was entirely unexpected. The Andermanns packed in a hurry, threw their suitcases and trunks into a carriage, and hastened to the train station, but by the time they got there the last train to Romania was about to leave and was already packed. The parents “were told they could get on the last train but they would have to leave their belongings behind,” which they refused to do. Thankfully, fat bribes could solve even the most desperate problems in that part of the world so the Andermanns were able to leave after all by paying the station master to add three cattle cars to the train for Romania, which they used to transport their furniture and valuables. Under Austrian rule, the Andermanns had climbed out of Buczacz, a small Galician town where they made a living as tavern-keepers, and moved to Czernowitz. There, the next generation studied commerce at the university, spoke multiple languages, kept a library “full of complete works of Goethe, Schiller, and Heine,” and lived in a central part of the city, where they could afford to buy “a house from an Austrian or Polish officer close to the main Temple.” The Soviet occupation now drove them from Czernowitz, where they had settled so comfortably, to Suceava in Romania, then Vienna, then Geneva and Paris, and finally to Montreal, where they settled down and became Canadians.

While some Bukovinan Jews fled from the Soviets in 1940, others fled with the Soviets later in 1941 when the Romanian-German troops reconquered Northern Bukovina. Although the Soviet authorities did not issue official evacuation orders to locals, many Jewish men managed to flee together with the Soviet troops before the Romanians returned. Some who followed the Red Army eastwards did not make it all the way to the Soviet Union but ended up “in German-controlled territory in Poland or Ukraine.” Josef Burg, a Jew from Wischnitz, reached the

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325 LBI, Frederick Andermann, *Czernovitz Memoirs.*
other side safely and survived the war. As he would later explain in an interview, “the greatest majority of Austrian Jews who still lived after the war owe their survival to the Soviet Union. What followed is an entirely different matter: Stalin wanted to annihilate the rest of the Jews.”

Burg was mobilized into the Red Army at the beginning of World War II in June 1941. Having witnessed the Anschluss in Vienna and lived through the anti-Semitic policies of the Romanian Goga-Cuza government, Burg had turned “pro-Communist.” Like his brother who had fought and died in the Spanish Civil War, he wanted “a state in which people would no longer shout in the streets ‘Down with the Jews!’”

Convinced that the Nazis would be defeated very quickly because “the Red Army is the strongest in the world,” before leaving Bukovina Burg told his mother “you’ll see I will come back in one or two weeks.” He never saw her again.

Those two weeks turned into twenty years, and by the time Burg returned home after wandering all over the Soviet Union, his entire family was gone, killed in the war. By uprooting him and tossing him to the four winds, the Soviet occupation and World War II turned Josef Burg into a man who was no longer at home anywhere, except perhaps in the Yiddish language. From Bukovina, he first went to the Volga Republic, where he taught German in a village named Rosendamm. Shortly after his arrival, the republic was abolished and its German residents were deported as punishment for having supposedly collaborated with the Nazis. As a Jew who did not know one word of Russian but who spoke German perfectly, Burg cut a strange figure there, in the middle of a territory abandoned by its former inhabitants. From Saratov, he ended up with other Soviet evacuees in the “Samarkandskaya oblast’,” where he joined the “Akhum Babayev” kolkhoz in the Ferghana Valley as a school teacher, for “German continued to be taught throughout the duration of the war.” As soon as the war was over, Burg left Samarkand and

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328 Ibid., 41.
traveled back to European Russia, where he ended up working first in the coal mines in the Urals, then in Cheliabinsk, and finally in Moscow. Burg put off returning “home” to Czernowitz for twenty years, and when he did come back with his Russian wife, it was with the painful realization that “I no longer have anyone here. Where should I go to? To whom? I came into a city in which I had spent my entire youth, in which I had become a writer and a man, but I knew nobody there. I had the feeling that the rocks under my feet were crying.”

**Conclusion: The Unraveling**

It was June 28, 1941, precisely one year since the Soviet troops had marched into Northern Bukovina. The secretaries of local party organizations were instructed to summon peasants and workers in “all villages and factories” and talk to them about “what Soviet rule did here in one year.” More than 20,000 people participated in meetings “to discuss Molotov’s speech on the radio.” There were no parades, no musical accompaniment to the speeches except for the dim sound of planes circling above Chernivtsi. Less than one week before, on June 22, Nazi Germany had declared war on the Soviet Union. The outbreak of war had caught the local Soviet authorities unprepared. “Under no circumstances should we give in to panic,” obkom secretary Hrushetsky declared in his usual firm tone during a party meeting held on June 24, but the Germans and Romanians were so close to the border that one could almost hear them knocking on Hrushetsky’s door. On June 22, the airport and railway station in Chernivtsi had been bombed; on the night of June 26, Germans “had started grouping themselves along the border,” and there were skirmishes with the Red Army in which 30 Romanian and German soldiers were taken prisoner. The party organization scrambled to evacuate the military and state apparatus. In only a couple of days, tens of families of “military who are on the front, families of

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communists who were mobilized into the army and those with many children” were gone. No arrangements were made to evacuate the rest of the population: “those who individually evacuated their families will be held responsible for it.” The local party apparatus started hemorrhaging people, as they were mobilized into the army. In some areas, such as Khotyn, Sekuryan, and Kel’mentsy, a good number of men volunteered to serve at the front. By June 28, 200 locals had been mobilized into fighting battalions (istrebitel’nye batalioni), but they were not yet equipped with weapons. In the meantime, German parachutists fell from the sky like raindrops. The electricity was then cut off, and radios were confiscated. “After a few days it became clear that this part of the land would be given up and the troops began withdrawing in massive confusion,” Leopold Hessing - a Jewish witness and Holocaust survivor – recalled.

As the German and Romanian troops drew closer, the threads that kept the regime anchored in local society began to snap, and the fabric of the “new Soviet society” began to unravel. For all the work that had been done to uncover “enemy elements,” all it took was for the Soviets to be caught in one moment of vulnerability- for “enemies” to come out of the woodwork These were strange days, for it seemed as though society, apparently tamed by Soviet power, was suddenly waking up and reclaiming its power. The closer the Romanians and Germans got, the less power the Soviets had over the population. As soon as news of the war came through, workers in many factories and sovkhozy stopped showing up for work. The army - the most important and most direct link between the state and the local population - lost authority. Although in most places the mobilization was carried out “in an organized manner,” there were also many districts where more and more men deserted every day. Some simply did not show up to the recruitment centers, while others tried to shirk military service by feigning

330 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l 6.
331 LBI, Leopold Hessing Collection, ME 1070, MM II 29 (accessed digital form), 12.
332 DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l 26.
illness and disability. In the Novoselitskij raion, out of 1,776 men who were mobilized into the army, only 1,581 showed up.\textsuperscript{333} There were mass desertions in areas where underground Ukrainian nationalist organizations were still active, for they were better connected with the population than were Communist party officials (the leaders were local peasants themselves). In the Vashkivskij raion, for instance, all deserters were recruited into the gang led by “the bandit and Romanian spy Kolotilo” - who was likely not a Romanian spy, because he was a Ukrainian nationalist - which was “growing every day by adding more deserters.”\textsuperscript{334} These grassroots gangs were not just for show. Encouraged by the fast approach of the German-Romanian troops, they began attacking the Soviet troops and terrorizing Communist officials. When the war broke out, 175 men from the village Berezhnitsa “went into the forest taking with them horses.” Since most of the nationalist leadership had already been wiped out, these were either ordinary people or members of terrorist organizations who had somehow managed to infiltrate the Soviet apparatus. Among those men in Berezhnitsa were “the president and secretary of the sel’sovet, both of whom were OUN members.”\textsuperscript{335} On the evening of June 23, only one day after the outbreak of war, somewhere in the countryside not far from Chernivtsi a group of locals assaulted a Red Army attachment and “attempted to take away their weapons.” People whose families had had their possessions confiscated by the Soviets saw in Germany’s declaration of war their moment to take revenge. This was also their war on the Soviet authorities and those local elements that had collaborated with the Soviets. In one village, a group of kulaki burst into the sel’sovet armed with revolvers and “asked to be paid back for the goods that had been confiscated from their relatives.”\textsuperscript{336} The president of one sel’sovet in the Zastavnyanskij raion woke up one night to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 24 June 1941.
  \item \textsuperscript{334} Ibid., 26 June 1941.
  \item \textsuperscript{335} DAChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l. 25, 28 June 1941.
  \item \textsuperscript{336} Ibid., l. 27, 28 June 1941.
\end{itemize}
find his house in flames.\textsuperscript{337}

It was the Soviet revolution in reverse, for those who had sunk to the bottom were again rising to the top. Those individuals who had benefitted from the Soviet occupation, on the other hand, now became even more dependent on the regime. Without the Soviet authorities to protect them, they were doomed to fall into the hands of those who thirsted for revenge. Since their lives were now on the line, they clung more tightly than ever to the regime, volunteering for the army and preparing to follow the Soviet troops should they have to withdraw from Northern Bukovina. “We know what the Germans are,” some older kolkhozniki apparently said, “we know how they robbed us in the first imperialist war and for this reason we want our sons not to allow the German fascists to [step] on Soviet soil.”\textsuperscript{338} It is doubtful that older peasants were already so well-schooled in “speaking Bolshevik” that they could easily throw around words like “imperialism” and “German fascism,” but there was probably also a grain of truth in this.\textsuperscript{339} Those who remembered the food requisitionings and public hangings the German and Austrian troops had carried out in Bukovina during World War I, as punishment against those locals who had collaborated with the Russians, might have genuinely feared another German occupation. Their fears were confirmed when the first German and Romanian troops crossed the border into Northern Bukovina. Situated on the border with Romania, the Old Believer village Belaya Krinytsia (Bilya Krynytsia, Fantana Alba) was one of the first to fall under German-Romanian occupation. “[The] bandits threw themselves upon the empty homes of agitators and teachers,” one comrade Velyko, head of the local raikom, wrote. “Once they occupied the village,” he added, “they [the Germans and Romanians] brought with them the former leadership together

\textsuperscript{337} DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 90, 23 June 1941.
\textsuperscript{338} DACChO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l 26.
\textsuperscript{339} Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
with a gang of kulaki.”\footnote{DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l 30.} As soon as the village was firmly in the hands of the new occupation troops, peasant activists were ordered to “gather all goods from the cooperatives” and turn them over to the Romanian and German troops. When the president of the local sel’sovet asked the troops to give him a receipt for these goods because this was “the property of the people and he would be held responsible for it,” he was silenced with a blow. Drunk with power (and, according to Velyko’s reports, with alcohol) the Romanian soldiers and German officers set about punishing the locals - Russian-speaking Old Believers - for having accommodated to the Soviet regime. “Once they occupied the village,” Velyko wrote, “they rang a bell and gathered separately all the men and women and proposed to the soldiers to shoot the men.” The peasants begged for mercy and “brought bread and salt.” Unimpressed, the soldiers cut off the beard of an old peasant.”\footnote{Ibid.}

It was not just members of nationalist organizations and Iron Guardists who put their hopes in the Germans, but also ordinary people who were tired of being ordered around by the Soviets and who couldn’t wait to reclaim their property. As the “enemy” troops approached the border, these people grew increasingly impatient and daring. On June 23 the Germans began bombarding Chernivtsi, throwing the local authorities into panic and killing and wounding a good number of people. In the midst of all this, one man climbed on the roof of a pharmacy in Chernivtsi and began waving a white flag. The Soviet authorities found him before the Germans. “When we went there we found only the hat of the person who threw the flag, and then underneath the hat we found its owner too. In his pockets he carried various emblems and swastikas,” reported Hrushetsky.\footnote{Ibid., l 2, 24 June 1941.} The Soviet authorities had plenty of reasons to suspect that, if the Germans and Romanians seized Chernivtsi, many would welcome them with open arms. In
one factory, one Ukrainian worker reportedly said that “while enemy planes were flying around, let our people come soon, then we will know what to do with the Jews and the factory.” A Romanian worker sang the Romanian anthem in his workshop; in another factory, a certain Tkach Tseranov “whose relatives had left to Germany” said that “if they take me into the army, I will immediately go over to the German side.” Yet another worker said he wished to “bandage a wounded German pilot, [because] I like them very much.”

At least some people remained loyal to the Soviets, or we would not know about any of these incidents today. Nevertheless, many people seemed well-disposed - if not amiably indifferent - towards the Romanians and Germans. But by the time the Romanians left Northern Bukovina once again in 1944, it was the Soviets who were welcomed with open arms. Let us return to our story and see how this came to be.

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343 DACHO, fond P1, op. 1, d. 80, l 50, 25 June 1941.
344 Ibid., l 65, 26 June 1941.
Chapter 7

At Home in the Nazi Empire

Hryhorij Vasyl’ovych Hretsiuk went to bed on the evening of June 28 a Soviet citizen. When he left church the following day, “the Soviets were no longer there.” The parishioners were greeted by a German officer who informed them, with the help of a translator, that “a new power has come. Whoever opposes it will be shot.” Armed with machine guns, the Germans drove through the village on their motorcycles “paying no attention to the people.” The Soviets had left in a hurry. A good number of people had attempted to flee Northern Bukovina together with the Soviet troops but civilians were not issued evacuation permits unless they had enrolled in the Red Army. Nor were the trains that were put at the evacuees’ disposal sufficient to transport everyone. Fearing the wrath of gentiles who accused them of collaboration with the Soviets, Jews “took the train station by assault,” leaving “their residences, collecting their things in a hurry, and trying to hang on to a wagon so they could escape into the heart of Russia.” Of those who left, many did not even make it to the other side as some of the trains “instead of going towards Russia ended up in Galicia and there fell into the hands of the Germans.” And so the Soviets left: slamming the doors behind them, setting buildings on fire, and blowing up the bridge over the Pruth river.

Once the cat was safely away, the mice began to play. People started settling scores with

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2 Ibid.
3 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1459, 135.
neighbors who had been overly friendly with the Soviets or who had benefited from the Soviet occupation at others’ expense. The brief interregnum also offered locals who stayed a golden opportunity to pocket the possessions of those who had left. As soon as the Soviets had left the city, riffraff rushed into Chernivtsi from the neighboring countryside, throwing themselves upon empty apartments and stealing everything in sight. Josef Froehlich, a lawyer living in Chernivtsi at the time, recalled how Ukrainians put on sashes with the Romanian flag and the swastika symbol on them, bursting “into Jewish homes in order to terrorize and rob.” “The Christians at the periphery of the city,” one Jewish woman from Chernivtsi would later recall, “threw themselves upon the Jews like hyenas, stealing and destroying everything.”

Many Romanian and Ukrainian peasants who had been forced into kolkhozes against their will welcomed the German and Romanian troops and looked upon them as saviors. At last, now that the Soviets were gone, they could recover their land and animals. But they were in for a big surprise. In the words of one witness, “people welcomed the troops with flowers and ovations, and they responded by shooting.”

This sinister carnival of violence marked the beginning of World War II in Bukovina. The scenario was far from extraordinary. It was here, after all, in the so-called ‘bloodlands’ that about half of the soldiers who died on the battlefield during “the most lethal conflict in history” perished. The waves of violence that swept over Eastern Europe during these years have been an endless source of fascination for historians of the region not simply out of voyeurism (although that also might account for the inordinate number of studies of Eastern Europe focusing on violence and genocide), but also because the question of violence is imbricated with the larger

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4 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, Etty Steinbergher, 03-899.
5 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03/900, 196.
issue of Eastern Europe’s position on the continent and its agency or lack thereof in relation to the Great Powers. The preoccupation with the Eastern front has been all the greater given that Eastern European borderlands were also the site where most European Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. For Holocaust historians, the interest in “the East” came together with the realization that the Auschwitz experience was actually very atypical, as most Jews were murdered close to their homes, with primitive methods. This shifted their attention from the German perpetrators (see the Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen debate on “ordinary men” versus “willing executioners”) to the issue of local collaboration and complicity in the Holocaust. As most of the killings did not take place on the territory of Germany but far away in the East, it became evident that the German troops - though they played a decisive role in coordinating the massacres - could not have murdered millions of people without the assistance of local collaborators. Suddenly Raul Hilberg’s claim that contemporaries of the Holocaust could be neatly categorized into “perpetrators, victims, and bystanders” no longer made sense.

Jan Gross’s *Neighbors* directly challenged this schema by revealing what Poles in fact had known all along: that the mass murder of Jews was a joint operation in which local Poles often took the leading role. Gross’s story about the massacre of the Jewish community of Jedwabne by Polish ‘neighbours’ raised a host of questions about guilt and responsibility, and the motivations behind local participation in the Holocaust. It also triggered an avalanche of scholarship, as one historian after another discovered that in his or her respective part of Eastern Europe - Belorussia, Ukraine, Poland - locals had collaborated too. The matter of local agency seemed settled, at least in the field of Holocaust history, when Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands* came along, raising the question anew. In Snyder’s own words, this is “a history of the people killed by the policies of distant leaders” - a study of the East European borderlands seen through
the prism of the mass violence inflicted by Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Soviet Union. The book defines the region in terms of the “human geography of the victims” as opposed to “the political geography of empires,” promising to bring “the Nazi and Soviet regimes together, and Jewish and European history together, and the national history together.” But in the process, Eastern Europeans dissolve into an amorphous mass of victims of political violence. As it turns out, the focus of the book is not really on the victims, for this would have required more differentiation between experiences of victimhood, but on Berlin and Moscow, and their treacherous plans to reshape Europe at the expense of the ‘lands in between.’ The result is a story that paints over the complex dynamics between different national groups, state governments, and local populations with the undiscriminating brush of collective victimhood. In short, the book reads like an experiment in transnational history gone awry. Yet the question of why the East European borderlands were so coveted by both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, and how its position shaped East European politics and society is an important one, and so is Snyder’s intention to bring together multiple national perspectives and embed the Holocaust in the larger context of World War II. To achieve this, however, we need to do what Snyder explicitly avoids, warning that “attention to any single persecuted group will fail as an account of what happened here.”

This chapter paints with a wider palette the interactions between Eastern Europeans and the Great Powers that ruled them during the war. It recaptures the complex dynamic between different actors in the region - from the Nazi authorities and the Romanian administration to Ukrainian nationalists and Jewish victims. The goal here is to understand how different local participants related to the Nazi and Soviet projects - or ‘plans’ as Snyder calls them. The result is

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7 Jan Gross comments directly on this in the following article: Jan T Gross, “A Colonial History of the Bloodlands,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 3 (2014): 593.
a story with not just two agents - Stalin and Hitler - but many: Ukrainians, Romanians, Jews, Poles, Germans, Soviets. Because this is an unusually complicated and sensitive topic with high moral stakes, this chapter is unusually long. To help the reader through this maze, I will attempt to briefly summarize it here. The first part is devoted to the joint Romanian-German re-occupation of Northern Bukovina in the summer of 1941. This was not the typical story of German military occupation in Eastern Europe, as Northern Bukovina remained under Romanian control and the returning troops were welcomed by a great many locals, especially ethnic Romanians. From the very outset, the Romanian administration came poised to accomplish the project that former Romanian governments had failed to achieve: to make Bukovina feel and look Romanian.

The war opened up new possibilities for Antonescu’s regime to act on this plan. As soon as they entered Northern Bukovina, the Romanians proceeded to de-Sovietize the area and cleanse it of “foreigners” - that is to say Jews. In short, this first part shows how the Nazi plan to absorb Eastern Europe into its empire contained and furthered the national and even imperial ambitions of local populations and governments. The chapter then takes a closer look at the dynamic between the two dominant national groups in Bukovina, the Ukrainians and the Romanians, and the Nazi authorities stationed in Cernăuți. While the Romanian authorities were officially in charge, the Nazi presence in Bukovina completely altered the relationship between the local Romanian and Ukrainian populations. Both groups looked to the Nazi authorities for protection and favors. Both sought to align their own interests with those of Nazi Germany while the Nazis encouraged now the Ukrainians, now the Romanians with their usual divide et impera tactics. In this part of the chapter, I focus closely on the Ukrainian story, tracing the resurgence of radical Ukrainian nationalism after the Soviet retreat and showing how Ukrainian nationalists
capitalized on the regime change to advance their own national project. And finally, the third part of the chapter deals with the Holocaust at the northern periphery of Romania, following the Jewish victims from their homes into the ghetto in Cernăuți and then to Transnistria. Much less familiar than Auschwitz and Treblinka, Northern Bukovina and Transnistria were both an arena for extraordinary brutality and one of very few Holocaust sites with relatively high survival rate. What makes their story unique is also the fact that most Jewish victims here did not come face to face with German, but with Romanian and Ukrainian perpetrators. As a result, many survivors attributed the violence to the ‘barbarism’ of these people and remained deeply attached to the German language and the ideal of Kultur. In this part of the chapter, I emphasize local collaboration - as Jean Ancel and Vladimir Solonari have done - but I also gesture towards a broader understanding of anti-Semitism in this part of the world as a manifestation of an abiding preoccupation with territory and place. My argument echoes Holly Case’s claim in her study of Transylvania during World War II that in this region “the Jewish question was linked with minority concerns” and passed “through the question of territory and sovereignty.”

Many locals - not just ethnic Romanians, but also Ukrainians - perceived the return of the Romanian troops not as an occupation but merely a return to a previous state of things. Here they were mistaken, for things had changed radically on the other side of the border. The loss of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviets and Northern Transylvania to Hungary had thrown Romania into a deep economic and political crisis that culminated with King Carol II’s abdication and a sudden regime change. Although Romania remained a monarchy (as King Carol II was succeeded by his son Prince Mihai), the king lost most prerogatives and his royal dictatorship was replaced by a military dictatorship under Marshal Ion Antonescu. Until February 1941, Antonescu governed jointly with the Iron Guard but then he promptly abolished
the national legionary state and concentrated power exclusively in his own hands. By the time the Romanian troops returned to Northern Bukovina in July 1941, the romantic story of national brotherhood and unity so popular in 1918 no longer held the same appeal. Because Bukovina had already been under Romanian rule for two decades, the story had to be adjusted. This time the Romanian troops were coming to take back what they had lost to the Soviets one year before and to exact revenge on those locals who had betrayed the Romanian cause by collaborating with the Soviet regime.

These circumstances gave the Romanian occupation a deeply paradoxical character. The incoming Romanian troops committed acts of extraordinary brutality, yet they also were acutely aware of having to fulfill a “historic mission” to rebuild civilization “in place of the Asiatic barbarity” in Northern Bukovina. This time, the Romanians did not come alone but accompanied by German troops. On the same day that Germany began its attack on the Soviet Union, Romania also declared war on the Soviets and then broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union two days later. Although the Romanian political establishment had always leaned towards the West, Germany’s victories and the inability or unwillingness of the Western powers to curb German expansion had determined them to change course. Romania’s main incentive to join the Axis powers was the prospect of recovering the territories it had lost in June 1940 to the Soviets. An alliance with the Soviet Union was therefore out of the question. Even though the decision to join the German war effort was largely a tactical one, the Romanian leadership did find the idea of a “New Europe” in which Romania would play a special role as a frontier country between Europe and Asia, extremely appealing. “We used to be a gateway to Christianity and now we are the gateway to the new Europe,” the Romanian newspaper Bucovina

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8 Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia şi Bucovina. Îndrumări date Administraţiei Desrobitoare (Bucureşti, 1941), 98.
proclaimed in July 1941. And so began the German-Romanian offensive in the southern part of the front on July 2, 1941. Together with the 11th German army, the 4th Romanian army crossed the Pruth river into Bessarabia, moving in the direction of Mogilev. The 3rd Romanian army together with the German Einsatzkommando 10 b, led by SS Sturmbannführer Alois Persterer, came in from the south, reaching Chernivtsi on July 5 and then joining the 11th army in its march to the east.9

The invasion was nothing like what one would expect from a “civilized” people on a mission to heal Bukovina of Soviet barbarism. As a reward for their heroism, the troops were allowed to rob, plunder, and murder to their hearts’ content for the first few days after the conquest.10 With the help of local informers and ‘collaborators’ thirsty for revenge, the incoming Romanian troops killed most of the Jewish population in the countryside within their first forty-eight hours in Northern Bukovina. Approximately 2000 Jews died during these first days.11 “Wherever the Romanian soldiers went, they brought the pogrom as a gift,” one witness would later recall. Soldiers burst into apartments “under the pretext that they were looking for weapons, [and] stole jewelry, clothing, linen, in short everything they could carry with them.”12 As soon as they entered Sniatyn, the Romanian troops proceeded to shoot Jews while the “peasants on the left shore of the Czeremush began plundering, robbing, and murdering in Jablonitza on the Polish side.” In Cernăuți too, Romanian soldiers were said to go “from house to house, taking

10 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1130.
12 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1436.
people out, beating them and shooting them on the spot. Within only a few hours the streets were covered with corpses, the city was in flames."13 Behind them, the incoming troops left a trail of bodies. In addition, the soldiers robbed abandoned houses and apartments, loading the “jewelry and expensive carpets” they found onto “trucks and tourism cars” and transporting them back home to their families.

This kind of behavior caused indignation among both German soldiers and returning Romanian functionaries who hoped to partake in these riches too. While these crimes were committed in the presence of German military and officials, the Germans did not carry out all the dirty work by themselves. The occupation was a joint operation. On the night of July 5, German and Romanian patrols went around Chernivtsi and arrested Jews, taking them to the Cultural Palace, where “a German officer decided who should be taken to Bilu for execution.”14 Around 200 Jews were taken to Bilu, a suburb of Chernivtsi, where they were shot and buried in a mass grave.15 That same night, the German SS set the Jewish temple in the city center on fire. Sidi Gross, who lived just across the street from the great synagogue in the city center, watched the temple burn to the ground from her balcony as “a German Jeep went up to one side of the temple, while an SS officer got out and went inside with a can of petrol and set it on fire.”16 A few days later, on July 8-9, another 500 Jews - representatives of the “Jewish leadership” and other suspects who “were part of Zionist organizations or former officers from the Austrian

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13 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, David Grinberg, 03-1473, 166.
14 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1452, 260.
15 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1438, 65.
army” - were arrested by the SS and shot.17

It is no surprise that the German SS engaged in such acts of brutality but what were the Romanians doing? As we know from previous chapters, anti-Semitism had always been an important ingredient for Romanian nationalism. This was especially the case in the interwar period when Romanian governments that could not agree on much else insisted that Greater Romania’s large Jewish minority were the greatest obstacle to national unification. After 1938, Jews in the newly annexed provinces lost their Romanian citizenship. Their situation worsened significantly when the Goga-Cuza government and then the Iron Guard movement came to power. Later on, under Ion Antonescu, antisemitic laws were issued from the General’s desk almost every day. Even though Antonescu disliked the anarchism of the Iron Guard, he shared with them the fundamental assumption that the Jews were responsible for Romania’s territorial losses (for they had supposedly invited the Soviets into Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia) and that the country would therefore be better off without them. But the anti-Jewish violence the Romanian occupation troops perpetrated in the summer of 1941 in Northern Bukovina was on an entirely different scale. It was made possible by the war and the recent Soviet occupation, which gave new impulse to traditional anti-Jewish prejudices.

The new Romanian leadership looked upon Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia as places that had to be not only reconquered but also purified and radically transformed both because of what the Soviets had managed to do there in only a few months of rule and because of the mistakes committed by the previous Romanian administration. The Romanians were returning to Northern Bukovina with the sense that they needed to make up for lost time and complete what they had not managed to achieve in twenty years of rule. “We are returning full of revenge into

17 Marcel Cornis Pope, find page number; Hausleitner, “Rettungsaktionen für verfolgte,”116; 03-899, Jean Ancel testimonies.
the Moldavian land of Stephen the Great, laying once again and for good the foundations for the Romanian nation,” the vice-president of the Council of Ministers Mihai Antonescu (a close collaborator of General Ion Antonescu) wrote in a guidebook for “the liberating administration” in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. By 1941, when Northern Bukovina returned to Romania, the new administration looked to the interwar national unification project as a great failure. “The sin of the generation of 1918,” Antonescu wrote, “was the fact that it considered national unity, the fulfillment of our nation as a great sentimental or historic abstraction. And once this had been achieved, the Romanian people fell into a great feeling of numbness, as though our destiny had stood still.” Now that Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia were in Romanian hands once again, the new leadership was eager to reset the clock and complete what previous administrations had failed to achieve.

By damaging what the Romanians had sought to build over the course of decades in Northern Bukovina, the Soviets had made even deeper transformations possible. They had cleared the way for the returning Romanian administration to try out new recipes for national unification. In the words of Traian Popovici, who was appointed mayor of Cernăuți shortly after the Romanians returned to the city, Cernăuți was to become a “laboratory of racial ideology” and a site of experimentation with new ideas about the nation. The hope was that, once they were successfully implemented in the recovered territories, these ideas would also be applied to the rest of the country, spearheading a larger process of material and moral reconstruction that would transform the entire country into a “truly Romanian and Christian one.” Just like in 1918, when they were first incorporated into Greater Romania, the newly recovered provinces were once

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18 Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina, 5.
19 Ibid., 10.
20 Traian Popovici, Spovedania/Testimony (Bucharest, Fundatia Dr W Filderman, 2001), 63.
again meant to play a special role within the nation-state. “The two provinces will be the preface for the work of reforming the entire state,” Antonescu wrote, through a “new functionary apparatus conscious of its responsibilities and educated for its great mission.”22 The long-awaited change would come this time from the periphery. The new administration declared itself firmly against centralization, assuming that regional autonomy would allow a more radical transformation process. This was the very opposite of what the Romanians had done in Bukovina after 1918 - but it was no more conducive to democracy than the centralizing approach. Just as before, the two frontier cities Cernăuți and Chisinau were to “personify the soul of Romania, coming to fulfill a special mission of their own, as border cities.”23

_Strengthening the Frontier_

Bukovina’s new Romanian administration came in prepared for the worst. After a year under the Soviets, they expected to find the province radically transformed - almost unrecognizable. To recover the Romanian essence of this territory, it was therefore not enough to undo what the Soviets had done in the province. One had to rebuild, reconstruct, transform Bukovina yet again to lay it “on purely Romanian foundations.” Compare this to what Romanian nationalists were arguing twenty years earlier. Never mind that Bukovina had been under Austrian rule for a century and a half. Nicolae Iorga believed that the province’s national core remained intact, for the architecture, fashions, and omnipresent German language the Habsburgs had brought into Bukovina formed a thin layer that could be easily peeled away to reveal the true Romanian essence of this territory. How strange that nationalists should now think that in only one year of Soviet rule, “the Bolshevik regime abolished everything that was Romanian in

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22 _Bucovina_, 20 August 1941.
23 Mihai Antonescu, _Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina_, 3.
Bukovina, tore up from the foundations everything that was autochthonous, ruined lives, robbed
the population, and brought from Bukovina everything that could be transported in one way or
another.”24 These radical changes could be seen best in the “physiognomy” of the city Cernăuți,
whose “aspect of an Occidental civilization” had vanished together with its ethnic German
population and the Romanians who fled in 1940. The city’s supposedly Romanian essence and
look had given way to something completely different: a much more invasive, abundant, and
penetrating material culture than anything Bukovina had experienced before. One of the first
things the Soviets swept away was the unification monument in the center of Cernăuți, built at
such great expense to the province and inaugurated by King Ferdinand and Queen Maria in 1923.
By the time the Romanians returned to Northern Bukovina in 1941, they found only a lonely
sculpture of a “Romanian soldier” lying somewhere “on a ramp at the train station in Cernăuți.”
The rest of monument had been dismantled and taken “by the Russians to places that are still
unknown to us until today.”25 In its place, “the Bolsheviks put communist posters and a photo of
Stalin.”26 Now it was the Romanians’ turn to do the same thing to the Soviet monuments they
found in Cernăuți. They did their best to eliminate every trace of the previous regime, although
this turned out to be surprisingly hard work. The Soviets had left a profound imprint on the urban
landscape.

Romanian nationalists insisted that there was no such thing as a distinct Soviet
civilization because the Soviets lacked the most fundamental prerequisite to culture: rootedness
in soil, a deep and organic connection to land. “The land on which they live does not belong to
them,” the anti-Bolshevik Pepe Georgescu - whom we already met in the previous chapter -
wrote, “for they do not know and they never will know what the land of your country means.

24 Bucovina, 19 July 1941.
25 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1036, l 13.
26 Ibid.
They will never know their ties to the land in which their parents, grandparents, and forefathers are buried.”

But the Soviets did have one clear advantage over the Romanians: they were masters of mass culture. In only a few months of rule, they managed to disseminate their propaganda all over the province. Soviet culture existed and took concrete forms. It manifested itself in a “deeply unified material culture” - a uniform infrastructure of institutions and a perfectly harmonized built landscape. After only one year of Soviet rule, there were elements of Soviet material culture to be found everywhere, in all nooks and crannies of Northern Bukovina, both in public institutions like libraries and in private homes.

As the Romanian refugees who returned to Northern Bukovina in 1941 discovered, “in Cernăuți on almost every street mailboxes are painted with the Ukrainian flag.” When a Romanian propaganda movie was screened at the cinema in Hotin, the public spotted a “Soviet star with five corners” hanging above the cinema doors.

These Soviet symbols, so ceremoniously displayed everywhere around the city, retrospectively legitimized the Soviet conquest. That they remained in place as late as 1943 also indicated that at least some of the population was amiably disposed towards the Soviets. Now that the stamp of Soviet rule was everywhere around Northern Bukovina, it began to look like the Romanians were the foreigners here. The traces the Soviets left behind were not only all-pervasive but also very abundant. The enormous quantities of propaganda they had disseminated included everything from books to maps, posters, props for communist agitation, and newspapers. “It is necessary to collect and destroy all this material,” the Romanian secret police noted in July 1941, “so that it not be hidden and then spread by elements that remained faithful

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27 Georgescu, 265 de zile la Cernăuți, 55.
28 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 14/1941, 51.
29 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 21/1943, 5 June 1943.
30 DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 37, 24 October 1943.
to the communist regime.” These were not imaginary fears, for even though the Red Army had withdrawn together with the Soviet administration, most of the population including former sympathizers and collaborators with the regime had remained in place. In the homes of “communist partisans,” the Romanian police discovered even more Soviet propaganda stocked up. One man kept a portrait of Stalin hidden behind an icon hanging on the wall.\(^{31}\) Pearl Fichman, a Jewish woman from Cernăuți, remembered that as soon as the Soviets had fled the town her family “made a fire in the kitchen stove and bathroom to get rid of books by Stalin that had accumulated from the previous year.”\(^{32}\)

The Soviets were more skeptical about the power of their own propaganda than the Romanians, who looked upon it as a kind of mass hypnosis with dangerous powers. For this reason, the Romanian authorities resolved to erase all traces of Soviet rule from Northern Bukovina. Yet the huge quantities of propaganda and material culture the Soviets had left behind made this task practically impossible. In the public library in Cernăuți, the Romanian authorities discovered “numerous volumes of Russian propaganda, Russian maps, and several statues of Stalin.”\(^{33}\) The university library was also instructed to hand over all of its newspaper collections from the Soviet period as well as “any other valuable books left over from the Russians.”\(^{34}\) Although the initial plan had been to store these materials at the headquarters of Bukovina’s Gouvernement, the quantities of propaganda were so enormous that special arrangements had to be made. By April 1942, the warehouse created for this purpose in the center of Cernăuți housed 616,800 volumes of Soviet propaganda and literature and 650 kilograms of additional printed materials including “200,000 school textbooks, 100,000 propaganda books, 100,000 books of

\(^{31}\) DACHO, fond R-307, op. 1, d. 2381, l 62, 5 March-5 April 1943.


\(^{33}\) DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4079, l 1112, 7 March 1942.

\(^{34}\) DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4080, l 111, 6 February 1942.
literature, 160,000 brochures, 40,000 scientific books, 10,000 military books, 2,000 books of statistics, 1,000 on sports, 1,000 philological, 1,000 juridical, 1,000 dictionaries and encyclopedias, 300 music scores, 500 maps, 250 kilograms of newspapers, 400 kilograms of printed material.” By May 1942, 800,000 volumes of Soviet literature had been collected, some of which were burnt immediately. The Romanian-language propaganda was thrown into the fire first, as it was too easily accessible. Most of the propaganda in Russian and Ukrainian was also burnt, but the Ministry of Propaganda in Bucharest kept a few specimens of for an “anti-Bolshevik exhibit.” The work of collecting and classifying these materials was so massive that the authorities could not perform it single-handedly but only with the assistance of locals especially recruited to fulfill these tasks. Ironically, the majority of these workers happened to be Jewish intellectuals, for they were the only people in Cernăuți who spoke all the languages required to classify the materials the Soviets had left behind. The work they did to collect and sort this literature counted as a form of “work for the public good” - an euphemism for forced labor.

Although de-Sovietizing Northern Bukovina was their first priority, the Romanian authorities did not dismiss everything the Soviets had achieved in the province but indirectly competed with them over who was more cultured and civilized and more invested in improving conditions of life for the local population. The Romanians, who thought of themselves as ‘children’ of the West,’ viewed the Soviets as illiterate and backward people dressed in the ill-fitting clothes of commissars, professors, and officers. The behavior of Soviet officials who came to Bukovina seemed to confirm this prejudice. As soon as they arrived in Chernivtsi to visit their

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35 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4079, l 116, 21 April 1942.
36 Ibid., l 124, 17 April 1942.
37 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2733, 15 May 1942.
38 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4079, l 186, 19 June 1942.
husbands, the wives of the Soviet university professors who took up positions here threw away their boots, headscarves, and parkas, and went on shopping sprees to get everything “a real lady” needed: “women’s clothes, a hat, shoes, a bag, gloves, a sun umbrella.”³⁹ For many Soviet soldiers and authorities who arrived here, the conquest of Northern Bukovina was like an exciting trip to the civilized West. As soon as they landed in Chernivtsi, they put on fancy clothes and let themselves enjoy the pleasures of the bourgeois life. The returning Romanian authorities never tired of stressing the barbarism of the Soviets. Yet they also began investing heavily in mass propaganda and culture on the Soviet model. Even more than the Soviet authorities themselves, they were convinced that the local population had been radically transformed by “Bolshevik propaganda.” In reality, this wasn’t always the case, for as one local noted in his memoir of the war, the only place where people did not have to stand in line during the Soviet occupation in Chernivtsi was “the cinema, where movies about the revolution and kolgospy were being shown.”⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the Romanian administration believed that only a similarly intense national propaganda campaign could neutralize the effects of “Bolshevik” propaganda on Bukovina’s population. As soon as they crossed the border into the territory formerly occupied by the Soviets, the Romanians began opening libraries, cinemas, cultural homes, and theaters for the local population. Local officials and notables including priests, teachers, public notaries were instructed to form “initiative committees” and establish cultural enlightenment institutions in villages where these did not yet exist.⁴¹ Formerly inactive and poorly organized, village cultural homes were now supposed to work according to monthly plans and pre-established targets in order to root out “the unfortunate Bolshevik seed” that had grown above all “in weak and

⁴⁰ Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki druhoi svitovoi vijny, 100.
⁴¹ DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 37, 2 May 1943.
insufficiently formed souls.” Under previous administrations, the Romanian national theater in Cernăuți had fallen prey to “political calculations [which] led to its dissolution and paralyzed almost all artistic life.” In January 1942, the theater was re-opened, its new mission being to “bring back the flame of Romanian culture and civilization” to Northern Bukovina. “Given the extensiveness of the artistic and theatrical movement in Cernăuți under the Bolshevik regime,” Bukovina’s governor Calotescu insisted that the Romanian administration should offer comparable institutions to meet the locals’ cultural needs.

As always, the cultural question was also a question of managing distance - the supreme test for every regime in Bukovina. The Soviets seemed to have aced this test, for their cultural propaganda had penetrated into the remotest villages, leaving deep imprints on the Bukovinian countryside. The returning Romanian administration was now determined to do the same. The countryside had always been a source of vulnerability for the Romanian state (as for other polities) because it was difficult to reach, elusive, and resistant to change. What the Soviet experience in Northern Bukovina seemed to suggest was that cultural propaganda, if well done, could successfully mediate between the state and the rural population. Like the Soviets before them, Antonescu’s administration reached out to villages that had been completely neglected before, with Romanian film screenings, lectures, and portraits of Antonescu disseminated “through schools, cultural homes, village libraries, and missionary teams.” Theater troops were sent on “propaganda tours” around the province to bring “the patriotic idea among the great mass of the population, to centers that aren’t visited by usual tours organized by state and private

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42 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2381, l 1156.
44 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4, l 231, 13 December 1941.
theaters” and mend Bukovina’s broken ties with the “heart of the country.” The new Romanian inspectorate for propaganda sent ambulant libraries into the villages. By November 1942, fifteen such libraries “with books for villagers” were “going around from village to village, stopping in each one of them for fifteen days.” Propaganda brochures with sensational titles such as The Bolshevik Hell and Two Years Behind the Marshall’s Shield were distributed to peasants for free. A radio was installed in Unification Square in Cernăuți “broadcasting two news bulletins daily to inform the population about the war” and war propaganda movies were screened in cinemas around the province. In May 1942, Governor Calotescu ordered that “two thirds of the village libraries destined for the province Bukovina should be distributed to cultural homes in the territory liberated from Soviet occupation.” The idea behind this was to make Romanian propaganda as difficult to ignore as the Soviets had made theirs. The returning Romanian administration was also very much concerned to increase the number of schools in the province. The official propaganda dismissed the schools the Soviets had set up in Northern Bukovina as “a nucleus of anarchy where the church and national Romanian sentiments were ridiculed,” staffed with “all the nincompoops and vagabonds eliminated from our schools.” Nevertheless, the Romanians followed the Soviet model for how to build and disseminate mass culture.

The returning Romanian authorities also had to contend with the legacy of local

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46 “Turneele Teatrului Național,” Bucovina, 10 January 1942.
47 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2803, 12, 15 Nov 1941-15 Nov 1942.
48 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2768, 12, 21 May 1942.
50 They also made the Romanian administration’s task easier by putting at their disposal materials and institutions they could easily recycle. The books the Romanian authorities planned to send into the villages were none other than those confiscated by the Soviets and left behind in a “mountain, anarchically thrown together” on the floors of the Polish House in Cernăuți - about 100,000 volumes in multiple languages: “Romanian, German, French, English, Russian, Jewish, Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish, Czech, and Italian.” All the books that were not reclaimed by their owners were automatically given over to the Societatea pentru cultura și literatura română, whose former library the Soviets had confiscated and thrown into a basement on a neighboring street. That most of these works were in foreign languages and could not be read by half-literate peasants did not matter as much as the fact that the books were captured as “war loot” and given to the peasantry as proof of the regime’s commitment to their betterment and cultural enlightenment.
‘collaboration’ with the Soviets. This was a sensitive issue because while the Soviet troops were gone after June 1941, many local Soviet sympathizers who hadn’t managed to flee with them stayed behind. The Romanian administration felt they could not proceed with their national reform program in Bukovina before local society had been thoroughly cleansed of unreliable elements. Yet their understanding of ‘collaboration’ was limited, for they took it for granted that only Jews and ‘foreigners’ (Ukrainians) had worked with the Soviets, while ethnic Romanians had been victims of the Soviets. This assumption rested on long-held anti-Jewish prejudices and the powerful myth of Judeo-Bolshevism, as well as the reports of Romanian witnesses who had lived through the Soviet occupation. “All refugees declare that the entire disorder is being provoked only by Jewish Communists and Ukrainians,” one Romanian intelligence report noted in the summer of 1940. Another official note from July 1940 indicated that “when the Soviet troops entered Northern Bukovina, Red Army officers were impressed that only Jews came to meet them” and accordingly, “in the first days all leadership posts were occupied by the Jewish element.”

Romanian eyewitnesses told tales of Jews robbing and murdering, seizing red flags and demonstrating in the streets, setting Romanian institutions on fire, kissing Soviet tanks, and welcoming the Red Army with flowers.

Among the ‘witnesses’ were, no doubt, locals eager to dissociate themselves completely from the Soviets and ingratiate themselves with the new administration. According to their reports, all of Northern Bukovina - with the exception of the Jews - had merely sleepwalked through the Soviet occupation. So had the Soviet authorities themselves, mesmerized and manipulated by the Jews. One intelligence report from June 1940 noted that “we must remark that Soviet officers and troops are behaving well towards the population, while the Jews and

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51 Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), O11/107, 23, 28 July 1940.
minorities are attacking everywhere, both the population and isolated members of the military.”\textsuperscript{52}

When the Romanians returned in the summer of 1941, one worker from Hotin who had been recruited into the Red Army shortly after the Soviets came in claimed that “there were some Jews who wished to lead us and kept shouting ‘to the front, to the front,’ but they had no authority and they took us from Proscurov almost to the White Church with great difficulty, from where every person started deserting to wherever they could.” What this worker wished to drive home was that the Christian population had nothing to do with the Soviet occupation - that they were mere victims of it.

Romanian witnesses described the Soviet occupation as an inter-ethnic, inter-religious clash in which the Jews had turned against the Christian population, attacking evacuation trains and attempting to disarm Romanian troops. Romanian refugees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina complained, for instance, that Jews “subjected them torture, beat them up with stones, opened their suitcases, took away their animals and destroyed their vehicles.”\textsuperscript{53} In addition, “as soon as the evacuation order had been given, the Jews engaged in anti-Romanian manifestations, tearing the flag and spitting on it, and climbing atop the unification monument they displayed the red flag.”\textsuperscript{54} The Jews therefore had to be punished not simply because they accommodated the Soviets but above all because they had committed anti-Romanian acts such as shooting Romanian functionaries, desecrating Romanian monuments, and “thrusting bayonets into the bodies of officers and policemen,” or desecrating churches.\textsuperscript{55} According to one report, “in the cathedral in Cernăuți, Communists pulled down the cross and replaced it with a red flag with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} YVA, O11/107, 4, 30 June 1940.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 28 June 1940.
\item \textsuperscript{55} YVA, O11/107, 6-7, 30 June 1940.
\end{itemize}
Stalin’s picture.” In Gura Humorului, Jews were said to have “sequestered cars, not allowing the Romanian population to withdraw,” while in the Hertza region Jewish communists were said to have “killed four Romanian soldiers and ten Jewish soldiers from a cavalry squadron.” A large number of Soviet sympathizers in Northern Bukovina had indeed been Jewish. This could be easily explained. After two decades under Romanian rule, many Jews in Bukovina looked upon the Soviet regime as a breath of fresh air - a welcome alternative to the rampant anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence of interwar Romanian governments. Well before the Soviets came in, Bukovina had had a Communist party branch of its own and a pretty vigorous leftist/Communist movement consisting overwhelmingly of Jews. The Ukrainians had their own leftist-peasant party too - the so-called Vyzvolennya. According to Evgenija Finkel, a Jewish woman who joined the Communist party in Cernăuți and then the Romanian branch of the Komsomol in the 1920s, “around 400 people from the villages and Czernowitz were leftist” at the time. To Jews like Finkel who experienced the worst of interwar anti-Semitism, the Soviet experiment looked like a promising attempt to build a new society, free of the prejudices and superstitions. By joining a Communist organization, these people no doubt felt empowered to on their own behalf; they felt they no longer had to stand by and bear the insults that were being hurled at them. Like most other groups who were complicit in the Soviet occupation in some way, Jews had been both victims and collaborators of the Soviets. For only a few months into the occupation, the Soviets had deported as many Jewish families from Bukovina as Romanian ones - if not even more. Even the Romanian authorities, otherwise eager to lay all the blame on the Jews, admitted that “during the occupation nobody was spared” - not even those Jews who had

56 Ibid., 9, 30 June 1940.
57 Ibid., 19, July 1940.
“thought [the Soviets] were liberators, but were wrong.”\textsuperscript{59}

The hunt for Jewish collaborators began as soon as the Soviets had left. The anti-Jewish violence erupted even before the Romanian authorities arrived. Pogroms broke out all over the countryside as locals threw themselves upon Jews they suspected of collaboration with the Soviets. One Ukrainian man from the former Kitsmanskij raion remembered that “after the NKVD left, the village could not go on without shedding blood,” for “the entire village decided that the local corrupt people would have to pay for what they had done.” Among the victims was a certain Mel’nychuk, who was said to be “in fact the Jew Mil’man who hates Ukrainians.” Known to have worked for the sil’rada and helped the Soviets purge the village of ‘enemies of the people,’ Mel’nychuk was caught “near the border” and killed “on the spot.”\textsuperscript{60} There was no doubt in this witness’s mind that locals had every right to take matters into their own hands once the Soviet authorities had withdrawn and collaborators found themselves without protection. Already ill-disposed towards the Jews, locals who had lost all of their possessions and perhaps families during the Soviet occupation held pro-Soviet Jews responsible for their losses and were eager to pay them back in kind. Even though their actions had ideological and political implications, they did not see them that way. For them the act of reckoning with former Jewish collaborators was a personal matter that happened to coincide with the Romanian administration’s plans. Ukrainian and Romanian peasants who lost their land and were forced into kolgospy under the Soviets blamed local Jews for their tragedy. One peasant from the Zastavnianskij raion who remembered the Romanian occupation rather fondly because “we worked our land (…) we sowed, fathered the harvest, and no one wanted anything from us” insisted that “there were many Jews” during the Soviet occupation “who went around and

\textsuperscript{59} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941.
\textsuperscript{60} Iurij Gorbashhevsky, “Ustanovelnija radyans’koi vlady v Pivnichnij Bukovyni i Khotynshchyni ta otsinka ii dial’nosti selyanami,” in Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki druhoi svitovoi vijny, 104-105.
listened to what people babbled about and then those cars came and took people to Siberia.”  

When the Romanian troops arrived in July 1941, they unleashed another wave of violence, this time with the official sanction of General Antonescu’s administration. Romanian soldiers were allowed to murder and pillage local Jews at will during the first three days after Northern Bukovina’s “liberation” in retribution for the devastating territorial losses of 1940 which the Jews had supposedly brought about by “inviting” the Soviets into Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. After this brief bout of violence, the authorities set out to purge local society of Jewish collaborators in more systematic fashion. What followed was a wave of arrests and “evacuations” of Jewish Communists. “In the following months,” one Jewish witness remembered, “all villages in Romania were evacuated of Jewish population” while “people who were found to have red fabric in their homes were accused of Communist provocation and arrested.”  

Whether they were found guilty or not, local Jews suspected of collaboration with the Soviets were ‘evacuated’ sometimes to internment camps nearby, more often directly to Transnistria. The ‘culprits’ included one “furniture maker,” a “graduate of the faculty of mathematics” who had taught at a school for adults during the Soviet occupation and was “known as someone with Communist ideas,” one Jewish tailor who had made a business out of forging passports before the Soviet occupation, one former member of the Italian Fascist youth, and one locksmith by the name of Leon Roitman who had “followed the Soviet troops in retreat to Balta in Ukraine,” stayed there in hospital “because of wounds by German aviation bombardments,” and then returned to Cernăuți clandestinely in December 1941. Even though no evidence was found against him, Roitman was deported anyway because “the individual still

61 Mariia Hryvul, in Bukovynští v tráhichnì roki druhoi svitovoi vijny, 135.
62 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03/781, Fessler Chana, 256.
63 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d.14, l. 18, 13 June 1942, 19 February 1942.
64 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 14, 26 June 1942/ 1120, 22 July 1942/ 1161, l 254.
seems suspect and it is not excluded that upon his return into the country he may have received some missions from the Bolsheviks.”65

The arrests and ‘evacuations’ of Jews were meant to serve both as punishment for collaboration with the Soviets and as a preventive measure designed to keep the Communist movement from reviving. To “prevent acts of sabotage,” the Romanian authorities took prisoners from among the local Jewish population. Though “well seen in Romanian and German circles,” such unorthodox measures were completely ineffective, as the prisoners tended to be Jews who “had had different functions in the administration under former political regimes” or who “donated large sums of money for the army, which made them hateful to the lower strata of the Jewish population who sympathized with the leftist movement.”66 The Romanian authorities were greatly helped in tracking down Jews who had “Communist ideas and (…) an anti-Romanian attitude, being among the first to welcome Bolshevik troops with red silk flags” by locals who went out of their way to ensure that no Jewish suspects would remain unpunished.67

The furniture maker and mathematics professor mentioned above might not have been deported to Transnistria had a “good Romanian” not informed Bukovina’s governor of their presence on the streets of Cernăuți. “Being in Cernăuți to do my Christmas shopping a few days ago,” he wrote, “I was greatly amazed to see one of the best known and greatest advocates and agitators of Communism walking down the streets of Cernăuți.” “Mr Governor,” the ‘good Romanian’ continued, “we who took refuge leaving behind the little we had saved through honest work, but which for us is a fortune, we are hurt when we see these scoundrels were not deported to the place they deserve so well.”68

65 DACHO fond 30, op. 1, d. 43, l 97 and l 98, 17 May 1943.
66 SANIC Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 10/1941, 49.
67 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 14, l. 17, 13 June 1942.
68 Ibid., l. 22.
Another category of people who now called the authorities’ attention were individuals who were said to have “carried out anti-Romanian propaganda and expressed hostile feelings towards the country and the Romanian people.” These were not so much devoted Communists as ethnic minorities who had welcomed the Soviets because they were glad to wash their hands of Romanian rule. Since denunciations flowed in effortlessly, the Romanian police had no trouble tracking down these individuals. In addition, the local Soviet press provided the Romanian police not only with names of suspects, but also with detailed accounts of what these individuals had said and done, and how exactly they had made themselves helpful to the Soviet regime. The list of suspects included Ukrainian teachers who had thanked the Soviets for letting them teach in their native language, workers who had praised the Soviet regime for freeing them from kulak oppression, and peasants who had ‘received help from the Soviet state’ and ‘praised and thanked the party and Soviet government and Stalin, and brought insults upon the Romanian government.’\(^69\) One man was interrogated by the Securitate because the Soviet press quoted him as saying that “the Romanian boyars” had imposed enormous taxes on Bukovina’s workers and that “back then in order to be able to make a pair of trousers one had to sell 2-3 hens, while now with one hen one can buy two pairs of trousers.”

But Soviet propaganda could be deceptive too. One Leonte Puzdreac, an ethnic Ukrainian house cleaner who came under scrutiny for supposedly publishing an article in praise the Soviet regime turned out to be “illiterate and incapable of writing such an article.” When interrogated by the police, he declared that “during the Soviet occupation there lived two Soviet journalists here (…) who came from the USSR and told Puzdreac that as a reward for taking care of the residence, they would publish an article about him in the newspaper.”\(^70\) That even illiterate

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\(^69\) DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 222, 25 March 1942.
\(^70\) Ibid., l 1132.
housekeepers were now suspected of carrying out Soviet agitation proved, once again, just how all-encompassing Soviet propaganda had been. Individuals who had had openly “hostile attitudes to Romania under the Bolshevik occupation” and who feared retribution went into hiding. Lipovenians from Cernăuți, for instance, took to the forests. But many others continued roaming freely. One priest by the name of Andronic Scraba, promptly summoned to the police headquarters for investigations, openly declared that “things weren’t so bad under the Russians” and that many Romanians around Rădăuți - particularly intellectuals - “had been waiting for the Russians to come with open arms.”

Politically conscious and committed Communists constituted only a small proportion of the population that accommodated the Soviet regime. Among the most enthusiastic Soviet supporters had been members of the lower classes, the poor, and the dregs of society who welcomed the opportunity to prosper at others’ expense. The entire population of one destitute village near Cernăuți was said to be “supporting the Communist regime, under which it had various benefits” even as late as February 1942. And then, as always, there were the maids and housekeepers who had extorted money and valuables from their employers during the Soviet occupation. When the Romanian authorities returned, one family in Cernăuți denounced their maid for threatening to turn them in to the NKVD and have them deported unless they gave her money and gifts. When the police searched the woman’s house, they discovered she had been amassed a mountain of goods during the Soviet occupation, “including valuable carpets, [and] a collection of crystal objects.” A good deal of the work required to undo the ‘legacies’ of the Soviet occupation consisted of this precisely: tracking down individuals who had appropriated

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71 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, l 502, 24 August 1941.
72 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 6, l 20.
73 DAChO, fond 30, op. 1, d. 3, 14 February 1942.
74 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 32, l 365.
goods and valuables either directly from victims of Soviet deportations or directly from the Soviet state itself.75

Living between Nazism and Communism, the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union and the nationalist dreams of Greater Romania, was challenging because the rules of the game were constantly changing. Yet individuals adapted and learned to align their own goals with those of the powers that be. When the Romanians took Bukovina at the end of World War I, one high school teacher by the name of Teodorovici changed his name to Teodoreanu. Had he kept his former Ukrainian name, Teodorovici would have sooner or later lost his job. When the Soviets invaded in June 1940, Teodoreanu once again changed his name back into Teodorovici, this time claiming that the Romanians had forced him, a Ukrainian, to become romanized. As a national Ukrainian, he enjoyed advantages that would have otherwise been out of his reach. To prove his loyalty to the regime, as soon as the Soviets occupied Northern Bukovina Teodorovici had marched down the streets of Cernăuți with local Communists. He had dramatically torn to pieces the “Romanian rag” and replaced it with a red flag, had refused to speak anything but Ukrainian in school, and had “mocked the Romanians.” Eugen Mateiciuc, a lawyer from Cernăuți who stayed behind after the Romanians fled, had given up his Romanian citizenship, “identifying completely with Communist politics,” and publicly declaring “that he was never Romanian and that under the Romanian government he had had to change his name into Matei in order to live in peace.” Unlike Teodorovici, who came to “regret that he hadn’t sought refuge in the country,” Mateiciuc managed to save his skin by fleeing Northern Bukovina together with the Soviets in 1941. What happened to him afterwards - whether he fared well under the Soviets

75 DАChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 11.
or not - is unknown. The Soviets promoted people like him at first because they lent the regime an aura of legitimacy.

Yet chameleons were strongly disliked and distrusted by every administration. This ability to change was not so much a character trait as a kind of deformation professionelle that developed when one lived in a place like Bukovina, under perpetually changing circumstances. ‘Collaborators’ who had not fled together with the Soviets were in fact more likely to work for the Romanian administration than others, for there was no safer place for a former ‘collaborator’ to hide than the city hall or the Siguranta. When the Romanians returned, Alexandru Wilentz, who used to work as a chauffeur for the Soviet authorities in Cernăuți, became the most trusted person “in the entourage of Commissar Gheorghiu who carries out the Police and Siguranta services within the Gouvernement of Bukovina.” Another man with a “great material position” who had served the Soviets as a translator became “secretary of the Commission for the Administration of Jewish Goods” under the Romanians. One lawyer from Cernăuți who had “glorified Stalin and the Bolshevik regime” and “spoken against the Romanian state” somehow managed to resurface under the Romanians and get himself promoted to a position with the Cernăuți city hall. After the unification, two Romanian pig merchants and one lieutenant made a fortune by showing up at local ‘auction commissions’ and claiming various objects as “belonging to them and having been nationalized by Soviets.” In this way, they amassed quite a collection of goods, including 106 large woolen carpets, 11 sowing machines, 19 large beds, 54 chairs, “a lot of dishes,” silver forks and knives, 84 duvets “some of them of very expensive silk.” The robbers had done perfectly well under the Soviets too. Now that the Romanians were

77 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 32, l 1170.
78 Ibid., l 316.
79 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 4, 151-152, 17 November 1941.
back, they donated 100,000 lei “for the reunification loan” and supplied the local authorities with free pigs to prove their loyalty to the national cause.

The hunt for ‘collaborators’ drove a wedge through local society, for different people had different ideas of what counted as ‘collaboration’ and what kinds of punishment were suitable. Many people who were officially slated as Soviet ‘collaborators’ had never cooperated with the regime more than they were required to keep their jobs. The Romanian police suspected of collaboration Hans Kittner, a doctor who had stayed behind during the Soviet occupation and was appointed “head of the hospital in Noua Sulita.” But the Soviets had not trusted him either because his patients had been members of the Bukovinian “aristocracy.” After working at the city maternity for a couple of months, Kittner had been “denounced as an enemy to the Communist regime” and then lost his apartment to a Russian functionary.\(^80\) Osias Birnberg, a Jewish doctor from Cernăuți, suffered a similar fate under both the Soviet and Romanian occupations. Although the Soviets had denounced him as “a counterrevolutionary element” and kicked him out of his apartment and deported his family, to the returning Romanian administration Birnberg looked like a potential collaborator. Never mind that Birnberg had been forced to leave Cernăuți for Vînița to make a living working “as a doctor in extremely difficult and disgraceful conditions.” The fact was that he had stayed behind and ‘cooperated’ with the Soviets in some fashion. So the “Siguranta came to [his] house and asked for [his] authorization number giving the impression that the Siguranta organs had doubts about [his] attitudes as a citizen.”\(^81\) Isac Liquornic, another Jewish doctor in Cernăuți, was punished by both the Soviets and the Romanians first for being a Zionist and fascist, and second for collaborating with the NKVD. A former member of a “revisionist Zionist organization” in Cernăuți, Liquornic had

\(^80\) DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 14, l 27, 11 June 1942.
\(^81\) DAChO, fond 30, op. 3, d. 14, l 75.
studied medicine in Bologna and Milan, where he had also joined the “organization of fascist youth.” Under the Soviet occupation, Liquornic managed to keep his position at the hospital for mental illnesses in Cernăuți although he was “afraid that someone would denounce [him] as a former member of the fascia of Italian youth.” So he ended up on the Romanian list of suspects for “having served the NKVD as a doctor” even though the police were unable to find any concrete evidence against him.\(^82\)

Most people who stayed behind did so not for political reasons but either because the Romanian authorities had not managed to evacuate the population in time or because they were afraid of losing their homes and jobs if they left. These individuals were suspected by both regimes and suffered under both occupations. Victor Mudric, a Romanian student from Hotin who was studying in Bucharest when Bessarabia fell to the Soviets, telegraphed his parents “Welcome under the protective wing of Romania” in June 1941, when Hotin was “liberated.” However, on returning home he discovered that his father had been interned in a camp for Soviet collaborators and his “mother and brother [were] starving and sleeping in a small room rented out by a merciful woman.” Unable to ‘repatriate’ themselves to Romania in 1940, Mudric’s parents - both schoolteachers - had had to make peace with the Soviets. But because he did not attend “classes for Communist agitators” regularly, Mudric’s father was dismissed so “the family was left in the streets.” Nevertheless, to the returning Romanian administration he looked like a Soviet ‘collaborator’ for he stayed behind and worked for the Soviets. “Why, namely, should my father, an old man of 54 years and one month be (...) slapped, taken to do hard labor, made to clean latrines, to walk down long roads in the rain and then, tired, fall down and sleep under the rain at night?,” Mudric wrote the Romanian gendarmerie inspector in Hotin. Suffering did not make victims of the Soviet occupation more understanding of others who endured a similar fate.\(^82\)

\(^82\) DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 14, l 53, 19 June 1942.
What really hurt Mudric was that his father - a Romanian patriot - received the same treatment as “Communists and Jews” who had betrayed the Romanian nation: “I was humiliated all of a sudden (...) Jews and Communists who walk down the streets freely smiled to themselves, their chest swelling with joy that they can express pity towards me, the fugitive.”

Purging Bukovinian society of unreliable individuals was a key element of the Romanian administration’s program for the newly “liberated” territory. In his official “guidelines to the liberating administration,” Mihai Antonescu noted that before implementing any kind of reform in Bukovina and Bessarabia, the “leadership of the education system will investigate the reasons why certain teachers and priests remained under Soviet rule and how they behaved under the occupation” in order to “decide whether these persons can be used further or need to be punished.” Public functionaries in Bukovina were also to be divided into separate categories according to whether or not they had sought refuge in Romania or Germany, and whether or not they had “occupied functions” with the Soviets. A special ‘revision commission’ was formed to investigate the activity of priests, teachers, and public functionaries who had stayed behind under the Soviet occupation. Those who were found guilty of ‘collaboration’ with the Soviets were issued an ‘unfavorable notice,’ while the rest received a certificate attesting to their good behavior. One could not get a job in Bukovina without such a certificate. One city hall employee from Cernăuți by the name of Artemie Baculinschi appealed to the commission to “issue a certificate proving that during the occupation of Cernăuți by the USSR [he] behaved impeccably” so he could return to work. Even though he had applied for repatriation to Romania multiple times, Baculinschi claimed that the repatriation commission “had given permits to all foreigners except for Romanians” like himself, who had to go “from door to door trying to obtain

83 DACo, fond 30, op. 4, d. 32, l 91.
84 Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina, 59.
85 DACo, fond R307, op. 2, d. 112, l 11, 24 September 1941.
a repatriation permit without success.”

Another former railway employee who had received an “unfavorable notice” that was “destroying his existence” wrote the general police inspectorate in Cernăuți in March 1942 protesting the “unfair” evaluation and claiming that his behavior during the Soviet occupation had been irreproachable and that he had only “sentiments of loyalty towards the Romanian state.”

Like him there were many others who expressed “dissatisfaction with their fate” although, in the opinion of Romanian officials, “most of them [were] compromised” and the “revision commissions are excessively indulgent.” Unsurprisingly, among the “public functionaries” who lost their positions were many Ukrainians. The campaign to purge the administration of unreliable elements was also aimed at Romanianizing the apparatus, this time for good. Ukrainians who had received “unfavorable notices,” Romanian officials insisted, “can no longer be given the honor of being supported by the Romanian state since under the Bolshevik occupation they had hostile attitudes towards the [Romanian] state.”

Among those found guilty of ‘collaboration’ were also priests and teachers. Under the Soviets, the same teachers who had served under the Romanians apparently “showed sympathy towards the Communist regime, giving speeches against the Romanian leadership, against the church.” Those who openly “activat[ed] against the interests of the Romanian state and the Romanian element” were promptly dismissed and their Romanian citizenship was withdrawn.

But many more managed to work their way back up the ladder, much to the dissatisfaction of the “local population who awaited the radical cleansing of Communist elements, who still remained

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86 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, l 251.
87 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 46, 10 March 1942; 1125 Notă informativă no 1.
89 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1127, l 111, 20 February 1943.
in place or regained their functions” mostly by “intervening with influential people.” 90 Most priests who stayed under the Soviets were also reinstated because “the population has admiration and trust for those who continued to serve the church under the Bolshevik occupation.” 91 The greatest pressure to punish Soviet ‘collaborators’ came from below. Ethnic Romanians hoping to occupy the positions freed up by ‘collaborators’ had a vested interest in making sure that every single one of them was punished. When this failed to happen, they protested. “Among functionaries and teachers who came from the West of the Pruth and are refugees,” one note to Bukovina’s Gouvernement read, “there is dissatisfaction about the fact that those who stayed in Bessarabia under the Soviet occupation aren’t being mobilized and are enjoying a 30% increase in their salaries.” 92

Politically unreliable elements and former Soviet collaborators in the liberated provinces were quarantined in internment camps. The camps were set up especially for Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, whose population had supposedly “acquired a foreign way of thinking, which could lead to a dangerous situation especially given the proximity of the front. In addition, this situation is exacerbated by the fact that part of the territory of Bukovina and Bessarabia is populated by minorities, which enjoyed a special regime and privileges.” One of the largest camps, where most ‘collaborators’ and suspects from Cernăuți were interned, was located in Sadagura. By November 1942, “a total of 2783 persons, among which 1079 Orthodox and 704 Jews” had spent anywhere between one month and one year in confinement in Sadagura. 93 Among them, people like Mudric’s father, a teacher who was swept up by the returning Romanian administration together with other ‘Communists’ because he had worked under the

90 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 7, l 241, 13 January 1942.
91 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 7, l 240, 13 January 1942.
92 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 29, 12.
93 YVA, M.52/121, 5 July 1941-31 October 1942, Report from November 1942, 1716.
Soviets. The internment camps were most crowded in the first months after the ‘liberation,’ when the Romanian authorities were busy “cleaning up” the state apparatus of Soviet collaborators and hunting down Communist agitators. By August 1941, there were already 834 prisoners in the Cernăuți-Rosa camp, 11,680 in Hotin-Edinet, 12,345 in Secureni, 1,320 in Storojinet, 1,670 in Vijnița, and 704 in Vascauti. But the search for Soviet collaborators continued well into the following year. As late as December 1942, “23 Communists” from around Cernăuți were shipped off to the camp Ediniti in Hotin.

The offenders included old Communists and locals who had performed various administrative roles and occupied leadership positions under the Soviets. Among them were people like Gheorghe Stefaniuc, an old Communist from Bukovina who had been named mayor of his village during the Soviet occupation and who, together with the Soviets, had forced peasants into the kolkhoz, taken “grain from people and forced those who didn’t have any to buy some and hand it over,” and pointed out anti-Soviet elements who were then to be deported. Alexei Bodnar, another old Communist who had been imprisoned for his political beliefs in the interwar years, resurfaced during the Soviet occupation as a mayor, in which capacity he also “contributed to the deportation of many families” and “took over the goods left behind by refugees.” Like Stefaniuc, Bodnar was now given a one-year sentence in the Ediniti camp. Not every prisoner in the camps was there for good reason. One man who was interned in Sadagura twice - first for five weeks and then for at least five months - came under suspicion as a Soviet collaborator because when the Soviets withdrew, he left with the Red Army. Like many other locals who had been forcibly recruited into the Red Army, the man had attempted to return to Bukovina but “fell prisoner to the German armies and spent seven weeks in a German camp.”

94 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, 26 August 1941.  
95 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1314, ll 2-4, 28 December 1942.
When he finally made it to Cernăuți, he was first put on trial and released, but then was once again arrested and sent to Sadagura shortly afterwards.\footnote{DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 97, l 402, 16 May 1942.}

Purging Northern Bukovina of Communists and Soviet ‘collaborators’ was also a first step towards purifying it ethnically, for most ‘collaborators’ who got arrested were Jews and Ukrainians.\footnote{DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 197, 19 May 1943.} It was the new administration’s goal to achieve absolute ethnic homogeneity in Greater Romania’s most ethnically mixed territories, for they regarded this as a crucial prerequisite to national unity. “I will carry out a total cleansing operation,” General Antonescu declared in September 1941, to eliminate “the Jews and all those who sneaked in here; I am alluding to: Ukrainians, Greeks, the Gagauz, Jews, all of whom, little by little, one by one, have to be evacuated.”\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 112/1941, 21, 5 September 1941.} Unlike its predecessors, Antonescu’s regime came prepared to take whatever measures were necessary to achieve this goal, no matter how drastic. The unexpected territorial losses in the summer of 1940 confirmed nationalists in their belief that ethnic homogeneity was not only desirable but absolutely necessary to keep the country together. To keep this from happening again, the new regime resolved to cleanse the recovered territories of ‘foreigners.’ They also resolved to “put an end to the unfortunate practice of creating hierarchies in the Romanian territories and considering the provinces and their rights in an inversely proportional relationship to their distance from the capital.”\footnote{Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina, 12.} No longer would Bukovina and Bessarabia be treated “like colonies,” for “nothing enduring can be built (…) if we don’t let each administrative cell and each corner of the country live its own life.”\footnote{Ibid., 11.} The ultimate goal was to turn Bukovina and Bessarabia into the “independent, self-standing provinces” they had always aspired to be.

But before this work could begin, the liberated territories had to be purged of Soviet

\footnote{\textsuperscript{96} DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 97, l 402, 16 May 1942. \textsuperscript{97} DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 197, 19 May 1943. \textsuperscript{98} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 112/1941, 21, 5 September 1941. \textsuperscript{99} Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina, 12. \textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 11.}
collaborators and dangerous foreigners. This required tracing new borders and placing the
liberated provinces under a special regime yet again. But the administration was determined not
to flail even if this meant taking extreme measures that would temporarily alienate the local
population. “The ethnic purification [and] structural reorganization that we must carry out in
Bessarabia and Bukovina,” minister president Mihai Antonescu explained in his guidebook for
the liberated provinces, “require that for some time we establish an absolute impermeability wall
between the territory of Bessarabia and Bukovina on the one hand and the territory of the
Kingdom on the other.”\textsuperscript{101} The purpose of this ‘wall’ between the liberated territories and the
former Old Kingdom was to “prevent the penetration of dangerous elements” and to allow the
administration to carry out ethnic purification measures undisturbed - including “removing or
isolating in work camps all Jews and every other foreigner with a doubtful attitude” and
organizing “the forced migration of the Jewish element and all other foreign elements.”\textsuperscript{102} In
addition to the Jews, Ukrainians would also have to be “sent into camps or deported” at some
point, or possibly transferred to Ukraine “according to a methodical plan” and replaced with “a
Romanian population from the overpopulated or poor agricultural regions.”\textsuperscript{103}

The purge could not begin, however, before the ‘foreign elements’ had been singled out.
This turned out to be unexpectedly difficult, for even the most committed anti-Semites could not
recognize a Jew when they saw one. Since there was no natural demarcation line between Jews
and gentiles in Bukovina, the Romanian authorities had to draw one themselves. Jews in
Bukovina tended to be better educated and more prosperous than Christians, and even though
they interacted with gentiles on a daily basis, they tended to keep to themselves in their private
lives. Few Bukovinian Jews could blend perfectly with Romanian society because their

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{103} DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3190, l 8.
knowledge of Romanian was rudimentary at best. But none of these characteristics were
exclusive to them. Ethnic Germans also spoke German better than Romanian, and so did many
Romans in fact. The task of separating Jews from Christians was further complicated by the
fact that some Jews had converted to Christianity and considered themselves completely
assimilated. Whether or not to recognize baptized Jews as Christians became a subject of heated
debate between the Romanian administration and Church authorities seeking to expand the
religious community through conversions. In March 1941, Antonescu adopted a law that forbade
Romanian Jews to change their religion.\textsuperscript{104} Bukovina, however, had been under Soviet rule at the
time. Shortly after the ‘liberation,’ the Council of Attorneys of the Ministry of Religion decided
that “baptism certificates issued to Jews during the Bolshevik occupation should not be
recognized as valid and no mention of Christian religion should be allowed in their personal
documents” because “the Bolshevik legislation did not regulate the problem of passage from one
religion to another in any way” and “the Romanian state cannot recognize in fact rights that the
Soviet state did not recognize either.”\textsuperscript{105} By September 1942, the Romanian authorities had
received over 250 petitions from Jews in Cernăuți, Hotin, and Storojinet who disposed of
baptism certificates “issued by various parishes” and requested to be recognized as Christians.
“With tears in our eyes,” the petitioners wrote Governor Calotescu, “we beg you to please solve
the above petition favorably so that we are able to give our children a Christian education.”\textsuperscript{106}

Whether one was recognized as a Christian or not was now a matter of life and death as
many Jews had already been deported and perished in Transnistria. All petitioners without
exception were turned down on the grounds that their requests were made “too late” or “in a

\textsuperscript{104} Stefan Cristian Ionescu, \textit{Jewish Resistance to ‘Romanianization,’ 1940-44} (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 38.
\textsuperscript{105} YVA, M.52/69, 11 July 1941.
\textsuperscript{106} DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 12, 1511, 2 October 1942.
spirit of opportunism.” The Romanian authorities also surmised - perhaps correctly - that most baptism certificates had been bought from priests who issued them “just like that, in exchange for sums of money.” The General Roman-Catholic vicarage in Bukovina complained that “when the new identity cards were issued, many Catholic converts were denied [the right to] record their Catholic religion, although they presented their baptism certificates, so they were compelled to receive identity cards in which the religion recorded was the Mosaic one.” But the Romanian authorities, for whom Jewishness was a racial and biological trait that could not be eliminated through baptism, could not be easily swayed. Even if Jewish identity was supposedly intrinsic and indelible, it did not manifest itself through any external markers, so it was still “difficult to establish if the person in question is originally Jewish or not.” As a result, Jews continued mingling with Christians undisturbed. As Governor Riosanu wrote General Antonescu in July 1941, “Romanian and German soldiers had been seen talking to Jewish women and girls who seek the company of officers and sub-officers for subversive purposes.”

Because the Jews were so elusive and so difficult to identity, it was necessary to pin them down. The initiative to introduce the yellow star of David into Bukovina as a visible marker of Jewish identity came not from Berlin or even Bucharest, but from the local authorities. Governor Riosanu, who was at the time “military commander” of Bukovina, petitioned General Antonescu in July 1941 directly to issue an “ordinance valid for the entire territory belonging to liberated Bukovina” whereby “all Jews, men and women, should be obligated to wear a visible white armband with the Jewish star applied to it, full with six corners, in black color.” Local officials

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107 YVA, M.52/69, 1148-1150, 11 July 1941.
109 YVA, M.52/52, 997-998.
110 YVA, M.52/105, 1560, 29 July 1941.
111 YVA, M.52/105, 1558, 29 July 1941.
112 Ibid.
had proposed to Governor Riosanu that “every Jew should wear a white fabric with a Jewish star in red applied on top” so Jews could be more easily distinguished from Christians.\textsuperscript{113} Anti-Semitism was, of course, at the heart of the problem. Yet, like the entire ethnic purification program, the Jewish question in Bukovina was subordinated to the larger goal of national reconstruction. Strengthening the national Romanian community and uniting it for eternity was the ultimate objective - and the anti-Jewish measures were designed to facilitate this process by making it easier for Bukovinan Romanians to stick to their community. First issued on July 30, 1941, the ordinance requiring Jews in Bukovina to wear the star of David was meant to give “practical applicability” to the difference “between people of Jewish ethnic origin and other nationalities established by national law.” Such a measure, the authorities believed, would have the additional “beneficial effect” of stimulating national consciousness among ethnic Romanians. An ordinance to this effect was re-issued in August 1942, requiring Bukovinan “Jews of any age and sex” to “wear on the left side of their chest, visibly, the distinctive sign of the Jewish star” under threat of punishment with “internment in a work camp.”\textsuperscript{114} Once they were clearly labeled, the Jews could be more easily isolated from the ‘Christian milieu.’

The next step would be to restrain the Jewish population’s freedom of movement and confine them to clearly delimited spaces where they could be more easily controlled. Beginning in August 1941, Jews in Bukovina were prohibited from traveling “from one locality to another” and travel agencies from issuing tickets and “travel permits to Jews.”\textsuperscript{115} An even more drastic measure was introduced in October. By order of the “higher command of the army,” the entire Jewish population of Cernăuți was required to move into “the district of the city limited to a few streets” that would become the Jewish ghetto. Released on the evening of October 10, the

\textsuperscript{113} YVA, M.52/105, 1560, 29 July 1941.
\textsuperscript{114} DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3340; Copie ordonanța nr 43/42, 24 August 1942.
\textsuperscript{115} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 18/1941, 36.
announcement instructed Jews living outside the area marked as the ghetto to vacate their
apartments, taking with them clothing and food, but “only as much as they can carry on their
backs, both for living in the ghetto and for the evacuation, taking into account that none of them
will be returning into their former apartments.”¹¹⁶ In addition, each Jewish family were to bring
with them the keys to their apartment and an inventory of goods they had left behind: “the
inventory as well as the key will be placed inside a closed envelope on which the name and the
address of the resident will be mentioned. The envelope will be handed over upon request, in the
ghetto.”¹¹⁷ All of this was to be accomplished by 6 in the evening on the following day and the
order made it clear that “Jews who still find themselves outside the ghetto after six will be shot.”
“I will never forget that black day, when a simple poster, without any kind of official signature,
announced the establishment of a ghetto,” wrote Selig-Ascher Hofer, who was living on one of
the streets that was absorbed into the ghetto.¹¹⁸ To make sure no Jews would slip out of the city
before the operation had been finished, Governor Calotescu requested on October 9 that General
Antonescu “give dispositions to institute a surveillance cordon around the municipality of
Czernowitz in order to prevent the Jews from exiting the city.”¹¹⁹

By the time the order announcing the formation of a Jewish ghetto in Cernăuți was issued
on October 11, the “evacuation” of Bukovinan Jews had already been planned. The deportations
began only a couple of days later. Jews who had barely settled down in the ghetto were
summoned to the train station and shipped off to the other side of the Dniester river. Even though
they were allowed to take valuables with them, as soon as they arrived at the destination the
deportees had their belongings confiscated. In his memoirs, Cernăuți’s mayor Traian Popovici

¹¹⁶ YVA, M.52/131, 1786, 11 October 1941.
¹¹⁸ Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies,
03-1453, Selig-Ascher Hofer, 267.
¹¹⁹ YVA, P.6/67, 9 October 1941, 131.
recalls that “those singled out for deportation were collected into groups of 2,000, marched through the mud to access ramps at the main railway station, then placed into 40-50 cars per train under military guard” and sent off to “Atachi and Marculesti on the banks of the Dniester,” where they were “stripped of whatever they still had including personal identification documents which were destroyed so their tracks would be lost.” After that, “they were ferried across, then marched again, barefoot and starved through the mud and mire.” The entire operation was orchestrated by the “Military Command of Bukovina” and implemented by the gendarmerie inspectorate in Cernăuți, who were charged with “collecting” the deportees, “guarding the ghetto,” and “embarking and transporting them to the frontier.” In the countryside, the “evacuations” had begun even earlier and were still unfolding when the first train of deportees left Cernăuți. Jews who had been rounded up in North Bukovina and interned in camps scattered throughout the province had been shipped off to the Dniester. Soon a rumor spread around Cernăuți that Jews in the south of the province had also “been apprehended from their homes and marched to gathering places to be embarked on trains that waited with their engines running.” More typically, however, Jews in the countryside were first rounded up and concentrated in larger towns, and from there dispatched to “unknown destinations” beyond the Dniester. This caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the urban Christian population, eager to have the Jewish deportees expelled as soon as possible. Some who did not know what the authorities intended to do with the Jews they had crowded in these towns even accused the Romanian police of “philosemitism.”

120 Traian Popovici, Spovedanie/Testimony, 95.
121 YVA, P.6/67, 10 October 1941, 132.
122 Traian Popovici, Testimony, 75.
123 DaChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, 19 March 1941. When the gendarmerie in Răduăți brought 1200 Jews from the recently liberated mountain regions into Răduăți, the local Christian population revolted, thinking the authorities had become ‘completely Jewified’ because they were now accepting Jews in the city.
Dorohoi were finally shipped off to Transnistria in November 1941, the local Romanian population rejoiced. “Through this fact,” the local police wrote, “the Romanians will regain their ethnic rights, to which they aspired for so long. Their hopes are that the entire Jewish problem in this district will be resolved and the Romanization that has been awaited for so long, will be carried out in every domain of public life.”

The deportations continued until the end of 1941 and were then resumed in the summer of 1942. But since the Jews dominated every branch of the local economy, they could not be removed at once without endangering the economic life of the province. Though eager to see them removed for good, the Romanian authorities had no choice but to issue authorizations allowing many Jewish specialists and professionals deemed indispensable to stay behind. In total, 43,798 Jews were deported from Bukovina by the end of 1943. Even so, the deportations reduced the size of Bukovina’s Jewish population drastically. Only 37.5% of the Jews living in Bukovina in December 1930 were still there in December 1942. Cernăuți alone went from a total of 42,932 Jews in December 1930 to only 19,400 by the end of 1942. The drop was even more dramatic in the countryside and in the smaller towns. There were only two Jews left in the entire Suceava district by October 1941.

The deportations could not have been carried out so quickly had locals not given the authorities a helping hand. Local Gentiles were not only happy to cooperate with the military authorities and the gendarmerie, but they even outdid them in the zealousness with which they applied themselves to the task. Officials and dignitaries, on the other hand, succumbed more easily to the temptation of bribe-taking. Ironically, many Bukovinan Jews who were deported and survived were saved by the corruptibility of Romanian officers, soldiers, and functionaries.

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124 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 16, l 79, 18 November 1941.
125 YVA, P.6/34, 7.
126 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4053, l 5.
But locals who took General Antonescu’s promise to cleanse Bukovina of “foreigners” seriously would have none of it. On learning that Romanian dignitaries “intervened so that certain Jews with a great material situation should remain in Bukovina,” the “association of war volunteers in Bukovina” wrote Marshall Antonescu to protest these “anti-national acts.” Every step of the way, the Jews provided the Romanian authorities with indispensable assistance. At the very outset of the ‘liberation,’ Romanian soldiers and officers on the prowl relied on local Romanians and Ukrainians to point out where Jews lived. “I remember how they shot those people, the Jews (...) young boys were standing there like this, around twenty of them. The Romanians asked them (in Romanian): where do the Jews live….he there is a Jew (they responded)…and they went to shoot him. And I saw that they went to shoot and I ran home, they lived across from me,” one Ukrainian woman remembered. The Jews were hardly safer in the hands of their Ukrainian neighbors, for they too “were no friends of the Jews, [and] showed the Germans where the Jews were.” There were no more impassioned anti-Semites than the Romanian functionaries and professionals who had recently returned to Bukovina together with the Romanian army expecting to be compensated for their sufferings with superior positions and higher salaries.

But life in Bukovina after the “liberation” was no bed of roses either. For many months, the “liberated territories” suffered from food shortages; basic goods such as bread, shoes, and clothing were completely missing or could be bought only for exorbitant prices. “Christian refugees” who came to Bukovina eager to receive “jobs in economic life” were bitterly disappointed and demanded to be “transferred to a different region of the country” - unless the authorities were prepared to introduce a food rationing system to keep local Jews from

127 DACChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, 3 November 1941.
128 Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki, 93.
129 Ria Gold, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 64.
competing with the “Christian consumer.” That the Jews were responsible for the high cost of living in ‘liberated’ Bukovina was a widely shared opinion. Peasants who produced and sold the food in the city indeed adjusted their prices to what the Jews were ready to offer.\(^{130}\) And since many Jews were already living in the ghetto and selling their valuables to purchase food, prices climbed fast. “Christian workers” also blamed their low salaries on Jews privileged by employers “in the sense that in sections where there are Jewish and Christian specialists, with the same capacities, the Jews assume leadership.”\(^{131}\) The only Christians who opposed the deportation of Jews from Bukovina were peasants who refused “to sell their products to Christians because the Jewish population offers better prices.”\(^{132}\) Some peasants completely stopped supplying the towns with food after the Jews were deported.

While the Romanian authorities moderated their anti-Jewish measures over time, Gentiles whose economic interests conflicted with those of the Jews became even more determined to remove the “Jewish threat.” Once the German troops were pushed on the defensive, Antonescu began revising his tactics in case the Jewish issue should be raised by the Allies, as it had before, at the negotiation table in the event of a German defeat. In 1943, all deportations to Transnistria were stopped and the Romanian authorities began repatriating Jewish survivors from Transnistria to Bukovina. Many Romanians in Bukovina were displeased by this change of course. In the words of one Gouvernement official, locals had a “marked anti-Semitic spirit, especially following the last concessions made to the Jews, the schools, the return from Transnistria.”\(^{133}\) Even so, the authorities stood by their resolution to return all Jewish families from the camps “back to their origin.” But the mood among the local Christian population was so sour that Jews

\(^{130}\) DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 137, 7 December 1941.

\(^{131}\) YVA, M.52/63, 1087.

\(^{132}\) DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, 1 December 1941.

\(^{133}\) DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1094, l 2.
could not be resettled in rural Bukovina, nor in “Moldova or other parts of the country where there are already local Jews” for fear of giving rise “to a series of discontents.”

Even General Dragalina, Bukovina’s new governor and General Calotescu’s successor, strongly recommended against returning Jews to their former homes. Once known for their national indifference, Romanians in Bukovina were now so profoundly anti-Semitic that they inspired fear even in the authorities. Their visceral hatred of the Jews - nurtured by food shortages, high unemployment, and poor living conditions - threatened to turn against the administration at any moment. “Public functionaries” and “Christian workers” who felt threatened by Jewish competition were “very displeased” when Governor Calotescu and then mayor Popovici issued Jewish professionals and specialists special authorizations allowing them to leave the ghetto and return to their jobs. If any Jews managed to escape deportation - whether by mistake or because they knew whom to bribe - there was no shortage of people who would turn them in. One man from Cernăuți - “a great war invalid missing both hands,” as he signed his petition to the Governor - reported that a Jewish lady from the city was “taking advantage of her situation, being married to a Christian” to “bring her family of Jews from Cernăuți [to another city], so as to keep them from going to Transnistria to the ghettos,” for which reason “it is high time this Jewess, opportunistically married to a Christian to do her business, as her entire kike people do, should be sent to the camps.”

Another local informed the police that the mayor of his hometown - a certain Gheorghe Lahman - had used his political connections to keep his father-in-law, a baptized Jew, from being deported to Transnistria. “This is not an anonymous [letter],” the denouncer wrote, “it is the truth, research it on the spot and you will find it.”

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134 YVA, P. 6/79, 73.
135 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, 28 October 1941.
136 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 14, 1314.
137 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, 1636.
policies did not remain without effect. When a “significant number of Jews” from Cernăuți and Dorohoi managed to sneak out of the ghetto and escape deportation, one Gouvernement official wrote: “since the presence of Jews in a state of laziness and freedom offers an indignant spectacle to true Romanians, I think that (…) on entering the ghetto no privileges should be created, everything that is Jewish blood should be in the ghetto, only in this way can we satisfy the Romanian element that had so much to suffer because of these Jews.”

More Jews survived in Bukovina than in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe, yet it would be wrong to conclude from this that Antonescu consciously defied Hitler’s orders and went out of his way to save Romanian Jews from ‘the final solution,’ as many apologists of his regime have claimed. The major difference between Hitler’s and Antonescu’s take on the Jewish question was that Antonescu was only interested in the Jewish question to the extent that it furthered his goal of ‘romanizing’ the liberated territories. By replacing unreliable, pro-Bolshevik Jewish elements with authentic Romanians, and “creat[ing] absolute Romanian homogeneity,” Antonescu aimed to fortify Romania’s vulnerable northern frontiers against Soviet influence. Moreover, it was his belief that xenophobia strengthened nationalist sentiments. Inspiring hatred of ‘foreigners’ among Romanians in the liberated territories was, in his view, just as important as “developing the heroic sentiment of the nation.” “This is how I was raised,” the Marshal commented in a meeting with the Council of Ministers, “with hatred for the Turks, the kikes, and the Hungarians. This sentiment of hatred against the enemies of the fatherland must be pushed to the ultimate extremity. I am assuming this responsibility.”

Antonescu’s goal was to achieve what previous administrations had failed to do by getting rid of the Jews once and for all in order to free up space for the Romanians: “we

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138 DACO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 102, II 346-347, 5 July 1942.
139 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 112/1941, 21, 5 Sept 1941.
140 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1941, 15, 8 April 1941.
kick them out of everywhere, we throw them [out and leave them] without any means of existence, we kick them out of the schools, from social positions, from the liberal professions (...) we will come up with dispositions through which we will infiltrate economic life. All Jewish stores, the entire industry will have to receive Romanian elements.\textsuperscript{141} From September 1940 to January 1941, the General issued one anti-Jewish measure after another. First he eliminated the “Mosaic cult” from the list of religions “protected and authorized by the state.”\textsuperscript{142} Then he prohibited Jewish professionals from offering their services to Christians.\textsuperscript{143} Beginning in December 1941, “all civilian or commercial enterprises and associations, foundations, establishments of any kind except for Jewish institutions with strictly religious or cultural character” were required to fire their Jewish employees.\textsuperscript{144}

All of Antonescu’s policies in Bukovina were carried out under the eyes of German military stationed in Cernăuți, whose task it was to assist the Romanians with reconstructing the liberated territories and ensure that their policies were in line with “German plans.” Headed by a certain “Ioan Pildner from Sibiu who masters the Romanian language,” the Gestapo had its headquarters in the center of Cernăuți, in the former Schwarzer Adler Hotel. The Germans also sent experts to Cernăuți to share their knowledge with the Romanian administration, such as the former military governor of Alsacia who knew a thing or two about ethnic purification. The Romanian administration also modeled its anti-Jewish measures after tried and true Nazi policies. The stream of “restrictions against the Jews” issued in Bukovina every day differed little from the anti-Jewish measures the Nazis had implemented in Germany: “Jewish physicians could only treat their coreligionists, Jewish youths were banned from public schools, religious

\textsuperscript{141} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 61/1940, 17, 27 September 1940.
\textsuperscript{142} YVA, P6/34, 27 July 1939, 26; 6 September 1940-21 January 1941.
\textsuperscript{143} Jewish actors were allowed to perform only in theaters that bore ‘the label ‘Jewish theater,’” while Jewish teachers could teach only in schools “for Jews and with Jewish staff.”
\textsuperscript{144} YVA, P6/34, 27 July 1939, 30.
services were forbidden, (...) Jews were ordered to hand in foreign exchange” and “cars, radio
sets, and various other goods,” while intellectuals “had to carry out forced chores on the streets
and public squares” - naturally without being paid for it. But the Romanian authorities were
not just copying the Germans, for they had their own anti-Jewish traditions to turn to for
inspiration.

Once the Jews and “foreigners” were marginalized or preferably eliminated altogether,
the plan was to replace them with authentic Romanian elements. The Bukovinian Romanians
who had fled the Soviets in 1940 and spent the year in Romania expected the new regime to put
them in positions of power in liberated Bukovina - as a form of compensation for their sufferings
during the war. Having left their homes in a hurry, many refugees had spent the year “at the
mercy of residents who received them in their homes, [and] gave them nourishment.” As soon
as Bukovina was reclaimed by the Romanians, they took the authorities by assault, begging to be
allowed to return home. Some “complained that they have no money, [while] others said that
they hadn’t eaten in two days.” It took the Romanian authorities many months to figure out
exactly how many refugees they had on their hands and how best to spend the little money they
could afford to allot to this problem. In addition to being poor and homesick, the refugees
considered themselves victims of the Soviet occupation. As such, they felt entitled to do
whatever they pleased and take whatever they thought was rightfully theirs once they returned to

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145 Traian Popovici, Testimony, 71.
146 Over the course of the previous decade, Romanian governments had adopted increasingly hostile policies towards
the Jews. While giving the semblance of improving the condition of minorities by proclaiming all Romanian citizens
“irrespective of ethnicity and religion equal before the law,” the Constitution of 1938 deprived thousands of Jews of
Romanian citizenship. Under the Goga-Cuza government, Jews lost even if the few rights they still had - eager to
speed up the Romanization process, the government appointed commissars to make sure that Jewish civil servants,
lawyers, doctors, and other professionals were definitively dismissed. These measures were temporarily
discontinued in response to interventions from abroad, yet in August 1940 King Carol II resumed the offensive with
a major racial law that excluded Jews from public jobs and liberal professions.
147 DACAO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, 179, 28 July 1941.
148 Ibid.
Bukovina. Having heard from Romanian soldiers who returned from the liberated territories that
the families they had left behind had been “arrested and taken into the interior of Russia by
Soviet troops, [and] that some of them had been killed by Jews or Soviet troops,” many refugees
were thirsty for revenge by the time the Romanian troops reclaimed Cernăuți, refugees eager to
“take revenge on the traitors” back home had resolved to cross the border into Northern
Bukovina “with or without a travel authorization,” into the “localities already occupied by our
army.” The nationalist press capitalized on this mood, urging refugees to return as soon as
possible in order to embark on the hard work of national reconstruction, which was to be carried
out “only in the spirit of Romanian tradition.” “We the refugees,” the nationalist Bucovina wrote,
“are the first who have the duty to apply ourselves to work for the reconstruction and uplift of
our liberated territories.”149 The refugees, the editors added, “will come out of patriotism, but
also because it will be profitable now that the Jews will be eliminated.”150 Most refugees were
only too happy to return home.

In the meantime, Romanians who had stayed behind were looking for ways to flee. A
rumor spread that “the population that was under the Russians in Northern Bukovina and
Bessarabia will be taken by the Romanian state and resettled in Muntenia and residents from
Muntenia will be brought in their place.” Having already lived through one Soviet occupation
and now the reconquest of Bukovina by the Romanians and Germans, these people thought
anything was possible, including a second Soviet occupation. As the Romanian authorities
discovered, “the majority of Jews” in Cernăuți “and in general all those who were under the
Russian regime” no longer wished “to stay on this territory but all of them want to go to
Muntenia - for the reason that they endured for one year so much misery and they don’t want to

149 “Refugiații sunt datori să se întoarcă acasă,” Bucovina, 30 July 1941.
150 Bucovina, 19 July 1941.
live here any longer because they are afraid the Russians will come here again.” This time, locals knew better than to sit still and wait for the Soviets to return. They were “ready to go, with their suitcases packed, saying that if it happens that the Russians come again they should be able to leave on time so they aren’t caught again.”

In addition to the refugees, the “liberators” - most of them non-local Romanians from the Regat - also felt entitled to superior positions in Bukovina. They too believed that they deserved to be rewarded for having returned Bukovina safely into Romanian hands. Well before the refugees were issued authorizations to return home, a series of “doubtful characters” already streamed in from Romania, “hoping to strike it rich in the city that was to be turned 100 percent Romanian.” As ethnic Romanians from the metropole and ‘liberators’ of Bukovina, these individuals felt entitled to raise “claims for a central residence, lush furniture, and all.” From relatives and neighbors who had already returned to Bukovina, many refugees found out that “their residences were occupied by functionaries, military, or various persons who didn’t own homes nor had lived in Cernăuți before.” So much for Antonescu’s promise that “based on the results of the census we will restore the property of refugees from the Regat and recognize the property of Romanians who are still in Bukovina and Bessarabia.”

Bukovinans felt like victims of a double injustice. First, whether they had stayed behind or fled to Romania together with the army, they had suffered the consequences of the Soviet occupation - whether that was ‘being refugees and losing their money and even families,’ or suffering “various privations under the Communists” such as having their families deported or being thrown into jail. Second, now that Bukovina was once again in Romanian hands, they

151 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 125, 22 July 1941.
152 Traian Popovici, Spovedania, 69.
153 Mihai Antonescu, Pentru Basarabia și Bucovina, 86.
154 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 175, 23 July 1941.
were assigned “subaltern” positions while all the coveted spots went to Romanians from other parts of the country. In protest, several “associations of Bukovinian volunteers from the war of unification” wrote the Conducator (the Romanian equivalent of Fuehrer - a title that General Ion Antonescu assumed), requesting that “Bukovinans not be excluded from the work of reorganizing this province” because “they are tied body and soul to this corner of the country, they know better than anyone else the surroundings and local needs and they think they have the right to participate in leading the reorganization and reconstruction of Romanian life in this corner of the country.”\footnote{Ibid.} But the refugees were both mistrusted and resented for being disruptive, expensive, elusive, and loud in their requests for financial support. Like all free-floating elements, the refugees were also seen as a threat to the state’s security. Many were suspected of spying for the Soviets. Even though all the Bukovinian evacuees were closely investigated by the Repatriation Commission before being admitted into Romania, the Romanian authorities believed the Soviets had somehow managed to sneak in “officers, soldiers, and Romanian or minority functionaries” who would “settle down in important regions and send information” to them.\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941.}

That said, to be an ethnic Romanian in Bukovina was to be in a privileged position under Antonescu’s regime. Even if the regime did not manage to romanize Bukovina overnight, as many had hoped, Romanians were given leeway to begin ‘romanizing’ the province all by themselves. The “Romanization” project rested on one basic assumption: that in the past, Romanians in Bukovina had been oppressed and marginalized, while ‘foreigners’ - notably Jews - had held a privileged position. To make Bukovina Romanian again, it was thus necessary to reverse this hierarchy by putting the Romanians at the top and letting the Jews and foreigners

\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941.}
sink to the bottom. The objective was not simply to do justice or achieve national equality, but also to exact revenge. Many Romanians interpreted the “romanization” project as a license to violate the rights of Jews and minorities, and make arbitrary demands, all in the name of “Christianity.” One Jewish man from Cernăuți remembered how his Romanian ‘friends’ came to his house before he was deported to Transnistria to ask him to leave them some of his possessions.¹⁵⁷ Mathias Zwilling, who was living together with his mother on the former Theaterplatz in the center of the Cernăuți at the time, was thrown out by a Romanian who took a liking to his apartment.¹⁵⁸ Pearl Fichman, another native of Cernăuți, was forced to swap apartments with a Romanian family, which “we couldn’t object to because we could have been sent to Transnistria if we had said no.”¹⁵⁹ The benefits of being Romanian or Christian - as the two identity markers became completely interchangeable - were to be enjoyed on a first come, first served basis. While the refugees had to wait to be repatriated to Bukovina, the “public functionaries” who came to Bukovina directly after the ‘liberation’ lined their pockets with gold - ironically, by grabbing the property of the refugees who had not yet returned. They “occupied multiple apartments, houses they found abandoned but furnished with everything necessary,” and rented them out to latecomers.

The pompous vision of an ethnically pure, perfectly ‘romanized’ Bukovina translated into good business. Romanians who came to Cernăuți from the Regat to ‘romanize’ Bukovina claimed apartments “not in order to stay here definitively but to transport the furniture they found to their properties, which they do not sell but sublet.”¹⁶⁰ The authorities worried that such abuses might “taint the prestige of civil servants chosen for these territories regained at such

¹⁵⁷ Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, Selig-Ascher Hofer, 168.
¹⁵⁸ Mathias Zwilling, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 177.
¹⁵⁹ Pearl Fichman, Before Memories Fade, 77-83.
¹⁶⁰ SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 58/1941, 135, 9 September 1941.
great cost,” yet they continued to indulge these behaviors. “Christians” were, for the most part, allowed to keep the apartments they had occupied even if their rightful owners returned. The mayor of Cernăuți Traian Popovici was one of the few Romanians in positions of power in Bukovina who authorized Jewish families to reclaim their apartments “occupied by a Christian - [usually], a male or female functionary.” But for this, he came under severe criticism from Governor Calotescu, who accused him of carrying out an “immoral transaction from a Romanian, Christian, and national point of view.”

"I cannot admit,” the governor wrote Popovici, “that if a Jewish home was attributed to a Christian, you should evacuate the Christian so the Jew can come in. (...) The right of Jews to their residence (...) will be respected to the same extent that the Jews respected the rights of Romanians and the Romanian nation.”

So that the Romanians would not be in a position of power only nominally while the ‘foreigners’ continued to dominate the local economy, as before, the new administration decided to extend the “romanization” project from the cultural into the economic sphere by formally transferring the property of deported Jews to the Romanian population. In theory, this was a sound strategy, if a profoundly undemocratic one. But the transfer was not carried out according to any plan but quickly degenerated into a bacchanal of thieving, robbing, and pilfering. Like the Soviets, who had also perfected the art of stealing from themselves, the Romanians were too tempted by the windfall to keep their hands off the confiscated goods. Most of the Jewish property was already gone before an official inventory and redistribution plan was drawn up. Newly arrived functionaries from Bucharest, members of the administration, officers, chauffeurs, maids, random civilians broke into apartments and stole whatever they could lay their hands on. Given only twelve hours’ notice to pack and move into the ghetto, many Jewish families had fled

161 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 7, l 4, December 1941.
162 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 7, l 234, 12 December 1941.
left their homes in a hurry, forgetting doors and windows unlocked. This was a robber’s dream. All one had to do was go in through the front door or window and take one’s pick of valuables. The robbers could rest easy, for the authorities had no way of checking what the departed families had left behind. The police in Suceava found a great many residences completely “ravaged” by “unidentified individuals who went into the homes of evacuated Jews and stole things.” “If we don’t proceed to taking into custody or selling these homes with all the goods left behind,” they concluded, “we will lose many of the things left over from the Jews.”

It was hard to tell where ‘romanization’ ended and robbery began, for the robbers were not only greedy commoners but also members of the administration, military, and the Romanian gendarmerie who were supposed to keep the Jewish property safe until it was ready to be distributed among the population. This was especially the case in the countryside. By October 1941, over 90% of the residences in Vijnița lay empty so “every day numerous thefts are committed, the majority of them by breaking in through the windows or the doors sealed by the local city hall.” Some people broke in. Others used their positions in the administrations to enter smoothly and steal without leaving any traces. One especially resourceful official from Vijnița drew up “fictional sales documents” to prove - should the need arise - that he had “bought furniture from the house that used to be the property of the Jew Moses Snap.” The “chief and delegate of the commission” responsible for inventorying Jewish goods in Suceava “burst into the homes breaking the seal put in there by the police, taking certain goods or doing the inventory alone, helped only by the city treasurer and a factory mechanic.” As mayor Popovici relates in his memoir, gentiles also frequently “came into the ghetto, pretending to be

163 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3, ll 77-78, 21 October 1941.
164 DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 23, 22 October 1941.
165 Ibid.
166 DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 99, 28 November 1941.
on close terms with the governor or military commander or mayor” and took away “whatever valuable things the victims still possessed - golds, jewels, carpets, furs, cloth” pretending they had “to bribe or reward those that would secure them an evacuation exemption.”

Although the situation quickly went out of control, the authorities did try to give the ‘romanization’ process a systematic character. Special institutions were organized for this purpose such as the National Center for Romanization or the Oficiul de locatii, which was in charge of transferring and allocating apartments and residences. “Romanization” commissars were introduced into factories to ensure that Jewish specialists and personnel were gradually being replaced with Romanian substitutes. As for the residences and property the deported Jews had left behind, these were to be carefully inventoried and evaluated by the administration, transferred into the property of the state, and then redistributed to the Christian population. A law issued in September 1941 stipulated that “the mobile goods of deported Jews are to be considered as goods without an owner and consequently they enter the patrimony of the state.”

“Rural properties expropriated from the Jews” such as land and residences were initially rented out to Romanian peasants or given over to state authorities and intellectuals. There were also proposals to use former Jewish property to facilitate “massive colonizations” of reliable Romanian elements “along this border.” In addition, in November 1941, the Council of Ministers decided that expropriated Jewish goods from Bukovina and Bessarabia be handed over to the “Gouvernements” of the liberated provinces and turned into capital that would then be invested in romanization projects and institutions. Bukovina’s Jews were to fund the ‘romanization’ process out of their pockets. Jewish specialists and professionals who were

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167 Traian Popovici, Spovedania, 83.
168 YVA, M52/44, 905, 12 January 1942.
169 “Proprietățile evreiesc din Nordul Bucovinei: pe aceste proprietăți se poate face o nouă colonizare de țărani români,” Universul, 13 January 1942 in YVA, M 52/73, 1206-1207.
170 DACO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, I 61, 15 November 1941.
authorized to work were required to contribute 30% of their salaries to “the romanization of industry and commercial enterprises.”\textsuperscript{171} The backbreaking work of reconstruction also fell on the shoulders of Jews mobilized to perform ‘work for the public good’ for minimal pay, such as rebuilding roads and bridges destroyed during the Soviet retreat.\textsuperscript{172} Not unlike in the post-World War I years, when the first Romanian administration in Bukovina set out to build Romanian culture in the ‘estranged’ province with institutions and cultural capital they inherited from the Austrian empire, the foundations for a new, ethnically purified Bukovina were now laid on Jewish capital and property.

The “romanization” project was all about legalizing illegality, giving the semblance of law, order, and justice to punishable crimes. While Jewish property was quickly disappearing into the pockets of Romanians, ministers and officials debated technical questions such as what kinds of goods should be expropriated, what counted as ‘mobile goods,’ and under what conditions the confiscations should be carried out so as to give the state great benefits at minimum costs. The decree on the “expropriation of commercial funds and Jewish goods from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina,” for instance, stipulated that both capital and “mobile goods” belonging to Jews in these territories were to be expropriated and handed over to the “Gouvernements.” The implications verged on the absurd, for the law effectively licensed the Romanian state to confiscate from Jews not only money, land, and residences but any other valuables such as clothes, shoes, and furniture. It encouraged Romanians to look upon Jewish property as a pool of free goods that could be appropriated at their convenience. And many did just that. The Metropolitan of Suceava, for instance, petitioned Governor Calotescu for approval “to assign part of the bed sheets left after the evacuation of Jews to meet the needs of 20 persons

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Bukovynysi v trahichni roki}, Order from General Calotescu, no 1307, 13 July 1941.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Bukovynysi v trahichni roki}, 180-181.
- members of the association of priests” as “we don’t have the possibility of ordering these objects elsewhere.” Similarly, the Gouvernement appropriated “candle-shaped light bulbs” from Jewish synagogues in Cernăuți for the “chandeliers of the Gouvernement Palace” and Governor Calotescu’s private residence. Anything - from a used pair of shoes to a light bulb - could be justifiably reclaimed for ‘romanization’ purposes. Yet some authorities had misgivings about how the expropriations were being conducted. “Taking everything away from the Jews, and leaving them without clothes, boots, etc,” the Romanian justice minister insisted, was neither the government’s intention nor the best way to romanize the economy. Instead, he recommended romanizing Jewish property while also sparing the economy the blows it had suffered “in other countries” where Jewish businesses and industries were liquidated too suddenly. In practice, there seemed to be no limit to what Romanians could claim for ‘romanization’ purposes, even though the law did make exceptions for community and religious goods such as “synagogues, temples, and cemeteries.” Even so, in August 1942 one Romanian priest from Cernăuți petitioned the Bukovinan Gouvernement to “transform the Jewish temple into a Romanian-Orthodox church,” under the pretext that “this is not a functional temple, but only a ruin which will never be turned into a temple again and which now presents a sufficiently disgusting aspect both to residents of this city and to foreigners who come to visit.” Fortunately, the priest’s petition was rejected on the grounds that the law “does not distinguish between functioning and ruined temples.”

When it came to other kinds of Jewish property, especially apartments and houses, no such exceptions were made. Institutions charged with safeguarding and redistributing Jewish property had leeway to make their own decisions and often came into conflict over what course

174 YVA, M.52/87, 1371, 11 August 1942.
of action to pursue. The *Oficiul de locații* took a hard line, sending “Jews whose residence is solicited by a Christian renter to live in the Jewish quarter.” The Military Cabinet staff, on the other hand, sometimes intervened with the office on behalf of Jewish proprietaries. One Colonel Cristescu, Chief of the General Staff with the Gouvernement in Cernăuți, arranged to have a Romanian official transferred to a different residence than that which had been assigned to him by the *Oficiul de locații* so as not to “evacuate the Jew who held this apartment.” On another occasion, Cristescu had used his position to exempt a Jewish doctor from “evacuation.” All of his transgressions were dutifully reported to Governor Calotescu, who had previously warned “all functionaries in the *Oficiul de locații* that they will be severely punished if they do not inform him of illegal interventions” on behalf of Jews.  

The windfall of Jewish property, like all fortunes dishonestly made, brought the administration bad luck. Instead of fostering national unity, as it was supposed to, the influx of Jewish capital sparked new conflicts and deepened old rifts within the Romanian community. Faced with boundless quantities of free woolen carpets, jewelry, and dressing gowns, people lost their minds. Forgetting all about their nationalist and patriotic sentiments, they trampled on anyone - including their own co-nationals - who stood between them and these riches. Even General Calotescu admitted that “in Cernăuți and Bukovina a terrible battle is being fought against honor and organization by rascals who want to lay their hands on things and get rich.”

Lured by the scent of free property, the German consul in Cernăuți also started claiming “some factories that were supposedly the property of Jews who had been German subjects.” The numbers of people who laid claim to Jewish property was truly staggering. By November 1941, the city hall in Cernăuți had received no fewer than 3,000 requests for vacant homes, not to

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175 YVA, M.52/44, 15 November 1942; and 916.  
176 SANIC, Fond Consiliul de Miniștri, 45/1942, 52, 17 April 1942.  
177 Ibid.
mention all the other ‘claimants’ who did not bother to submit petitions but simply took whatever their hearts desired. “As a military man,” Governor Calotescu said, “I often blushed when I was informed about the breaking of seals, the transport of furniture from one place to another, violations of other people’s residences…” 178 Sometimes, multiple people were allocated one and the same piece of property, and the “residents who have authorizations often meet before the same property, fight, complain to the administration of goods or some, who forwarded petitions longer ago, can’t find them anymore while others obtain the authorizations and take or occupy the property, which gives rise to continuous scandals, threats, and reclamations.” 179 One official who arrived in Vijnița in July 1941 a few days before the local Jewish community was ‘evacuated’ discovered that the house that had been assigned to him was also being claimed by a Romanian judge. Threatening the other official that “if I say anything else, he will arrest me and sue me,” the judge removed all the furniture that had not yet been sold under the pretense that he was “collecting and inventoring state goods.” 180

Such mixups tainted the administration’s reputation with the locals. No matter how the goods were allocated, someone always complained that “no justice is being done.” To be sure, the administration was highly corrupt and incompetent. It was no secret that the police and gendarmerie hired to safeguard Jewish property were the first to “steal goods without anyone knowing who did it.” 181 But people also had overinflated expectations of what was rightfully theirs. Officers returning from the front were shocked to discover that no special provisions had been made for them when it came to Jewish property. One captain who was transferred to the garrison in Cernăuți in 1942 after being wounded complained that he was “unable to obtain a

178 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 4, l 189, 29 November 1941.
179 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 84.
180 Ibid., 12 November 1941.
181 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, l 110, 24 November 1941.
residence and had to live with his family in a hotel and keep his suitcases at the train station.”

Another military man felt insulted when the authorities told him that he should be able to wait for an apartment as he was already used “to living in tents at the front.” To quiet the discontent, the Council of Ministers decided that “at least 25% of the Jewish expropriated residences put up for auction should be reserved for officers and our heroes at the front.”

The ‘romanization’ of Jewish property caused frustration among the Romanian population also because it did not have the expected effects. Romanians had been promised that Bukovina would soon be in the hands of ‘autochthonous elements’ but, as late as 1943, the local economy was still dominated by “foreign” elements. The ‘romanization laws,’ it seemed, were being applied selectively, with the result that “there exists almost no enterprise that is not predominated either by the Jewish element, or the Ukrainian one - combined with Russians, Poles.” In in most factories in Cernăuți “only 10-12% of the personnel are Romanians and the rest are other nationalities.”

The final purpose of the ‘romanization’ project was to remove the Jews from their dominant position, to curtail their economic power, and bring them to their knees so the Romanians could take over. When extended into the economic sphere, however, the ‘romanization’ project ran up against insurmountable obstacles. The Romanian authorities were in a double bind. If they continued ‘romanizing’ the shops and factories, on the one hand, they risked throwing the whole local economy into crisis. Barely one month after Cernăuți’s Jews had been ‘evacuated’ into the ghetto and deported, prices had already risen and food supplies plummeted. If they allowed the Jews to stay, on the other hand, the authorities risked alienating

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182 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 600, l 2, 20 August 1942.
183 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 208, l 2.
184 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1635, l 1, 20 August 1943.
the Romanian population. Already in September 1941, Romanian refugees in Cernăuți were “displeased because all services in the locality from restaurants, butcher shops, and other enterprises - all staff are only Jews.” Only a few months into the new administration, local Romanians were already dissatisfied with the progress made on the ‘romanization’ of the economy. Many complained that, while “foreigners” continued to be employed everywhere, “the Romanians walk around the streets unable to take any kind of position, since all of them are occupied by Jews.”

Once the Jews were removed from their positions, however, economic conditions worsened. When the Jews of Suceava were evacuated, the city’s economy suddenly stood still, like a broken watch, “hurting above all the Romanians in the city, who due to their precarious material situation didn’t have sufficient provisions for an extended period of time.”\(^{185}\) The same thing happened in Cernăuți, where most shops closed as “there are no Christian merchants to replace [the Jews].” Factories stopped producing goods once they ran out of materials.\(^ {186}\) Once all the Jewish hairdressers and tailors and mechanics and laundry women were gone, it looked like the Romanians had no specialists of their own with whom to replace them. “Even simple residents of the city are amazed that there used to be so many professionals among the Jews,” the police reported three months after the first big wave of deportations from Cernăuți.\(^ {187}\) To keep the local economy from collapsing, Jewish professionals had to be brought back in. And so the administration had to undo what it had done earlier, since the “situation of this province is completely different from that of the rest of the country” and “the use of Jewish labor is necessary for a certain period of time both for economic development and to instruct new

\(^{185}\) DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 122.
\(^{186}\) Ibid., 1 March 1942.
\(^{187}\) DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, 17 January 1942.
Christian elements that are meant to replace them.”188 As it turned out, in Bukovina the Jews were indispensable even to their own removal.

Dancing with Hitler and Stalin

Romania’s territorial losses to the Soviets in the summer of 1940 were the main reason why the Romanians went to war on Germany’s side as opposed to the Allies’. Even though the Romanian political establishment and public were traditionally pro-Western, they could never participate in an alliance that included the Soviet Union, as that would effectively require them to give up Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia definitively. Initially, the alliance with Germany brought on more territorial losses. The Vienna Diktat deprived Romania of North Transylvania, which Germany handed over to its ally Hungary in an attempt to keep both states moderately dissatisfied so they would continue cooperating with Germany and contributing to the German war effort. Unlike Transylvania, Bukovina was not reclaimed by any other German ally. Even so, the Romanians did not trust Germany’s assurances that Northern Bukovina would remain firmly in their hands. Here too Germans were throwing the ball around to different players, giving both Romanians and Ukrainians to understand that their territorial demands would be met sooner or later. Moreover, Germany and Romania were profoundly unequal partners. In Transnistria, Odessa, and Stalingrad Romanian soldiers fought poorly. Yet Marshall Antonescu felt obligated to push the Romanian armies further and further east to demonstrate his loyalty to Germany and increase Romania’s chances of recovering the piece of Transylvania they had lost to Hungary. The Germans were aware of Romania’s motives and knew how to take advantage of them. Initially, Hitler envisioned a “purely defensive participation” in the war effort for Romania both

188 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 96, l 113.
because he wanted to safeguard the Romanian oil fields and because he was skeptical about Romania’s military might. 189 Although General Antonescu was put in command of both the Romanian and German armies that launched an offensive against the Soviets from Romania in July 1941, his leadership was formally replaced before the armies crossed the Dniester. The Romanians were Germany’s allies, but the power differential was visible. The Germans left no doubt as to who was really in charge.

Just like in World War I, in 1941 the Germans came to Bukovina poised to show the locals the meaning of Kultur but behaved in ways that flatly contradicted their claims of cultural superiority. Even in the midst of war, culture was a constant topic of conversation among Romanian and German officers in Bukovina. While dining with the German authorities at the military refectory in Hotin, Romanian police officials discovered that “our country is very little known abroad” and “the enemy propaganda is gossiping about us in every possible way.”

Greatly offended by the German claim that Romanians were in fact the “descendants of prisoners in the Roman empire,” the Romanian police took time out of their busy afternoon to set their interlocutors right. They gave the German officers a quick lesson in Romanian history, proving that “on the contrary emperor Trajan and his successors, conquering and mastering Dacia, brought to this land which constituted the cradle of Romanianism their elite legions, for only with these legions and soldiers worthy from every point of view could they defeat” the Dacians, “a patriotic people, superior from any point of view to the other peoples in the East of Europe.” 190 Eager to please their teachers, the German officials agreed that “we have every right then to assert that Rome sent the most distinguished human element to conquer Dacia and that only in this war can we see that the Romanian people possesses qualities much superior to those

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190 DACHO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 155.
of the Italian people.” Yet the men at the front remained unconvinced. Nor did they care much about Trajan and the Dacians. A pamphlet that had been making the rounds of the German army before it fell into the hands of the Romanian police in Bukovina in July 1942 described Romania thus:

Do you know the country  
On the border of Asia and Europe,  
Where the kikes and the Romanians quarrel,  
And resist culture.

Where the shepherds in their shacks catch lice,  
Where bears live in the forest,  
Where there are more kikes than Christians  
And all of them are vegetarians.

Because they all eat garlic  
It’s better to stop breathing  
In the synagogues the kikes happily worship  
Their talmud  
And burn candles.

In only a few stanzas, this horrible piece of German wartime folklore reflected all the prejudices and stereotypes that marred Germany’s relationship with its ally. The poem went on to describe Romania as an uncultured, uncivilized place where “moles run around the room,/ where sparrows make nests,/…./where dogs pull at everything and are ready to bite you,/ where pigs lie around in chains/ thin like barren goats,/where it rains without stopping until your very last piece of thread is wet,/ until you forget in the dirt and mud/that you were born a human being.” Romania’s large Jewish population - ‘there are more kikes than Christians’ - was another source of tension between the allies. Like Hungary, Romania had a greater degree of autonomy from Germany than the territories directly occupied by it when it came to implementing the ‘final solution.’ For reasons we have already discussed, Antonescu’s regime had strong

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191 Ibid., 156.
incentives to pursue a more moderate line than Hitler. This only confirmed German suspicions that the Romanians were so corruptible and unreliable because they were in fact “under Jewish influence.” While passing through Cernăuți, a representative of the German Legation in Bucharest noted in passing that “Antonescu cannot do everything the way he would like to because not all of his Romanian collaborators are sincere people” but rather, individuals who allowed themselves to be manipulated by the Jews. Similar complaints that “Romania and Hungary are making the mistake of not taking the same measures against the Jews as Germany” were being voiced in the neighboring General Gouvernment as well.

Because of these prejudices, the German and Romanian authorities in Bukovina had a conflict-ridden relationship. Confident of their cultural and technical superiority, the German troops ordered Romanian soldiers around, abused their power, terrorized the local population, and insulted the Romanian authorities without getting punished - a painful reminder of the inequalities inherent in the German-Romanian alliance. The Romanians often had violent encounters with the German troops. A Romanian platoon commander from Gura-Humorului related, for instance, how German soldiers “caught me by the collar and broke my tie and hit me in the face calling me coward, saying that if I was indeed a platoon commander I should be at the front and not at home.” The brawl had started when the German soldiers burst into a warehouse where tobacco was kept, demanding to be given cigarettes for free. When the “cowardly and wretched Romanian” intervened, he was given a beating that left him with a broken shirt, a missing tooth, and with the dubious honor of having been ‘touched’ by a member of the German military. “You should know that it is an honor for you to have been touched by a German soldier,” one of the Germans shouted at the victim. The frictions between the unequal partners

192 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, 23 July 1941.
193 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, 1 594.
were always manifest. Whether they exploded into violence or not depended largely on how the Romanians reacted to German provocations. During a soccer game between a Romanian sports club in Cernăuți and the ‘soccer team of the German aviation in Bacau,’ some players started fighting. Fortunately for the Romanians, however, the game ended in victory for the Germans. Peace was restored with dinner at a local restaurant “where sufficient quantities of vodka and beer were consumed, everyone getting drunk by 9:45 in the evening when the party ended in songs, isolated dances and a perfect sense of collegiality.”\textsuperscript{194}

Not every conflict was so quickly resolved. One night in February 1943 a train arrived at the station Dornesti as usual. A German gendarme got off and asked the Romanian guard on duty to “evacuate from the German wagon of the train two Romanian soldiers because the train is coming from Germany and is strictly and exclusively reserved for German soldiers.” The guard did as he was told but the Romanian soldiers refused to move. The German gendarme took matters into his own hands, throwing the Romanian soldiers’ luggage out the window. The soldiers ran after their rucksacks, swearing at the German. The crowds on the platform quickly “divided themselves into two camps, one for and another against the Germans.”\textsuperscript{195} German soldiers often went berserk, disturbing public peace and insulting the Romanian authorities. When a group of security guards in Cernăuți tried disarming one drunken German soldier who was firing his pistol at random in the middle of a public square, another group of German soldiers, “around 10-15 of them, also inebriated,” began shouting and threatening them. The Romanian guards actually had to withdraw “towards the Gouvernement in order to avoid a scandal.”\textsuperscript{196} As members of a superior \textit{Volk}, German soldiers did not feel subject to the same laws as all the other mortals.

\textsuperscript{194} DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 34, l 115.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 15, 1943.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., l 25.
The Germans never tired of reminding their Romanian allies of their second-rate power status. They often made decisions without consulting them and bypassed the Romanian authorities whenever they saw fit. Germany’s dominant role in the alliance with Romania did not simply wound the pride of its Romanian ally but also created concrete problems for the Romanian regime, such as a lack of agency and control over its own population. A rather bizarre situation arose, with the German troops not only failing to back up the Romanian authorities, but openly acting against their interests. The Romanian police now had to keep their eyes peeled for enemies on every corner, for the Germans played two games at once, making friends on both sides of the barricade. The German army turned out to be more of a competitor than an ally, for it was not only technically superior to the Romanian army, but also wealthier. It could, for instance, afford to provide its soldiers with winter boots and clothing. When the Romanian authorities announced in March 1944 that all pre-military youth in Bukovina would soon be mobilized, there were widespread complaints because of the “lack of shoes and clothing,” which locals felt “the state should give them just as they are providing it in Germany.” Minority youth had even more reasons to be upset about serving a state that not only did not give them boots and uniforms, but also did not fully recognize their membership in the body politic and regarded them as foreigners.\textsuperscript{197} Many of them ended up in the Wehrmacht. German policies on the issue of recruitment into the German army were quite complicated. Racial ideology made the Wehrmacht an exclusive institution. Only 450 of the 800 ethnic Germans who volunteered to enroll in the German army in Bukovina in May 1943 were accepted. To be admitted, the candidates had to offer “proof of knowledge of German” and demonstrate with relevant documentation that they had “at least 25% German blood.” A special Commission for the Recruitment of Germans in Romania was charged with evaluating the candidates to make sure that “foreigners are

\textsuperscript{197} DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 82, 3 March 1944.
excluded. At the same time, the Wehrmacht did not discourage non-Germans from volunteering. Late in the war, a special commission was set up in Cernăuți to form a Bukovina *Volksdeutsche-Ortsgruppe*. But given that over 98% of Germans in Bukovina had already been repatriated, the commission ended up enrolling a good number of “Ukrainian and Polish half-breeds” who promptly appeared before the German authorities to “prove their Germanism through fictitious witnesses.”

In the borderland, power manifested itself in the ability to control movement across the frontier. Here too the Germans called the shots. With the German authorities present, the Romanian administration increasingly lost control over the northern border areas. The Germans lent the Romanians additional border guards and policemen to strengthen the frontier, but they also siphoned off labor force and manpower. There was very little the Romanians could do to stop the outflow of people because they had signed a treaty with the Reich allowing Romanian citizens who enrolled in the Wehrmacht or were recruited for work in Germany to keep their Romanian citizenship. Many locals who left for Germany clandestinely almost always did so with the knowledge and support of the German authorities, who provided them with “German military uniforms” and had them join the “columns for the transportation of German wounded, materials, or military who go on leave.” To make these departures possible, special offices were organized all over the country, “with which members of German National Socialist organizations collaborate.” In addition, Germany secretly supported ‘enemy elements’ that had been excluded from political life in order to guarantee the Romanians’ loyalty by playing one political faction against another. When Antonescu’s regime eradicated the legionary movement, many young legionaries fled to Germany, “determined by their uncertain future in Romania following

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198 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1910, l 2.
199 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 97, l 304.
200 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 190, l 76, 17 June 1941.
the arrests en masse” that followed the so-called ‘legionary rebellion’ of January 1941.\textsuperscript{201} There were as many as 1000-1500 Bessarabian and Bukovinan legionaries in Germany by mid-1942. As soon as they arrived there, they were “enrolled in the German army and sent to fight on the eastern front,” from where they could easily cross the border back into Bukovina.\textsuperscript{202} Dressed in German uniforms, they could not only sail past the border guards but also bring weapons into the province, hold meetings in restaurants and taverns, and congregate in the streets undisturbed.\textsuperscript{203} The Romanian authorities continued to keep a close eye on them, but there was very little they could do to keep the movement from resurfacing.

The greatest source of friction between the Germans and the Romanians was the Ukrainian question. The German authorities hesitated to pronounce themselves on the territorial dispute between Romanians and Ukrainians in Bukovina. They repeatedly put off making a decision until the end of the war in order to keep both sides striving for their support. A very strange dynamic emerged, with the Ukrainians and Romanians on the one side trying to figure out the rules of the game and the Germans on the other side constantly changing the rules and improvising. Since they had no idea what the Germans intended to do about Bukovina, the Romanian authorities had to keep interpreting and guessing. Some time in 1943, the Romanian police in Cernăuți noticed that a German variety theater caravan that had been touring Bukovina had been displaying for the public to see a map of Europe in which Romania was depicted with its old frontiers “without Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia.” What could this mean? Most likely, that the theater had not bothered to update their map since June 1941. But since this was an “official German propaganda organ,” their gesture was taken to heart. Romanians were scandalized that after “two years of fighting and bleeding on the Eastern front shoulder to

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 116, 19 March 1941.
\textsuperscript{202} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1942, 20 June 1942.
\textsuperscript{203} DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 271.
shoulder and next to the army of the Reich,” the Germans so blatantly ignored their territorial claims. The Ukrainians, on the other hand, felt encouraged by this gesture, which they took to mean that the Reich recognized that Bukovina should be returned to the Ukrainians as soon as the war was over.

Although they never pronounced themselves officially on this question, the Germans gave Ukrainians in Bukovina to understand that they would be generously rewarded if they contributed to the German war effort. Ukrainians were no Aryans but they also made good cannon fodder. When the German army began enrolling Ukrainians en masse, word spread among Romanian officials in Bukovina that the Germans had promised “that if the Ukrainians do everything they can together with the German troops they will get their Greater Ukraine including Northern Bukovina.” In November 1941, a representative of the German police in Berlin came to Cernăuți apparently to convince leaders of the Ukrainian community to “demand in a memorandum to the Reich the annexation of Northern Bukovina and Northern Bessarabia to the General Gouvernement” under German rule. Ukrainians who placed themselves at the disposal of the German military became immune to persecution by the Romanian authorities. When the Soviet troops withdrew, one Ukrainian man who had “carried out intense Communist activity” during the Soviet occupation offered his services to the German military command in Cernăuți in order to escape arrest as a Soviet collaborator. Like a suspicious lover searching for signs of betrayal, the Romanian administration closely followed every German-Ukrainian encounter. In December 1941, a German captain inaugurated the Ukrainian St Nicholas holiday festivity with a speech. Even though the participants did not say anything “against the Romanian

204 DACbO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2381, f. 180.
205 DACbO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, f. 149, 25 January 1944.
206 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 10 November 1941.
207 DACbO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, f. 170, 21 November 1941.
state or Romanian sovereignty,” the festivity had a manifestly nationalist Ukrainian character and the Germans seemed to approve of it.\footnote{DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 156, 12 December 1941.}

For as long as the promise of a Greater Ukraine under Germany’s protection was in the air, Ukrainian nationalists went out of their way to demonstrate loyalty to the Germans. Right across the border, in the General Gouvernement, locals “displayed German flags in the streets and public institutions” and celebrated Hitler’s birthday. In Bukovina too Ukrainian nationalists promised that, if the Germans were to guarantee “that these regions belong to Greater Ukraine,” Ukrainian youth would sympathize with their cause much more and would be ready to go to war “en masse.”\footnote{DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4.} Ukrainian irredentists coming from Galicia with “illegal documents issued by the German authorities” confidently predicted that a change “will happen in the administration of Bukovina” soon.\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 44/1941, 20 January 1942, 59.} As the war dragged on, they became increasingly convinced that it was only a matter of time before an “independent Ukraine that will incorporate Eastern Galicia and Northern Bukovina” was established under German patronage.\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 21/1943, 5 October 1943, 89.}

Yet this was all wishful thinking, for Germany had already missed its opportunity to support the Ukrainians when they refused to recognize the fledgling independent state formed on the OUN’s initiative. The Germans had no intention of investing in the Ukrainian national project beyond what benefitted them directly. Yet when they appeared to distance themselves from their Romanian allies ever so slightly, Ukrainian nationalists jumped to the hopeful conclusion that “Ukrainians will be paid back for their role in the war through Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia.”\footnote{Ibid., 205.} In truth, nobody knew what the Germans intended to do with Bukovina - perhaps not even the Germans themselves. Although Ukrainian nationalists pressured
the Germans to pronounce themselves once and for all on the matter of Bukovina’s belonging, the German authorities played for time. The most they could promise was that “the question will be settled at the end of the war when the political and geographic fate of Europe is decided.”

The German authorities took on the role of mediator between the Ukrainians and Romanians in Bukovina, a position the Romanian authorities deeply resented, for it deprived them of authority over a large section of Bukovina’s population. Ukrainian nationalists who had never reconciled themselves to Romania’s annexation of Bukovina saw in this a perfect chance to further their own cause. As soon as the Germans had set foot in the province, they immediately turned to them with their national grievances, which the Germans actually encouraged. The inconvenience of settling squabbles between the two nationalities was outweighed by the advantages of being recognized as the supreme authority by both groups. Through an outpouring of memoranda and petitions, Ukrainian nationalists attempted to bring the Germans over to the Ukrainian side by acquainting them with the history and circumstances of Ukrainians in Bukovina. One memorandum drafted by the OUN noted that “Bukovina was always Ukrainian, even when the capital of Moldova was in Suceava.” Once again, Ukrainian nationalists invoked Austria’s nationality policies to prove the province’s Ukrainian character and justify their present demands. The memorandum ended with an appeal to Germany to “help with the creation of a great nationalist Ukrainian state” and save Ukrainians in Bukovina “from the Romanian yoke.”

“No nation has more in common with Germany than the Ukrainians,” the Bukovinian branch of the OUN wrote in a memorandum to German Legation in Bucharest. Both the Ukrainians and Germans, they claimed, had a vital interest in seeing Moscow defeated. The Romanians, on the other hand, supposedly “protect the development of the Russian

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213 DACHO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 25 February 1944.

214 DACHO, fond 30, op. 3, d. 4.
language, introducing this language into the schools.” This was plainly wrong. The Romanians feared Soviet expansion as much as the Ukrainians and suffered just as much - if not even more - under the Soviet occupation. Romania had just lost almost two thirds of its territory to the Soviet Union. The Romanian authorities were guilty of many sins but “protecting the Russian language” was not one of them. To persuade the German authorities of their absolute loyalty, Ukrainian nationalists threw the Romanians and Soviets into the same category of imperial aggressors. “The Romanian state forcibly stretches over Ukrainian territory, it introduces the Romanian language and administration there where it was never heard before,” the petitioners complained. 215 The overall effect of these memoranda was not only to raise Germany to the position of arbiter between the two nationalities, but also to discredit the Romanian authorities in the eyes of their allies and to win the Ukrainians the “sympathy and good will” of the Germans in Bukovina. 216

No longer having to put up with the Romanian authorities, win their favor, or follow their orders, Ukrainian nationalists avoided them altogether and took their grievances straight to the German military officials. 217 According to the worried reports of Romanian officials, the Ukrainians were growing bolder and ruder by the day, increasingly “impertinent and even threatening towards the Romanian population.” 218 Emboldened by the presence of an outside ‘arbiter,’ Ukrainian nationalists presented the Romanian Gouvernement in Cernăuți with a long list of demands, including a request to return the Ukrainian national homes that had been shut down to “Ukrainian organizations” in the city, to re-open the newspaper Chas, and to allow

215 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 50, 15 October 1941.
216 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 44/1941, 41, 6 January 1942.
217 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 10/1941, 20 August 1941.
218 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 58/1941 Ilfov, 487, 12 October 1941.
Ukrainians to use the Ukrainian language in correspondence and to teach it in private courses.\textsuperscript{219} In addition, the OUN - the largest and best-organized branch of the nationalist Ukrainian movement - stepped up its propagandistic activity. To make the Ukrainian population more nationally conscious, they urged them not to send their children to Romanian schools unless they were allowed to study in the Ukrainian language. But because most Ukrainian peasants did not care about their language rights enough to follow these orders, nationalists had to take drastic measures, such as “claim[ing] a fee from parents whose children study in Romanian primary schools” that went up to 2,000 lei per child and 100 kilograms of corn or grain.\textsuperscript{220} To avoid the consequences, Ukrainians distanced themselves increasingly from the Romanians. Yet most of them remained confused about what “the real Ukrainian nationalism” meant and “reserved towards any events within the Ukrainian movement.” How were they to know whom to trust if the nationalist leader Bandera was hand in hand with the Germans one day and then imprisoned by the Germans the next?\textsuperscript{221}

Overall, the Ukrainian nationalist movement stood to benefit from the German presence in Bukovina. Ukrainian nationalists were often seen wearing German uniforms, driving German cars, and participating “in great numbers in festivities organized by the Germans.”\textsuperscript{222} This allowed them to travel freely and unencumbered. When a Romanian policeman demanded to see the documents of one Ukrainian from Cernăuți who was traveling in the German wagon of the Berlin-Bucharest train “dressed in SS German uniform,” a German lieutenant shooed him away, insisting that the Ukrainian’s documents “are alright and that the Waffen-SS contains many

\textsuperscript{219} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 10 October 1941.
\textsuperscript{220} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 105-106, 25 November 1941.
\textsuperscript{221} DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, 1178, 21 December 1941.
\textsuperscript{222} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 105-106, 25 November 1941.
citizens of other ethnicities.” Ukranian youth who went to Galicia to enroll in the Ukrainian legions and returned to Bukovina wearing German uniforms could also “get in touch with Ukrainian elements” in their home villages undisturbed. In October 1941, “three civilians and one military in Ukrainian uniform” drove to Cernăuţi to deliver Ukrainian propaganda to the “banderite student Colotelo” and the Romanian police could do nothing about it. When the new head of the “Banderite movement” in Western Ukraine visited Cernăuţi after Bandera’s arrest to touch base with members of the local organization, he used “a German car and an identity card issued by the German command in Cracow.” The Romanians feared these Ukrainian initiatives would sooner or later “degenerate into acts of sabotage or terrorism or revolt” but in order to “ensure order and security” they had strict to “proceed with tact and keep within the legal framework.”

Ukrainian nationalists were by no means as secure in their relationship with the Germans as the Romanians feared, but they did have one major advantage: they had numerous institutions that allowed them not only to disseminate propaganda among the Ukrainian population in Bukovina but also to make themselves heard in Berlin. Whether they were convincing or not, Ukrainian propagandists were difficult to ignore, and their work - even if it did not always yield the intended results - influenced how the Germans approached the region. Recall how the

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224 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1146, 25 December 1942.
225 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 5 November 1941.
226 This was the case not only in Bukovina, but also in the “General Gouvernement,” where Ukrainians had it much worse and were increasingly “dissatisfied with the German regime.” Due to the “total lack of food” and the poor treatment they suffered at the hands of the German occupation authorities, many Ukrainians began clandestinely crossing the border from the Gouvernement into Bukovina. But these conditions - far from pleasant for ordinary men and women who were simply trying to make ends meet - proved quite beneficial for Ukrainian nationalists, who managed all the while to expand their organization and focus on “creating cadres and maintaining ties with Ukrainians in neighboring countries.” The key was perhaps that the Germans, unlike the Romanian authorities, tolerated their activity because they regarded the “Ukrainian movement as inoffensive.”
227 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, 12 January 1942.
228 Ibid., 186.
German theater caravan on tour in Bukovina accidentally displayed a map on which Romania appeared without Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. As it turned out, the choice of map was not entirely accidental, although the Germans might not have been aware of it at the time. In 1926, a certain Zenon Kuzelea had established a Ukrainian scientific institute in Berlin “with the aim of demonstrating and justifying the Ukrainians’ right to rule over Northern Bukovina, Bessarabia, and a part of Maramures.” Among the institute’s achievements was to bring historians, geographers, and cartographers together in an effort to publish works of history and geography to “convince public opinion about the fairness of the Ukrainian battle and their right to rule over Romanian territories inhabited by Ukrainian elements.”

Whether these Ukrainian propagandists were convincing or not mattered less than the fact that they drew attention to themselves and their cause. The consequence was that in 1934, when the German General Staff issued an official map of Ukraine for military use, this included “Bukovina up to the Siret, Bessarabia, and some parts of Maramures.” One such map was still displayed as late as December 1941 at the German military headquarters in Cernăuți. Unlike the Romanians, who were represented mainly through official, state channels, the Ukrainians had a series of nationalist institutions - most of them informal - acting on their behalf. They tempted German authorities with plans for a new Ukrainian state under Germany’s protection that would include Bukovina and other territories with substantial Ukrainian populations. The Ukrainian Committee in Lemberg, for instance, proposed that a separate Ukrainian province should be formed within Hungary; they even proceeded to “discuss with the forums in Budapest the problem of detaching Northern Bukovina from Romania.”

Though the OUN resisted this idea (at least while Bandera was alive), some Bukovinian Ukrainians who had ‘repatriated’

229 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 110, 17 December 1941.
230 Ibid.
231 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 117.
themselves to Germany during the Soviet occupation insisted that Bukovina should be incorporated “into the General Gouvernement of Galicia and Poland, so that when the Ukrainian state comes into being Bukovina should be annexed to Ukraine.” They even sent Hitler a memorandum to this effect, though without success, as Hitler apparently responded that “he cannot annex Bukovina to Ukraine because this is a Romanian province for which Romanian soldiers shed blood to clean it of Russians.”

Later in the war, when Ukrainian nationalists began distancing themselves from the Germans, the triangle shifted. Seeing that Germany - much like the Soviet Union - had no intention of helping Ukrainian nationalists achieve their dream of an independent Greater Ukraine, the Ukrainian nationalist organization in Bukovina began seeking a rapprochement with the Romanians on an anti-imperialist platform. This was a new line, for up until then the entire relationship between Ukrainians and Romanians in Bukovina had revolved around competition for attention and support from a greater power. The new plan to form a Ukrainian-Romanian alliance against German and Soviet aggressors did not materialize in the end, however, because of deeply ingrained Romanian suspicions of the Ukrainians.

As the Ukrainian nationalist movement expanded, a vicious circle emerged in which the Romanian authorities tried to clamp down on any activities that might be construed as propagandistic and nationalist, thus supplying Ukrainian nationalists with even more reasons to complain about their unjust treatment. What nationalists wrote in their memoranda to the German command in Cernăuți was thus true, but it mostly reflected the desperate reaction of Romanian authorities to the signs they were reading everywhere. These signs indicated that the Ukrainians had a special relationship with the Germans, that they could count on their protection and use the immunity the Germans provided them to pursue their own goals. The Romanians had

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232 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3, l 1166, April 1943.
all the more reason to be upset since their own allies, the Germans, seemed to be condoning and even encouraging Ukrainian nationalists. In the minds of Romanian nationalists with long memories, this seemed familiar, with the Germans filling the role once played by the Habsburgs. Recall that Romanian nationalists had always thought that the Ukrainians had fared better than the Romanians under Austrian rule. It was under the Habsburgs, after all, that Bukovina had incorporated a very large Ruthenian-speaking population. Without the Habsburg policies that encouraged Ukrainians to migrate into Bukovina from Galicia, Bukovina would have been able to preserve its Romanian national character – or so Romanian nationalists contended. The Romanians feared that the Germans were now doing something similar. “[The] measures that have been taken so far,” local officials reported, “did not bring any results and the minority population still doesn’t show any interest in learning the Romanian language so as to speak in the language of the state to which they belong.”233 If any language served as a lingua franca in Bukovina, it was still German.

This made for a peculiar atmosphere once the German troops arrived in Bukovina. Many locals felt quite at ease around them, as they could communicate perfectly well in German, perhaps even better than they could with the Romanian authorities in Romanian. Nevertheless, Antonescu’s regime was unwilling to accept this state of things, for its very raison d’etre was to recover the lost territories by re-incorporating them into Romania and restoring their Romanian national character. When it transpired that Bukovina’s minorities were quickly reverting to their older language practices, the Romanian authorities resolved to reinstate the Romanian language through a series of harsh measures such as banning the Ukrainian and “Jewish” languages from the public sphere. The initiative came from officials on the ground, who suggested that all stores and other public places display signs instructing the population to speak only Romanian. The

233 YVA, M.52/135, 1811.
Romanian authorities turned this idea into law, for they were determined to make a statement about who was in charge. Young Ukrainians who were caught speaking or singing in Ukrainian were arrested. “Young boys were singing, the gendarmes on one street beat them, then they ran to another, and continued singing… Oh how they beat them. It was forbidden to sing,” one Ukrainian local would later recall.234 Although some schools continued to offer Ukrainian language classes, students were instructed to speak Romanian to each other and with the teachers. One Ukrainian woman who was a student at the time remembered that “all subjects in school were taught in the Romanian language (…) by Romanian teachers, but at home of course we all spoke Ukrainian.”235 Together with the schools, the churches were an important site of nation-building, and so the authorities wanted to make sure the Romanian language dominated here too. In practice, of course, Ukrainian priests and teachers often departed from the rules. “[They] ordered that masses in church should also be in the Romanian language,” said Kateryna Vasylivna Petrysh from Roztoky, “but the priests were good, so we agreed with them [to have] our mass in the Ukrainian language.”236 Although there were still ways around the language regulations, this time the Romanian authorities were determined to enforce the law. In January 1942, an official order was issued banning “the performance in public locales of Ukrainian, Russian, and Hungarian songs” a well as “Romanian adaptations of Ukrainian songs” – and all locales “in which such songs are sung will be closed.”237

The more liberties the Ukrainians seemed to enjoy under the protection of the Germans, the more uncompromising Romanian officials became. Some Ukrainians were apparently even “turned out of schools” and “refused enrollment.” This happened to Yurij Gorbashhevsky, who

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234 Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki, 79.
235 Ibid., 90.
236 Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki, 90.
237 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 44/1941, 12 January 1942.
went to Cernăuți to enroll in a middle school only to learn from a public notary that “Ukrainians don’t have the right to study in middle schools” anymore.\textsuperscript{238} Such things only poured more fuel on the fire of Ukrainian nationalists. These stories found their way into the memoranda and petitions that ended up in German hands. The gist of these petitions was that the Ukrainians were victims of Romanian oppression, just as they had been victims of the Soviets. The new repressive measures implemented by the Romanian authorities also had the perverse effect of warming the Ukrainian population to the nationalist movement. Thanks to their own uncompromising measures and the repressive policies implemented by the Romanian administration, Ukrainians no longer sent their children to Romanian schools.\textsuperscript{239} With the Romanian police randomly picking up Ukrainians, all the nationalist talk that had once seemed absurd began to look quite promising. A growing number of Ukrainians were said to be “supporting the annexation of Northern Bukovina up to the Siret to the Ukrainian state.”

Although they put themselves entirely at the Germans’ disposal, sending young men to enroll as volunteers in the Wehrmacht and helping the German troops defeat “the Poles and Bolsheviks,” the Ukrainians did not get what they hoped for: an independent, united Greater Ukraine. Their flirtations with Germany ran into a significant problem; when nationalists finally proclaimed an independent Ukraine in June 1941, the German authorities did not recognize it. This split the nationalist movement in two. One faction, led by Stepan Bandera, refused to compromise and decided to pursue their goal through other means. Another faction, headed by Andrij Melnyk, considering German patronage to be indispensable, decided to accept Germany’s decision and continue collaborating with the Germans. The energy and time wasted on squabbles between the two factions so overall crippled the movement. It became clear just how dependent

\textsuperscript{238} Gorbashevsky in \textit{Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki}, 106.
\textsuperscript{239} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 47, 24 November 1941.
the Ukrainian movement was on the actions of Germans. When the German authorities eventually ordered Bandera’s and Melnyk’s factions to reconcile, “Bandera obeyed” and the conflict subsided. Yet the rift was never completely healed and the Ukrainians’ relationship with the Germans remained fractured, for nationalists now had good reason to doubt that the Germans would ever compensate them for their contributions to the war effort. Indeed, the Germans eventually arrested both Bandera and Melnyk, leaving the nationalist movement leaderless and throwing them into complete confusion as to Germany’s real intentions. But there were other sources of conflict as influencing the Ukrainians’ relationship with the Germans. Ukrainian youth who went to Germany to volunteer for the army were treated very badly, to the point where many refused to go back after they returned home for holidays. Since they were considered too untrustworthy to be sent to the front with the German troops, many of them were used as slave labor in German factories. The work these Ukrainians had to do was so difficult and the treatment they suffered at the hands of their German employers so bad that many attempted to escape and return to Bukovina. Quite a few were “captured and shot as deserters,” while others were arrested soon after arriving home.

This was all very confusing, especially since Ukrainians who were directly under German rule in the General Gouvernement seemed to suffer a much worse fate than their co-nationals in Bukovina. There the situation was more complicated but also more tolerable for them due to the interplay between the German and the Romanian authorities. Bukovina bordered directly on the General Gouvernement, so Ukrainians in the two provinces were well informed about each other’s conditions. In the General Gouvernement, where they were alone in charge, the German authorities did not bother to make a good impression on the Ukrainians. They were so brutal

240 Ibid., 42-43, 13 November 1941.
241 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1154, l 2.
towards the local population that Ukrainians there apparently “stopped talking about the establishment of a Ukrainian state” and started looking longingly towards Romania, where Ukrainians “have everything, are living in freedom, and nobody is taking away the product of their work.” Since these reports came from Romanian officials commenting on the situation across the border, they should be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, it is true that Ukrainians in the Gouvernement had it much worse than their co-nationals in Bukovina. Within a short time, the German authorities managed to alienate the Ukrainian population completely. Like the Soviets before them, the Germans placed their economic objectives before everything else. Because they needed grain and meat to feed their armies and the population on the home front, they started requisitioning food from the peasant population. Nothing infuriated peasants more than having their land and animals taken by authorities who offered nothing in return. In the General Gouvernement, peasants were required to deliver food even though they were poorly supplied with goods themselves. The only incentive to hand over grain to the state was a measly reward of “raki and tobacco.”

From the perspective of these people, the Soviets and the Germans did not look all that different. The Germans even refused to dismantle the collective farm system they inherited from the Soviets simply because it was a more effective way of delivering food to the state. They recycled not only institutions that had worked for the Soviets, but people as well. Border officials reported that in German-occupied Ukraine it was “the notorious communists who were given good positions.” Once again one occupation regime laid the foundations for another. As the situation at the front worsened, the German authorities in the borderlands embarked on a desperate effort to collect everything that could be of use to the army. In September 1943, the border police in Hotin reported that the German military authorities on the right bank of the

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242 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 28, l 18.
Dniester were reaping grain frantically “night and day” and transporting it in trucks “especially during the night.” They were also requisitioning winter clothing - “thick clothes, jackets, socks” - and buying animals - cows, horses, pigs - for very cheap prices from the local population and shipping them to Germany, “for which reasons the population in that region is dissatisfied, especially the Ukrainians.”

When the Germans arrived, they were welcomed with open arms, especially by Ukrainian peasants who saw them as liberators from a tyrannical regime that had taken from them everything they held dear: their land, their animals, and sometimes their families. Years later, Ukrainian peasants in Bukovina would remember their days under Romanian-German rule as a relatively normal time when people could work for themselves and keep what they earned. In the words of a Ukrainian man from Drachyntsi, “it was good under the Romanians that you had something of your own, you had your own household, nobody wanted anything from you.”

These memories were filtered through the experience of the postwar years under Soviet rule, when Bukovinans endured the trauma of yet another collectivization drive and famine. At the time, however, Ukrainians were far from happy with their living conditions. This was especially true of Ukrainians in the General Gouvernement, who experienced the brutality of German rule first-hand. Though most of them were favorably disposed to the Germans at the beginning of the occupation, their experiences under German rule changed their minds.

By the end of 1943, they were openly hostile to the German authorities. Peasants refused to hand over food. They dug holes in the earth and hid their grain there. Ukrainian peasants in villages along the Galician frontier were even hiding “refugees followed by the

243 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 28, l 6, 6 September 1943.
244 Ibid., l 12.
245 Ibid., l 19, 16 October 1943.
246 Lungul in Bukovynsi v trahichni roki, 141.
247 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 28, l 11, 11 May 1943.
authorities,” including Jews.248 A growing number of Ukrainians went into the forests and joined Communist partisans. For most of them, this was not an ideological choice but a survival strategy, for if they stayed behind they risked being picked up and sent to Germany for work. Some people must have joined the partisans out of fear of retaliation. One manifesto signed by a “partisan group commander” in Northern Transnistria urged locals to join a rebellion or be “harshly punished.”249 With all the bands of partisans on the loose and all the peasants who resented the occupation authorities, the countryside became a dangerous place. When the Gouvernement authorities brought in a group of German colonists from the Caucasus and settled them in Ukrainian villages, locals responded by “setting houses on fire and killing the new colonists.”250 In Bukovina, the Germans were generous to the Ukrainians at first because it was easier and more convenient to do so given that Bukovina was de facto under Romanian control. But because Galicia and Bukovina were connected through the networks of Ukrainian nationalist organizations, developments in the General Gouvernement always impacted Bukovina and vice versa. Here too “Ukrainians [were] no longer trusting Germany” ever since the German authorities had refused to recognize an independent Ukraine and abolished Ukrainian battalions in Galicia. Following instructions issued by their leaders in Galicia, Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina distanced themselves from the Germans and put out feelers for a new alliance with the Romanians or, possibly, a peasant rebellion against both Germans and Romanians.

While nationalist organizations remained staunchly anti-Soviet, ordinary Ukrainians remembered the Soviets rather fondly. This widened the already considerable distance between nationalists and ordinary Ukrainians “outside the organization,” who, according to the Romanian authorities, “express the opinion that under the Soviet regime they enjoyed all kinds of freedoms,

248 Ibid., 18.
249 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4, l 26, 16 May 1942.
250 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2381, ll 187-188.
especially cultural ones” and that “back then almost all the leaders used to be Ukrainian.”251 This was not what most Ukrainians would have said right after the Soviets department, but the Germans had gone out of their way to alienate the local population. If, at the beginning of the war, Ukrainians left Bukovina and Galicia en masse to enroll in the German army, later on some Ukrainian divisions of the SS apparently had to be withdrawn from the eastern front because so many of their members deserted to the Soviets. The Germans had proved that they “had no intention of creating an independent Ukrainian state,” but the Soviets were opening up new avenues for collaboration with the Ukrainians.252

The Ukrainian problem illuminates the complex relationship between nationalists, the great powers, and ordinary people. The Ukrainian nationalist movement was profoundly shaped by factors outside of the nationalist organization itself, most importantly by Germany and the Soviet Union. These great powers influenced the nationalist organizations both in terms of content and institutions. As we have seen, a good deal of the OUN’s activity during the war years revolved around the question of which great power the Ukrainians should align themselves with. The Banderite faction went down a path of their own, Melnyk’s group remained faithful to Germany. Although all factions shared the goal of a united, independent Greater Ukraine, there was no agreement on what shape this independent Ukraine should take and whether it should be under the protection of a foreign power. Accordingly, nationalists spent a good deal of time devising strategies for achieving their national goals and aligning them with the interests of the great powers.

The nationalist movement also benefitted from the competition between the great powers in the context of the war. During the war, Ukrainian nationalists found themselves between a

251 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 255 ob.
252 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 2381, l 265.
rock and a hard place, but this uncomfortable position had some advantages. Nationalist organizations were more active in these years than ever before, they were successively courted by one great power and then another; and they expanded by borrowing the wartime tactics used by the great powers to gain a larger following. Already by October 1941, the Romanian governor of Bukovina, Calotescu, feared that “the Ukrainian movement will not stop but will be fueled and fostered by the German authorities and might take worrisome proportions.” Nationalist organizations like the OUN also benefitted from the war because it war destabilized or even erased previously inflexible national borders. Once Bukovina and Galicia were both incorporated into the German sphere, the smaller Bukovinian branch of the OUN could communicate freely with the core of the movement in Galicia. People and propaganda flowed across the border undisturbed for the first time since Austria-Hungary’s collapse - and the Ukrainians, who had been divided by the national borders established in 1918, benefitted from this a great deal. As long as they could negotiate with the great powers, nationalist organizations thrived; when they were left on their own, when they were faced with the task of building their national projects with their own hands and persuading not the Germans or the Soviets but the people they claimed to represent, they did not fare so well. Once they lost Germany’s support, the Banderites grew more radical but also more alienated from the local population. While the Banderites began devising new plans for an anti-imperialist alliance against the Germans and Soviets, ordinary Ukrainians were turning to the Soviets. This drove a wedge between nationalist organizations and the local population, making the task of cultivating “national consciousness” even more difficult.

For as long as the Germans were present, Ukrainian nationalists could take more radical

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253 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 86, 7 October 1941.
measures. They became more aggressive not only towards the Romanian authorities but also towards the Ukrainian population they claimed to represent. They launched an all-out war against national indifference, with the goal being to incorporate every Ukrainian in the province into some kind of nationalist organization. In 1942, the head of the Ukrainian People’s Republic in exile, Andrij Livytskij, formally appealed to all Ukrainians to enroll in political organizations. Soon after his address, fourteen Ukrainian intellectuals and 840 workers and peasants from Cernăuți reportedly joined the Melnikist branch of the OUN. In their effort to absorb the entirety of Bukovina’s Ukrainian population, nationalists had to redouble their propaganda efforts.

Thanks to the easy access they now had to Galicia, the historic center of Ukrainian nationalism, Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina could mount a propaganda campaign on a larger scale than ever before. Their propaganda was not only much more widespread and easily accessible now, but also more uncompromising. The propaganda that nationalists distributed among the Ukrainian population spoke of an independent Ukrainian state and an impending Ukrainian revolution in Galicia - as though these things had already been achieved.\(^{254}\) Given how uncertain Bukovina’s fate was at the time, it is little wonder that these rumors were taken for the truth.

Many Ukrainians came to believe that it was only a matter of time before Bukovina became a part of Ukraine. Not all of them were happy to hear this, but many took it as an invitation to manifest their national differences openly. The more impatient among them even crossed the Dniester to “prepare for the upcoming rebellion” which would lead to the “revival” of Greater Ukraine.\(^ {255}\) One nationalist manifesto calling for “schools for Ukrainians and an end to Judeo-Communist education” appealed to Ukrainian teachers everywhere to “bring Ukrainian culture to the people” in order to make up for the time when “we were compelled to hide from

\(^{254}\) Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 15 October 1941.

\(^{255}\) DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3, 14 February 1942.
our children the truth about the glorious past of Ukraine” and to “poison the minds of children with Jewish internationalism, with love for everything that belongs to Moscow and disgust of our fatherland, language, literature, and culture.”

Ukrainians in Bukovina responded to this propaganda offensive by wearing their national costumes and symbols ostentatiously - “blue and yellow belts and feathers painted in these colors” - to set themselves apart from the Romanian population. As nationalists instructed them to do, many Ukrainians also began speaking exclusively Ukrainian. Romanian officials reported that more Ukrainian was spoken in Bukovina now, at the end of two decades of Romanian rule and one year of Soviet occupation, than under Austrian rule, even in predominantly Romanian districts such as Rădăuți and Siret. In Cernăuți, the Ukrainian language could be heard everywhere in the public squares, “as well as in the stores, [and] on the streets.”

When asked a question in Romanian, Ukrainians shrugged and responded ‘ya ne ponemayu.’ When priests said mass in Romanian, some Ukrainians would “start coughing and then leave the church.” This time, ordinary Ukrainians seemed more willing to put their national interests above more pragmatic considerations. Ukrainians who came to the city hall with business insisted on speaking only Ukrainian even if this meant going “back with their problems unsolved.” Even though public gatherings were officially forbidden, people were seen gathering around the former Ukrainian national home on holidays. Ukrainians in Cernăuți were also known to be hiding weapons in preparation for an upcoming “Ukrainian revolt.” These were all clear signs that “Ukrainian propaganda was never as powerful as now.”

This was all the more alarming as it put the Romanian authorities in a bad light, making them look weak in the face of the expanding Ukrainian movement. If Ukrainian nationalism was

256 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 55.
257 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, 1418, 26 August 1941.
258 YVA, M.52/135, 1811.
becoming so dangerous, why were the Romanians not doing anything about it? Many corrupt officials owed their positions to the complicity of locals, and so had an interest in covering up for them. One “chief of post” in Cernăuți did not denounce Ukrainians because he had done “things that could be revealed by residents, [for] many know how many goods he collected from Jews and the homes abandoned by them.” The head of the gendarmerie post apparently “had his own sins and because of that doesn’t want to cause unpleasantness.” As long as locals could be induced to keep quiet about their past misdeeds, the officials in question got to keep their jobs, while Ukrainian nationalists could go on agitating undisturbed.

The paradox of the Ukrainian nationalist movement was that both institutionally and ideologically it was derived from the projects undertaken by the great powers in this region. The reason Bukovina experienced such a surge in Ukrainian nationalist activity was that for the first time in many years Ukrainians here were no longer separated from their co-nationals in Galicia by a national frontier. Now that they were part of a common German sphere they could circulate freely, meaning it was Nazi Germany’s expansion into Eastern Europe that made it possible for Ukrainians in the territories of former Soviet Ukraine, Poland, and Romania to consolidate their organizations. Here was the irony: although their aim was to create a new set of frontiers, Ukrainian nationalists thrived when borders were fluid or absent To come to an agreement on their agenda, nationalists needed to communicate with each other freely. This was only possible when a greater power brought these territories together under its control. Whether this power was friendly or hostile towards the Ukrainians did not matter as much as the fact that it brought them together.

Now it was the Nazi empire that made it possible for Ukrainians in Galicia and Bukovina

\[259\] DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3, 14 February 1942.
to forge new links - earlier it was the Austrian and Russian empires. It was under the Austrian administration that a Ukrainian nationalist movement spanning the borders between Galicia and Bukovina emerged. The two provinces, let us remember, were in fact only one crown land from Bukovina’s conquest by Austria until 1850. But the crucial moment in the development of the idea of a Greater Ukraine came during World War I, when Ukrainians in formerly Austrian-ruled Bukovina and Galicia and their co-nationals under Russian rule came together under one administration. With the change in regime after the Bolshevik revolution, the new occupation authorities designated to rule Galicia and Bukovina were ethnic Ukrainians with nationalist sympathies. The Romanian authorities were well aware that “it was under the Russian occupation that the connection between Ukrainians in Galicia and those in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia crystallized because at that time there was no proper frontier between Galicia and these two Romanian provinces.”

Bukovina played a secondary role in the Ukrainian national movement. Since they were not numerous enough to initiate a powerful national movement of their own, Ukrainians in Bukovina relied on the support of their more numerous co-nationals in Galicia, who sent them propaganda and instructions. The transfer was usually mediated by Ukrainians at the frontier, who kept in touch with nationalist organizations in Galicia. The Ukrainian owner of a tavern located near a train station on the border with Galicia would, for example, relay information from the Ukrainians who would “come by train across the frontier from Galicia” to the local Ukrainian population, including instructions “not to send their children to school but to buy textbooks and books in the Ukrainian language for children to study at home so they can develop national irredentist feelings.”

\[261\] DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3.
Ukrainian flag but when our troops came in pretended to be Romanian, would host Ukrainians from neighboring villages who “sing Ukrainian songs and toast for the creation of Greater Ukraine.”262 A Ukrainian priest from Iablonita, in the Rădăuți district, would cross the border into formerly Polish territory, taking with him pictures of Huzuls “demonstrating their bravery in the Ukrainian battle or describing the miserable lives they live under Romanian oppression” for publication in Ukrainian propaganda magazines. Because Ukrainian priests often kept “in touch with propaganda centers in Galicia,” the Romanian authorities feared that they “could through their activity cause a Ukrainian revolt,” for they enjoyed more authority over the population than other propagandists. They gave a religious, almost messianic feel to the nationalist project, as in the case of one Galician priest who, during the “blessing of the water” on January 6, stood on the ice in the middle of the Czeremush and addressed Ukrainians on both the Galician and Bukovinian shores of the river: “brothers, do not worry. Soon the Czeremush will no longer be a frontier and then we will walk together wherever we wish.”263

Like the nationalists themselves, Romanian officials had an exaggerated sense of the nationalist movement’s influence on the population. As nationalist organizations redoubled their efforts to disseminate propaganda, Romanian officials deduced that Ukrainians, “even those in the remotest villages, are conscious of their mission” to resist ‘romanization’ and to reclaim the province for the future Greater Ukrainian state.264 The secretive nature of the nationalist organization also made it look fiercer than it really was. To their great alarm, Romanian officials discovered that Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina were organized similarly to the legionaries. The members formed “nests” of eight to ten members per village, which were subordinated directly to the district leadership. These cadres wore a pin “with the Ukrainian symbol” and a

262 Ibid., 3 December 1941.
263 DACHO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l 270, 5 February 1942.
264 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1942, 8 May 1942.
business card that said “we either create Ukraine or we die for it,” and operated under pseudonyms. With the membership fees it collected, the organization supplied the Ukrainian legions in Galicia with weapons and “manifestos with revolutionary subversive character, magazines, brochures, and books.”265 From their own experiences with the legionary movement, the Romanian authorities knew that underground organizations were to be taken seriously. They resolved to clamp down on the Ukrainian movement before it was too late. They took drastic measures to consolidate the border with Galicia against Ukrainians acting “on behalf of the terrorist banderite movement.”266 Antonescu gave orders that all Ukrainians who had left for Galicia to enroll in the Ukrainian army be “arrested and sent into the camps” as soon as they crossed back into Bukovina.267 The authorities were so intent on stamping out the nationalist movement that they even considered taking “all Ukrainians, Ruthenians, and Huzuls who are known to be elements opposed to our interests” over the Dniester and colonizing them “in occupied regions in the Ukraine.”268

In truth, nationalists did not speak for the entirety of Bukovina’s Ukrainian population. Their uncompromising stance on the Ukrainian question was more the exception than the rule. Nationalists did not put into words what Ukrainians were already feeling but rather struggled to instill national sentiment into an indifferent population. Unless their lives were at stake, most people preferred to coexist peacefully with the authorities. Nationalists and ordinary Ukrainians were different tribes, and bridging the gap between them was always a major challenge for all nationalist organizations.

The Ukrainian nationalist organization (OUN) was run by a nationalist elite - a select

265 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 104, l 15, 22 April 1942.
266 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1942, 393, August 1942.
267 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 44/1941, 16 December 1941.
268 DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 3, l 117.
group of people who often struggled to reach the peasantry. Most OUN members were educated individuals: priests, officers, students, and teachers. Furthermore, many of them had complicated pasts. Dumitru Bendac, who headed the “committee of nationalists Ukrainians” in Cernăuți in 1941, had studied engineering at the university in Prague and served as an officer in the Austrian army; before joining the OUN, Bendac had “activated in various political organizations with Ukrainian irredentist character” but had also once been a Communist.\footnote{SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941.} Another Ukrainian nationalist from Cernăuți, Dumitru Hrehoreac, had served in the Romanian army and then turned pro-Soviet in 1939.\footnote{Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 21 October 1941.} From its inception, the OUN had been a militant organization that sought to “draw attention to the Ukrainian problem through acts of sabotage.” To do so effectively, it needed to recruit members throughout the territories inhabited by Ukrainians. The Polish branch of OUN was headed by Stepan Bandera, while the Bukovinian one, centered in Cernăuți, emerged around 1937-8, “with the society Samostiinist” under the leadership of Orest Zebachinsky. When the Soviets invaded Bukovina in 1940, Zabachinsky and other Ukrainian nationalist intellectuals in Bukovina fled to Romania, where they apparently “got in touch with the Romanians who tried to use them for espionage” purposes. Some nationalists, however, stayed behind and continued their work underground. Organized in “formations of nationalist partisans,” they killed NKVD agents and disarmed Soviet units, took Soviet soldiers prisoner, and also killed Jews “from among the rural population” whom they suspected of collaborating with the Soviets.

All the while the movement was torn by ideological disagreements and personal rivalries. Two factions emerged: one led by Petro Voinovskij, whom Zabachinskij had put in charge of the movement when he left Bukovina, and another led by a Galician nationalist by the name of Zaits.
But because Zaits was arrested by the Soviets and shot or deported, when the Romanian troops returned to Northern Bukovina Voinovskiy assumed sole leadership of the organization. In keeping with the OUN’s official pro-German policies at the time, Voinovskij approached the German authorities in Cernăuți with a plan to organize “a formation of Ukrainians who would be at the service of the German police” and would then “leave to Ukraine to enroll in an Ukrainian army.” Tempted with promises of “land and jobs,” many young Ukrainians followed their nationalist leaders to Galicia, though some returned soon afterwards and joined the Banderites.

This was when time when the first major fissures appeared within the OUN, triggered by Germany’s refusal to recognize the independent Ukrainian state that Bandera proclaimed in Kiev in June 1941, right after the German troops had occupied the city. While Andrij Melnyk, another major figure within the movement, decided to accept Germany’s decision, Bandera and his supporters took this as a sign that the Germans had no intention to help the Ukrainians achieve their dream of a Greater Ukraine. The Banderites decided to go down a separate path, independent of both Germany and the Soviet Union - and of Melnyk, whom they dismissed as a traitor. The two factions collided head-on, for both Bandera and Melnyk wished to be recognized as supreme leaders of the OUN. The antagonism between the factions crippled the movement, polarizing its members and throwing the entire organization into confusion. The entire period was marked by “disorientation, social agitation, and confusion.” This was all the more so because the OUN - with its vision of a Greater Ukraine that included Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Galicia - was not the only nationalist organization agitating for a Ukrainian state. The “republican-democrats” or Petliurists envisioned a different Ukraine, fashioned out of “Russian territories and Galicia,” while the “monarchist-hetmanists” led by Skoropadskij called for an

271 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 18 October 1941.
272 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 475, l 101.
autonomous Ukraine encompassing exclusively Russian territories.273

Even though there was little agreement as to what the independent Ukrainian state should look like and how it should be achieved, Ukrainian nationalists pursued their (often conflicting) dreams with great resilience and impressive flexibility. Most Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina embraced both philo-Soviet and philo-German sentiments, as though these were not incompatible ideologies but one and the same. The policies adopted by the OUN mirrored this zig-zagging pattern. At first arm in arm with the German authorities, the Banderites changed direction once the Germans appeared to have “abandoned the idea of a Ukrainian state including Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia and were considering the Romanians to be the true owners of these supposedly Ukrainian territories.”274 The course they now pursued was premised on the idea that both Germany and the Soviet Union were imperialist powers whose interests could never be reconciled with their own. In Bukovina, the OUN took this new direction under the leadership of a young Banderite, a student from Kloshchka by the name of Mykhalo Colotelo. Advised by their Galician colleagues to “gain influence and strength wherever there are Ukrainians in order to always have a hold over the masses,” Colotelo and his collaborator Miroslav Kinzirskij - another old member of the movement and a former partisan during the Soviet occupation - embarked on an aggressive campaign to consolidate the Ukrainian community in Bukovina. Above all, this meant familiarizing the local population with the OUN’s aims through propaganda and stamping out any dissent.

Once they turned their backs on Germany, the Banderites became extremely radical, chauvinist, and violent. In a manifesto dated October 1941, they listed among their aims “fighting against foreign and enemy songs - Polish, Russian, and opportunist,” and singing “only

273 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 492-1-10.
274 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 96, l 124, 14 February 1942.
Ukrainian, Cossack, hunting, national, and patriotic songs.” Their slogan was to “Organize and open Ukrainian schools. Don’t drink, don’t smoke.” The Banderites were just as uncompromising towards fellow nationalists who disagreed with them as they were towards foreigners. In a meeting of the OUN leadership in Cernăuți, Colotelo warned his colleagues that “whoever will try to disturb what the organization has realized will be mercilessly shot.”

Tempers often flared at these meetings, for Ukrainian nationalists could rarely agree on anything. Some were persuaded by Melnyk’s claim that Germany had guaranteed that “the Ukrainian problem would be solved favorably,” and that “the only reason that Germany had not acted yet was because they would dissatisfy the Russians and prolong the war.”

Even though the Banderites adopted the principle of “from the periphery to the center,” Banderites in Bukovina did not have much of a say in how the organization was run. Their strategy was, according to instructions they received from their colleagues in Galicia, to “keep the Ukrainian masses permanently dissatisfied by provoking acts of terrorism and sabotage” and to disturb the Romanian-German alliance through “terrorist attacks on heads of the German-Romanian superior authorities in protest against Romanian rule.”

In January 1941, however, Colotelo and his entire entourage in Bukovina were arrested. Miroslav Kinzirskij managed to escape to Galicia but after a few months was dispatched the eastern front. Colotelo, on the other hand, was condemned to 15 years of forced labor but was saved by a bout of typhus, from which he was allowed to recover at a hospital in Jassy. From there, he fled to Galicia, where he was elected member of the “Supreme Council” of the OUN and began advocating collaboration with

275 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, Nata informative 1703, October 1941.
276 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 31 December 1941.
277 Ibid.
278 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 104, l 9, 10 October 1942.
279 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 96, l 124, 14 February 1942.
Romania. When he returned to Bukovina in April 1943 to “inspect the situation from a political and organizational point of view,” he convened the local members of the OUN and instructed them “not to carry out anti-Romanian propaganda but to talk about the common fate of these two peoples, the Bolshevik danger, and the necessity of fighting together against Moscow.”

Colotelo’s new initiative ran up against major obstacles, however. First, the antagonisms between Ukrainians and Romanians were too deeply ingrained to allow a different kind of relationship to develop between the two nationalities. Second, the OUN was too weak to make an impact; the successive waves of arrests that wiped out most of its leadership also discouraged new members from joining. Even the Banderites, of whom there had been quite a few in Bukovina, were “doing poorly because of the destruction of the conspiratorial element among the rural population.” The result was a lull in irredentist activity, both in Bukovina and in Galicia, where young Ukrainians were leaving the OUN and attaching “themselves to Communist bands of partisans or bands led by Kremenchuk.”

The OUN’s new policy was one of the few anti-imperial projects attempted in the region that required collaboration between two traditionally antagonistic nationalities. The idea gained force in the latter part of the war, when an alliance with Germany no longer held quite the same appeal for the Ukrainians. The OUN’s new politics rested on a vision of the international system in which German Nazism and Soviet Bolshevism were both “imperialist, reactionary, and antinational systems.” The war was a confrontation between these two empires, which fought “not only for an idea but also for territorial conquests and subjugation.”

Where did the Romanians and the Ukrainians fit in this scheme? For them, the war was a

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280 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 475, l 103.
281 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1094, 19.
282 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1154, 12.
283 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1094, 19.
struggle for emancipation from the great powers. They could only win it through attrition tactics that would exhaust the great powers and level the inequality in power between the empires and the “subjugated peoples.” In light of these facts, it was a mistake to try to save oneself from one imperial power by running into the arms of another. The only sure way to survive for those nationalities that found themselves “between a rock and a hard place” was to forge an alliance with each other. This program was spelt out in the resolutions drafted at the 31st congress of the OUN: “fighting against Russian Bolshevism demands the political and military collaboration of all nationalities and states in the name of the idea of liberty, justice, and a just order based on the principle of national sovereignty and the creation of free independent states on the ethnographic territory of each nationality.” But what if the nationalities in question could not agree on the boundaries of their ‘ethnographic territory,’ as with the Ukrainians and the Romanians in Bukovina? The resolution noted that “all imperialist tendencies must be excluded from this fight,” including those of the ‘subjugated’ nationalities themselves; the only way to prevail over the ‘age-old enemies of European peace’ was to fight “shoulder to shoulder with the other nationalities.” In this battle, the Ukrainians had a natural ally: the Romanians, who were also threatened by Russian and German expansionism. But instead of working together with the Ukrainians, the Romanians - guided by Antonescu, who had “become a blind instrument for the machinations of potentates in Berlin”- had formed a common front with the German imperialists, “organizing arrests and mass condemnations of Ukrainian nationalist elements and even Romanian ones, who sacrifice all of their strengths on the altar of the battle against communism.”

Though both Germany and the Soviet Union were denounced for their expansionism, the Soviet Union or “Russian imperialism” - as the OUN called it - was singled out as the greater

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284 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 475, l 137.
The greatest obstacle to a “harmonious relationship with the Romanians” was, of course, the competing Ukrainian and Romanian claims to Bukovina and part of Bessarabia. The OUN claimed they were willing to make concessions to solve the conflict; in a manifesto addressed to “the Ukrainian people of Bukovina,” they proposed “an exchange of population [or] giving Ukrainians in Bukovina their cultural rights.” In exchange for the Romanians’ cooperation, they suggested that the “OUN could vow to respect the territorial integrity of the Romanian state in the future.” This was not just talk: in the fall of 1943, a delegation of Ukrainian nationalists appeared before the Governor of Bukovina to “demand that a formula of reconciliation between the Ukrainian element and the Romanian state be found.”

How did ordinary people navigate this complicated wartime landscape? Although in sources from the period the voices of ordinary men and women rarely rise above the loud arguments of nationalists and state officials, it is still possible to get a sense of their attitudes. People became experts in reinventing themselves. Like chameleons, many Bukovinans changed colors to blend in with the new political environment. We have already seen Ukrainian nationalists doing that to perfection, and ordinary men and women did the same. The more involved one had been with a past administration, the more likely one was to embrace the succeeding. The more enthusiastically one welcomed the new authorities, the safer one was from suspicion. There were plenty of people, for instance, who changed their names from Romanian to Ukrainian-sounding ones during the Soviet occupation, and back into Romanian when the Romanian authorities returned. Others changed their politics according to “political circumstances or personal interests.” One man from Burdujeni first “carried out Anglophile

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285 Ibid., 1145.
286 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 475, l 60.
287 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1157, l 2, 9 October 1943.
politics” and then joined the legionary movement and mobilized the staff of the local abattoir where he worked to seize public institutions in Suceava during the legionary rebellion.  

When the Romanians returned to Bukovina in June 1941, “dubious individuals,” some of them Ukrainians who had been “in the service of the secret Bolshevik police,” started wearing ribbons in red, yellow, and blue and displaying makeshift Romanian flags stitched together out of red flags left over from the Soviet occupation. These were old defensive strategies, not unlike the trick of hanging an icon in the window of one’s house or store during a pogrom to safeguard them from Christians.

The more this kind of behavior prevailed, the more determined the authorities were to set firm boundaries along ethnic-national, religious, and political lines to sift out the opportunists from the authentic Romanians. The Romanian police resolved to check the passports locals were issued under the Soviet occupation for the rubric indicating “ethnic nationality, according to what the respective individual declared.” This was easier said than done, though, for “many individuals in this category destroy these passports.” Some even made a profit out of these constant regime changes. If anyone could be said to have benefitted from every single occupation, it was the housekeepers, maids, and day laborers who literally held the keys to the city. They were the ones who opened the door to the new rulers and saw the old authorities out-and the only ones who stayed put when the rest of the population fled to from this or that occupation regime. “[They] profited from the circumstances to rob both the Romanians during their evacuation, then the Germans during the repatriation, then the withdrawing Russians, and currently the abandoned Jewish homes,” wrote one Romanian official. The same category of

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288 DACHo, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, 24 August 1941.  
289 DACHo, fond 30, op. 4, d. 3, l 36.  
290 Ibid., l 25, 26 June 1941.  
291 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941, 40.
people who thrived during World War I rose to the occasion during World War II, robbing “the residences of refugees, as well as deported Jews, and offering their services as political informers, for which reason they were tolerated and left undisturbed by the Bolsheviks.” The “dregs of society” benefitted from the frequent regime changes because they thrived in the in-between spaces. It just happened that most of these people were Ukrainian; and so an essentially social phenomenon came to be perceived in ethnic terms. In her memoir one Jewish woman from Cernăuți writes, for instance, that “we used to call [the Ukrainians] ‘chameleons’ because they changed colors easily.”

This war was not simply a battle between ideologies or empires, but also between two antithetical tendencies: one towards indifference, the other towards ideological commitment. Surviving these constant transformations took flexibility and imagination - and so, the harder state authorities pushed for stability, the harder they tried to trace clear lines between groups of people, the more difficult it became to do so. The ability to transcend linguistic and ethnic boundaries served one well during times like this, so people developed it. The different occupation authorities - Soviet, German, Romanian - were not the only ones who frowned upon this. For obvious reasons, nationalists also disliked it when people were too adaptable. One of the greatest obstacles for Ukrainian nationalists in Bukovina was getting the Ukrainian peasant masses to develop a national consciousness and to behave not opportunistically but in accordance with their nationalist program. Sometimes, however, the problem was the opposite: Ukrainians were so deeply rooted in the places they lived that they valued them more than anything else, including the dream of a Greater Ukraine. Nationalists, however, did not shy away from population transfers, if these proved necessary to achieve a unified and independent

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292 DACChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 46, ll 1038-1039.
293 Hedwig Brenner, Marie-Elisabeth Rehn, and Erhard Wiehn, Mein altes Czernowitz: Erinnerungen aus mehr als neun Jahrzehnten 1918-2010 (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2010), 58.
Ukraine. In October 1941, the general secretary of the Ukrainian Council in Lviv Andrij Lyvitsky went to Bucharest to discuss a potential “transfer of the population of Ukrainians from Bukovina” by April 1942. The “population” looked upon such schemes with anything but enthusiasm. When Ukrainian agitators in Galicia talked about a Greater Ukraine that would encompass Northern Bukovina, Ukrainians in frontier villages shrunk back in fear. If Northern Bukovina indeed became a part of Ukraine, they would have to leave their homes. Locals even considered sending peasant delegations to Bukovina’s Gouvernement to declare that “peaceful citizens of Romania are not solidary with the activities of Ukrainian politicians who fight for the annexation of Bukovina and as a result wish to stay in Bukovina where they were born and raised and where they feel good. They cannot be blamed for certain anti-Romanian political activities of Ukrainian politicians in Bukovina and Galicia.”

Such discord between the nationalists and their “people” also strained nationalists’ relationship with the great powers. When Andrij Lyvitskij declared in a meeting in Berlin that “the Bukovinian Ukrainians are completely prepared for a change in regime,” one German official responded that “he knew about the state of spirit in Northern Bukovina and knew the peasant masses have no idea what is going on.” The German authorities were willing to work with nationalist leaders but only up to a point because, for all the benefits of this partnership, they knew it did not bring them any closer to the peasant masses. “The people” did not interact with the great powers in the same way as their national leaders did, for their attitudes were shaped by very different experiences. When the OUN made it their task to fight an anti-Bolshevik war alongside other ‘subjugated’ nationalities, Ukrainian peasants “did not manifest in

294 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 492-1-10, 31 October 1941.
295 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 97, l 454, 16 May 1942.
any way their wish to free themselves from the Bolshevik yoke.”296 On the contrary, they began fighting the “liberating armies” on the side of the Soviet partisans and troops. This seemed like the less terrible choice at the moment. National indifference was not the only reason why Ukrainians in Galicia and Bukovina, against the OUN’s orders, went over to the Soviets in the latter part of the war. They were afraid of being caught on the wrong side of the fence when the fortunes of war turned, as they always did. That this would happen eventually was clear after the disaster at Stalingrad. Just in case the Soviets were to return unexpectedly, Ukrainians began organizing themselves “to be on the side of the Bolshevik partisans.”297

The more changes they experienced, the more accommodating Bukovinans became to whichever regime was in power. Their attitudes were shaped not so much by political and ideological calculations as by an instinct for self-preservation. This World War II episode thus gives us a chance to reflect not only on the relationship between the great powers and the nations in between but also on how a world conflict was experienced by ordinary men and women in the borderlands. This in turn helps us answer larger questions: what loyalties if any remain unshaken at the end of the day? And did these frequent regime changes foster any particular disposition among locals? Gregor von Rezzori, who went to Germany during the war but kept his Romanian citizenship until 1944, when he officially became a stateless person, liked to think that his experience at the intersection of different cultures, languages, and regimes made him “a free man.” He was thankful “to his origins” for turning him into a stateless person not only from a technical and legal point of view, but also “out of conviction.”

So were Bukovinans indeed more free and less enslaved to ideology because they knew

296 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 3, 492-1-10.
297 DACHO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1099, l 2.
everything could change from one moment to the next? While someone was always there to welcome the new authorities and occupation troops, over time Bukovinans became more skeptical of states and state authorities, and more difficult to rile up on behalf of this or that ideology. After seeing the great powers come and go, it was difficult to take any claims to this territory all too seriously. But the flip side was that locals came to believe anything was possible. When an occupation force in retreat threatened to return soon, locals actually believed them because it had happened so many times in the past. One could never be sure that the current occupation was really the last one. This led many individuals to behave with caution. That many Bukovinans were distrustful and indifferent towards those in power became obvious even to the authorities. Communist officials who came here from eastern Ukraine to launch the ‘collectivization’ campaign remarked that Bukovinans were hard to mobilize - unlike in the eastern oblasti, where the grain collection campaigns had found enthusiasts who spent night and day working at the regime’s behest, in Bukovina the same process was more difficult to carry out and took more time because people found it hard to believe that the collectivization was permanent. This atmosphere of uncertainty caused trouble to the different state authorities that came and went. It was very difficult to convince the local population that one was here to stay.

One had to be extremely naive to think anything was there to last. Caught by surprise in the summer of 1940, when the Soviet troops invaded Northern Bukovina before the Romanians had a chance to evacuate, Romanians who had managed to escape and then returned to Bukovina did not settle down again for fear that the Russians would return. As late as September 1941, Romanian refugees who returned to Cernăuți continued to live in the houses of friends and acquaintances because “even today they are still expecting that Cernăuți will be bombarded by the Russians.” Before leaving Cernăuți, the Soviet authorities had warned locals that “within two
months at the most the Russians will return,” and why should one not believe them when the same thing had happened before in World War I? They proved right in the end, for the Soviets did return a few years later, in April 1944. This perspective from the bottom up and from the periphery to the center also reveals just how much the occupation authorities borrowed from each other. The differences between German and Soviet power became hard to see, especially at the bottom of the social pyramid. For the ‘dregs of society,’ there were plenty of opportunities to benefit from both regimes. And from the perspective of the peasants who had their food requisitioned by both German and the Soviet troops, the difference between the two occupation regimes was not always obvious. The peasants eventually came to distrust all the military and state authorities. Whether under Romanian, Soviet, or German rule, peasants experienced shortages - they cultivated food they couldn’t sell for reasonable prices and they were forced to give away the grain and food they had labored over practically for free. At the height of the Romanian occupation, peasants were even forbidden to sell grain to anyone other than the state - which was a recipe for economic ruin. The state did not pay them on time but “postpones them constantly from one day to another.” The peasants responded by cutting off the food supply to the city; they returned from the market with their carts full of produce “because their things cannot be bought for lack of money.”

The gap between the village and the city grew deeper as the peasants were hit hard by the economic crisis and by the prolonged state of war. They had their grain requisitioned by the military, they had limited access to goods they could not produce themselves, and also suffered from shortage of labor because so many peasants were mobilized and taken to the front. Their mood was so sour that, as one Romanian official noted, “if there were no restrictions on freedom

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298 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 21/1943, 123, 11 October 1943.
of speech because of the war, we would see many abuses and complaints.” It is understandable then that from the point of view of the peasants who were on the receiving end, the differences between Soviet and German occupation were not as great as those between war and peace. What mattered to them the most at was whether they could just carry on with their work undisturbed and then enjoy the fruits of their labor. After suffering so many deprivations, the peasant population in Bukovina had no other wish than to see the war coming to an end, “irrespective of the result.” As Marija Dmytrivna Landiuk, a Ukrainian woman from Chahor, recalled: “to us it was one and the same, who was here, whether it was the Russians, or the Romanians, only let it be peace.”

This was only partly true, however, for it seems that people did have some preferences. They tended to prefer the regime that had just ended. Whether out of inertia or because things tended to get only worse, it is striking how positively both Ukrainians and Romanians in Bukovina viewed the Romanian-German occupation. This is explained by the fact that when the Soviets returned, there was another round of deportations as well as a period of economic crisis and starvation. In retrospect, the Romanian occupation looked like a pleasant time - as long as one wasn’t Jewish, one could survive and perhaps even thrive. People could keep their land and work it, and nobody had the right to take their property away. That Romanians should view the Romanian occupation as the best part of the war goes without saying. What is interesting is that the Ukrainians felt very much the same. What mattered to them was not so much whether a regime was democratic or not, but whether or not they could keep what was. For this reason, many Ukrainian peasants didn’t regard the Romanian occupation as an ‘occupation’ because it wasn’t as disruptive - for them - as was the Soviet regime, “[It] was good under the Romanians

299 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 2, l 1676.
300 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 21/1943, 30, 16 July 1943.
301 Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki, 74.
that you had something of your own, you had your own household, nobody wanted anything from you.\footnote{Lungul in} The Soviets on the other hand, were more difficult to welcome unless one stood to gain from exploding the social hierarchies. The deeply traditionalist peasantry had every reason to dislike the Soviets, because they tried to dislocate them, to disrupt the social order by making the rich poor, raising the dregs of society to the surface, and replacing religion and superstition with the scientific materialism.

There were areas of Bukovina that transitioned smoothly from one occupation to another, places where locals did not come face to face with the occupation authorities and where life went on pretty much as before. But only a few kilometers away from such oases of tranquility, villages had to be evacuated and thousands of people - mostly Jews - were killed. It is astonishing how little impact the death of thousands of local Jews during these years had on those who weren’t immediately affected. Georgij Kharytonovych Amarij, a Ukrainian peasant from the Hlybotskij raion, much preferred it under the Germans and Romanians than under the Soviets because while the Soviets took everything away, “German cars would pass through the village and nobody would be harmed,” while “planes with crosses on them were would fly in the sky but there was no bombing.” As long as one’s own skin was safe, all was well.\footnote{Bukovynetsi v trahichni roki, 71.} Another Ukrainian peasant recalled that, unlike the Soviets, the Romanians “did not ask anyone for anything. They had a bad relationship only with the Jews.” Only when the anti-Jewish measures began to impact the Christian population economically did they begin to think that something was not quite right; otherwise, one had no reason to complain and one could go on believing, as long as one didn’t happen to be Jewish, that “Romania didn’t let anyone die, nobody perished.”\footnote{Ibid., 143.}
Black Milk

The first deportee trains left Cernăuți in October 1941, only a few days after the ghetto was formed in the ‘lower city.’ The order to ‘evacuate’ the Jews came suddenly and unexpectedly - whole neighborhoods were lifted at once, put on trucks, and taken to the train station. Hanging on one of the cars was a sign that said ‘cattle for Ataki;’ the journey to Ataki took several days, during which the deportees had nothing to eat or drink. From Ataki, a little Bessarabian town located on the shores of the Dniester, the deportees were marched to the river and loaded on barges, but not before having the few things they had brought with them confiscated. Many drowned in the river; those who survived and made it to the other shore were first marched to Mogilev, a transition camp in the territory that came to be known as Transnistria - a strip of land between the Dniester and the Bug that had been a part of Ukraine but was then given by the Germans to Antonescu in August 1941. Here, Jews were forced into a ghetto that was at first loosely delimited from the rest of the city and later surrounded with barbed wire. This was not an extermination camp like Auschwitz-Birkenau; here Jews were killed much less methodically. Instead of being gassed and fed into the furnaces, they were left prey to hunger, thirst, and disease. Thousands of people died here every week. “[Every] day hundreds of people die here,” one survivor wrote in her diary in March 1942, “one has to queue to report deaths, only few people can afford an individual grave for their dead, the majority are buried in mass graves. Every day one encounters wagons with corpses, one on top of another, here an uncovered, decomposing foot sticking out, there a hand, a horrible sight, yet one gets used to this too.” 305

Yet many more Jews survived Transnistria than Auschwitz. Up to the Bug, the territory - and the camps - was administered directly by the Romanians. Although the Romanian authorities

305 YVA, O.33/6360, 14, 21 March 1942.
worked closely with the German Einsatzgruppen and the army, they had some autonomy, which proved crucial. The saving factor for the Jewish deportees who survived Transnistria, it has been said, was the corruption of the Romanian authorities who were placed in charge of the camps. Many Jews owed their survival to the fact that Romanian overseers could be bought with bribes. Those who had the money to do so could pay for authorizations to stay in Mogilev, where their chances of survival were certainly higher than elsewhere in Transnistria (especially in areas under German administration). Of course, the rich were less likely to be deported out of Cernăuți to begin with, because they could buy authorizations and permits ostensibly issued to professionals the administration could not do without.

There was another factor particular to this corner of the stage where the Holocaust played out: this was the presence and involvement of both Ukrainians, Jews, Romanians, and Germans. What made the experience of the Holocaust here unique was that it was not perceived as a German invention. It was not something imposed by one great power on the population, but something that both the perpetrators and the victims experienced as a phenomenon with deep local roots. Although of course none of the killings that took place in Bukovina after the Soviets withdrew would have taken place without the Germans, the Jewish victims perceived the Germans as secondary characters in a drama that involved them and the Romanians and Ukrainians. Many Jewish survivors from Bukovina were convinced, until the very end, that the Germans could not be responsible for their sufferings because the German people were too cultured to commit such crimes. Although the Germans scripted the action, the actors here at the periphery did a lot of improvisation. They had their own motives, their own background stories that informed how this experience was lived and understood. That Jews in Bukovina found it so hard to believe the ghetto and the deportations were the Germans’ doing is understandable given
that they had always been so deeply attached to the German language and culture, and given that
the people who took them from their homes and stole their belongings and forced them into the
ghetto were mostly Romanians and Ukrainians. Moreover, this happened at the end of two
decades under Romanian rule, shortly after the legionaries had taken in power - so the new
measures did not look like a foreign imposition but more like a continuation of Romanian policy.

If Antonescu’s regime differed from Hitler’s in its approach to the Jewish question, this
was not because Antonescu was less anti-Semitic or because he was secretly trying to rescue as
many Jews as possible. This was definitely not the case because, as we have seen, getting rid of
Bukovina and Bessarabia’s large Jewish population was an important element of his
nationalization program. Though there was no mention of camps before 1941, the new regime
was invested in “solving” the Jewish question for good, most likely through deportation and
resettlement. Once the Romanians were given Transnistria as a reward following the peace treaty
of Tighina in August 1941, a new opportunity arose to solve the Jewish question. The Tighina
agreement specified that “the evacuation of the Jews across the Bug river is not possible at the
moment. Therefore they must be concentrated in labor camps and put to work until the cessation
of hostilities when it would be possible to move them to the East.” Hence, the labor camps
where so many Bukovinan Jews ended their days. 306 The agreement also formally permitted
German units to operate in Romanian-occupied territory. In the early stages of Transnistria’s
occupation, from August through October 1941, the Romanian army participated side by side
with German troops and Einsatzgruppen in the murder of local Ukrainian Jews and the “arming
of local Ukrainians who became the nucleus of the local Ukrainian militia.” 307 From late July

306 Jean Ancel, “The Romanian Campaigns of Mass Murder in Transnistria, 1941-42,” in The Destruction of
Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu Era, ed. Randolph Braham (Boulder: Social Science
Monographs, 1997), 88.
1941 to the spring of 1943, over 300,000 Jews were transferred across Transnistria into improvised camps near the Bug river. Both German and Romanian soldiers took part in the killings in Transnistria, yet the Romanian army did not merely execute what the German authorities ordered them to do. They initiated “the policy of punishment, imprisonment, and persecution of Jews in Transnistria.” The Romanian gendarmes did the nitty-gritty work of selecting crossing points for transferring the deportees across the Dniester, receiving them on the other side, and deciding where they would be settled.\textsuperscript{308}

In the Romanian case, the murders were not justified by racial propaganda but by claims that the Jews were responsible for Romania’s territorial losses. Pro-Bolshevik JEws had supposedly invited the Soviet troops onto Romanian territory and helped them carry out their programs of collectivization and mass arrest. To understand what the Romanian army did in Transnistria, one must also remember that Transnistria was never regarded a more than a temporary acquisition, a kind of backyard to the Romanian nation-state where all the undesirable elements could be safely discarded. Once Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia had been recovered and re-incorporated into the nation-state, the Romanian troops considered their task accomplished. Though Hitler ‘generously’ passed Transnistria on to Antonescu as a reward for Romania’s war efforts, the regime - and the public - were more interested in recovering all the traditionally Romanian territories than in expanding the state borders. Once it was brought under Romanian rule, however, Transnistria was organized just like the other recently annexed Romanian territories: with a governor at the top, who was directly subordinated to Antonescu, and thirteen prefects ruling over separate districts. This gave it a semblance of normality, but only temporarily, for as soon as Germany began to lose ground to the Soviets, Transnistria was

\textsuperscript{308} Ibid., 94.
put under military administration, eventually becoming a German operation zone.\textsuperscript{309}

What the Germans and the Romanians shared was the conviction that purging these territories of their Jewish population was the key to bringing about a deeper transformation. Though the Romanians and Germans worked together in Transnistria, whether one ended up in a German- or Romanian-administered camp made a big difference. A Jewish deportee had a much greater chance of survival if he or she ended up on Romanian-occupied territories - not because solving the Jewish problem was less of a priority for the Romanians or because they were innately opposed to the brutal measures to which the Germans resorted. What both armies did with the Jewish population of Bukovina and Bessarabia was not accidental. In both cases, what is now known as the ‘Holocaust’ in Transnistria was part of a larger project. That, however, is why the Romanians and the Germans did not pursue the same path - and why, in retrospect, the Romanians adopted a less brutal policy towards the Jewish deportees. For the Romanians, the Jewish question mattered only insofar as it related to the question of nation-building. The Jews had to be removed because they had proved to be the most significant obstacle to the nationalization of Bukovina and Bessarabia after World War I, and because they were by definition foreign elements that stood in the way of national unity.

Even before Antonescu joined the Axis, Romanian governments had experimented with a wide range of anti-Semitic policies on their own initiative. Antonescu took these measures in an even more radical direction, which happened to coincide with Hitler’s views on the Jewish question. But to the Romanian regime, these measures made sense only for as long as they furthered the goal of consolidating the nation-state. When the balance of power began to shift in the Allies’ favor, Antonescu became open to revising his policies. His goal was to secure the territories Romania had recovered with Germany’s help, even if this meant compromising on the

Jewish question. The Romanian authorities developed a similar attitude towards the great powers as Bukovinans did towards the various regimes that came and went: one of ambiguity, skepticism, and mistrust. No Romanian alliance with a greater power was genuine, both because it was inherently unequal and because the Romanians were always adjusting their behavior according to the twists and turns of the war. From their unexpected territorial gains in World War I and the tragic losses in the summer of 1940, the Romanians had learned how much their fate depended on the great powers. They also remembered how the Allies took up the Jewish cause in 1918, making formal recognition of Romania’s territorial annexations conditional upon legal reforms to the benefit of the Jewish population – which the Romanians conceded, simply because they had no choice. With Germany on the offensive, the Romanians could go back to treating the Jews however they pleased, but the Romanians were always kept in check by the fear that the Allies would once again take the side of the Jews - and since their objective was to keep the newly recovered territories, the Romanian authorities tried to play by both sets of rules.

For this reason, Antonescu chose to deport only Jews in the provinces that had been under Soviet occupation and then repatriate survivors beginning with 1943, once the Germans began their retreat. The official decision to repatriate the Jews who had been ‘evacuated’ from Bukovina and Bessarabia in 1940 and 1941 was taken in the “Consiliul de Ordine” in November 1943. This was after repeated interventions on the part of Centrala Evreilor - the official, central representative body for the Jewish community, headed by Wilhelm Filderman - with the Romanian authorities. The CER requested to be allowed to send its own delegates to Transnistria to take stock of the situation and to provide assistance with clothing, food, and medication. They also negotiated the return to Bukovina of tens of thousands of deportees who had survived up to this point. Interestingly, the CER insisted that the survivors not be sent back to their original
places of residence but to larger towns and cities such as Siret, Storojinet, and Cernăuți because they feared that otherwise “their lives would be under threat, for their goods seem to have been appropriated by the Petliurist Ukrainians.”\(^{310}\) If the Romanian authorities had strong reason to reverse their previous policies and allow the Jewish deportees to return to their homes, the locals who had stolen Jewish property were definitely not looking forward to their return. To avoid conflict, the authorities forbade the deportees to settle in small towns and the countryside. The repatriations took place in several waves, through three points of transit: Mogilev-Attaki, Rezina-Orhei, and Tiraspol-Tighina. The CER insisted that the Romanian government bear the costs of their transportation back to Bukovina and Bessarabia: “since the deportees were exiled by the government without paying for transportation, naturally their repatriation should be carried out in the same conditions.” While some deportees returned on foot, others were transported in carriages and convoys, or “escorted by gendarmes.”

For the Germans, of course, “solving” the Jewish question was a top priority. It was not just the prerequisite to expanding Germany’s power, but an objective in itself, inherent in the civilizing mission the Germans believed they had to fulfill in Europe. This is why Jewish deportees who ended up in the German-occupied areas of Transnistria had a much lower chance of survival than those who found themselves under the Romanian administration. The German troops occasionally raided the Romanian camps and abducted Jewish deportees, making them work for the Todt organization, most often without asking Romanian authorities for permission. By November 1943, when the CER had their audience with the Romanian authorities, up to 1,500 Jews had been ‘kidnapped’ and taken across the Bug. Bad as things were in Mogilev - where hundreds died every day of thirst, hunger, and cold - the deportees would have given

\(^{310}\) YVA, P.6/79, 63, 26 November 1943.
anything to be allowed to stay there, for deportation across the Bug meant certain death.\textsuperscript{311} Those who were taken by the SS into German-occupied territory (including the poet Paul Celan’s parents) suffered a truly tragic fate. Far more brutal than the Romanians, for whom the Jewish question was mostly an instrument for achieving territorial claims and negotiating with the great powers, the Germans believed that purging the territories under their control of their Jewish population was an act of culture – provided it was done systematically.

Though they committed terrible atrocities in the name of \textit{Kultur}, the German authorities took issue with the fact that Romanian soldiers murdered Jews indiscriminately. One German official complained that “the Romanians usually left the victims’ bodies where they were shot, without trying to bury them.” The German authorities also objected to the “high incidence of acts of pillage and rape committed by the Romanian soldiers.”\textsuperscript{312} Indeed, the Germans never stopped regarding their Romanian allies as barbarians. That the Romanians had lived side by side with such a large Jewish population for so long was enough to compromise them forever in the eyes of the Germans. “[The] Romanians are not a civilized people (…) Yes, they have no \textit{Kultur},” says governor Frank in \textit{Kaputt}, Curzio Malaparte’s great World War II novel, during a dinner-table conversation on the topic of the Jassy pogrom where over 7,000 Jews had been slaughtered. “Germany is a country that has higher civilization and abominates barbaric methods,” he adds, “gazing around him with an expression of sincere indignation.”\textsuperscript{313} What makes this “German King of Poland” truly monstrous is the contrast between his cultured appearance and deportment and the savagery of the crimes he was responsible for. This “simple-minded, cruel and vain German copy of an Italian \textit{signore} of the Renaissance” was a man who could play “the piano

\textsuperscript{311} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1238.  
\textsuperscript{312} Jean Ancel, “The Romanian Campaign,” 97.  
divinely,” talk about “Donatello, Politian, and Sandro Botticelli” with half-closed eyes, a man who had studied in the Roman University and laid eyes on the beautiful galleries of Florence, Venice, and Siena - yet also one who could, with a snap of his finger, send thousands of people to their deaths. This is a fictional account, yet it captures the horror and absurdity of the situation.

How did the Ukrainians fit into this equation? Though they were neither the decision-makers nor the victims, the Ukrainians were nevertheless present throughout this episode. Survivors always had clear memories of Ukrainians being involved in some capacity. Survivors always talked at length about what the Ukrainians did and how they were involved because they were bystanders par excellence. In Northern Bukovina and Transnistria, where so many killings took place, Ukrainians formed the majority of the population that stood by and occasionally extended a helping hand - often to the German and Romanian soldiers, sometimes to the Jews. Clearly, the deportations and the system of labor camps could not have come into being, nor could they have been kept functional, without assistance from the locals. Most labor camps were guarded by the Romanian gendarmerie and the Ukrainian militia, who were famous for their brutality. Sabina Rueber, a Jewish woman from Czernowitz who ended up in the Mogilev ghetto, wrote in her journal in April 1943: “In addition, we are in the hands of the Ukrainian militia and that is as good as being outlawed. A civilized person cannot even imagine what brutality and cruelty towards us these militia men are capable of.” Formed in September 1941 to help the Romanian prefects keep public order around the ghettos and camps of Transnistria, the Ukrainian police consisted of local residents equipped with guns and colored armbands with the word ‘police’ on them. Their job gave them license to brutalize and rob the Jewish population at will.

314 Malaparte, Kaputt, 72-73.
315 YVA, O.33/6360, Sabina Rüber, 23 April 1943.
Without this group of people, who went out of their way to make sure no prisoner of the camps emerged unscathed, the entire operation would have failed. The German and Romanian authorities were too few to be able to coordinate all the camps on their own.

The people who translated their directives into reality on the ground were the local Ukrainains - “young people and men within the Ukrainian populace” - a great number of whom “were ready to murder, torture, rape, and abuse Jews.” Aside from these people, who earned their living by beating and robbing Jewish prisoners, there were also the local peasants who lived near the camps and interacted, whether directly or indirectly, with the deportees. Unlike in Auschwitz and other extermination camps, in Transnistria the camps were usually not sharply divided from neighboring villages and towns. In Mogilev, Jews could walk into and out of the ghetto pretty much freely - it was only later that the authorities decided to surround the ghetto with barbed wire. When they ran out of money and could not find any other means of subsistence, Jews from the Mogilev ghetto would sometimes wander into the market in town to beg for food. In her diary, Sabina Rueber relates how a Jewish girl who was so hungry she could barely walk asked a Ukrainian woman at the market for bread. The woman shooed her away: “Off with you Juda! Am I to give bread to you?” To Rueber’s surprise, this was not a one-time event. The local Ukrainian population, young and old, was profoundly anti-Semitic: “the hatred of the Jews is in their blood, they cannot drop it, just as the cat can’t let go of the mouse.” Those who had grown up under the Soviet regime were “even worse” than the older Ukrainians in this respect. Manfred Hilsenrath, the German writer Edgar Hilsenrath’s brother, who also ended up in the ghetto of Mogilev, recalled the “hard and pitiless” faces of the Ukrainian peasant women who occasionally came into the ghetto to sell food. To them, the deportees were non-entities that deserved nothing but “disdain and hate.”

Why did the Ukrainian peasant woman refuse to give bread to the starving Jewish girl? Why did so many young Ukrainian men willingly join the militia and participate in the mass murder of Jews? Was the age-old anti-Semitism that Rueber talks about at fault? Or was it fear, as Curzio Malaparte suggests in *Kaputt*: “the German fears the defenseless, the weak, and the sick. The *leitmotif* of fear, of German cruelty as a result of that fear, had become the principal keynote of my entire war experience.”

Perhaps it was all of these things. Misery did not breed tolerance and sympathy, but ruthlessness and cruelty. Suffering seldom ennobled the victims; much more often, it made them indifferent and beastly. By the time the German and Romanian troops occupied Transnistria, the local Ukrainian population had been under Soviet rule for a little over two decades and yet they continued to live isolated from the modern world. This was the periphery of the periphery, a place too remote to lend itself to civilizing missions. In Mogilev, for instance, where most Jews deported from Cernăuți ended up, there were “no streets, one sinks in mud, no sewage, no running water in the homes, who would have thought this possible?”

These victims of the Soviet regime - people who had lived through famines, collectivization drives, and deportations - were now given a chance to victimize someone else, and many of them took it. Here, evil had the face of a Ukrainian peasant who rushed into the house of a deported Jewish neighbor to “gather all the valuables in satchels,” a peasant woman who made herself a new dress out of Jewish *talesim*, or a young man who showed up minutes after a train full of deportees arrived at its destination to seize all the “bundles of clothes, suitcases, and rucksacks” the deportees had brought with them.

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318 YVA, O.33/6360, Sabina Rüber, 16, 23 April 1943.
319 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1444, 241.
320 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1453, 269.
People behaved unpredictably. Many Ukrainians took advantage of these horrible circumstances to make a bit of extra money and to enjoy, for once, a chance to order others around. There were also Ukrainian peasants, both in Bukovina and Transnistria, who helped Jews survive the war, sometimes even risking their own lives to do so. Although these stories are inspiring, they were more the exception than the rule. This should not be surprising, for most human beings with a healthy instinct for self-preservation prefer to save their own skins before they attempt to help anyone else. Still, some Jews encountered Ukrainians who, for various reasons, were willing to shelter them. Some did it out of a sense of religious duty or because they were politically opposed to the Germans. Lydia Harnik, a Jewish woman from Cernăuți who ended up in Mogilev, was saved by a Ukrainian worker who found her lying in a ditch, half-starved, and took her into her home to wash and feed her. Later on, Harnik was taken in by a Ukrainian Communist who offered her food and shelter in exchange for German lessons so he could read “Marx and Engels in the original” - and whom she eventually married.321 The first time he tried to escape Scatzinetz, where he was interned, David Grinberg was caught by the Ukrainian police, beaten, and taken back into the camp, where a Ukrainian guard welcomed him by “beating him with the bed of his weapon into the chest and arm” and throwing him into a ditch. The second time, he succeeded thanks to a Ukrainian peasant who took him in, washed him, and gave him some clothes. From there, Grinberg moved into the house of a man who had been mayor under the Soviets and who sheltered him until some neighbor denounced him “for holding a Jew.” Eventually, Grinberg was captured again, severely beaten, and thrown into prison in Mogilev. Cilli Foerster, who was interned in Mogilev, remembered that “the peasants around were sympathetic but couldn’t be easily reached.” Occasionally they would throw food at the Jews who were working on the railways and roads, or over the fence into the ghetto once the area

321 Lydia Harnik, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 81.
was encircled with barbed wire.\textsuperscript{322}

Such minimal acts of kindness often paid off, for the deportees were ready to give everything they had in exchange for a piece of bread. The Romanian officials, whom the Ukrainian peasants bribed to get into the ghetto, also benefitted from these transactions.\textsuperscript{323} These were the benefactors of the Jews: most of them were not charitable Christians or philo-Semites but people looking to make a little money on the side. Yet the fact that such people existed revealed the nature of the system. Corruption pervaded everything, from the functionaries in charge of the camps to the lowly Ukrainian and Romanian peasant, and it proved to be a life saver. Even the unachievable could be achieved if one had the money to pay the right people. Deportees who lost track of their relatives could get in touch with their family members again if they paid Romanian functionaries to find them. Once the relatives were located, they would usually offer the Romanian functionary hundreds of thousands of lei to bring the deportees “money, clothes, and lingerie.”\textsuperscript{324} Often the couriers who transported letters, money, and food from Cernăuți to Transnistria were peasants, for they didn’t need special authorizations to travel to Ataki. From there, the parcels would usually go to Jews who had been detached to Ataki for work and who would then carry them to Mogilev to their intended recipients. Though all connections between the camps in Transnistria and Bukovina were forbidden, this underground contraband system kept families and relatives connected and allowed news and goods to circulate. These exchanges happened often enough that they took a quasi-formal character. Respectable people - among them professionals, engineers, and functionaries - transported money and parcels from Cernăuți to Mogilev because this was a business that paid off. On

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\textsuperscript{322} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1444, 241.
\textsuperscript{323} LBI, Manfred Hilsenrath, \textit{The Story I Was Reluctant to Tell}, 48 (accessed digitally).
\textsuperscript{324} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1942, 39, 14 April 1942.
\end{flushleft}
leaving Cernăuți, the couriers earned 10% of the sum they took with them to Transnistria and, if they were able to show the sender written proof that the package had landed in the right hands, they would get an additional 20-30% of the total on returning. Sometimes even German authorities performed this role. The family of Josip Bursuk, who lived in Cernati at the time, received letters from relatives who had been deported to Transnistria through a German officer who “came to their home with letters written in Yiddish so the Germans couldn’t read them.”

Although the Romanian authorities were easier to corrupt than the Germans, sometimes they were the ones who called for stricter measures towards the Jews. This happened when more contraband money and bribes flowed to the German military authorities and the Romanians felt cheated. Interestingly, the Germans often intervened on the Jews’ behalf not only because they stood to gain from it but sometimes also for sentimental reasons. The obsession with Kultur resurfaced: German hearts beat faster when they encountered here, in the middle of nowhere, an island of people who spoke the language of Goethe and Schiller. Germans found that those Untermenschen they were supposed to wipe out were almost exact replicas of themselves. They spoke the same language, both literally and figuratively. Manfred Hilsenrath recalls in his memoirs that “German soldiers didn’t behave in a hostile way” because they were astonished to discover “an entire colony of people who spoke German in the middle of Ukraine.” More than once German soldiers and officers took Jewish deportees under their wing, saving them from certain death at the hands of the Ukrainian militia or Romanian gendarmerie, for no other reason than that they spoke perfect German. In October 1941, the police in Cernăuți reported that Romanians were “revolted against German soldiers” who went out of their way to protect

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325 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 69/1942, 14 August 1942.
326 Josip Bursuk, in “...und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 34-36.
327 LBI, Manfred Hilsenrath, 74.
Jews.\textsuperscript{328}

Now that the Romanians had worked themselves up into a lather to put an end to the Jewish question once and for all, it was the Germans who were sabotaging this project by offering the Jews protection. Right under the eyes of the Romanian police, the German military escorted a Jewish man by the name of David Kohn back to his house in Dorohoi in exchange for 12,000 lei, only a few weeks after the Romanian authorities had put him on an ‘evacuation’ train headed for Transnistria. When the train stopped in Cernăuți, Kohn took advantage of the guards’ inattention and snuck out of the wagon. He hid in the ghetto and then managed to escape deportation yet again by paying the German military to bring him and his wife and child back home.\textsuperscript{329} A certain Mrs Zucker, a Jewish woman from Cernăuți, was able to bring her parents clothes and food in the camp where they were interned with the help of a German sub-officer who drove her there in his car.\textsuperscript{330}

The German military sometimes performed inexplicable acts of kindness towards the Jews, angering the Ukrainians and Romanians, who seemed to have no qualms performing whatever brutalities were required of them. Since the Wehrmacht had recruited a good number of ethnic German soldiers from Bukovina, the war sometimes brought old acquaintances face to face. These bonds, it turned out, could not be easily undone. Selig-Ascher Hofer, a Jewish man from Vijnița who lived in Cernăuți in 1941 before being deported first to Mogilev and then to Schargorod, was saved by a German soldier from Bukovina, with whom he had served in the Romanian army as a border guard before the war. The German had left Bukovina with the \textit{Heim ins Reich Aktion} in 1940 and settled in Germany, where he was mobilized and sent on the eastern

\textsuperscript{328} SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 58/1941 Ilfov, 12 October 1941.
\textsuperscript{329} DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 3, l. 83, 26 November 1941.
\textsuperscript{330} DAChO, fond R307, op. 3, d. 4.
front. The war took him to Transnistria and brought him face to face with his old friend.\textsuperscript{331} Hedwig Brenner, another survivor from Cernăuți, was regularly visited at her home by a German officer who kept “bringing groceries, bread, soap, and other things” only because he too “had graduated from the Deutsche Technische Hochschule in Prague in 1936.”\textsuperscript{332} This is not to say that the Germans were always more lenient towards the Jews than were the Romanians or Ukrainians. Few Bukovinian Jews who were taken across the Bug into German-occupied territory survived the war. The day after the Germans paid a surprise visit to Cariera de Piatră to collect some laborers for their camps, the Romanian camp authorities had to send a group of gendarmes and deportees to the Bug to “fish out the bodies of those killed by the Germans while crossing the river.”\textsuperscript{333} These German incursions into Romanian territory occurred quite often and were always unexpected. Usually, a group of Germans - typically SS men - would come into a camp and have the number of laborers they wished to take delivered to them by the head of the “Jewish colony.” The laborers would then be loaded on a ferry or barge, taken across the Bug, and transported into the camps to which they had been assigned. One Jewish woman from Cernăuți had been interned in Ladizyn for a time when a group of Germans came into the camp and took 600 of the 700 deportees to the German labor camp Mihailowka, where they were put to work building roads.\textsuperscript{334}

The camps brought together people who might never have crossed paths otherwise. There were Germans from the Reich, from Austria, and ethnic Germans from Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina. There were Jews from Bukovina and Bessarabia but also people like the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{331} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1453, Selig-Ascher Hofer. \textsuperscript{332} Hedwig Brenner, Christel Wollmann-Fiedler, Czernowitz ist meine Heimat: Unterhaltung mit der Zeugin Hedwig Brenner (Brugg: Munda-Verlag, 2009). \textsuperscript{333} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1127, 22. \textsuperscript{334} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1452.}
Hilsenraths - assimilated Jews from Germany who came east to escape Nazi persecution, not knowing that they were jumping from the frying pan into the fire. There were Ukrainians - locals from Transnistria - and Romanian officials running the camps. The encounters between these groups often had unexpected results. When Hitler invaded Austria in March 1938, a Jewish man by the name of Siegfrid Jägendorf who had been living in Vienna fled to Romania. Jägendorf was an electrical engineer who had worked for the large company Siemens-Schuckert Werke all his life and had recently been named director of their Romanian branch. He lived in Rădăuți in Bukovina from 1938 until October 1941, when all the Jews in town were rounded up, “ordered to give up their money and valuables,” and deported to Ataki and Mogilev across the Dniester. Having left Vienna right after the Nazis arrived. Jägendorf had not yet been subjected to the humiliations that other Viennese Jews who stayed behind endured. This meant he came into Mogilev with the courage and dignity of someone who believed he had rights. This attitude saved him - and many other Jews in Mogilev. On arriving, Jägendorf went directly to the German Ortskommandant - with whom he could converse freely in his mother tongue - introduced himself and told him: “I would like to know where we are being taken, what will happen to us and whether we can get trucks for the trip further, at least for the old people, the women, and children, because many of us simply can’t go on in this weather and given our physical condition.” Astonishingly, the German Ortskommandant did not respond by shooting Jägendorf, as so often happened, but instead directed Jägendorf to the Romanian captain, adding that “we could very well use a man of your caliber and with your experience here for, even though we’ve been here for three months already, we were still not able to fix up the severely damaged electricity network and water system.”\textsuperscript{335} From then on, Jägendorf was under the Ortskommandant’s wing, which gave him almost complete immunity and allowed him to

\textsuperscript{335} YVA, P.9/10, Mappe VI: Weitere Dokumente: Formular des Tagesberichtes, Ende 1943-1944, 26.
intervene directly with the Romanian authorities on the deportees’ behalf. Jägendorf got permission from the Romanians to repair an abandoned factory and set it to work again. Initially the Turnătorie (as the factory was called) issued travel authorizations to 116 Jews - mechanics, carpenters, and other specialists who were needed to fix the broken machines, collect construction materials, and manufacture work tools.\textsuperscript{336} Though it started with only 116 workers, the factory expanded to 658 employees by October 1943. The product of a chance conversation between a Viennese Jew and a German Ortskommandant, the factory saved the lives of hundreds of Jews who were employed there by providing them and their families with a means of subsistence and insuring them against further deportations.\textsuperscript{337}

The Turnătorie took on a number of roles in the community. Though it was “never what one would call a lucrative enterprise,” the factory provided social services, effectively replacing all the welfare institutions that Jews no longer benefitted from. Its workers were provided with special housing and access to a community kitchen. Later on, when it ran out of specialists, the Turnătorie began to double as a trade school, recruiting apprentices - most of them people “with baccalaureate and university studies” - in special courses taught by professors and engineers. More than 150 young Jews learned a trade at Jägendorf’s factory. As the head of the main economic and social institution in Mogilev, Jägendorf enjoyed authority over both the Jewish deportees and the Romanian and German authorities, and so when a Jewish Central Committee for the City and District of Mogilev was elected in November 1941 he was naturally elected president.\textsuperscript{338} The official purpose of the Jewish Committee was to mediate between the deportees and the authorities by communicating and implementing orders, organizing the deportees into work formations, and making sure the work got done. As the only functional Jewish

\textsuperscript{336} YVA, P.9/10, 59.
\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid., 32.
representative body in Mogilev, the Committee fulfilled many other functions, such as providing social welfare for those who couldn’t work, organizing soup kitchens, and running hospitals - all paid for with money provided by the wealthier deportees. Though Jägendorf’s iron foundry saved the lives of many Jews in Mogilev, the space it created for the deportees to exert some control over their own fates could only exist for as long as the German authorities allowed it. The whole enterprise was an exercise in optimism that threatened to fall apart any minute. Not only were the materials and resources on which it depended in short supply, but work at the factory was constantly interrupted because of unexpected drops in the labor force. Although they were technically not supposed to, German officers often came to Mogilev to take workers across the Bug. Of the 4,000 deportees who were captured by the Germans, only few survived until the ‘liberation.’ When Jägendorf intervened with a German officer on behalf of one of his workers, he was “beaten up by that soldier so badly that he had to stay in bed for several weeks and then undergo an emergency operation.”

By the end of the war, Bukovina’s Jewish community was broken and powerless. It had lost its status, its financial power, and many of its members. Astonishingly, however, it did not lose its affinity for German culture and the German language. Bukovina’s Jews derived their identity in large part from the fact that they spoke German, grew up reading German classical literature, and made regular pilgrimages to Vienna, Berlin, and Baden-Baden. To take this from them on the grounds that they weren’t really German was to render them completely rootless. Paul Celan, now celebrated as the greatest German-language poet of the twentieth century, translated this identity crisis into poetry. His entire work is an attempt to exorcize the German language and make it human again after the Holocaust. All German-speaking Jews faced a

340 YVA, P.9/10, 34-35.
similar dilemma. Some, like Hans Chaim Mayer - who later took the name of Jean Amery - chose never to speak a word of German again. Most Jews in Bukovina did just the opposite; if anything, they came out of the war more attached than ever to their Austrian heritage and the dream of German Kultur. While they were living in the ghetto in Cernăuți, Ilana Shmueli and a group of her friends - among them Paul Celan - fashioned an “enchanted alternative world” for themselves by reading day and night “Spinoza, Nietzsche, Rilke, Trakl, George, Karl Kraus” and listening to Beethoven symphonies on the gramophone. “It was absurd in those demonic times,” Shmueli writes in her memoir, “paradoxically it was at that time that I came to learn and love German poetry and literature.”

Siegmund Meisler, another German-speaking Jew from Czernowitz, returned from Mogilev, where he survived on leftovers “from the German barracks,” was convinced that “the German language saved us.” The German language acquired an almost sacred quality during the war. Jews held on to it as if the survival of German culture and its Geist depended only on them. In 1953, a Jewish woman from Cernăuți decided to burn her German books to insure herself against possible accusations during the doctors’ trial. The books had somehow remained intact throughout the war, even though their owners were deported to Mogilev. When she set about her task, Ms Ginninger found she could burn all the volumes except for Goethe’s Gesammelte Werke. It was better to risk one’s life than to destroy Goethe’s work with one’s own hands.

The killing machine had been set into motion by the Germans but, here at the periphery, it was operated by Romanians and Ukrainians. For this reason, Jews here could maintain the illusion that “the really cultivated Germans” did not participate in the brutalities and were not responsible for the horrors inflicted upon them. As Rosa Roth-Zuckermann, a Jewish woman

342 Siegmund Meissler, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 117.
from Cernăuți, put it years later: “Until today I still want to believe that no cultivated and truly sensible people took part in these horrors, but only the mob. And the Romanians were in general less civilized and less cultivated.”³⁴³ It was a peculiar form of double-think: the survivors both knew that “Death is a master from Deutschland” and did not know it because to negate the superiority of German culture was to negate themselves. To make matters even more complicated, many Bukovinian Jews were both Austrophile and leftist, enamored of both Franz Joseph and the promise of a life of freedom and equality under Soviet rule. Take Lydia Harnik, for instance. Born in 1909 in a well-off family of Austrian clerks in Bukovina, Harnik was brought up on “Lessing and Schiller and Goethe.” After the war, which she spent as a refugee in Vienna and Prague, she moved to Czernowitz to enroll at Romanian university in 1923. Harnik survived Transnistria and continued to live in Chernivtsi as a citizen of Soviet Ukraine, married to a devout Communist - a Ukrainian she had met in Transnistria and who had saved her life. Even after living through five regime changes and the Holocaust, Harnik still held on to the German language and her “love of Austria,” which she defined as “love of the country Austria, love of the former Austrian rulers, appreciation for German and Austrian classical literature, in the spirit of which we had been brought up.”³⁴⁴ In the mental universe that people like Harnik inhabited, Nazism was an aberration. “[W]e could absolutely not understand the Hitler system. How could one understand something like that? It was incomprehensible and inconceivable, something wild, unbelievable.”³⁴⁵ Or take Severin Schrajer, another Holocaust survivor from Cernăuți. Years after the war was over, Schrajer would declare without hesitation that “I am almost German, because we were absolutely brought up in the German way.” Not even the trauma of the Holocaust could persuade Schrajer to hate the Germans and the German language:

³⁴³ Rosa Roth-Zuckermann, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 145.
³⁴⁴ Lydia Harnik, in “und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 77.
³⁴⁵ Ibid., 77.
“I cannot hate the Germans. Even though they exterminated everyone, I cannot hate them, because that would mean hating myself. No one ever understood that on the inside I am a German and only according to the documents, Jewish. I must have, as it were, various complexes, but I never yielded.”

Czernowitz and Bukovina were no longer the same after the Holocaust. A city profoundly influenced by its Jewish population came out of the war with only a modest Jewish population; only a small number of Jews who still lived in the city after the Soviets reclaimed Northern Bukovina in 1944 had been born there, as a new Jewish community consisting primarily of new arrivals from the east replaced the old one. This had profound implications for the city and region as a whole - precisely because the Jews had always been such a powerful economic and social force here. We have already seen what happened when the Romanian authorities attempted to change this – they had to reverse their policies to avoid complete breakdown. By 1944, however, changes that could not be brought about by other means had been made possible by the extraordinary circumstances of the war. The result was an entirely new demographic and social structure. After successive waves of deportations, there were no more Jews in the countryside. Jews who were repatriated to Bukovina later in the war and those who returned together with the Soviet ‘liberators’ were unable to return to their homes in the countryside for several reasons. As both the Romanian authorities and Jewish leadership agreed, Jews who survived Transnistria might not survive the return to their home villages. The Christians who had moved into their houses and stolen their belongings would surely be less than thrilled to have to return these things to their rightful owners. When the repatriations began in 1943, the Centrala Evreilor therefore insisted that Jews be relocated to major towns and cities, as “it is possible that

346 Severin Schrajer, in “und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 169.
be more sensitive to their return than the population in the cities where Jews continued to live and where the coexistence [between Jews and Christians] proved to be peaceful.”347 Even so, the deportees’ return to Bukovina caused a good deal of conflict. Even the Christian population in the city did not take it well. On returning to Czernowitz, one of Jägendorf’s former employees in Mogilev gave in to despair, for “what is going on in Bukovina ever since the return of the deportees surpasses everything.” “You know me,” he wrote Jägendorf in May 1945, “this is the first time that I regret that we even survived. One cannot create any kind of coexistence with provocations and terror towards the peasant population.”348 The atmosphere was one of conflict and chaos: the returnees were all looking for work and housing. Much of the Christian population resented their return. Some survivors came back barely alive and perished shortly after arriving home; many suffered from hunger and poverty. All of this was happening just as the Romanian troops once again withdrew and gave up Northern Bukovina to the Soviets. The city looked like a whirlpool of people with bundles and suitcases - some leaving, others going, yet others simply waiting around to see what would happen next. Once again, the Jews faced some hard decisions. They could stay behind, under the Soviet occupation, or go to Romania while the border was still open.

In a relatively short time, Bukovina’s Jews scattered to the four winds. Some Jewish men were recruited into the Red Army and sent back to the front as soon as they got out of the labor camps. Together with the Soviet army, they made the tour of Europe - going all the way to Vienna and Berlin, and then coming back to Bukovina as ‘victors.’ Pesah Rozenberg, a Jewish man from a prosperous Czernowitz family, was among them. The Rozenbergs were the sort of people who always took the blows under every single regime. During the first Soviet occupation,

348 YVA, P.9/10, 36, 9 May 1945.
the Rozenbergs lost most of their property to the collectivization and Pesah was forced to work in a metal factory to make ends meet. When the Romanians and Germans arrived, the Rozenbergs were once again blacklisted, this time for being in the wrong racial rather than social and economic category. While Pesah’s parents managed to stay behind in Cernăuți, he and his siblings were deported to Mogilev in November 1941. He was still in Mogilev in March 1944, when the Soviets ‘liberated’ the camp after their offensive on Uman. Barely one month later, the whole city was covered in posters calling up all able-bodied Jewish men to join the army. A new adventure began for Pesah Rozenberg the day he was put on a train - once again - with 800 other men, most of them Jewish, and taken east, into the Soviet interior. After a month or so in Voroshilovgrad, where the men were provided with military instruction and equipment, they were sent back to the front in August 1944. Rozenberg’s unit ended up fighting on the Ukrainian front, “from Proskurov to Tarnopol,” where they were almost completely wiped out during a German offensive. The survivors were relocated at the end of 1944 only a few kilometers away from Cernăuți. Here, Rozenberg was wounded in the knee during a German counter-attack. Eventually, he followed the Soviet troops west, reaching Bratislava and Vienna, and then returned to Romania together with the ‘occupation troops.’ Mordehai Kogan was also in Mogilev when the Soviets mobilized the Jewish deportees into the Red Army and he too ended up on the front. From Pinsk, he went to Pskov and then Leningrad. When he got his first permission to leave in 1946, he returned to Cernăuți. Like Rozenberg, Kogan too left his native city and went straight to Bucharest, from where he immigrated in 1947 to Israel. Selig-Ascher Hofer was living in the house of a Ukrainian woman in Czernowitz in the spring of 1944, shortly after he had returned from Schargorod, when the NKVD showed up unexpectedly one night to check if

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349 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1232, 7-8; 03-900.
the woman was hiding any ‘Heimkehrer’: “the Russians were hunting down men who had returned from Transnistria in order to take them to the front.” While Hofer and his family managed to hide, most other Jewish men, in addition to local Ukrainians, were mobilized into the army.

Women did not have it any easier; they too were rounded up and sent to labor camps in the Donbas. When she returned home from work one day, Pearl Fichman - who had been staying with friends and neighbors in the evenings because “a regiment of Don Cossacks who had come to town were going into houses and taking able-bodied women into the army” - found two different notices on her doorstep: one a mobilization order from the army, and the other note calling her up for labor in Donbas. To understand the effect of these population movements on Bukovina, one has to bear in mind that a vast number of Jews in Bukovina had already perished in Transnistria. The survivors did not even have the chance to settle down before they were rounded up again and sent away by their Soviet ‘liberators’: some to the West with the Red Army, others to the East as forced laborers in the Donbas, yet others to Siberia in a new round of deportations of ‘enemy elements.’ Jews in Southern Bukovina were subjected to similar measures, even though they were not directly under Soviet occupation, for Romania soon became a Soviet satellite. Manfred Hilsenrath, who was living with his brother Edgar in Rădăuți and Suceava at the time, relates in his memoir how the Soviets, who needed “free labor for the harvest to get food for the army,” closed off one street at a time and rounded up all the young people living there, first putting them in prison and then shipping them off to the labor camps. While the Hilsenraths managed to escape, Edgar’s girlfriend was caught and “sent to a labor

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350 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1453, 282.
camp, where she was raped and mistreated.”

The luckier ones made it across the border into Romania before the frontiers closed yet again. The vast majority of them were not there to stay but viewed this merely as a way station, a temporary stop on their way to Palestine. Though the Jewish community in Bukovina was essentially destroyed at this point, in Bucharest the Zionist movement was still very active, although it had been officially outlawed in 1942. Once they made it to Romania, Jews from Bukovina applied for emigration passports and, with the help of Zionist organizations that sponsored them and organized their departure, left for Palestine. By March 1944, the Romanian police in Cernăuți had received 115 requests for “emigration passports for Palestine.” The Romanian Transportation and Agency Office in Bucharest had already prepared to carry out “a series of transports of Jews from the Old Kingdom, Bukovina, and Transnistria” with Marshal Antonescu’s approval, “by ship under the Bulgarian pavilion.” The emigration “operation” would be formally carried out by the State Subsecretariat of Labor of the General Commissariat for Jewish questions, on the condition that all emigrants be kept under surveillance so “as not to facilitate actions with subversive character.”

One cannot stress enough how important the Zionist movement was at this point. As the German troops began withdrawing from the East, Jewish youth organizations in Romania prepared themselves for counter-attack. They played an important role not only in facilitating the emigration of many Romanian Jews to Palestine but also in sheltering Jewish refugees from Poland and Hungary. Although they had separate national and regional branches, these organizations were in fact transnational. They transferred funds from one branch to another, and used their transnational connections to coordinate the emigration of Jews to Palestine.

351 LBI, Manfred Hilsenrath, accessed digitally.
352 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 499, l 33, 8 January 1944; 6 March 1944.
On one’s own, one was very unlikely to make it out of Bukovina to Eretz - but with the help of an organization that had representatives everywhere, emigration was difficult but not impossible. As the Romanian police were very well aware, ever since the start of the war Zionist youth organizations in Romania had been in touch with their counterparts in America, England, and Palestine, who sent them money and “instructions for saving the Jewry in Poland, Transnistria, and Bukovina.” The leaders of two of the largest Zionist youth organizations in Romania, Gordonia and Dror, had apparently “received several tens of millions from abroad, both in foreign currency and Romanian money, which they used to help deported Jews.” They provided Jews in Northern Bukovina and Poland with “false documents” with which they could cross the border into Romania and move along the chain of local Zionist organizations all the way to Palestine. Without their help and protection, Bukovinian Jews who made it across the border were often caught by the Romanian police, for they had no documents and no source of income. It was a very unusual time.

While survivors were being liberated from the camps, new borders were being drawn across the continent. A very different kind of attitude and activity was required now. It no longer sufficed to talk - in German - about building a Jewish state in Palestine. What was needed now was a proactive approach, and the Zionist youth organizations were up to the task. They did very dangerous work to help fellow Zionists and Jews from Bukovina cross the border into Romania and then prepare to leave for “Eretz.” After Zionist organizations had been officially outlawed and dissolved in 1942, Zionists operated clandestinely under the eye of the police, who had orders to arrest, investigate, and court martial Halutzim who were found in possession of weapons and other “compromising materials” such as clandestine correspondence.353 Arie Vardi, a long-time Zionist from Cernăuți, joined the ‘Briha’ department of the Zionist youth movement,

353 DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 558, l 4.
whose mission was to help Jews under German-occupied Poland and Soviet-occupied Bukovina escape to Romania. “[Many] of our haverim who tried to cross the border” into Bukovina, Vardi recalled, “were discovered and shot” because the “border was well guarded by Soviet soldiers.” With the help of a Zionist organization in Arad, Manfred Hilsenrath managed to cross the border into Hungary and then go to Austria, eventually joining a Hach Sharah camp organized by a Zionist youth group in the Pyrenees to train young refugees for “survival and battle in Israel.” “Survival and battle” was the sort of thing that Zionist organizations did now. They were very much a product of their times, and while some were more radical than others, all of them embraced an ideology that aimed to prepare Jews “professionally and culturally” for emigration to Palestine.

The journey from Romania to Palestine was difficult and dangerous, as the international situation had not yet settled. The roads, the seas, the air were anything but safe. In 1941, the 800 Jewish refugees aboard the ship Struma had gone to their deaths when the ship was torpedoed by the Soviets in the Black Sea. Now there were the added complications of shifting borders, changing regimes, and alliances that were constantly in flux. As former Romanian citizens who had just left Soviet-occupied territory, Jewish survivors had an uncertain status that complicated their journey to Palestine. They were stopped several times on their way there and confined to various displaced persons camps and quarantines for weeks or even months at a time. After she returned from Schargorod “about 3-4 weeks after the Russians marched in,” Pepi Pollak stayed in Czernowitz until May 1945, “when the Russians allowed Jews to go to Romania.” In 1947, she left her native town of Campulung in Southern Bukovina and joined one of the transports to Palestine organized by local Zionists. It took her over a year to get to Israel, however, as the ship

354 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1418.
355 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 558, ll 3-4.
she was on was captured by the British and all the passengers were interned in Cyprus for ten months.\textsuperscript{356} Pesah Rozenberg, who left Bucharest in December 1947 together with 15,000 other Jewish emigrants, also reached Israel after spending almost a year in an internment camp in Cyprus. It took the writer Aharon Appelfeld, a child at the time, months to get to Israel and be reunited with his father - the only member of his family who had survived Transnistria. It was in the DP camps that Appelfeld received his schooling, for this was where he - and many other children who had lost their parents in the war - spent their most formative years. “During that time,” he writes in \textit{Story of a Life}, “the DP camps were like battlefields. Sometimes it seemed that all the struggles were over the children and who would claim them. Would the smugglers succeed in fanning them out over the continent, or would the soldiers of the Jewish Brigade protect them and bring them to Palestine? Or perhaps some distant relatives would lure them to America?”\textsuperscript{357} Appelfeld landed in Palestine, where he immediately put on a uniform and was sent into combat, never having the chance to go to school. Manfred Hilsenrath, who also moved from one DP camp to another, from Vienna to Reichenhall, from Stuttgart to Ulm and Aachen, ended up in the United States.

The Holocaust made Bukovina’s Jews into the rootless - or transnational, if you will - community they had been supposedly since time immemorial. Those who survived the war ended up in every corner of the world, from the Soviet Union to Israel, France, Germany, and the United States. The war violently shook them out of their provincialism and forced them to reach out to Jewish communities elsewhere and, in many cases, become truly aware of their Jewishness for the first time. Jews who had never left Cernăuți - with the exception of brief trips to Vienna, perhaps - now landed in Israel, with its incredibly diverse population. Others landed in New

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{356} Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1220, Pepi Pnina Pollak. \\
\textsuperscript{357} Aharon Appelfeld and Aloma Halter, \textit{The Story of a Life} (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 76-77.}
York, like Pearl Fichman, who got to experience at Columbia and Brooklyn College a new, American streak of anti-Semitism. “We would never meet again as grown men and women. The ones who survived,” Pearl Fichman writes, “live in different countries, under different regimes, speaking different languages. Our children are American, Israeli, French, German, Russian, Australian, Brazilian, Argentinean, English, etc.”

The children and grandchildren of Fichman’s generation of Bukovinian Jews may not be living in the same country, they may no longer be speaking the same language, but they go on heritage tours to rediscover the ‘homeland’ of their parents and grandparents, and they call themselves ‘Czernowitzer’ although all of their memories of this place are essentially borrowed. As for the generation of the ‘uprooted,’ they continued to carry with them a strong attachment to their native Bukovina.

Jews who left to Palestine to build the new ‘Jewish homeland’ and those who stayed back in Bukovina went through similar trials after the war. Both groups struggled with feelings of homelessness and displacement, and both had similar difficulties adjusting to the new world they lived in. Both ‘homelands’ - the one in Palestine and the one in Bukovina - were imagined, even utopian projections. The Biblical Jewish homeland was not simply there but it had to be rebuilt and reinvented. The realities on the ground were very far from this dream of a Jewish homeland where a Bukovinan Jew would feel at home. This was a new world of its own, with new challenges, new traditions, and a new language to be learned. The people who flowed in from all corners of Europe in the years after the war had little in common other than the fact of their survival and their ‘Jewishness’ - which meant different things to different people. Pearl Fichman arrived in Israel in 1949, in the middle of the first Arab-Israeli war, by way of Bucharest and New York. While in Bucharest, waiting for her parents to obtain an emigration visa to France, Fichman had had to change her address six times. In 1947, she went to New York and enrolled at

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358 Pearl Fichman, *Before Memories Fade*, 43.
Columbia. Only two years later she wrote an old friend of hers who had emigrated to Israel that she would join him because she thought she would be “happier living among people who had gone through similar experiences.” As it turned out, Israel also felt foreign to her because of the “diversity of people’s looks, dress, languages.” Life there was “just one step up from the concentration camps.” One had to make do with the bare minimum: “a refrigerator but no kitchen; table clothes but no table; wide sheets and no bed - just army cots.”

Even Zionists from Bukovina, no matter how dedicated they were to building a new home in Palestine, were poorly prepared for the new life they would lead there. Ilana Shmueli’s father, a devoted Zionist from Czernowitz, had spent his entire youth “fighting to fulfill his dream of Jewish heroism.” A former member of the Jewish sports club Makkabi, the B’nei Brith-Loge, and the Verein der Allgemeinen Zionisten, he had always been passionate about Zionism as an ideal but had never considered moving to Palestine until after the war, when “his world broke apart.” When he finally arrived there in 1944, he “felt like he was not desired” and died, “old and ill,” shortly after arriving. Those who found the strength to go on had to make peace with the fact that their lives would never be the same. After her father died in 1945, Ilana Shmueli went to Tel-Aviv to take babysitting classes, although her dream was to become a professional violinist. Her mother - a woman used to the comforts of an upper middle-class life - had to make a living as a caretaker, although she “found it shameful to have to work for someone else.” Shmueli had already been living in Israel for a time when she reconnected with her old friend from Czernowitz Paul Celan, who was living the isolated life of an exile in Paris. To live in exile, isolated from his German audiences, had been his own choice. Although his poetry was best known in West Germany, where Celan was occasionally invited to conferences and won

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359 Ibid., 158.
360 Ilana Shmueli, Ein Kind aus Guter Familie, 27.
361 Ibid., 87.
literary prizes, he could not stand to live there and write amidst the ‘perpetrators.’ During these
difficult years, as his mental health deteriorated, Celan began toying with the idea of relocating
to Israel, where many of his childhood friends - like Shmueli - were now living. The idea of a
‘Jewish homeland’ as a remedy for his existential homesickness became increasingly appealing
to him. Yet his visit to Israel was a letdown; Celan did not fit in there for the same reasons that
he struck such a strange figure on the European literary scene. He was a Holocaust survivor and
Jewish poet who insisted on writing in the ‘language of murderers,’ a self-inflicted agony. After
living for more than twenty years in the ‘Jewish homeland,’ Ilana Shmueli could only conclude
that “the people on the margins - the marginal men of the homeland - are actually exiles there.
The need for ‘absolute’ belonging, which demands so much from the difference that is there, and
which one cannot afford - too often - but then there can be no question about it - and then one
has the feeling that ‘Heimat’ is exile - and ‘exile’ – homeland.”

Those who stayed in Bukovina could maintain the illusion that things might have been
easier for them had they gone to Israel, where most of pre-war Czernowitz (or what was left of
it) seemed to be. With a few exceptions, most Jews who stayed in Bukovina did so because they
had no choice, either because their family circumstances didn’t allow them to leave or because
they weren’t able to secure passports and emigration authorizations. Hedwig Brenner, whom we
have already met, crossed the border into Romania, where she and her husband had a home in
Ploesti, with the intention of emigrating to Israel as soon as possible. But when the Communist
regime came to power in Romania, they were trapped behind the Iron Curtain; from 1945 to
1982, when Brenner finally managed to go to Israel, she applied for a passport no less than 140

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362 Paul Celan, Ilana Shmueli, and Susan H. Gillespie, *The Correspondence of Paul Celan and Ilana Shmueli*
(Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2010), 38.
times and was turned down over and over again.\textsuperscript{363} Paul Celan was also among those Bukovinian Jews who fled to Romania as soon as the war was over, but unlike Brenner he left Bucharest just before the borders were closed again. The scramble to leave for Israel was phenomenal in the first few years after the war, when the Soviet administration still granted emigration authorizations, but precisely because the demand was so great, passports could no longer be obtained by honest means. Those who could afford to pay extra stood a much higher chance of having their applications approved. Anna Rosenberg had lost both of her parents in Transnistria but, because she was over 16, she was not counted among those Jewish orphans who were repatriated and then sent to Israel. When the war ended, she returned to Cernăuți and got married. Her only surviving relatives were an uncle, who had received an authorization to stay in Cernăuți because he owned a factory, and some aunts, who moved to Romania soon afterwards. Because her uncle refused to leave his house and factory, Rosenberg decided to stay in Cernăuți and apply for a visa to Israel from there. She and her husband, certain they would leave soon, started selling their furniture little by little they took apart their veranda and used it as firewood. They sold their window panes and “practically demolished the house to be able to emigrate.” And then they had a surprise: the authorities denied them a travel permit, most likely because someone else paid a higher price for their documents and left in their place. The Rosenbergs spent the rest of their days in Chernivtsi.\textsuperscript{364}

Another opportunity to emigrate arose in the 1980s, when the Soviet Union negotiated an agreement with Israel. This triggered one of the biggest emigration waves out of the Soviet Union. By the time this happened, however, the survivors who had settled in Bukovina after the war already had new families that tied them to this place, or else were too old to emigrate. This

\textsuperscript{363} Brenner, Czernowitz is meine Heimat.
\textsuperscript{364} Anna Rosenberg, in “...und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 130.
was when the gap between the prewar and postwar generations of Jews in Bukovina became manifest. Older Jews had been fully immersed in the Jewish community and had been exposed to Zionist ideas even if they did not actively participate in the Zionist movement. If they were not already so before the war, they had been made very conscious of their Jewish identity by the Holocaust. Many survivors had lost their families in Transnistria and, once they returned to Cernăuți after the war, had to rebuild their lives from nothing. They were living in a completely new world - there were new rules to be learned and new people to learn to live with. This was the same city, but it was a different place. Their children and grandchildren, on the other hand, grew up in this new world. Unlike the older generation, who clung to the hope that Israel might cure their homesickness, the younger ones grew up only with a vague awareness of their Jewishness and were profoundly immersed in a world that was Soviet and Ukrainian. Rosa Ruth-Zuckermann had always been active in the Zionist movement and longed to go to Israel after losing her parents, her husband, and her children in Transnistria. Zuckermann did not manage to leave immediately after the war but kept thinking that “the only good thing would be to go to Israel although it’s difficult there.” Although both of her brothers moved there in the 1980s, she couldn’t go with them because her son, who was married to a Ukrainian woman, refused to leave Chernivtsi. The world Zuckermann’s son lived in remained foreign to his mother.

The generation gap was deepened by the fact that parents and children had literally grown up and lived in very different worlds, speaking different languages. Zuckermann grew up speaking German and German remained her language of choice for the rest of her life. Her son did not speak a word of it, for his ‘mother tongue’ was now Ukrainian.’ people like Rosa Zuckermann or Lidia Harnik, another member of the older generation of Jews born as Austrian citizens, lived in a haunted house. Unlike the cities that were razed to the ground in World War
II, Cernăuți remained physically intact. Old ‘Czernowitzer’ walked down the same streets they used to take to school or to the university. They were surrounded by the same houses where they used to visit their friends. “I think back to Czernowitz with wistful feelings,” Rosa Roth-Zuckermann said. “I feel a great pain when I think about that which used to be. (…) It was my Heimat, my native city, and in the entire city there used to live relatives and friends of mine.”

There were no more familiar faces in sight and the streets now had different names. Everywhere one went, one was constantly reminded that one’s memories were nothing but memories. Rosa Roth-Zuckermann described this eerie feeling very well when she said that “somehow one is a stranger in this city now, completely foreign. I go around and think to myself: ‘Good Lord, how do I still fit in here?’”365 There were others who stayed simply because they were deeply attached to the place, much more than to their religion or vaguely imagined ancestral homelands. Severin Schrajer was one of those Bukovinian Jews who refused to emigrate because “I am a committed patriot of Bukovina, for me it never even came into question to leave it.”366 What is really astonishing about people like Schrajer is that, even after living through several regime changes and the horrors of Transnistria, they continued to think about their ‘nationality’ not in racial or ethnic terms but as an attachment to a particular place. “By nationality,” he said, “we are Bukovinans and I don’t know how it would be for us [to live] in a land like Israel, for I am absolutely not Orthodox.” What did it mean to be a ‘Bukovinan’ by nationality? Schrajer derived his identity from the place itself - defined not as a physical location in space, but as a relative position. Schrajer defined himself as a “Bukovinan” because he was deeply anchored in a place that allowed him to be both Jewish and Romanian and a German-speaker all at once.

The next most numerous German-speaking population group in Bukovina were the ethnic

365 Rosa Roth-Zuckermann, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 150.
366 Severin Schrajer, in “…und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 168.
Germans. Their community collapsed when the vast majority of Germans in both Northern and Southern Bukovina left for Germany with the *Heim ins Reich Aktion* in the fall of 1940. Those few who stayed were in a difficult situation. After the ‘repatriations’ to Germany, their numbers dropped sharply and they remained an isolated ethnic island in the midst of a large non-German population. Suceava, the medieval capital of Bukovina, had been home to one of the largest ethnic German communities in the province; by the summer of 1941, so many Germans had left Suceava that a new census had to be carried out to determine just how many were still there.\(^{367}\) And even then the emigration wave had not subsided. Two new ‘repatriation’ offices had opened in Suceava and more people were registering to go to ‘the Reich,’ including “Romanians married to Germans and Romanians without blood ties as well as Ukrainians and Lipovenians.”\(^{368}\) Most Germans who left earlier, with the *Heim ins Reich Aktion*, had been lured by promises of a new, prosperous life in Germany. Although older people were generally opposed to leaving, the younger generation were easily persuaded by the Nazi propaganda that promised them new homes and better jobs. By the summer of 1941, a rumor spread that all Germans who did not register to be repatriated would lose their “right to claim they are of German nationality” and will be “treated in the future as foreigners of German race and will never have the right to demand the protection of the German state in the case that they should feel unjustly treated.”\(^{369}\)

At the same time, people who had already been repatriated to the Reich began returning to Romania. Among them were both ethnic Germans and Ukrainians and Romanians who had slipped out of Bukovina in 1940 by pretending to be German.\(^{370}\) Thousands of Romanians had left Northern Bukovina together with the Germans. This is no surprise given how few

\(^{367}\) DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 190, l 78, 30 June 1941.
\(^{368}\) Ibid., l 49, 19 May 1941.
\(^{369}\) Ibid.
\(^{370}\) Bucovina, “Tragicul dezastru,” 18 July 1941.
Romanians could be evacuated in the summer of 1940 before the Soviet troops invaded Northern Bukovina. In Germany, the Romanian evacuees were “distributed among various camps,” where, as the *Bucovina* reassured its readers, “the German authorities behaved as well as possible to the Romanian refugees from Bukovina.” When the Romanians reclaimed Northern Bukovina in 1941, these people began trickling back in.\(^{371}\) Many ethnic Germans also tried to return to their former homes in Bukovina, but since they were now considered German citizens they were not permitted to go back legally. A special governmental commission was set up in Germany to weed out all “former Romanian citizens who left the country voluntarily and received German citizenship in Germany as refugees irrespective of their ethnic origin.”\(^{372}\) Still, quite a few ‘repatriated’ Germans made their way back into Bukovina clandestinely. On returning, they found their homes in the hands of strangers. Three German families from a village near Suceava returned in the fall of 1943 from the Reich only to discover that “their houses being the property of the state, had been given to other citizens, so they had to live with relatives.”\(^{373}\) The repatriated Germans could no longer feel at home, especially since Bukovina’s status remained uncertain and there were rumors that the Soviets would soon return. “Those who returned from Germany,” the Cernăuți police reported, “are afraid of being conquered by the Bolsheviks” and “are of the opinion that it would have been better if they hadn’t returned from Germany to their homes in Bukovina so they are now again in the position of becoming refugees.”\(^{374}\)

Why would these people return, at such great risk to themselves, to a place they had left only a few years before? Because they found the Reich was not the land of milk and honey that Nazi propagandists made it out to be. On landing there, the ‘repatriated’ found themselves in the

\(^{372}\) DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 493a, 138, 11 August 1943; DAChO, fond R307, op. 1, d. 1148, 14.
\(^{373}\) DAChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 493a, 154, 6 October 1943.
\(^{374}\) Ibid., 142.
unenviable position of refugees. They did not lead the lives of national heroes but of displaced persons. German families who had repatriated themselves to the Reich wrote their acquaintances in Bukovina in 1942 to “take care of their homes because they would return in the spring of 1941, as they cannot stand the climate in Germany.” Germany was a foreign country for most Germans from Bukovina - just as Israel, the Jewish homeland, felt nothing like home to those German-speaking Jews who arrived there from Bukovina after the war.

The demographic balance tilted in the Ukrainians’ favor after the war, with the Romanians as the second most numerous group. The trauma of displacement did not spare the Romanians, even though they were in control of the region for much of the war period. During the Soviet occupation, a large number of Romanians fled Northern Bukovina and either settled in the south or went to the capital and lived there as refugees. Some of these people returned when the Romanians reclaimed Northern Bukovina in 1941 - although quite a few stayed behind in Romania for fear that the Soviets would reconquer Northern Bukovina. The first to go ‘back’ to Northern Bukovina after the Romanians reclaimed it were actually not the refugees who had left in the summer of 1940, but Romanians from the ‘Old Kingdom’ who were in no way connected with Bukovina but were looking for opportunities to enrich themselves. These were the people who made up the new administration and claimed positions of authority - but since they were only loosely tied to Bukovina, they also were the first to flee when the Romanians had to withdraw yet again and Northern Bukovina fell back under Soviet control in the spring of 1944. This time around, the authorities deliberately made no arrangements to evacuate the bulk of the Romanian population from the territory reclaimed by the Soviets. As Antonescu never tired of emphasizing, if enough Romanians remained in place then Romania might still have a chance to

375 Ria Gold, in “und das Herz wird mir schwer,” 66.
376 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 190, 11, 1 January 1942.
recover the territory in the event that a plebiscite was held there. Overall, Bukovina’s population dropped significantly during the war. A large number of Romanians in Northern Bukovina were deported during the Soviet occupations, among them well-off peasants, factory owners and industrialists, and members of the local ‘bourgeoisie.’ In August 1941, the Cernăuți police reported that “so far we don’t know how many Romanians, Ukrainians, Jews, and others were killed, deported, or taken prisoner by the Bolsheviks but the number was significant.” The thousands of people who disappeared into the wilderness of Siberia were replaced by a new, predominantly Ukrainian population “from other regions of the country and even from abroad.”

The deportations were an exercise in both social and ethnic engineering. The two criteria coincided, as most ‘bourgeois’ elements were either Romanian or Jewish. Many Romanians from Northern Bukovina who did not manage to take refuge in Romania in 1940 were arrested by the Soviets shortly after the invasion and transported across the Dniester. One Romanian family who stayed behind in Hotin were picked up in the middle of the night in May 1941 and driven away in a “black car without being investigated or imprisoned.” Their relatives never heard from them again and did not know “whether they are alive or where they are.” Another local, an employee of the Romanian postal services in Cernăuți who had no time to take refuge in 1940, was “picked up from his job by the Soviet police and deported” in the summer of 1941. Like so many other Bukovinans, his traces were erased so completely there was no way of knowing if he was alive or dead. When the Romanian authorities returned to Northern Bukovina, they made it their task to repatriate all the Romanians who had been deported or mobilized into the Red

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377 SANIC, Arhivele Județului Ilfov, 15/1941, 26 August 1941.
378 DACHO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 46, l 1005.
379 Ibid., l 212.
Army and driven eastward during the Soviet retreat. By repatriating the Romanian deportees, the Romanian authorities sought not merely to undo what the Soviets had done but also to further their own project of making the northern borderlands more Romanian. Here is another instance in which one regime was building on the policies of another: in this case, Antonescu’s regime was taking advantage of the population shifts the Soviets had brought about to carry out radical changes they would likely not have managed otherwise. When the General Staff asked Marshall Antonescu for permission to repatriate the Bukovinans and Bessarabians from those territories east of the Dniester and Bug that were now under German-Romanian occupation, the Marshall approved on the condition that the deportees be sorted first to make sure no politically or ethnically impure elements were allowed back on Romanian territory. The idea here was to regenerate the Romanian population at the northern periphery of the nation-state and also strengthen the ethnic Romanian character of these territories by sifting out ‘foreigners’ and politically unreliable individuals. Before they were transported back to Bukovina, all deportees had to travel to Rostov, Stalino, and Harkiv to be examined by a repatriation commission. The commission had strict orders not to issue repatriation visas to Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews, as well as to “people suspected of having been active under the Soviet occupation against Romanian interests.”

This was still not the final stage in the remaking of Bukovina. The population continued to shift as the fortunes of war changed; one day the Germans were on top of the world and the next they were fleeing westward. After Stalingrad, the Soviets began advancing rapidly into Eastern and Central Europe. Nothing was certain, however. Cossack volunteer troops passing through Bukovina on their way from the eastern front to the Polish or Serbian front assured

380 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Photocopies Osobyi Arkhiv Moscow, vol 4, 374, 12 November 1942; 387, 13 February 1942.
locals that the Germans were winning, that they could not be defeated by the Soviets because they “have a superior technique and the Cossacks know how both the Soviets and Germans fight.” German soldiers also seemed confident that victory would soon be theirs. These reassuring messages flew in the face of reality. Bukovinans did not need anyone to tell them what was going on, for they could easily see it for themselves. The German troops looked worse and worse as time went on. They went around in ragged clothes and begged locals for food - and once they started retreating, they behaved like savages and robbed the local population of their jewelry, clothing, and food. Hedwig Brenner remembers how Jews in Cernăuți “locked themselves up in their houses, cellars, attics” when the German troops began their retreat because German soldiers were running through the city and demanding food and valuables at gunpoint, although “after four years of hunger and unemployment, nobody had anything left.”

Locals took this as a sign that the Soviets were rapidly advancing and Bukovina would change hands once again. German military trucks were driving through the province, away from the front, day after day, and “columns of carts with civilian population [were] being evacuated from Ukraine, as well as cattle.” Alarming news were coming in from Galicia; in October 1943, over 1,000 families of “Russian locals from the Dniepro-Petrovsk area” - most likely ethnic Ukrainians - had arrived in Snyatin, just across the Pruth river; they were settled there by the Soviets as soon as the German troops retreated and were given “empty houses to use, left over from the Jews and Poles.” In addition, the Soviets were dropping parachutists into Galicia “in order to fill the gap” within the ranks of partisans who had been “destroyed by the German troops.” Some of these parachutists were captured and found to be “armed with automatic weapons” and supplied with money “with which they would recruit adherents” in order to carry

381 DACHO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 13 March 1944.
382 Brenner, Mein altes Czernowitz, 110.
383 DACHO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 45, 14 March 1944.
out “terrorist acts with the help of the local population, Ukrainians and Poles.” As far as Bukovinans could tell from their ‘observation post’ on the edge of eastern front, the Soviets were getting the upper hand. Having lived through a similar experience once before, locals dreaded a second Soviet invasion. Whether Romanian or Jewish - whether they benefitted from the German-Romanian occupation or were victimized by it - most people feared the Soviets. What made the Soviet advance especially alarming was the fact that the Soviets were using partisan tactics - essentially, terrorist methods - to make headway into German-occupied territories. In March 1944, “a column of 1000 Bolsheviks dressed in German uniforms” were caught only 20 kilometers away from Lviv. After they shot a few German soldiers, the Soviets withdrew into a nearby forest, where they were caught and defeated “only after fighting for several days.”

This was no longer army-to-army combat but total conflict with no definite beginning and ending and no clear boundaries. The territories that bordered on the front - Galicia and Bukovina - were most exposed to Soviet attacks and were the most likely to be ‘infiltrated’ by Soviet partisans and soldiers.

The Soviets were already close to Bukovina’s northern border when the Romanian authorities finally began preparing to evacuate the province. Once again, the evacuation did not follow any kind of plan, nor were locals informed that the Romanian authorities were going to withdraw until it was too late to do anything. As the authorities and state functionaries began packing and transporting their things, however, it became clear that Northern Bukovina would likely fall to the Soviets again. In Visnita, city authorities began enrolling locals into two separate registers, one for those who would be evacuated and the other for those who would stay

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384 DACo, fond 30, op. 4, d. 28, l 14, 6 October 1943.
385 DACo, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 43, 14 March 1944.
The vast majority of people fell into the second category. It was only the administrative and military authorities and the “families of state functionaries” - as well as the “industrial enterprises” - who were being evacuated. No provisions were made for the rest of the population, unless they were wealthy enough to sponsor their own transportation. “Institution heads,” industrialists, and merchants began loading their possessions on carts and buses and shipping them off to the Regat for “enormous sums of money.” In the meantime, word spread that the authorities would not only not evacuate the bulk of the population in these territories but would even forbid them to leave in the event of a Soviet invasion.

As usual, rumors made up for what the authorities failed to communicate to the population. There were all kinds of suppositions and explanations for their behavior. One was that the Germans would soon occupy Bukovina and evacuate the population themselves. Another was that the authorities would only evacuate Romanians who arrived in Bukovina later, from the Regat. The only true rumor was also the hardest to believe: that the authorities were going to leave the Romanian population behind to face the Soviets on their own. When their mayor informed them that there would be no general evacuation, the residents of Hotin panicked. Situated as they were in the most exposed part of Bukovina, they would bear the brunt of a second Soviet invasion first. Locals began wondering if they would “proceed just like in 1940, when they [the locals] asked what to do and were told they had four more days to evacuate when in fact Hotin was occupied on the first day at 17:30.” Those who could afford it began shipping their possessions to the Regat and moving their families there too. Merchants and shop owners began closing down their stores and selling their goods for almost nothing. State

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386 DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 13 March 1944.
387 Ibid., 1359, 29 January 1944.
388 Ibid., 1127, 13 February 1944.
functionaries took their homes apart and packed them into suitcases.\textsuperscript{389} At the same time, though, state functionaries feared that if they moved to Romania they would be “jobless and starve to death because of the surplus of functionaries.”\textsuperscript{390} After spending all their savings moving their families to the Regat, many Romanian civil servants from Bukovina were indeed forced to return home because “life there was too expensive and the authorities in the Regat didn’t offer any help.” Only one thing was worse than being in the way of the invading Soviet troops - and that was being a refugee in Romania, penniless and homeless. Panic turned into anger at the authorities, who seemed to care so little about the fate of their co-nationals that they were willing to abandon them to another Soviet invasion.\textsuperscript{391} Why did the authorities not do more to save the Romanian population from the fury of another Soviet invasion?

Unlike in 1940, when the Romanians were caught by surprise, Antonescu’s regime deliberately decided to keep the Romanian population in place in 1944. Even if they had wanted to evacuate everyone to Romania, they would have been unable to do so because the administration simply did not have enough trains at its disposal to transport so many evacuees. In February 1944, the Cernăuți police reported that “the Romanian population and functionaries of all kinds tried by all means to evacuate their mobile goods and homes and families into the interior of the country,” but the “wagons and personal trains” available were “insufficient to satisfy the needs of the population panicked by the evacuation.”\textsuperscript{392} Even though the majority of the population - not only ethnic Romanians, but also minorities such as Poles and Jews and even some Ukrainians - feared a second Soviet invasion and insisted that they be evacuated, the authorities in Bucharest decided to do just the opposite. In a meeting with the Council of

\textsuperscript{389} Ibid., l 277, 1 February 1944.  
\textsuperscript{390} DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 19 February 1944.  
\textsuperscript{391} DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 125.  
\textsuperscript{392} DAChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 273, 7 February 1944.
Ministers in January 1944, Antonescu instructed Bukovina’s Governor Dragalina to keep most of the population and resources in place, distributing the food among the population and leaving behind all the industry “we don’t absolutely have to transport to the West.” His plan was to keep the bulk of the Romanian population in place so the territory would not be as easily sovietized as before.

Of course, this strategy only made sense if Soviets did not hold the territory for long and the Romanians could be sure of their eventual defeat. Astonishingly, even as late as 1944, Antonescu was still convinced the Wehrmacht was too powerful to be defeated by the Soviets. Even with the Soviet advances at the front, Antonescu could never imagine that the Soviets would take Cernăuți for good. “If this arrow reaches Cernăuți, then the front is broken, the gate towards Central Europe is open and the two branches of the German army, the northern one is closed up towards the Baltic Sea, the southern one towards the Black Sea and then disaster awaits the Germans.”

This scenario seemed too frightening to imagine. Moreover, Antonescu firmly believed that “no matter how harsh the enemy, he won’t be able to destroy everyone.” He was also convinced that most Romanians would be reluctant to leave because they “don’t detach themselves too easily from their homes.”

Still, the main reason no general evacuation orders were issued was that dislocating large masses of population was “against our interests.” In Antonescu’s view, it was keep the bulk of the Romanian population in Northern Bukovina so the ethnic character of the province would not change in the Soviets’ favor. Absurd as it seemed to those who were directly affected by it, Antonescu’s decision was calculated to avoid mistakes made in the past, during the evacuation of Northern Transylvania - when all “the intellectuals from the territory that was given up were

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393 SANIC, Consiliul de Miniștri, 125/1944, 27 January 1944, 29.
394 SANIC, Consiliul de Miniștri, 113/1944, 3 March 1944, 34.
395 Ibid.
evacuated” but could no longer return home because “they will be lynched by the population,” who considered them traitors.\footnote{SANIC, Consiliul de Miniştri, 113/1944, 3 March 1944, 34.} But people who had already been through one Soviet occupation knew the Soviets had no need for plebiscites, as they could more easily reshape the province through mass arrests and deportations.

With every step they took in the direction of Bukovina, the Soviet troops threw the local population deeper into despair. Each time they heard about new Soviet advances at the front, locals “would put the measuring tape on the map and calculate how many kilometers there are from the place where the front had gotten and us.”\footnote{SANIC, Consiliul de Miniştri, 125/1944, 27 January 1944, 20.} Their panic quickly turned into with the authorities’ seeming indifference to their plight. Bukovinans were reminded yet again that they were second-class citizens. Antonescu’s decision not to evacuate couldn’t have come at a worse time, for the German authorities were just beginning to transport ethnic Germans and Poles and Ukrainians “who enrolled to go to Germany” away from the front. Just a few kilometers away, across the border in the General Gouvernement, the German authorities were loading up trucks with “functionaries and archives” and sending them west, back into the Reich. The rest of the population, for whom no provisions had been made, began wondering “why the Germans can evacuate and direct the population towards the Reich - millions of Russians and Ukrainians and declared enemies of Germany, and the Romanians are leaving their own brothers in the hands of the Bolsheviks.”\footnote{DACChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 125.}

Antonescu’s decision alienated people who were relying on the Romanian authorities to save them from certain death under the Soviets. Anyone who had welcomed the Romanian troops in 1941 knew they would suffer an unhappy fate once the Soviets returned; they were convinced that “if the Bolsheviks come back, they will exterminate them [the locals] either by
deporting them deep into the Russian steppes, or by killing them for having made a pact with the Romanians.”

It was well known that many Romanians who had not managed to evacuate the province before the first Soviet occupation had been deported or arrested and shot. First thing the Romanian administration did as soon as they reclaimed Bukovina in the summer of 1941 was to publicize these crimes. In July 1941, the newspaper Bucovina printed an article on the “tragic disaster of Romanians in Northern Bukovina” listing all the sufferings endured by Romanians who had stayed behind. People who tried to escape into Romania had been caught at the border and shot, functionaries had been arrested and deported to Siberia “because of denunciations and suspicion,” and replaced with people brought in from the Soviet interior. Even so, the Bucharest press insisted that Romanians in Bukovina had a duty to stay behind and keep the territory out of Ukrainian hands. 

Locals ignored these sermons; they were desperate to leave. Some threatened to “throw themselves into the waters” of the Pruth if the Romanian guards tried to stop them at the border, while others said they wanted “to die with the cross at their heads and not with the Soviet star.” In February 1944, a group of lawyers from Cernăuți drafted a memorandum to the Marshal, pleading with him not to “sacrifice” Bukovina’s population by leaving it at the mercy of the Soviets. “We are convinced,” they wrote, “that in your enlightened patriotism, you won’t accept sacrificing the population of our province, leaving it prey to massacres and deportations.” Even as they assured Antonescu of their gratitude for liberating Bukovina “from the Bolshevik yoke,” the petitioners also requested “respectfully, that you please to embrace warmly our cause, ordering that all the necessary, timely measures be taken to evacuate the entire population which by no means wishes to come to a tragic end under the knout of the

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399 Ibid., l 122, 19 February 1944.
400 DACHO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, l 270.
401 Ibid., 19 February 1944.
invading executioner. ⁴⁰² Among the signatories were Traian Popovici, Aurel Morariu, and Dragos Vitencu, all committed nationalists who found themselves in the position of having to reprimand their own nation for leaving “their own brothers” behind. “The population of Bukovina,” they wrote, “does not abandon its cradle and home, its tombs so easily.” ⁴⁰³ Governor Dragalina also received a memorandum on behalf Bukovina’s population from a delegation of “peasants, priests, and teachers” headed by the old Austrian politician and former minister of Bukovina under Averescu’s government, Dori Popovici. The delegation included other old-timers, such as George Flondor, and representatives of the Ukrainian peasantry.

That people like Popovici and Flondor were among the authors of this memorandum is significant because they were all members of the older generation of Romanian politicians who had supported unification. In their memorandum, they indeed linked the current evacuation problem with the larger question of national unification. To them, the present scenario - in which the authorities in Bucharest issued directives without taking into account the needs and wishes of Bukovinans - was no different from what had happened in 1918 when Romanians from the Regat sabotaged the national unification project by ignoring and defying regional interests. “The so-called great work of national reconstruction of this province,” they wrote, “suffered the most lamentable failure precisely because the Bukovinian element was never listened to.” ⁴⁰⁴ All of these interventions were unsuccessful, for Antonescu stood firm. If he was unwilling to evacuate Romanians, he was even more inflexible where non-Romanians were concerned. When Governor Dragalina suggested that “much changed within the souls of Ukranians when they were told that their departure to Romania would be permitted,” Antonescu promptly declared

⁴⁰² DACChO, fond 30, op. 4, d. 475, l 13.
⁴⁰³ DACChO, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, ll 320-321.
⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., ll 92-93.
that “we will not bring any Ukrainians into the country because I don’t trust the Slavic soul.”

This back-and-forth ended when the Soviets invaded Northern Bukovina in April 1944. There were, as always, people who looked forward to the changing of the guard. Before they left the province, Romanian officials predicted that “people from the lower strata, the poor, will immediately go over to the Soviets although they have abstained from any kind of propaganda.” So they did, along with those who had waited patiently for the Romanian authorities to leave so they could fill their pockets with the money and goods abandoned in a hurry. The second Soviet occupation was, in many respects, everything locals feared it would be. The Soviet authorities set to work right away, tracking down and punishing ‘collaborators’ for helping the German and Romanian authorities. This was not just a repeat of the first invasion, however, because the Soviet troops were no longer conquering new territories and populations but reclaiming a place they already thought of as theirs. This meant that locals would no longer be treated as foreign nationals but as equal Soviet citizens - which translated into much more severe punishments for ‘collaborators,’ who were now guilty of betraying their fatherland. The Soviets no longer felt compelled to court the local population with promises. They went straight to the business of reckoning with the legacy of the German-Romanian occupation.

This ‘reckoning’ process took several forms. As usual, politically unreliable elements and collaborators were arrested, deported, and sometimes murdered on the spot. On returning from Transnistria to Sereth/Siret after the war, Manfred Hilsenrath found “three men hanging from poles” in the town square, probably as punishment for “collaboration with the Germans.”

Scores were settled not only between the Soviet state and its unfaithful citizens, but also between individuals who had personal grudges. When Hilsenrath arrived in Siret, he found that his

405 SANIC, Fond Consiliul de Miniştri, 125/1944, 63-64, 27 January 1944.
406 DACHØ, fond 30, op. 7, d. 32, 19 February 1944.
407 LBI, Manfred Hilsenrath, accessed in digital form.
grandfather’s house was inhabited by an ethnic German who had moved in right after the family was deported. Although the new owners protested that “this is now our house, the *Fuehrer* gave us the house,” they eventually had to give it up and “move their belongings downstairs.” Now that the *Fuehrer* was gone and the Soviets were in power, Jewish survivors reclaimed their homes and valuables, which of course brought them into conflict with the new owners. Another aspect of the reckoning process was the regime’s attempt to come to terms with Northern Bukovina’s transformations during the years of German and Romanian rule. This meant figuring out exactly what had happened there and who was responsible for what. Unsurprisingly, the Soviets interpreted Bukovina’s war experiences through a Soviet lens. The German and Romanian troops had occupied a territory that was already Soviet and committed crimes against innocent Soviet citizens. There was no mention of Jewish victims as such; if there was any victim at all in the Soviet narrative, it was Ukrainian culture. In short, the Germans’ and Romanians’ worst crime was not the Holocaust but their attempt to undo the cultural work the Soviets had done before them.

The returning Soviet authorities went to great lengths to document the atrocities the German and Romanian troops had committed in Northern Bukovina. The point was to prove that the Germans and Romanians were the real barbarians - where the Soviets had built culture from scratch, they had demolished cultural institutions. Where the Soviets had brought national emancipation and rights, they had enslaved other nationalities and brutally murdered thousands of people. Nowhere in all the documents enumerating the crimes committed by the German and Romanian occupation forces was it mentioned that Jews were singled out. The reports only referred to the victims as ‘Soviet citizens.’ It is striking that the Soviets spent so much time proving the uncivilized nature of the enemy - for this was the same claim their foes made.
German propagandists maintained that the Slavs, especially the Russians, had no culture of their own and were generally on a low intellectual level, which is why they didn’t deserve a space of their own. They were *Untermenschen* that had to be wiped out before the work of cultural reconstruction could begin. The Soviets now sought to prove the opposite – and they did not have to try very hard.

As soon as they arrived in Northern Bukovina, the Soviet authorities created special state commissions that went around the province and took stock of the situation. The first task of these commissions was to record material damages such as the total number of cultural institutions (schools, theaters) that had been destroyed and the number of residential buildings ruined in the war. Most of these damages had happened during the Romanian and German retreat. We know from the testimonies of Jewish survivors that the German troops on their way back from the eastern front slashed and burned everything. Now the Soviets recorded all the damages not only to get a sense of things before they began the work of reconstruction, but also to prove - to the local population and to themselves - that the Romanian and German troops had no respect for culture. They mentioned that the enemy destroyed perfectly functional factories and agricultural cooperatives, and took away valuables - such as the objects displayed at the local history museum - which the Soviets considered to be their own property.\(^{408}\) They wrote about how the ‘enemy’ robbed the MTS stations and dismantled factories, how they robbed both state and private property of Soviet citizens, and above all, how they targeted “cultural-enlightenment institutions.”\(^ {409}\)

The image one gets from these reports is of a purely destructive occupation, in which all the institutions the Soviets built were swept away. Of course, a good deal of the Romanian

\(^{408}\) YVA, M52/106, 1568, 31 July 1945.  
\(^{409}\) YVA, M52/120, 1708, 17 July 1945.
occupation had been precisely that: taking things apart because Antonescu’s regime was determined to break definitively with the past and create national unity. But while the main point was to present the Romanian and German troops as brutes, the Soviet authorities really emphasized the damages inflicted on “Ukrainian culture” in Northern Bukovina. This is important to emphasize because, even though their most numerous and loyal supporters in Northern Bukovina were probably still the Jews, the Soviets stuck with their national project and appealed primarily to the Ukrainians. They cast the Ukrainians as the victims of the Romanian-German occupation and presented the entire conflict on the territory of Bukovina as driven by ‘nationalism’ - the bad kind of nationalism, the kind that shot ‘peaceful citizens’ and buried them in deep pits - against the right kind of national culture and national identity, which was Soviet.

Although this was only one dimension of the conflict and it was the Jews as opposed to the Ukrainians who bore the brunt of the persecutions, the Soviets did have all the evidence at their fingertips to prove their point. They went to each raion and recorded how many “cultural institutions” such as village clubs, reading rooms, libraries, and schools had been closed or destroyed. On the Soviet map, this was now Ukrainian territory, and so any damage to the institutions and infrastructure the Soviets had set into place was an attack on Ukrainian culture.

Aided by Jewish survivors, the Soviet commissions were able to identify exactly where the killings had taken place and exactly how many people had been murdered. They collected first written record of what would later be known as ‘the Holocaust.’ This was a very important record, but never, in any of these reports, were the victims identified as Jewish, but merely as ‘Soviet citizens.’ These records are practically the only detailed record of the killings aside from the testimonies given by survivors later. Of course, these reports had a propagandistic purpose but they were nevertheless grounded in reality because all the facts they mentioned were later
corroborated by the survivors’ testimonies. With the help of one Jewish survivor who had
“participated in the burial of the bodies,” the Soviet commission was able to go back to the pit
where hundreds of Jewish bodies had been buried, open the grave and investigate the bodies. On
opening the grave, a “zigzag” pit about two meters deep, the “expert commission of doctors”
found around 800 bodies buried there, “men and women, from very old ones to nursery babies.”
Closer to the surface, there was a layer of bones. Around two meters lower, they “found a layer
of bodies that had been thrown in disorder,” the majority of them wearing civilian clothing and
“only a few naked.” Many of the bodies had their “ears cut off, eyes poked out” and “smashed
skulls” - they had been violently murdered. The commission established that they had been killed
on 5-7 July 1941, exactly when the Romanian and German troops re-occupied Northern
Bukovina. “This was not only a shooting of a select group of people,” they wrote, “but a mass
killing.”

Here they were wrong - the bodies were indeed very numerous but the killings had not
been done indiscriminately. These were the Jews in the countryside who were shot or tortured as
soon as the Germans and Romanians came into Northern Bukovina. Among the victims was
Josef Burg’s mother, who was living in Wischnitz/Vijnița at the time, while her son had enrolled
in the Red Army and fled east with the retreating Soviets, promising her they would see each
other again soon. Aharon Appelfeld’s mother was also killed in this way - shot in the first days
of the occupation, while her son escaped by hiding outside in the fields. From a man named
Kleiman, the survivor who took them to the place where the killings had happened, the Soviet
doctors found out that nine people had worked to bury the bodies for six days in a row “in a pit
that was 50 m long and 5 m wide.”

\[410\] Kleiman also recounted that the “chief of post” supervising him ordered that the grave diggers should carefully inspect the bodies before burial and take

\[410\] YVA, M52/115, 1656, 15 July 1945.
away all their valuables: “money, gold, bracelets, rings, watches” and even suits and shoes from some of the bodies. All the valuables were to go directly to the chief of post. Several smaller mass graves were identified around the area.\textsuperscript{411} In a pit on the way from Novoselitsa to Strointsy, the commission found three graves where fifty bodies were buried. Another grave on the way from Marshytntsí to Kotelevo contained thirty-nine bodies. In some cases, witnesses were able to identify exactly who had been shot; witnesses in Stalnivtsi, a village in the Novoselitskij raion, testified that on July 7, 1941 a “Romanian military group” came into their village and shot five locals: Naum Brelban, Mark Iuris, Beil Iuris, Greshko Iuris, and Tub Epelban. The residents of Kotelevo also said that the gendarmerie came into their village in August 1941 and shot seven locals “and buried them in the forest.”\textsuperscript{412}

Who were these people who offered the Soviet authorities this information? Some of them were survivors, people who had lost their relatives and friends, people who had come just one step away from being murdered themselves. There were also local non-Jews, especially Ukrainians, who reported the murders - even though as we already know, the Ukrainians had not been completely innocent either. The Ukrainian militias in particular were infamous for their brutality. It is understandable, however, why now the Ukrainians should be so eager to volunteer information. As we know from survivors’ testimonies, Ukrainian locals had played a crucial role in the first days of the occupation in pointing out the Jews. Their role was similar now that the Soviets were back, only now they were going around with the Soviet authorities and pointing out where the killings had happened. This was an interesting strategy - by simply pointing out and describing what others had done, these people managed to survive the transition unharmed. But is there such a thing as a mere observer? And how did the Soviets deal with the fact that some

\textsuperscript{411} YVA, M52/115, 1657, 15 July 1945.
\textsuperscript{412} YVA, M52/115, 1658, 15 July 1945.
Ukrainians had been directly involved in the killings? They smoothed the contradictions by neatly separating the victims - honest Soviet citizens - from the perpetrators, to whom they referred as “Ukrainian-German nationalists.”

There were similar investigations and reports for each individual raion. In the Vashkovskij raion, the commissions established that from July 1941 to April 1944 a total of 1035 people had been “shot and tortured.” They painstakingly recorded all the acts of brutality committed against “peaceful citizens.” In some cases, the victims had been buried alive - in others, the commissions found on opening the mass graves that women “had their breasts cut off” or their hands pulled off. The Soviet commissions were also able to reconstruct in horrifying detail all the atrocities that had been committed in Cernăuți during the first days of the occupation, on July 6 and 7, just as the German and Romanian troops arrived. They estimated that in total, about 6,000 people had been “shot and tortured in the city Chernivtsi” and around 50,000 taken “to work as slaves in Germany.” They did not stop at this but went further, identifying the perpetrators - the Romanian and German authorities responsible for these crimes. The report on Chernivtsi contained a very detailed description of the atrocities committed on July 7 and 8, when the Romanian and German soldiers “gathered more than 2,000 Soviet citizens in the Cultural Palace” in the center of the city and in the evening “took every third person to the Pruth” and made them “dig a pit and then shot them all.” Of course, the Soviet citizens in question were Jewish, but there was no mention of this except to say that the “head of the Jewish cult dr Mark Abram Yakovlevich and rabbi Dr Mark” were humiliated, tortured, and then shot. The report described how the victims kept inside the Cultural Palace were told that they would be allowed to go home but as soon as they came out of the building, “they were fired at with

413 YVA, M52/113, 1603-1604, 6 July 1945.
414 YVA, M52/106, 31 July 1945.
machine guns by Romanian soldiers." They also recorded that mass shootings had taken place on Russkaya street, where dead bodies had been left lying for days, among them some “without legs and hands,” and picked up almost a week later and loaded on “carts with which rubble and garbage would be carried and also in trash cans” and taken to the Jewish cemetery for burial. The report also mentioned that some ‘citizens’ had been killed by beating and some by drowning in the Pruth, “by having rocks tied to their bodies.”

Conclusion

I have written about the different occupations and regime changes from the perspective of the authorities, of nationalists, of politicians – of people who had significant power over individuals, who thought about big ideas and tried to put them in practice. Now I want to look at this story from the perspective of those men and women who went through these changes. How did people think of themselves at the end of the day? Who were they loyal to and where did they feel at home - what language and country did they identify with? Here I am particularly interested in that generation of people whose lives spanned several regimes, who were born under Austrian rule, went to school and grew up under Romanian rule, and were adults or teenagers when World War II broke out. Given that World War II transformed the province so radically, throwing its residents to the four winds, how did people make sense of their broken lives? How did they establish that sense of continuity and meaning that is so important to one’s identity? And above all, how did they think about places? What remains of a place, what is a place when its coordinates change so often? In the case of Czernowitz and Bukovina, the World War II context brings additional complications. It illustrates what was so interesting about

415 YVA, M52/106, 31 July 1945, 1570.
Bukovina’s case: the fact that the place transformed so often without changing much physically. It is one thing to return to one’s native city after a world war and find it razed to the ground, but going home and finding it is still intact and yet completely transformed is a very different experience. It speaks to a much larger phenomenon than post-war trauma: displacement and homelessness as an existential condition, as a state of mind, as a way of being in the world.

These multiple regime changes led people to develop complex, layered identities. The more changes they experienced, the more transformations the places they lived in underwent, the more complicated their sense of self. The irony is that over time - at least over the course of the period we are concerned with here - the general trend was towards a stable, uniform, and coherent identity. The idea was that, if only this cultural coherence could be achieved, there would be no more poverty, conflict, and inequality. As we move forward in time, regimes became less and less tolerant of diversity and ambiguity, and more bent on drawing straight lines through the entangled and complex populations of the borderlands to make them conform to preset categories. Yet the act of subjecting people to so many different projects had the opposite result: shaped and reshaped by so many different systems, all striving to achieve some kind of uniformity, people developed patchwork identities. People could be many different things at once - both victims and perpetrators, both Romanian and Austrian, German and Jewish. Pearl Fichman, who survived Transnistria and then moved to France, the United States, Israel, and back to the United States, is a perfect example. In her memoir, she writes about her complicated sense of identity: the feeling that each experience, every new place she lived added a new layer to her identity.

People were much like the city itself - they were composed of many layers, one superimposed on another. Nothing was ever erased completely but rather was built upon. This is
why the simple question ‘where are you from?’ was so difficult to answer - because many Bukovinans had been born in one place, been raised in another, and then had switched citizenships a few more times, often without ever leaving their homes. “Now, considering layer upon layer of languages and cultures and regimes,” Fichman writes, “how can I easily answer a seemingly simple question? As a rule, I say: ‘I was born in Romania.’” But that answer did not satisfy anyone. It did not even satisfy Fichman herself, who felt like a ‘fake’ Romanian because, even though she had been a Romanian citizen, her cultural circle and way of life had not been the usual ones. Fichman had grown up with “Wiener Schnitzel,” “Spritz,” the “poetry of Schiller, Goethe, and Heine,” and songs “by Schubert and Lehar” - and even though nothing could be more stereotypically Austrian, she could not claim to be Austrian either, for what kind of Austrian was this who was born at a time when the Austrian republic did not even exist, at the easternmost periphery of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire?  

What were people like Fichman, whose fate had been to move back and forth between so many languages and regimes? They were a bit of everything - and that is precisely what was so difficult to accept in the twentieth century. “Growing up,” Fichman writes,” the Romanian education went on side by side with the accustomed life of before - no cutting off of the former, just adding another facet to my life.” Hedwig Brenner tells a similar story. She too had to rebuild her life over and over, first in Bukovina, then in Romania, and finally in Israel. Her life story was also one of constant adaptation and re-invention, like Fichman. Also like Fichman, she had trouble pinning down who she was and where she came from. Raised in a Jewish family in Czernowitz, Brenner grew up speaking German at home but at school and later on, as an adult working in Romania, she naturally spoke Romanian as well. After she and her husband

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416 Pearl Fichman, Before Memories Fade, 8.
417 Ibid.
418 Hedwig Brenner, Mein altes Czernowitz, 95.
immigrated to Israel, she picked up a bit of Hebrew too, although, like many other German-speaking Jews from Bukovina, she never truly mastered it and never made it fully her own. “But I promise,” she writes, “that in my next life I will speak Hebrew.”

The identities of Bukovinian Jews were complicated and multilayered because they occupied such a unique place on Europe’s cultural map. They lived in the East, yet they weren’t typical Ostjuden. They were Holocaust victims, yet they remained profoundly attached to the German language and German culture. But the truth is that Romanians, Ukrainians, and Germans in Bukovina had similar experiences and equally multilayered identities. This became evident in World War II, when many Bukovinans were forced to leave their native places and make new homes elsewhere. It was the moment when many of them discovered that their ‘homelands’ were not where they thought they were. Most Jews who left Bukovina after World War II to go to Israel felt just as foreign and out of place there. For many Romanians in Bukovina, World War II brought the realization that their co-nationals from Romania could never truly understand their problems. The war brought regionalism to the surface. One could be both Romanian and ‘Bukovinan,’ one could recognize the authority of the Romanian state yet choose to remain under the Soviets out of a sense of attachment to one’s native realm. Paraskiva Moldavanu, a Romanian peasant woman from the Hertsaevskij raion, decided to cross the border into Romania in 1944 because, like many other Romanians, she believed “they were in mortal danger” if the Soviets returned. She left her house and fled with her husband, brother, and two small children. While the brother and husband made it to the other side, she had to stay behind because the children fell ill. Moldavanu hid with her two sick children in the forest for two weeks and then, when they succumbed to the disease, returned home to her village in Bukovina. “On the one hand,” she reflected, “I was afraid to go back home, because I thought the Red Army would kill

419 Ibid., 143.
me but on the other hand I felt too sorry to leave my house and decided to return.**420** Romanians who stayed behind under Soviet rule were, in the eyes of their co-nationals across the border, forever tainted by their association with the “Bolsheviks.” We can see just how profoundly people were influenced by the states they lived in, the regimes they were under, and the institutions they interacted with. This drove a wedge not only between co-nationals who lived under different administrations and in different states, but also between generations. Within a single family one could find people with radically different experiences and outlooks on life. In the family of Dmytro Yakovijchuk, a Ukrainian from around Putyla, “the older children had Romanian education, the younger ones - Soviet, and our parents - Austrian (...) each one of us had his own, very different views on life under the influence of different educational systems.”**421**

How one understood the war and how one related to one regime or another depended a lot on whether or not one was immediately affected by them. Many Ukrainian peasants living in remote villages did not give much thought to the Romanian-German occupation because they could go about their everyday lives in peace. They paid attention only if their grain was requisitioned, if their fathers and sons were mobilized into the army and died at the front. Whether one stayed in Bukovina after the war or emigrated also depended on one’s family circumstances - and so did the choices one made during the war. Rosa Roth-Zuckermann refused to immigrate to Latin America with her husband when this was still possible because she did not wish to leave her parents behind. Her husband stayed with her and was murdered in Transnistria, just like the rest of the family. Later, it was Zuckermann who wished to emigrate to Israel and yet couldn’t because her son was too attached to Chernivtsi and his Ukrainian family. Family ties were strong and complicated. One cannot properly understand what people did or did not do

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**420** Paraskiva Ivanivna Moldavanu, in *Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki*, 153.

**421** Dmytro Vasylovych Yakovijchuk, in *Bukovyntsi v trahichni roki*, 133.
during the war without taking this into account.

Where was home for these people at the end of the day? What did these people cling to and how did they make meaning out of their experiences? The answer is: the imagination. This generation of displaced people anchored themselves in an imaginary world - an ideal Heimat that kept them from “floating aimlessly through the world,” as Manfred Hilsenrath put it. This Heimat was called Bukovina and “Czernowitz” or Cernăuți or Chernivtsi. In reality, it meant very different things to different people. For Hilsenrath, the feeling of Heimat came from continuing “the relationships we lost during the war.” “We cannot recreate what is gone forever, but somehow those were our roots,” he writes.422 Family and old friends from before the war gave one a feeling of belonging and stability, but in many cases these connections were severed by the war. Many survivors who lost their families in Transnistria were afraid to return home after the war because nobody they knew and loved would welcome them there. This was the same city, these were the same streets, yet they greeted those who returned with a blank stare. “I wanted to stay in Transnistria,” Rosa Roth-Zuckermann said, “because I was ashamed to go back to Czernowitz. I didn’t regard it as a liberation because I was deeply unhappy, incredibly lonely, and incredibly unhappy.”423 Josef Burg, who had left Bukovina with the Soviets in 1940, put off returning to Cernăuți for two decades for fear of facing the city where his entire family was murdered. Many who survived the trip back from Transnistria and returned to Bukovina found it too painful to stay. “I don’t know why,” one Jewish survivor recalled, “in this city I couldn’t find my place, it was like a foreign city to me. I couldn’t stay there.”424

422 LBI, Manfred Hilsenrath, 21.
424 Center for the Study of Romanian Jewry, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel Collection, Testimonies, 03-1459, 138.
It was not just the city that no longer belonged to them but their own homes as well. People returned and found strangers living in their apartments, wearing their clothes, and using their things as though they had never been theirs. It must have been incredibly disturbing, especially for survivors who felt they were alive only by mistake. When Felicia Ginninger returned from Mogilev, she found that her old apartment in Cernăuți had new Russian residents with whom they had to share their space for the next ten years.425 Riva and Siegmund Meisler, who stayed in Cernăuți after the war, realized after a while that their “Czernowitz” was no longer in Bukovina but in Israel and Germany, where their old friends and relatives were now living. “We have to go there,” they said, “and moreover, here we have no future. Everyone is over there, the entire Czernowitz is there. In every city there are Czernowitz people, in every city. Everywhere they speak German, Russian, and Romanian.”426 Matthias Zwilling, who also stayed behind after the war, found his Heimat in Vienna, where he went once more when the borders opened again after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Like many other Bukovinian Jews, Zwilling remained deeply attached to Vienna because he associated the Austrian capital with the Habsburg Empire, an alternative incarnation of German Kultur that allowed Jews like Zwilling to reconcile their love of German culture and the German language with their Holocaust experience. Like so many other people in Bukovina, Zwilling and his family were products of empire. They looked to Vienna as their capital even though they were far removed from it.

Although Vienna had also changed, it somehow made less of a jarring impression on old ‘Czernowitzer’ than the sight and sound of a Ukrainian-speaking city, which is what Czernowitz became after the war. When they briefly returned to ‘Chernivtsi’ in 1970, Hedwig Brenner and her husband were startled by the foreign aspect of the city they knew so well. “With the image of

425 Felicia Ginninger, in “und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 55-60.
426 Riva and Siegmund Meisler, in “und das Herz wird mir schwer dabei,” 119.
old Czernowitz in our minds, we are disturbed by the foreign Cyrillic writing on the signs above shops, and the sounds of a Slavic language that, for us, does not fit with the street scape are strange. We were overcome by the uncanny feeling that we were in a city where only the rooftops are still part of our memory.\footnote{Hedwig Brenner, \textit{Mein altes Czernowitz}, 115.} Nevertheless, Brenner continued to view “Czernowitz” - the city of her memories and childhood dreams - as her true home, even if this city could no longer be found anywhere on the map. “\textit{My Heimat} is there where I was born, where I spent my youth. If one leaves [this place] later and acquires more homes in addition to it, they are only surrogates. Czernowitz remains my Heimat.”\footnote{Hedwig Brenner, \textit{Mein altes Czernowitz}, 75.}
Chapter 8

Melancholy People

“All my joys to this are folly,
None so sweet as melancholy”
Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*

Any reader of German literature will have heard of Czernowitz. Fewer people know where Chernivtsi is. To get there, the traveler boards the overnight train in Kiev. Fifteen hours later, at the break of dawn, the train reaches the old Habsburg station on Ukraine’s southern frontier with Romania. Coming from the old Ukrainian capital, with its monumental tsarist architecture and omnipresent Soviet legacy, one gets the feeling that Chernivtsi belongs to an altogether different world. Everyone here speaks Ukrainian and Russian, yet the old city looks as Austrian as ever. Even when Chernivtsi was still Czernowitz, the city felt out of place. It was like an island of German language stranded miles away from Vienna and Berlin. Its German culture blossomed not when the city was still under Austrian rule, but when its former ties with the German-speaking world had already been broken. Today, the myth of a hidden, half-forgotten German-speaking cultural paradise in the middle of Eastern Europe eclipses the city’s past and present. The residents of this provincial city in the middle of nowhere - so the story goes - dreamed about Vienna, Bremen, Berlin, and Paris, and their reverie effortlessly turned into art.

The story of how people actually lived in this town and what it meant to be a part of this world pales before the legend of the city that magically transformed into a cultural metropolis, like an exotic flower that unexpectedly blossoms in the middle of a dark forest. In Czernowitz, place and culture almost never overlapped. Its writers and poets were both deeply attached to their native land, and extremely peripatetic. Most of them lived in Czernowitz for only a short

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period of time and spent the rest of their lives moving from state to state and continent to
continent. They were nomadic writers perpetually longing for their “native realm.” It was their
place of origin, paradoxically, that made them placeless, homeless, rootless intellectuals par
e excellence. This chapter is about three such literary figures from Czernowitz: Gregor von
Rezzori, Paul Celan, and Josef Burg. All three have been notoriously difficult to place on the
literary map of Europe because they all wrote in a language other than that of the countries they
lived in. They all moved between different states, changed citizenships multiple times, and found
success in unlikely places, among audiences they never intended to come into dialogue with.
Their literary biographies illustrate how complicated literature’s relationship with place was in
this part of the world.

Like most intellectuals in the Eastern European borderlands, Rezzori, Celan, and Burg -
though cosmopolitan by anyone’s standards - could not afford not to think about the significance
of place. All three writers came from a part of the world that was far removed from the great
capitals of literature and provincial even in the best of times. The burden of Bukovina’s
provinciality grew heavier after World War I, when local writers who had always considered
themselves “Western” by virtue of being Austrian experienced the regime change as a “symbolic
return of Bukovina from Central Europe to the Half-Asian Balkans.” For those young men and
women who returned to Czernowitz after spending the war years in Vienna and Prague as
refugees, the trip back home was like a journey “into the exile of provincial narrowness in which
one felt completely cut off from the cultural centers of the West.”

Yet they all created literature islands out of language and wove dreams out of their yearning for a place and time too distant to
be reached. This was the miracle of the German literary renaissance in interwar Bukovina - that

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2 Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, Czernowitzer Geschichten: Über eine städtische Kultur in Mittelosteuropa (Wien, Köln,
Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2003), 164
it happened only when Bukovina became “self-standing and freed from any kind of connection with the territories of origin,” against the background of Greater Romania’s powerful assimilationist politics. Until then, Bukovina’s German literature had wallowed in a state of relative mediocrity, even though German had been the official language all along. When the empire collapsed and Bukovina went over to Romania in 1918, the old bureaucratic elites were suddenly swept away and a new space emerged for a younger generation of poets and writers to develop in, transforming the German language from a “pure decor to power” into the vehicle for a new kind of German-Jewish middle class culture “immune to social marginalization and national ghettoization and independent of the new field of power controlled from Bucharest.”

The result was a kind of literature that was “perfectly synchronized with patterns of European literary modernism and at the same time very different from the folkloric heimatlich model.” But this was not an easy position to be in. In the poet Alfred Margul-Sperber’s words, “this poetry suffers (…) from a fourfold tragedy: first of all, its bearers are poets at a time in which, as the joke goes, a man standing before the window of a milliner tells his wife he could buy her a hat that would be like a poem, while she says, with a shrug of the shoulders: ‘but darling, who still buys poems nowadays?’ Secondly, these poets are Jews and that means that the non-Jewish world doesn’t want to know about them (…) Thirdly the overwhelming majority of poets in Bukovina write in ‘German’ and this is an especially tragic case at a time when even Jewish poets living in Germany, whose ancestors have been living there for centuries, are having their competence in German-language poetry disputed (…) the fourth and perhaps the most important tragedy of the Jewish poets in Bukovina consists of the fact that they live in Bukovina,

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3 Ibid., 170.
4 Ibid.
where there is neither an echo nor a public for them.”

5 This was the generation of Rezzori, Celan, and Burg.

**The ‘Balkankind’: Gregor von Rezzori**


6 Its author was pretty much unknown in the United States, even though he had already published a couple of novels in Germany. His name was Gregor von Rezzori - a peculiar combination of Italian and German, with the aristocratic *von* in between. When it first appeared in German a couple of years earlier, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* had almost passed unnoticed. After publishing a slim volume of prose entitled *Maghrebinische Geschichten* and *Ein Hermelin in Czernopol* in 1958, Rezzori had become known to German audiences mainly as a satirist, dandy, and literary trickster. In 1959, the magazine *Der Spiegel* featured an article on Rezzori, “known to German readers as the most famous son of Maghrebinia and its inventor,” depicted on the cover as a dashing young man, mischievous-looking, and dressed to kill. The article mentioned Rezzori’s novels only briefly and went into great detail about the author’s complicated trajectory from the “Balkans” to the West.

A worthy son of ‘Maghrebinia’ - the imaginary land he made up to “explain his origins, nationality, political and intellectual orientation” - Rezzori was a man who could not be easily confined to one category or another. He carried the aristocratic title “*von*” yet his ancestors could not be located in any Austrian or Italian nobility archives (*Adelsarchiv*). It was just as unclear

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5 Ibid., 171.
what role Rezzori had played during World War II, when he managed to live in the very heart of Germany without ever being sent to the front. When he started working for the Nord-West Deutscher Rundfunk as the leader of a political re-education program titled *Am runden Tisch* after the war, Rezzori “proved to be a strong critic of National Socialism on the radio.” But as a “Volksdeutscher with Romanian citizenship,” he was also said to have volunteered to enroll in the Wehrmacht - “a decision which might have sprung up from his conflicting attitudes [towards it], and not only from the battle for survival.” Rezzori was the very opposite of the politically aware and militant author figure so popular in Germany after the war but someone who, apparently, while Hitler was marching into Czechoslovakia, “was considering whether he should put on a straw hat or a Harrow hat.” Here, in short, was a controversial and complicated character - not unlike those populating Rezzori’s novels.

It was the American reading public that first took Rezzori seriously as a writer. His *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* originated in a short story Rezzori had written in English and published in 1969 in the *New Yorker*. The story had elicited over 400 letters from readers - most of them Jewish. When the complete novel was published ten years later, once again the Jewish public received it with enthusiasm, for “at last someone had admitted to having grown up as an anti-Semite without falling into nostalgic philo-Semitism afterwards.” This was the beginning of Rezzori’s quick ascent to literary fame in the West. In 1989, he published another book in English translation - an “incidental autobiography” titled *Snows of Yesteryear* which put him in the category of writers of the Habsburg *Untergang* such as Joseph Roth, Sandor Marai, and Stefan Zweig. Unlike them, however, Rezzori did not so much bemoan this world as joke about

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it. In *An Ermine in Czernopol*, another one of Rezzori’s novels inspired by his native Bukovina, the narrator describes Czernowitz - thinly disguised under the fictional name of Czernopol - as “no good or beautiful city,” no idyll of tolerance and understanding among various nationalities (as nostalgics describe it), but one whose distinguishing feature was “laughter”: “Because laughter was everywhere, part of the air we breathed, a crackling tension in the atmosphere, always ready to erupt in showers of sparks, or to discharge itself in great thunderous peals.”

The English-language editions of Rezzori’s novels were shortly followed by Italian and French translations. These too were remarkably well received. Rezzori spent the last thirty years of his life traveling between New York, Toscana, Paris, and London, giving interviews and lectures, and appearing on talk-shows.

Even though he always wrote in German, Rezzori never became a member of the postwar German literary establishment. He kept himself aloof from the literary scene, both literally and figuratively. He liked to describe himself as a *literatus* of the 19th century at the beginning of the 21st and a “living anachronism,” for he did not follow contemporary literary trends and fashions, nor did he frequent any literary circles. Rezzori was a German writer ‘through correspondence’ or, rather, a self-exiled author who wrote in German but lived outside of Germany. “What I wrote is a way of thinking and expressing myself that has nothing to do with the German spirit of nowadays,” Rezzori said. “I am an anachronism, an Austrian anachronism.” But what kind of an Austrian was this who had not even lived in Austria more than a few years at the most?

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Rezzori did not seem to belong to any one place, but rather to a world suspended beyond space and time, somewhere in the realm of the imagination.

Rezzori cultivated the persona of a rootless cosmopolitan and “living anachronism,” as he liked to call himself, with the same attention and care with which he crafted his fiction. He thought of himself as a man between times and places, a person beyond classification - much like his native land. In *Anecdotage*, a volume of essays and reminiscences published a few years before his death in 1998, Rezzori writes: “born into a gap between ages. Geographically suspect as well. Teetering on the border of East and West. No tears shed over a lost world seen as lost long before it really was. An eventful past impinging unnostalgically on the here and now (bringing with it the sentimental values of bygone days). No-strings-attached metamorphoses: fictions of my own being. As much a part of me as my books. I am all this - and I am not.”\(^{13}\)

Rezzori was a German-language writer with not even one drop of German blood. He came from a family of Habsburg bureaucrats who had been living on the territory of Austria-Hungary for five generations, imperial citizens *par excellence*. The Rezzori’s had Sicilian ancestors but were utterly devoted to the German language and the Habsburg monarchy. About his grandfather, Rezzori writes that “in accordance with his rank and position, [he] was unconditionally loyal to Emperor Francis Joseph I. This was not in contradiction to the Italian origins of the family, which he proudly acknowledged (…) the Rezzoris had always been loyal subjects of the Habsburg monarchy.”\(^{14}\)

Simply by virtue of having been born in Bukovina, Rezzori became an *Epochenverschlepper*, in his own words, a relic of a vanished world that was at home neither here nor there, someone who felt ‘out of his skin’ everywhere he went but for whom there was

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no place to return to. Rezzori described this condition as having a “dubious identity.” In Mir auf der Spur, he relates how later in life he found out from his mother, who had been too embarrassed to tell him the truth, that he had been born in a carriage on the way to Czernowitz. This was the dramatic beginning of a lifetime of wandering, in which Rezzori saw a reflection of “the crux of my Habsburg existence.” He was not the only Bukovinan to think of himself in these terms. Many Czernowitzers felt they had led not one, but multiple lives as ‘fake’ Austrians, ‘fake’ Romanians, ‘fake’ Ukrainians, and so on. For Rezzori, however, this ‘dubiousness’ was not only the product of historical accident but also the marker of an existential condition associated with modernity and also, in his view, indispensable to the act of writing and creating.

The world Rezzori evokes is not the bemoaned “world of yesterday,” but a postwar landscape dotted with ruins and inhabited by people consumed by nostalgia, pining for something that was forever lost. What concerns him the most is the tragicomic fate of individuals who had been expelled from the past and forced to reinvent themselves in the aftermath of an empire’s collapse. His novels present an “anatomy of melancholy” in interwar Bukovina, where nostalgia, unease, restlessness were the dominant mood. “We grew up with the myth of a lost bygone world,” he writes, “golden and miraculous. By 1915 we were already what later hundreds of thousands of Europeans were to become: refugees, exiles, leaves tossed by the storms of history.” Rezzori’s protagonists are not the usual kind of exiles, for they were expelled from time rather than place. He describes their condition in Snows of Yesteryear: “neither my father nor my mother belonged to the indigenous population. Each in his or her own way lived in a kind of exile: they had both ended up in a colony deserted by its colonial masters. Hardly anything remained of the former social world they had inhabited - however confined and

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These were people whose life trajectories had been so profoundly shaped by the Habsburg empire that, after the empire was no more, they felt dislocated, uprooted, and unable to find their bearings. In the new world where cultural and ethnic identities were expected to coincide, people like Rezzori’s parents were no longer seen as culturally superior ‘civilizers,’ but as aberrations. To give some sense of constancy and meaning to their lives, these “old masters” clung to their old prejudices and ideas, even though these were no longer justified by the place they occupied in society: “we considered ourselves members of a class of masters, although we were no longer masters of anything, taken over by another class to which we dreamed ourselves superior but which, in fact, treated us as second-rate citizens because of the odium attached to an ethnic minority.”

Rezzori’s half-mythical, half-real Bukovina is suffused not only with nostalgia for the world of yesterday, but also with hatred of the Jews. Anti-Semitism is a powerful motif in Rezzori’s story of loss, collapse, change, and nostalgia. His novels present an unusual perspective on the issue: a view of anti-Semitism from the inside, as seen not by a victim or sympathetic observer but by someone who grew up deeply immersed in it. In Rezzori’s Czernopol, anti-Semitism - like opera tickets - was above all a marker of status, a way of signaling membership in the honorable strata of society. Among the upper classes, Rezzori suggests, anti-Semitism was more like a phobia than the deep hatred it became once it was embraced by the lower classes and petty bourgeoisie. He gives the example of his own father, who was deeply prejudiced against the Jews but did not share the visceral anti-Semitism of the Romanian regime - not out of generosity but because he believed anti-Semitism was a privilege “reserved to him and his peers” and not something the Romanians or Ruthenians, who were as

16 Ibid., 65.
17 Ibid., 200.
low as the Jews on the cultural scale, should be allowed to indulge in. The anti-Semitism of his father had nothing to do with racial ideology, but was rooted in such peculiar superstitions as the belief that Jews were bad luck, that they were “blood-suckers” and phonies - although he was also one to insist that “that doesn’t give anyone the right to steal from them.”

In *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*, however, the anti-Semitic Austrians stranded outside the “world of yesterday” are not unlike the people they despise the most. They are all strangers and wanderers, deeply loyal to the monarchy and to German *Kultur*. They are committed to the German language and hated for it by the Romanians; and they are convinced they knew better what German culture was about than even the Germans themselves. In Rezzori’s Bukovina, Jews and non-Jews compete for authenticity and for the right to claim German *Kultur* as their own. The first-person narrator - a reflection of the author’s own voice - ends up identifying with the Jews he was taught to despise because, like them, he becomes an outcast in morally purified, post-Anschluss Austria. In Hitler’s empire, German speakers from outside the ethnic German heartlands - like himself - lost their dignity as “bearers and preservers of *Kultur*,” and were dismissed as *Tschuschen* - inauthentic Germans from the East, whose blood, national feelings, and moral make-up had been no doubt diluted with foreign elements.

Nostalgia is Rezzori’s subject, not his mood - and this is what sets his Czernopol novels apart from the vast memoir literature that came out of Bukovina. Rezzori spins his childhood memories of Bukovina into “private mythologies and myths,” knowing full well that the Czernowitz he remembers exists in a time and space of its own, accessible only to the imagination and otherwise impossible to recover. The “Czernopol” of Rezzori’s childhood was both ethereal and incredibly magnetic - a place where the past and present intermingled. Like

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19 Ibid., 168-173.
Galicia and Lodomeria, Bukovina was like a “Shakesperean kingdom” whose existence was questionable: “and yet one spoke of it, as though it still was, although it no longer exists since 1940.” Everything about Bukovina and Czernowitz was “former.” In Claudio Magris’ words, Rezzori’s native city was “the former capital of the former crownland of Bukovina, given up by the former Ottoman Empire to the former Habsburg empire and included in the former kingdom of Galicia, successively one of the former lands of the Habsburg crown, then former Romanian city, and who maybe, tomorrow, formerly Soviet…” Czernopol, it seems, consisted entirely of relics of the past, more vivid and visible than the present. In his fiction, Rezzori attempts to recapture the _spiritus loci_ of this place that was half-legend, half-reality, that both existed and didn’t exist. When I think back to that time,” Rezzori writes, “Bukovina appears before me floating between heaven and earth, like Mohammed’s tomb. Whatever I think of sounds a bit unbelievable.”

Frustrated by the elusiveness of his imagined Czernowitz, Rezzori went back to Bukovina in the 1980s in search of his lost homeland. He found Czernowitz almost completely unchanged, yet “its overpowering here-and-now was soulless. It had been, to some extent, pulled out of its world time (_Weltzeit_).” Instead of the “dozen of ethnic groups, languages, religions, temperaments, and traditions” for which his _Heimatstadt_ had acquired “worldwide fame,” Rezzori found “plump” women, “stocky and bloated men.” A people of cabbage-eaters, not starving, not discontent, resigned to God’s will, earnest and demure” - in other words, a very

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24 Ibid., 10.
different universe from that which he remembered.\textsuperscript{25} The city was clean, with “no traces of its demonic” character.\textsuperscript{26} Rezzori discovers that his \textit{Heimweh} - his homesickness - was not for the place itself but for the sunken world that had once animated the streets and buildings that otherwise “remained untouched and identical.”\textsuperscript{27} Reality, rather than aiding memory and relieving homesickness, threatened to pollute them and spoil the pleasure of nostalgia. So Rezzori abandoned it as fast as possible, concluding that one “should not go in search of lost time in the spirit of nostalgic tourism.”\textsuperscript{28}

Rezzori’s Bukovina has an extraordinary literary quality to it precisely because it is so difficult to place in space and time. And this literary quality, this fictional element, is Rezzori’s only unbreakable bond with his homeland. “I would never have written without Bukovina,” Rezzori acknowledged, “and also would not know what I should be writing about without this background.”\textsuperscript{29} Naturally, Rezzori’s first novel was about this world, once home to “a good dozen ethnic groups, languages, religions, temperaments, and traditions, where they seethed and were sublimated into the amalgam of a quintessential \textit{Schlawinertum}.”\textsuperscript{30} Entitled \textit{Maghrebinien Geschichten}, this book painted a humorous and grotesque portrait of a place that could not be found anywhere in particular. “You will look for Maghrebinien in vain,” the reader is warned, “you won’t find it on any map or globe” for even though “some claim that it can be found in the south-east what is this but a relative concept in the Copernican world system?”\textsuperscript{31} Bukovina was not only a source of inspiration for Rezzori but it also provided him with an endless ‘palette’ of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 12-13.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 10.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 17.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Gero von Böhm, Interview with Gregor von Rezzori, in \textit{Begegnungen: Menschenbilder aus drei Jahrzehnten} (Muenchen: Coll. Rolf Heyne, 2012).
\item \textsuperscript{31} Gregor von Rezzori, \textit{Maghrebinische Geschichten} (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1953), 9.
\end{itemize}
images, metaphors, and ideas to draw from. It gave him his sensibility as a writer: “the scoundrels and fools the dreamers and dullards the far too many witty tongues of the legendary city of Czernopol all helped to weave the fabric of a durable life that I carry within me and love and sometimes even more deeply hate. Even today after another life - two three even more - spent in other places I can feel that all the fibers of my being are interwoven in this cloth. All my images come from it.”

Though deeply attached to his “legendary homeland,” Rezzori did not become a Heimat-writer. If anything, his attachment to Bukovina made him allergic to the very idea of Heimat and the nostalgia for it. What Rezzori’s half-fictional half-real “Czernopol” shows is that homelessness - like the railways, the television, or consumerism - is a necessary symptom of modernity. Both Snows of Yesteryear and An Ermine in Czernopol are exercises in irony rather than nostalgia. The reader is invited to feel the taste of homesickness and longing for the past, but also to laugh at the absurd desire to recover something that never really existed. From “Czernopol” - the legendary city that is nowhere to be found on the map - we are to learn that rootedness is at best an illusion, that we had better get used to feeling displaced and disoriented because this is a “typical attitude of the modern man towards life”: “our experience makes us especially sensitive to deracination, world-loss [Weltverlust], and disorientation.”

A son of “Czernopol” and a “child between times and cultures,” Rezzori was a deracine par excellence. His roots were in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, “a world that vanished almost as soon as he was born.” He grew up and came of age in Romania and post-World War I Vienna, then lived in Germany, settled down in Italy near Florence and traveled well into his old age to Vienna, Bucharest, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, Rome, and New York, learning to make himself at

32 Gregor von Rezzori, Anecdotage, 148.
home everywhere in the world.\textsuperscript{34} Although his life trajectory was rather unusual, Rezzori saw in it the reflection of a sense of homelessness and displacement increasingly common in the postwar world, where “almost every one of us has changed his milieu and circle of friends more than once and consequently also his language.”\textsuperscript{35} From a condition imposed upon him by “historical events,” statelessness became for Rezzori a moral and ideological choice - a “spiritual marker” and a “mindset.”\textsuperscript{36} To cling too strongly to any one place, to depend on any set of circumstances, was less desirable to Rezzori than learning to “be at home everywhere,” a skill he developed while living the life of a wanderer: “I could - and still can - set roots everywhere. And I can also cut them off any time.”\textsuperscript{37} He believed that rootlessness was a prerequisite for intellectual and moral freedom - a kind of vaccine against ideological naivety and the dangerous human desire for uniformity and coherence. For this reason, when he lost his Romanian citizenship in 1944, Rezzori remained stateless for forty years, until traveling without a ‘fatherland’ became too complicated so he acquired an Austrian passport, because “the second evil, namely that of becoming an Austrian again, seemed lesser.”\textsuperscript{38} Even in his old age, Rezzori lived like a “domestic nomad,” “traipsing back and forth” between his house in Toscana and the tower in which he wrote and read in order to “avoid getting settled in one spot for good (…) because I don’t want to give up my freedom.”\textsuperscript{39} Yet Rezzori was also the first to admit that he owed all of this to “my origins” in Bukovina, “a land which practically no longer exists - which

\textsuperscript{37} Gregor von Rezzori, Anecdotage, 6.
\textsuperscript{39} Rezzori, Anecdotage, 6.
is no longer the same as before either politically or demographically.”

Rootedness and rootlessness were for Rezzori not just philosophical concepts, but also identity markers paradoxically rooted in place. He viewed America as a continent of nomads, innately rootless people who left their birthplaces and moved across the “vast crazy quilt of the US” with ease. Europe, by contrast, was a continent of nostalgias, of longings for lost homelands, and people searching for their roots. While Europeans carried in their souls a “Heimat, a small idyllic homeland,” Americans could both love their birthplaces and “bear this monstrous continent” with them. They could be firmly attached to one place yet see it as “only one tiny spot” on the vast continent.

In short, space shaped cultural sensibilities. Rezzori discusses these ideas at length in his essay on Nabokov’s Lolita, which he interprets as an expression of the “passionate love affair of Europeans with frivolous America.” Although Nabokov and he could not have been more different in many ways, Rezzori identifies him as a fellow deracine, a man “uprooted from the soil of a beloved birthplace,” sharing “a certain lifelong homesickness,” and lamenting “a loss far greater than any given spot on the globe.” Similarly to Nabokov, Rezzori viewed America as a utopia of rootlessness, complete freedom from place, and the burden of memories. “I had been filled with the desire to go there and roam over its boundless spaces,” Rezzori writes, “occupied, I imagined, by buffalo and skyscrapers, redskins on mustangs, gangsters with their molls, black men playing jazz on saxophones, and Buster Keaton.” The Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz had a similar fascination with America as a place where “all continuity breaks” and “memories fade and go to pieces” - a place of infinitely

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42 Gregor von Rezzori, A Stranger in Lolitaland, 44.
43 Ibid., 42.
wide spaces, vast expanses, and limitless fields. Milosz too put space at the center of the American experience, defined by the “excessive splendor and enormity of landscape.” “This excessive splendor,” Milosz wrote, “seems to conceal some idea, and perhaps even the bed of the highway traced among the dwarf pines had been readied long ago in anticipation that someone would drive along it, someone who would grasp the intentions of its hidden, perverse Creator.”

The breadth and enormity of America were both overwhelming, frightening, and immensely seductive to East Europeans used to narrow - often stifling - state borders and imagined homelands.

Though skeptical of fatherlands and Heimaten, Rezzori regretted the loss of such “specifically European forms,” which, he believed, signaled a general decline in European civilization. For him, there were two major turning points along Europe’s downward trajectory: the Anschluss of 1938 and the end of World War II. 1938 was the first such moment of rupture for Rezzori because it put an end to an age-old dream of unifying Europe into a supranational entity on the model of the Holy Roman Empire by substituting a narrow, racial understanding of Germanness for a broader and vaguer idea of a German empire that “had no fixed boundaries and even in a fantasy future was not a real nation.”

This dream of a boundless Germany was essentially a linguistic utopia, a “fairy tale through and through,” embracing all German-speaking peoples and having nothing to do with Bismarck’s or Hitler’s versions of Germany. The only polity that came close to embodying this ideal had been the Habsburg empire or the “black red gold empire” as Rezzori calls it, “a fatherland of language”: “I am still its wholehearted citizen today though I realize I too have become part of its mythical heritage.”

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45 Rezzori, Anecdoteage, 184.
46 Ibid., 185.
Living in Vienna at the time, Rezzori experienced the Anschluss as a first step towards the de-Europeanization of Europe. In March 1938, people who had always lived in the heart of Europe had to cut off their roots and “begin an uncertain existence somewhere unknown” for the first time: “it didn’t happen every day that one left one’s home, one’s possessions and friends and the beloved places one lived in.” Europe changed from one day to the next and “whatever had been in the past seemed to have been suddenly gone forever, as though it had never existed.” The second major rupture occurred at the end of World War II, when Europe collapsed again and whatever was left of it “transformed into a second-hand America.” This ‘Americanization’ of Europe manifested itself not only in America’s growing influence on European affairs, but also in the decline of “specifically European forms” such as the ideal of Heimat and the desire for absolute belonging. The “Americanization” of Europe marked the beginning of a new era, for Rezzori, one in which Europeans became increasingly mobile, nomadic, and “American” in how they related to places and territory.

Rezzori’s work is ultimately about Europe. His novels re-defined Europe and re-imagined European identity at a time when Europe’s distinctness from America was becoming less and less clear. But Americanization was not the only reason why Europe was in serious trouble, in Rezzori’s view. The writer believed that Europe had brought about its own downfall by unleashing the forces of nationalism and national chauvinism which brought “us, where we stand today: on the precipice, in fact at the end of Europe.” Because Europe had essentially destroyed itself from within, a “political illusion” like the European Union was bound to disintegrate because the unity it created was temporary and superficial, while national antagonisms

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An entity like the European Union was, in Rezzori’s opinion, fundamentally unstable also because it left intact absurd borders such as that between Austria and Germany, which perpetuated the false notion that Bismarck’s German Reich was the direct successor of the Holy Roman Empire and that today’s Austria is “also the Austria of once upon a time, the kaiserlich und koeniglich.”

Rezzori’s ideal Europe looked less like the European Union, and more like the “beautiful complex of Maghrebinia,” the hodge-podge of nationalities and languages from “Italians to Poles, Russians, Romanians, Ruthenians, and God knows what else” that had once been ruled by the Habsburgs. His novels are an excellent example of what Claudio Magris called the ‘Habsburg myth in Austrian literature,’” yet the writer always insisted that “I am not nostalgic about the disappeared empire, we will never be able to reconstruct it.” His aim was, rather, to evoke a world “that has disappeared almost completely from the consciousness of Europeanness” in order to reveal a different way of imagining Europe. This “other” Europe was a dialectical entity consisting of two, equally important halves: West and East. At the time that Rezzori was writing his tales of “Maghrebinia” and “Tescovina,” West Europeans seemed to have reconciled themselves to the loss of Eastern Europe to the Soviets. Rezzori’s novels were a reminder that the very essence of European identity lay in the interplay between East and West. Eastern Europe was, in short, just as European as its western counterpart. Like Milan Kundera, Gyorgy Konrad, and others who were embracing the idea of Mitteleuropa as an alternative to the “Eastern bloc” at the time, Rezzori argued that the idea of Europe “beyond the Iron Curtain was kept alive much

more than in the West, which has grown increasingly indifferent to its culture.” While in Western Europe, culture had succumbed to consumerism, in the East the dream of Kultur remained as alive as ever.

Rezzori’s nostalgia was not for Habsburg Kultur, but for the cultural legacies it sought to overcome in the East. His heroes are not the Habsburg civilizers, but the half-savage Ruthenian Cassandra in Snows of Yesteryear, exotic Romanians like Herr Alexianu in An Ermine in Czernopol, and the Oriental-looking Jews and Gypsies of Bucharest in Memoirs of an Anti-Semite. About his parents, imperial citizens par excellence, Rezzori writes that they “lived in their own cocoon, knowing nothing about the vivid cultural and spiritual life” around them and forgetting - in their total self-absorption - that “Habsburg Czernowitz had been established not on the steppes but on the foundations of another equally traditional culture - Byzantine and the empire of the Ottomans.”51 That his parents’ generation had failed to acknowledge the virtues of this sunken culture was, for Rezzori, a mere reflection of “the fatal tendency of western culture to spread and remove other cultures,” of its overpowering and brutal expansionism. As the writer saw it, the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe had been always been unequal, almost predatory: “the influence of the west had always been ominous for the rest.”52

The Poet out of Nowhere: Paul Celan

In October 1959, a new professor of German joined the faculty at the Ecole normale superieure in Paris. He was almost forty years old and had been living in Paris for a little over a decade. Very few people knew who Paul Celan was - and even fewer suspected he would become the star of postwar German literature. In Paris, Celan only had literary contacts with a

51 Rezzori, Mir auf der Spur, 28.
52 Ibid., 142.
few authors whose works he had translated into German: Rene Char, Henri Michaux, Jean Daive. He also had a couple of poet friends - Jean Bollack and Andre du Bouchet who knew he wrote poetry but could not read his work. Paul Celan insisted on writing in German even though this made his work inaccessible to French audiences. He was a native German speaker originally from Romania - not German but Jewish. He had come to Paris straight from Vienna. He could read and speak Romanian, French, Russian, and some Ukrainian and Hebrew. He had escaped deportation to Transnistria by the skin of his teeth, but his parents - who refused to go into hiding - had not. Shortly after the “liberation,” Celan had received news that his mother and father had been shot by the Germans in a camp somewhere across the Bug. Yet, shortly after arriving in Paris, he wrote: “there’s nothing in the world for which a poet will give up writing, not even when he is a Jew and the language of his poems is German.”

The 1950s, when Celan arrived in Paris, were not a good time for avant-gardist and esoteric poetry of the kind that he wrote. Difficult to understand and almost impossible to translate, Celan’s poetry remained practically out of reach for French readers until after his death. Only one year after he settled down at the Ecole normale in the Quartier Latin, however, Celan received the highest literary distinction a German-language writer could aspire to: the Georg Buechner prize. The previous year Celan had already been awarded the Bremen literature prize. In Paris, he only managed to publish 4,000 copies of his first volume of poems Die Niemandsrose - most of which probably remained unsold. By contrast, the Suhrkamp publishing house in Berlin released 21,000 copies of this volume in German. By the mid-1960s, most educated people had heard about Paul Celan and likely read his best-known poem Todesfuge, a “moving portrayal of the horrors of a Nazi death camp,” as one literary scholar described it at the time. In Germany, Celan was always at the center of literary debates - a mysterious, even controversial figure - even though very few

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readers were actually familiar with his poetry. He was the kind of literary figure one heard about but did not read. Yet the literary establishment in Germany and abroad declared him the author of “the best existing contemporary German poetry.”

Celan often visited Germany to give lectures and readings, yet he kept himself aloof from the German literary scene, becoming a sort of German poet through correspondence, dispatching poem after poem from his self-inflicted exile in Paris to Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Bremen. Unlike in France, where he remained an obscure figure until his death, in Germany Celan’s name was on everyone’s lips. He was as controversial as he was celebrated. According to Celan, German literary critics completely misinterpreted his work. The poet’s disagreements with his German audiences were not just a matter of aesthetics and style; they were a serious conflict around his identity as a German-speaking Jew and Holocaust survivor. Unsurprisingly for someone whose parents had been murdered in the Holocaust, Celan feared that his poetry was being misused by “conciliators and Wiedergutmacher” who wished to leave the embarrassing past behind as soon as possible. To him, comments such as Guenter Bloecker’s, that his Todesfuege consisted of “contrapuntal exercises on music paper or on mute keys - music for the eyes, optical music lines,” read like politically charged attacks, motivated by a reluctance to come to terms with the past and perhaps even by a resurgence in anti-Semitism. For Celan, the danger of anti-Semitism remained as real as ever and, as time went by, his preoccupation with anti-Semitism turned into a genuine obsession that alienated him even from his closest friends. In reaction to Bloecker’s off-handed criticisms of Todesfuge, Celan wrote his friends Ingeborg Bachmann and Max Frisch that the poem was for him “an epitaph and a grave. Whoever writes

54 DLA, Paul Celan, Box 2, Allgemeines V, Stefan Ripplinger, “Celans Überwinder,” in Konkret no 10, October 1997.
55 DLA, Paul Celan, Box 2, Allgemeines V, Stefan Ripplinger, “Celans Ueberwinder,” in Konkret no 10, October 1997.
about the Todesfuge that which this Bloecker wrote about it is desecrating the graves. My mother too has only this grave.”

Whether anti-Semitism had something to do with how Celan’s work was received in Germany or not, what is certain is that Celan felt ill at ease among fellow German poets and writers. Among them he felt like an outsider and imposter. As he put it in a letter to his childhood friend from Cernăuți Gustav Chomed, “many young German poets owe me something. But that they cannot forgive me, the Bukovinan Jew.” Incidents such as the “Goll affair,” when the widow of the poet Ivan Goll accused him of plagiarism, claiming among other things that “the death of Celan’s parents in the camps was a legend and (...) that a few days after the death of her husband he wanted to rape her” confirmed Celan’s suspicions. They reinforced his sense that everywhere he went, he was regarded as a fraud, a Jew who “dabbled” in the language of another people, a “dealer in used metaphors,” a cultural parasite incapable of

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56 Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan, Gisele Celan-Lestrange, Max Frisch, and Bertrand Badiou, Herzzeit: Ingeborn Bachmann, Paul Celan, der Briefwechsel: mit den Briefwechseln zwischen Paul Celan und Max Frisch sowie zwischen Ingeborg Bachmann und Gisele Celan-Lestrange (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 12 November 1959, 165.

57 Celan was especially skeptical of “patented anti-Nazis like Boell or Andersch,” German intellectuals who were bending over backwards to disentangle themselves from the Nazi regime by placing “themselves in a comfortable and immaculate position that allows them to be extremely mean in private.” Neither did he show any sympathy for what his fellow Bukovinan Gregor von Rezzori was trying to do in his Maghrebinische Geschichten - which earned a literary prize that year. That such a “pretty and amusing” and “humorous” a portrayal of “of-course pre-Nazi anti-Semitism” should be applauded struck Celan as disturbing though unremarkable, given the hypocrisy of the postwar German literary establishment. Celan’s fears might have been exaggerated given his poor mental health at the time (from 1962 until his death by suicide in 1970 he was in and out of mental institutions); yet anti-Semitism was far from extinct and Celan genuinely felt that no matter how successful he was in Germany, fellow poets and writers - whether openly or covertly - would always regard him as a Jewish ‘impostor.’

58 Paul Celan, Gustav Chomed, Barbara Wiedemann, and Juergen Köchel, “...ich brauche Deine Briefe,” (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 16.

59 DLA, Paul Celan, Box 5: Goll Affäre, Juergen Wallmann, “Dokumente zu einer Infamie: Die Celan-Goll Affäre,” 86.
creating anything original.  

Celan’s “dubiousness” cast a shadow on his relationship with the Western European literary establishment. To fellow German-language poets and writers in the West, he appeared to have landed in the middle of the German literary scene practically out of nowhere. When he first arrived “in the West” after the war, all Celan had to recommend him as a German poet was a letter of introduction from his friend and mentor, the Bukovinian poet Alfred Margul-Sperber, who described him as the most promising German-language poet of his generation. But the German literary landscape of Bukovina was practically unknown abroad. When Max Rychner first published some of Celan’s poems in the Zuerich newspaper Der Tat, he wrote in the preamble that “Paul Celan is a young Romanian, who having grown up in a Romanian-speaking village, learned German by a strange twist of fate and was drawn into our literature.” By “our,” Rychner meant the literature of ‘legitimate’ German speakers with less complicated life trajectories and inexplicable origins. Celan, whose family had made it their sacred duty to speak an immaculate German at a time when it took some effort and courage to do so (because as we have already seen, all non-Romanian languages were outlawed in the public sphere), was incensed by Rychner’s ignorant comment. In response, he wrote that “I have not, as you Herr Doktor think, learned German - German is my mother tongue, and yet I had to write German poems as an exile.” Rychner’s innocent mistake signaled a larger problem that would haunt Celan for the rest of his life abroad: that German speakers in the West would never recognize him as one of them. To them, he was a cultural aberration, a “Steppenwolf without origins, with

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Jewish features that are recognizable for miles,” a man “who does not in fact exist.” For Celan, such comments felt like a slap in the face, for they made it plain as day that the ‘West’ did not know or care much about the efforts of poets and writers who had cultivated the German language with such ardor at the edge of the German-speaking world. But neither did Romania or the Soviet Union.

So, if Celan’s poetry did not ring German even though it was written in the German language, but it was also definitely not Romanian or Russian, where did Celan belong? Celan’s seeming placeless-ness was a symptom of a larger phenomenon Bern Kolf called “invisible poetry” - the emergence of islands of literature and culture that floated outside of space and time. “This practice of the linguistic motherland, which throws the cookie after picking out the raisins,” Kolf writes, “amplifies the chronic identity crisis in which the literature of a national minority necessarily finds itself: due to its language it does not belong to the land in which it finds itself, due to its themes and worldview it does not belong to the literature with which it has the language in common. And it is too weak to be self-standing, because it has no reception space.” This is why the question of Celan’s “origins” and their influence on his poetry have always fascinated his critics. A poet like him could only emerge from the ashes of empire, yet at the time that Celan was writing, literature - like politics - was expected to follow national lines. But in Bukovina, culture and politics had never moved in tandem, and the simple categories with which literary critics operated did not fit Celan’s profile. As a result, after his death, Celan was reclaimed by not one but several different nation-states as their poet. Some critics insisted that Celan should be counted Austrian because apparently, when he first landed in Vienna in December 1947, he “invented a fantasy biography for himself, namely that he had been born in

63 Ibid., 338.
1918 and not as the case was actually, in 1920 in Czernowitz.”

Whether Celan’s choice had the symbolic significance that critics later attributed to it is uncertain, but in any case the “Austria” he identified with was not a political entity but an imaginary realm of language and literature. Romanian critics and his literary friends from Bucharest always reclaimed Celan as a Romanian poet, for even though he wrote most of his works in German Celan spent the formative years of his life in Romania, where he translated from Romanian into German, and on several occasions even experimented with writing poetry in the Romanian language. In turn, Germany reclaimed Celan as its own poet even though he would never have described himself as such. Critics of course have also pointed out the Jewish elements in Celan’s work - although whether he should be considered a Jewish poet or not has been disputed, especially in Israel where committed Hebrew-language writers frowned upon assimilated Jews like Celan, who clung to the language of the enemy. To make matters even more complicated, Celan once described himself even as a Russian poet - not because he ever wrote in Russian, but because he strongly identified with Osip Mandelshtam and Sergey Esenin. “Celan is of course no Russian poet,” the novelist Hans Richter wrote, “just as he is not the successor of French poets from Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Valery and Appollinaire to Char, Daive and Michaux, just as he, as a citizen of the French Republic, did not become a French poet. He could have called himself, at the most, an Austrian poet or a German [poet] from Romania. But unreservedly and simply German? Never.”

If there is anything most critics agree on, it is that Celan’s origins are the key to his

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poetry, that place was in fact the main concern of this deracine par excellence. That critics have
paid such careful attention to this question is unsurprising given how often Celan and his
Cernăuți friends - intellectuals in their own right who later wrote memoirs about their youth in
Bukovina and their friendship with the poet - talked about his “point of departure” or “place of
origin,” as the poet put it in his so-called “Meridian speech.”67 Some have ascribed Celan’s
unusual German language to the atmosphere of multilingual Cernăuți, “a cultural center, a far-
removed bridgehead of the European and Jewish spirit” where Jews, Germans, Poles,
Romanians, and Ukrainians lived side by side.68 Others have, on the contrary, insisted that the
influence of Celan’s birthplace on his poetry should not be overestimated because the
“multicultural inflections in Celan’s work are not due to the multilingualism of Bukovina (…) but are much more the result of an intensive life-long engagement with people and books, not
only from Bukovina.”69

Whether or not Celan can indeed “be placed” - whether his poetry is anchored in space or
attached to any particular landscape - is a matter of contention. For even though his poems are
always about places, they have an almost ethereal quality to them - as though they were
suspended somewhere outside of time and space. Although there is no consensus on what Celan
understood by his “place of origin,” the problem of Heimat and the longing for roots are very
important themes in his work - as the poet himself acknowledged in both his Bremen and
Buechner prize speeches. In the first speech he gave in 1958 in Bremen, Celan described the
landscape “from which - after such detours! but is there such a thing as detours? - the landscape

69 DLA, Christine Ivanovic, “Auch du hättest ein Recht auf Paris’: Die Stadt und der Ort des Gedichts bei Paul
from which I come to you, which is likely unknown to most of you” as a “non-place,” in the words of Marko Pajevic, a literary utopia that existed outside of geography and could not be contained within borders.\(^{70}\) This was the place in which “those Hassidic stories that Martin Buber told all of us again in German were at home,” a former province of the Habsburg monarchy “now fallen out of history.” Unlike his contemporary Rose Auslaender, who was much more of a landscape poet, Celan described his native Bukovina as a “place where people and books lived,” a place filled with dreamers who were both there and not there, anchored to the ground yet always traveling in their imaginations to Vienna, in the one-way train that was the German language. This was Celan’s “place of origin,” of which nothing remained at the end of the day but the language: “amid all the losses only one thing was reachable, close, and not lost: the language. It, the language, was not lost, yes in spite of everything.”\(^{71}\) In his “Meridian speech,” Celan developed this idea further, likening poetry to an act of homecoming in which “language becomes voice”: “It is on such paths that poems take us when we think of them (…) they are encounters, paths from a voice to a listening You, natural paths, outlines for existence perhaps, for projecting ourselves into the search for ourselves…A kind of homecoming.”\(^{72}\) Here it becomes evident that Celan’s preoccupation with his “place of origin” was much more than a longing to return “to the intact place, that still existed in the mind” - the nostalgia for the forgotten crown land that fell out of history.\(^{73}\) It was an attempt to come to terms with homelessness as an existential problem - a question that Martin Heidegger, whose ideas very much resonated with Celan’s, was also deeply preoccupied with. The conclusion Celan arrives at


\(^{71}\) Paul Celan, “Ansprache anlässlich der Entgegenahme des Literaturpreises der Freien Hansestadt Bremen,” in Ausgewählte Gedichte (Suhrkamp, 1969), 128.


is that places of origin cannot be found on the map because “they do not exist.” Instead, he says, “I find the connective which, like the poem, leads to encounters. I find something as immaterial as language, yet earthly, terrestrial, in the shape of a circle which, via both poles, rejoins itself and on the way serenely crosses even the tropics: I find…a meridian.”

Celan’s biography and the intellectual problems he was concerned with were very much intertwined. Rather than look for direct Bukovinian influences in his work, we should reflect on how place, home, and homelessness became major themes in both his personal life and poetry. This is why an analysis of Celan’s poetry is necessarily also an analysis of his life story, and why so many of his interpreters and critics have ended up writing not simply criticism but intellectual biographies of Clean. This was in fact how Celan saw the world. The landscape he was anchored in was one of books, ideas, and language - it was both immaterial and immediate or “terrestrial,” as he described it in his Meridian speech. In Romantic fashion, Celan was in fact living his poetry, which is why he was so opposed to the idea of art as aesthetic artifice. It is striking, then, that so few of Celan’s poems were actually read and understood. Instead, the poet became a kind of symbol of homelessness, a tragic figure embodying both the human condition and the plight of modern man. In this way, he resembled Gregor von Rezzori, who also impersonated displacement and rootlessness, albeit in a very different way. This might have something to do with the postwar context in which both of these writers emerged on the literary scene, when literature - and especially poetry - was in decline and readers were perhaps more drawn to the idiosyncratic personalities and life stories of writers than to their works.

Though very different in most other respects, Rezzori and Celan were both preoccupied with the question of homelessness as both a concrete condition and an existential question. Their

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life trajectories were very unusual indeed: they both came from a part of Europe that had been in the throes of transformation for most of the twentieth century and where roots were as badly wanted as they were impossible to find. But the theme of homelessness transcended their particular experiences and resonated with the reading public in Western Europe and overseas. Unlike Rezzori, who became a symbol of the happy cosmopolitan - living proof that it was both possible and desirable to live unattached to any one place -, Celan personified the eternal wanderer in search of a Heimat, roaming from place to place, desperate to belong yet always homesick. The pain of homelessness became especially acute for Celan in his later years when, according to Otto Poeggeler, his thoughts were increasingly “there from where he came: in the lost Heimat, that had been Czernowitz, which earned a lasting depiction in world literature in the Prague of Kafka and Rilke.75

This was, incidentally, also when Celan met the philosopher Martin Heidegger for the first time during a lecture at Freiburg. This encounter between the Jewish poet and the German philosopher, the Holocaust survivor and the former Nazi sympathizer, was nothing if not strange. Whether out of a sense of guilt or because he genuinely valued Celan’s work, Heidegger went to a lot of trouble to make the poet feel welcome in Freiburg. Thanks to Heidegger’s intervention with his friend, the bookseller Fritz Werner, when Celan arrived in Freiburg he found his volumes on display in all major bookstores in town.76 Even though he did not let himself be photographed together with the philosopher, Celan accepted Heidegger’s invitation to visit his chalet in Todtnauberg in the Black Forest the following day. The two went for a long walk around the moors and Heidegger offered to take the poet to “the Hoelderlin-landscapes on the

76 Gerhart Baumann, Erinnerungen an Paul Celan (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986), 66.
upper Danube, the Bodensee and in Hauptwil” some other time. From the encounter, Heidegger gathered that “Celan is ill - hopeless” and that he needed to be “brought in touch with the ‘wholesome’” again. There was no second visit, however, for Celan - though spiritually and intellectually close to Heidegger - kept his distance.

Celan and Heidegger had very different life trajectories and sensibilities, yet they both converged on the idea that homelessness was the central experience of modernity. Celan, who had “roamed all over Old Europe, thrown into many cultures and numerous epochs,” was eternally homesick but could not settle down anywhere. Heidegger, who “never saw himself forced or moved to abandon his Heimat,” was deeply rooted in his “landscape of origin” and had the air of a “peasant, a nature spirit and a mystic.” For him, homelessness was a “symptom of oblivion of Being” that “is coming to be the destiny of the world.” “In the face of homelessness of man,” he wrote in A Letter on Humanism, “man’s approaching destiny reveals itself to thought on the history of Being in that man finds his way into the truth of Being.” Heidegger found his way home by repudiating everything artificial and manufactured, and returning to language as a primordial disclosure of Being. He renounced modernity quite literally, by living the last years of his life as a recluse in a mountain cabin in the Black Forest. Celan, the listless wanderer, remained tormented by his desire to set roots and his inability to do so. Yet he too arrived at a very similar conclusion: that the lost Heimat could be found only in the encounter between self and other, in the act of dialogue that was the poem and which Celan described as “the meridian.” Within this utopian space of poetry, one could be at home and yet have no roots. As Emmanuel

78 Gerhart Baumann, Erinnerungen an Paul Celan (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986), 75.
Levinas explains, “nothing is stranger or more foreign than the other person and it is in the clarity of utopia that man shows himself. Outside of any kind of rooting [enracinement] and domicile; fatherland-lessness as authenticity! But the surprise in this adventure in which the I dedicates itself to the other in the non-place, is the return. (...) As though going towards the other I was finding myself again and implanting myself in a land, henceforth native, completely free of the weight of my identity. Native land that does not owe anything to roots (...) native land or promised land?”

In the last few years before his death, Celan became increasingly drawn to Israel as a political and spiritual homeland - a place where he, as a Jew, might “find a new sense of belonging and some feeling of home.” For a few years, the poet even toyed with the idea of moving to Israel, where many of his childhood friends were living. In the fall of 1969, he actually traveled to Jerusalem, according to Peter Szondi, because he “wanted to test in this trip whether he could live in Israel definitively.” While visiting a kibbutz settled by fellow Czernowitzers, Celan apparently told his friends that he was seriously thinking of living on a collective farm himself. These plans all came to nothing. The poet’s hopes of finding a home in the Holy City were dashed when he discovered that Jerusalem too felt alien. Like other mythical homelands, Israel was better in the imagination than in reality. For Celan, the “return home” [Heimkehr] to Jerusalem was above all a literary homecoming. In the years preceding his trip to Israel Celan had immersed himself in Jewish literature, from Chaim Nachmann and Bialik to Martin Buber and Jehuda Halevi, developing Jewish themes in his own poetry. In Israel, the poet saw not only a state but also an idea - not only a practical solution to Jewish homelessness but also an existential necessity, essential proof that homelessness “in these times of universal

81 The Correspondence of Paul Celan and Ilana Shmueli (Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2010), 140.
growing self-alienation and massification” had a cure. “I cannot imagine the world without Israel,” he wrote in a letter to the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai in November 1969, “and I also don’t want to imagine it without Israel.”

For Celan, Israel was both a solution to the problem of “Jewish loneliness,” which he experienced acutely in those years, and a powerful affirmation of human will. As he put it in the speech he gave at the Hebrew Writer’s Union during his visit, “I find here, in this outer and inner landscape, much of the compulsion to truth, the self-evidence and the world-open uniqueness of great poetry. And I believe that I have conversed with the calmly confident determination to assert ourselves in the human.” Celan held on to his dream of Jerusalem after he returned to Paris, although his hope of finding freedom from exile there was gone. To Ilana Shmueli, his childhood friend from Cernăuți, he wrote that “Jerusalem lifted me up and strengthened me. Paris pushes me down and empties me out. Paris, through whose streets and houses I have borne so much burden of madness, so much burden of reality, all these years.”

For the last three weeks before his suicide, Celan kept talking about Israel. But, as John Felstiner pointed out, his attitude towards it was “full of anxiety and distanced.” The poet closely followed events in the Middle East and worried about Israel’s fate. In a letter to his friend Franz Wurm, in June 1967, he confessed that “there is disquiet within me because of the Israel question, the people there, the war, and because of wars. Israel must live, and every effort has to be made for this.”

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82 The Correspondence of Paul Celan and Ilana Shmueli (Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2010), 140. Draft of talk to Hebrew Writer’s Union, 14 October 1969.
84 The Correspondence of Paul Celan and Ilana Shmueli (Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2010), 140. Draft of talk to Hebrew Writer’s Union, 14 October 1969, 12.
85 Ibid., 27 October 1969, 11.
Yet his affinity for Israel was not that of an eternal wanderer who had finally found a homeland, but that of a man who knew how difficult it was to build a *Heimat* out of nothing and against all odds. As the poet Yehuda Amichai observed, Celan’s “desperate efforts” to hold on to his mother tongue were somewhat akin to “his own fate in a nation welded together by its resurrected language.”\(^8\) Language was the reason why Celan could never feel at home in Israel, where being Jewish meant speaking Hebrew and forgetting German - the language of assimilation. Although he considered himself a Jewish poet - as long as Jewishness was defined not only thematically, but also “as a pneumatic issue” - Celan could never give up writing in German because he believed that “only in the mother tongue can one speak one’s truth.”\(^9\) Going to Israel would have meant exchanging one kind of exile for another. Unless he gave up German, Celan would never achieve that sense of absolute belonging he longed for - he would be as much of an outlier in Jerusalem as he was in Paris. He had that realization during his visit, when he discovered the “narrowness, the excessively familiar, provincial and indiscrete style of daily interaction” and the overwhelming problem that “here in Jerusalem - in Israel - he could not and must not write in German if he wanted to belong.”\(^9\) Then it also dawned on Celan that not even his fellow-countrymen could really understand him. At the end of a reading he gave in Tel Aviv before an audience of *Landsleute* from Bukovina, the poet saw himself surrounded by men and women “with whom nothing seemed to tie him anymore” - people who had come to listen to him out of curiosity and *Heimat*-pride, who were thrilled to hear him reciting in German but in fact

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90 *The Correspondence of Paul Celan and Ilana Shmueli* (Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2010), 143.
did not understand a word of what he said.91

The German language was both home and prison to Paul Celan: it gave him freedom and comfort, and held him captive. The German language was the “language of death” - the “Meister aus Deutschland” - a step-mother tongue for Celan. Yet he could never renounce it, for the German language was the only Heimat he ever had. The tragedy of Celan’s generation of assimilated Jews was, in Moshe Barasch’s words, that they were “spiritual children of a non-existing Germany of poets and thinkers.”92 For them, a volume of Goethe’s works was more sacred than the Bible. While trapped inside the Jewish ghetto, Celan and his friends would spend their afternoons reading Trakl and Rilke, or memorizing Hölderlin and Rilke.93 But the German language was never truly theirs, even though they were more devoted to it than the ethnic Germans who claimed exclusive rights to the German language after Hitler’s rise to power. Assimilated Jews like Celan in fact “had no natural language.” Had he been born only two or three generations earlier, Celan would most likely have spoken not German, but Yiddish. German became his mother tongue not by nature, but by choice. “It was not completely natural, intuitive, without requiring any thought,” Barasch explains, “but speaking good German was something one had to achieve, one could do it but it did not come naturally.”94 A lover of German poetry and a dreamer, Celan’s mother went out of her way to make sure her son spoke an impeccable German: “good German meant pure German. And pure German was (...) a written rather than spoken language.”95

Holding on to the German language after the Holocaust was, likewise, an act of will.

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93 Ibid., 29.
95 Ibid., 94.
Many German-speaking Jews who survived the war refused to utter another word of German. Hans Chaim Mayer, who took the French name of Jean Amery, was one of them - and there were many other, lesser-known Jews who preferred to forget that they had ever spoken German before. Celan, on the other hand, held on to the German language with the stubbornness of someone for whom this was the only way to survive. But his language became tormented, broken - the voice of a man who had to “translate himself into German” to make himself understood, an “Übersetzerisch” - a translation-ese that will only begin to unveil its truths when stones write, when there is lithography (writing in stone) at a point ‘to the north of the future.’”

Cut off from the rest of the German-speaking world, Celan fashioned a “personal language island” for himself, a Heimat out of a language that, in his words, had become “more sober, more factual, it mistrusts the beautiful and tries to be true - it is a grayer language (…) most interested in precision, it doesn’t shed light, it doesn’t poetize but it names and places, it tries to measure the realm of the given and the possible.” This was the primordial, authentic language that Heidegger also called for - a language stripped bare and reduced to its essence. But even so, it was still recognizably German. And when it reached another German-Jewish poet in exile in Stockholm, it felt like Heimat. “You have given me with your poems,” Nelly Sachs wrote her friend Paul Celan in 1959, “a Heimat that I thought only death could conquer.”

The ease with which Celan’s poetry moved from the concrete to the abstract and back was truly remarkable. He was, in this sense, a translator of “pure mortality” into “infinite.” His poems, though grounded in concrete experiences and molded out of simple language,

98 Paul Celan, Nelly Sachs, and Barbara Wiedemann, Paul Celan, Nelly Sachs: Briefwechsel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1993), 28.
transcended the realm of the immediate and the concrete, reflecting on homelessness as an existential state - the “destiny of man,” in Heidegger’s words. But unlike Heidegger, for whom exile and homelessness were existential categories, Celan had the doubtful privilege of experiencing these concepts on his own skin. He moved seamlessly from meditating on the essential homelessness of man to criticizing Western, capitalist society for breeding artificiality and isolation. His ideas operated on multiple levels simultaneously. Although his poetry was deemed esoteric, erudite, even obscure and unintelligible to most readers, Celan had no intention of writing a kind of ‘modernist’ poetry that was completely disconnected from reality. In fact, he was always trying to re-connect the poetic, ideational sphere to the sphere of lived experience. Although his poetry was anything but political, Celan often reflected on the fate of Europe, especially in his correspondence with childhood friends who, unlike him, had stayed behind in “the East.” In these letters, the poet reflected a lot on the separation between West and East, and his experiences as an ‘easterner’ exiled in Western Europe. For him too, just as for his fellow countryman Gregor von Rezzori, “the West” turned out to be a huge disappointment, even though going West was all his generation ever dreamed about. In Cernăuți, people like Celan felt out of place, so they lived into a dream-world of their own making. They read newspapers from Bremen and Berlin, and bought German books freshly published “in the West.” Germany was too far to even fathom, but Vienna was still reachable, at least in the imagination. “The reachable, distant enough, the place to be reached was called Vienna,” Celan said in his “Meridian speech.”100 This was why Celan was so eager to go to Vienna immediately after the war. All the time that he was in Bucharest, where he worked as a translator for Cartea Rusa after the war, Celan tried to find a way to go west even if it meant leaving Romania illegally after the frontiers had closed. But when he finally reached Vienna at the end of 1947, the poet found “a

100 Paul Celan, Ausgewählte Gedichte (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), 128.
kind of no man’s land, somewhere between reality and history” instead of the “spiritual Heimat” he had hoped for. Shortly afterwards, Celan moved again, this time to Paris.\textsuperscript{101}

Bukovinans had always been enthralled by the West because “the West” represented everything “the East” aspired to become but was not yet: it represented the promise of progress, prosperity, and modernity. Everyone looked to the West: residents of Czernowitz who were impatient to see their city transforming into a second Vienna, locals who were in love with the civilized capital and deeply hurt when their love was not reciprocated, local ladies who dressed according to the latest fashions in Berlin and Vienna, the emerging Romanian intelligentsia who went out of their way to prove that they too were part of the Western civilized world. This was in part because Bukovina’s remoteness, its great distance from the heart of Europe, gave “the West” the allure of a promised land. “Easterners” like Celan spoke the language of Western European culture better than Western Europeans themselves. This is why, when they finally reached the West, they found it so disappointing. The Paris Celan went to in search of “new spiritual nourishment which Czernowitz could no longer offer” was for him, above all, the city of Mallarme, Valery, Eluard, and the surrealists.\textsuperscript{102} But instead of this dream of belles-lettres, the poet only found loneliness and artifice in the French capital. “Much of what one wants to regard as light here in the West is actually nothing more than the phosphorescence of corruption,” he wrote in a letter to his childhood friend Gustav Chomed in Chernivtsi.\textsuperscript{103}

In the “West” Celan felt even less at home than in Czernowitz, even after he became a well-known literary figure. After the “Goll affair” - which left a deep imprint on his psyche - he

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Paul Celan, Gustav Chomed, Barbara Wiedemann, “- \textit{ich brauche deine Briefe}” (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 38, 3 May 1962.
even got the notion that the awards he had been given were merely “an alibi for those who (…) have continued what they began under Hitler by other, more opportune means.”

To his childhood friend Erich Einhorn, who was living in the Soviet Union at the time, Celan wrote that his Darmstadt speech “with all its unanswered questions documents how lonely man can feel in capitalist society.”

As he became increasingly disenchanted with the “golden West,” Celan sought refuge in his memories of his childhood in Czernowitz. “Ah, you know, I wish I were still living there - not only the Toepfergasse was…humane,” he wrote his friend Gustav Chomed, who quickly reminded him that “the Töpfergasse, my dear little Paul, with everything that was in and in it - it hasn’t existed for long. ‘Eto bylo davno i nepravda is the very adequate expression in Russian. There is only the memory that still lives in some hearts. So you shouldn’t regret anything. The tragedy of our life is not that the Toepfergasse has disappeared. The tragedy is that it actually never existed except in our imagination.’

From his exile in Paris, Celan looked east with a growing sense of nostalgia and also with the hope that there, where the Töpfergasse used to be, there was still truth and authenticity to be found. In Celan’s imagination, the “East” became the antidote to exile - a space that had not yet been tainted by all the evils of Western consumerism and capitalist society. Celan even toyed with the idea of going on a trip to Moscow and St Petersburg, and then going back to visit his birthplace, then under Soviet rule. But by the time his old friend Gustav Chomed invited him to spend “a few beautiful weeks” in their Heimatstadt together, Celan was too sick to travel. “It is an old wish of mine,” he wrote, “to visit the Soviet Union, to see Moscow, Leningrad and naturally also my native city. But the state of my health is, as you know, unfortunately not the

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104 Paul Celan, Erich Einhorn, and Marina Dmitrieva-Einhorn, Einhorn: du weisst um die Steine – Briefwechsel (Berlin: Friedenauer Presse, 2001), 10 August 1962.
105 Ibid.
106 Paul Celan, Gustav Chomed, Barbara Wiedemann, “- ich brauche deine Briefe” (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 17 February 1962, 22.
best, taking a long trip is out of the question.”107 So the “East” remained a fantasy for the poet, a distant dream of a Heimat that - as Chomed said - had never really existed. From his childhood friends Gustav Chomed and Erich Einhorn, with whom he kept up a correspondence, Celan learned that exile was not just a Western speciality. What brought the old friends together again was their shared experience of living among strangers, in a foreign language. Because he continued writing in German in Paris, Celan was equally isolated from his German readers in West Germany and French audiences. Chomed and Einhorn, who were living in the Soviet Union at the time, were even more isolated and constrained. Einhorn worked as a German translator in Moscow - under “real existing socialism” - where keeping up foreign correspondence was a dangerous thing. While Celan wrote freely about his bitter experiences in the “so golden West,” his friend Einhorn had the censors to think about. While Celan fantasized about a future trip to Moscow, Einhorn could not entertain such hopes about Paris. Instead, he sent his friend modest requests for books and vinyls that were nowhere to be found in the Soviet Union. The two friends were living in very different worlds. The frequent silences in their correspondence suggest they might not have appreciated just how similar their situations actually were, for they were both exiled - one of them in ‘this often so inhuman Paris’ and the other confined to Moscow at the end of the Thaw period.”108

In Soviet Chernivtsi, where Gustav Chomed was working as an accountant for the public health office of the local raion, the feeling of Heimat was also absent even though the city looked almost the same as in its Toepfergasse days. Chomed recalled that even in the olden days “I was in quite close contact with all possible kinds of Germans and I persuaded myself more than once of our high superiority. And that the majority of them are bastards I already recognized

In his letters to Celan, Chomed wrote that the Russian language was much richer and more beautiful than German. Behind this, there was a more complicated story. Like Celan, Chomed had grown up in an assimilated Jewish family in Czernowitz, as a native German speaker. After the war, he returned to Chernivtsi after hearing that his sister was looking for him there even though he had intended to stay in Western Berlin, where he was working as a translator for the Red Army. Both at the front and later in Chernivtsi, Chomed could not speak German for fear of arising suspicion, so he gave it up even though he never mastered the Russian language to the same degree. After applying for an immigration visa to Israel continuously since 1956, Chomed finally received permission to leave in December 1972 - and he did, without a moment’s hesitation.\(^{110}\) Celan, on the other hand, held on to his “eastern” myth although, as his friend Petre Solomon said, “he could not be happy anywhere. He tried it, and the last place where he went was Israel. But he never went beyond a theoretical enthusiasm for Israel. He already had a certain Jewishness, a European Jewishness, but Celan could never feel at home there. Or anywhere.”\(^{111}\)

At the time that he was living in Cernăuți, Celan was a rather obscure figure, a member of a small but vocal German-speaking minority the Romanians were trying hard to silence. Now Celan brings post-Soviet Chernivtsi probably half of its tourism revenues; the other half comes from Jewish memory or Heimweh (homesickness) tourism. Every year wide-eyed tourists go on pilgrimages to Celan’s native house, completely unaware that the memorial plaque hangs on a slightly different building than the one Celan used to live in because the municipality thought a

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\(^{109}\) Ibid., 17 February 1962, 22.

\(^{110}\) Paul Celan, Gustav Chomed, Barbara Wiedemann, “- ich brauche deine Briefe” (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 75-76.

more elegant facade facing the tree-lined street would make more of an impression. Few people come to Chernivtsi today to see it for what it is. Those who do quickly avert their eyes and go back to imagining what Czernowitz used to be like. Here is how one German visitor described it in 1992: “Here reigns Soviet sadness. Some garish porn magazines hang in the kiosks. In the city, in which once upon a time the most elegant bookstores of Mitteleuropa could be found, there is today only one bookshop. A few cheaply printed dime novels lie in the dark. Chernovtsy is an intellectual no man’s land. (…) The only thing that remains are the facades.”

The visitor then went on a tour of what used to be the Jewish ghetto in Czernowitz: “in the backyards, idyllic scenes play out: laundry flutters in the wind, hens cackle, and old women peel vegetables and fruit. Of days past they wish to know nothing more.” Indeed, travelers don’t come to Chernivtsi to see the Ukrainian women hanging their laundry, but to experience the melancholy of a place that once upon a time was great but then suddenly declined and vanished.

This myth was born after the Soviet Union collapsed and Eastern Europe’s borders opened once again, inviting Western Europeans to rediscover the ‘lost’ part of Europe and kindling hopes of a broader European revival. Tourists and scholars from Germany and Austria came to Bukovina to see the ‘sunken landscape,’ as Rose Auslaender called it, with their own eyes. After almost half a century of Soviet rule, the few natives who were still there were only too happy to indulge in nostalgia for the world of yesterday. Rosa Roth-Zuckermann, one of the most charismatic old Czernowitzers still in the city, kept a whole shelf full of Celan’s books in her home in Chernivtsi, side by side with a portrait of Franz Joseph. “There was a kind of spirit of tolerance in this Czernowitz,” she reflected, “national hatreds existed only under Hitler. Poles,

113 Ibid.
Jews, and Romanians would come to student balls in the *Deutsches Haus.*" Like Kafka’s Prague, Celan’s Czernowitz was a paradise lost, a “nostalgic absence and presence,” a world “not upside down but in negative.”

It is this feeling of oblivion, the sense that what lies before one’s eyes is only a small and superficial relic of the splendor that used to be, that makes the mythology of places like “Czernowitz” so appealing. There is something majestic, even irresistible about the sudden collapse or disappearance of a world. The narrative touches a sensitive cord in contemporaries who come all the way to this remote corner of Western Ukraine to imagine what “Czernowitz” used to be like. In the 1990s, when the municipality had not yet learned to cater to nostalgia tourism, German-speaking visitors would travel around the city with Austrian maps and Baedeker’s from before 1918. Then locals - most of them from families who moved to Bukovina from the eastern oblasti of Ukraine after the war - began restoring Habsburg buildings, polishing and brightening up the city, and decorating it with monuments. On *Vulytsya Holovna* - the main street that crosses the city, reaching out to the former *Volksgarten* - there is now a bust of Paul Celan. How strange that this uprooted, alienated man who felt nowhere at home is the only reason most people outside of Ukraine ever hear of “Czernowitz” these days. The “place where books and people lived,” the imagined Czernowitz of poets and writers, is in some ways more real than the “real” city of Chernivtsi.

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The Last Mohican - Joseph Burg

The visitor to Chernivtsi quickly leaves the Soviet-era pre-fabricated blocks behind and heads straight to the old city center to see the Habsburg theater, the former Staatsgymnasium where Karl Emil Franzos once went to school, the university inaugurated with Emperor Franz Joseph’s blessing in 1875, and the elegant former metropolitan’s residence in the exotic Moorish style. The traveler walks down the old city streets, retracing the footsteps of Paul Celan, Rose Auslaender, Alfred Margul-Sperber, and Moses Rosenkranz. This is the Czernowitz of elegant cafes, fancy hotels, and bookstores - a kind of Central European intellectual paradise where “dogs bore the names of Olympian gods and chickens scratched Hoelderlin verses into the ground,” where “butchers’ daughters sang coloratura and cabby drivers argued about Karl Kraus.” Nothing seems too wild to be true of this “hidden capital of Europe.” It has even been said that back in the olden days, the concierges in Czernowitz spoke five languages to accommodate all the nationalities in the city. How strange - and exotic - this city must have been when people used to walk down its streets arguing about Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer - here in the middle of nowhere, as though the fate of Europe and the world was in their hands. This is the sunken Atlantis, the “sunken landscape,” as Rose Auslaender called it, that nostalgics of Mitteleuropa hold up as a model of what Europe should look like today.

But few of them know that this Mitteleuropa-idyll is not the only “sunken” world of Czernowitz - and that the myth of the island of German Kultur in the middle of a sea of Galician mud, as Karl Emil Franzos would say, in fact displaced another kind of nostalgia for a different Czernowitz. Scratch beyond the surface of today’s Chernivtsi and you will find traces of German-speaking Czernowitz. Everywhere around the city there are Habsburg-era manhole

covers inscribed with “k.u.k. Czernowitz” and, as soon as the paint peels off the walls of Habsburg-era buildings, layers of German-language writing reappear. Beneath this vanished city, however, is another sunken world, more difficult to find because it left much fewer traces. This was the so-called “Jerusalem on the Pruth,” a capital of Yiddish-language literature and culture. This other facet of the city has faded into oblivion not only because World War II wiped out the majority of its population, but also because the other “vanished world” of the assimilated, German-speaking Jewry wanted it to be quickly forgotten.

This Yiddish-speaking city was as dream-like as the Czernowitz of German poets and philosophers. It was also a product of the imagination that gradually “climbed from the land of dreams into the kingdom of reality” thanks to a generation of intellectuals who set out to turn the Yiddish language from “jargon” into a respectable national language, with a culture and literature of its own. The world they created in Czernowitz was part of a larger realm of Yiddish literature that expanded greatly in the interwar period, encompassing America, the Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania. This was when Cernăuți too became a center of Yiddish culture and literature alongside Kishinev and Bucharest. Even though they developed side by side, these two worlds - the Yiddish-speaking Tschernovits and the German-speaking Czernowitz - did not intersect. They even occupied different physical spaces. Moshe Barasch recalls how he and Paul Celan would spend time together on a “stone wall” located “exactly at the border between the strictly Orthodox Hassidic residential quarters and another neighborhood, where the more Europeanized Jewry used to live.”

On the “European” side of the wall, there lived the German speakers. On the other side were the Yiddish-speaking masses.

This was the world Josef Burg grew up in. Born in Wischnitz/Vijnița, one of Bukovina’s

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most Jewish towns, once a “cradle of Hasidism,” Burg grew up speaking Yiddish. In 1934, he published his first short story in a local Yiddish-language magazine called *Tschernovitzer Blitter* and then continued writing only in Yiddish for the rest of his life. This was not because Yiddish was the only language he knew. While a student in Cernăuți, Burg also learned Romanian and German; he knew German well enough to attend university in Vienna. For Burg, speaking Yiddish was an ideological and existential choice, for he believed that Yiddish was the only true language of the Jewish people. In his own words, “Yiddish is the language of the Jewish people! Czernowitz … the city with a strong assimilationist wave and with sons and daughters - who came from the narrow back streets and from attic rooms, filled, like pomegranates, with a mood and desire to sing and tell stories about Jewish life (...) and all of a sudden a new melody rang [and] (...) they strode across the tangled up Czernowitz streets, carrying in themselves a desire for exaltation, for Jewish creativity.”

It was the Tshernovitz of Itzik Manger, Eliezer Shteinbarg, Moshe Altman, Jakob Shternberg - of the Yiddish cultural renaissance - that Josef Burg sought to recover within the pages of his books. This world had become submerged even more deeply, it had vanished even more suddenly and completely than the world of Celan and the German-speaking Jewish intelligentsia. The only thing that remained was the Yiddish language. “In the world war,” Burg wrote, “one third of our people died but Yiddish has remained.” This was only partially true, in fact, because the vast majority of Yiddish speakers in Bukovina had either died in the Holocaust or emigrated later. The Yiddish-speaking Tshernovitz that Josef Burg evokes in his books emerged as miraculously as its German-speaking counterpart. It was an unexpected result of Bukovina’s incorporation into Greater Romania. As soon as the old frontiers between Bukovina - formerly under Austrian rule - and Bessarabia - formerly under Russian rule - were removed,

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many Bessarabian Jews migrated to Bukovina in search of better career prospects and a higher standard of life. In addition, Bukovina also received Jewish refugees from Galicia, who emigrated when the Ukrainian, Bolshevik, White, and Polish armies who continued disputing territories after World War I had ceased unleashed a wave of pogroms on the Jewish population to the north. By the early 1930s, Cernăuți had already developed a “thick web of Yiddish cultural activity.” “This was a current of Jewish youth blessed with talent,” Burg writes, who brought with them love for Yiddish.”

Before long, a network of institutions of Yiddish culture appeared in Cernăuți, the most famous ones being the Juedischer Schulverein, whose aim was “going to the people to raise national consciousness and elevate it through their own language” and the Morgenroit society, of which the poet Itzik Manger also was a member. There also emerged Yiddish-language kindergartens, libraries, schools, a theater, and student cultural societies. In 1928 Shmuel Aba Soyfer, a Galician Jew who had come to Cernăuți to study history at the university, launched the first “tribune for free Jewish speech in Romania,” the Tshernovitser Bleter, a magazine many Yiddish language writers including Josef Burg launched their careers. Unlike the German-speaking Jews in Cernăuți, the Yiddish-speakers were institutionally stronger and had ties with Jewish organizations elsewhere in Romania and abroad. The Jewish Schulverein, for instance, had branches in Bessarabia and Romania as well. In 1921, it convoked an all-Romanian Jewish cultural gathering that led to the creation of an all-Romanian Jewish cultural federation.  

What was it that drew all these Yiddish-speaking intellectuals to Cernăuți? Although the German-speaking Jewish community in Cernăuți was much more prominent and dominant, the city held a special place in the Yiddish cultural imagination. It was in Czernowitz that the

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decision had been made to recognize Yiddish as a Jewish national language with the same status as Hebrew. In 1908, Nathan Birnbaum - who had recently moved to Czernowitz and was just teaching himself Yiddish at the time - organized a language conference that brought together Jews from all over Europe, Bundists, Zionists, Yiddishists and Hebreists, people from various political and social camps to settle, once and for all, the thorny question of which language should be recognized as the national Jewish idiom. Although they were not allowed to use the Jewish national home in the city center for their proceedings because the head of the local Jewish Gemeinde was the then-assimilationist politician Benno Straucher, the conference organizers opted for Czernowitz both because its Jewish community was unusually powerful and because, as Isaac Leib Peretz supposedly remarked, “in this town one can hear different languages coming out of every open window.”

As Solomon Bikl later wrote, “in Bukovina the Jews occupied a certain socio-political position like in no other country of the world. The Jewish community (…) together with the Ukrainians, Romanians, and Germans practically co-ruled this province which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.”

In 1990, as the Soviet Union was about to unravel, the Tshernovitser Bleter reappeared in a bilingual Yiddish and Ukrainian edition after a silence of fifty-three years. The man who re-launched the magazine had published his first story in it in 1934, three years before the Bleter closed down on the order of the Romanian ministry of internal affairs. One year earlier, the same man had founded a new Jewish cultural society in Chernivtsi and named it after the famous Yiddishist and children’s author Elieser Shteinbarg. This was none other than our protagonist Josef Burg, now almost eighty years old and, to the best of his knowledge, the only surviving Yiddish-language writer in Ukraine. The magazine - a much thinner version of the old

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Tshernovitser Bleter, consisting almost entirely of Burg’s own writings - was part of the writer’s own utopian project to keep Yiddish culture alive in Chernivtsi by force of sheer will even though no more than 4,000 Jews were still living in the city at the time and very few of them still spoke Yiddish. But Burg was not so easily discouraged. For almost half a century he had written only in Yiddish, occasionally publishing in official Soviet Yiddish-language magazines such as Sovetish Heymland, but mostly for the drawer. The kind of nostalgic literature he produced was frowned upon in the Soviet Union. Especially after the anti-cosmopolitan campaigns, Yiddish writers who wished to get published were expected to throw in some anti-Zionist propaganda somewhere in their writings. At the time that Burg set out to restore the Yiddish cultural scene in Chernivtsi, in the context of Gorbachev’s perestroika, non-Russian intellectuals and intelligentsias across Soviet Eastern Europe were re-discovering national traditions. Unlike the Poles, the Ukrainians, and the Baltic peoples who were launching new liberation movements with national inflections, the remaining Jewish communities across Eastern Europe were too small and divided to adopt a unified program. The story of Josef Burg illustrates the melancholy fate of these scattered Jewish pockets in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse.

Burg was one of very few Jews born in Bukovina before World War I who returned to live there after World War II. The community he found in Chernivtsi when he returned after twenty years in the Soviet Union had very little in common with that in which he had grown up. In this new world, he was a stranger - nobody knew him and he knew no one. But in spite of it all, Burg resolved never to leave his native city again. Determined to keep the memory of Yiddish Tschernovits alive at any cost, he set out to single-handedly revive the Yiddish language in Bukovina. As he explained in his manifesto, published in the first issue of Tshernovitser Bleter in 1990, “we want to revive once again that which remained after the great catastrophe
and after many years of forced assimilation. We further want to weave the thread of our Jewish continuity, of our *mame loshn*, the language of Eliezer Shteinberg and Itsik Manger.”

By 1999, the magazine had over 1,000 subscribers but most of them lived abroad and, as the writer admitted, “our readers have begun abandoning us for different reasons.” Burg was almost ninety when he became known abroad as Ukraine’s last Yiddish writer.

While Western critics and reading publics saw in him a relic of the past - the last member of a species on the brink of extinction - Burg took his project very seriously. He wished not merely to remind people of days gone by, but to keep that world from disappearing together with him. His attempt to resurrect the Yiddish-speaking Tshernavits ‘of yesterday’ was nothing if not quixotic. “Today - I am alone,” he wrote, “I don’t like it when they call me ‘the last one’…I brought ‘Tshernovitser Bleter’ into being so that I wouldn’t be its last editor and the last writer in Bukovina who writes in Yiddish. And I do everything so that the thread of tradition may not be broken.” In the olden days, the magazine had attracted over forty young writers. Now Burg was its only permanent contributor: its editor, its writer, and very likely also its most enthusiastic reader. “I hope for a miracle that will continue the tradition of Jewish life in Czernowitz and our culture,” he said in an interview. But the miracle did not happen and the ship sank with the captain. The paper went out of print after Burg’s death as no one could be found to keep it going. In one respect, however, Burg was very successful: he did manage to bring back to life, even for only a short time, an aspect of Jewish life that had been almost wiped out of existence. In 1989,

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125 Ibid. When he looked for the old edition of the *Bleter* in the local archives in 1990, Burg found that not even one copy of the old publication had survived the war, so he became determined to “make sure that the *Tshernovitser Bleter* continue to exist in the archives of Austria and Germany and that it will be possible to find it even one hundred years from now.” The complete *Tshernovitser Bleter* can be found in the literature archive in Vienna today - but they too have become a relic, a testament to Burg’s refusal to let go of the past, to accept the passing of his native Yiddish world.
he created the Elieser Shteinbarg society - an organization that sought to keep alive through sheer determination the relics of a world long vanished.\textsuperscript{127} Through the organization, Josef Burg, who would not believe “that all the Jews are leaving” but insisted that “they will remain, they will live here and they have the right to develop their culture and native language,” set out to reverse the downward trajectory of the Yiddish language in Eastern Europe and prove that “Yiddish does have a future.”\textsuperscript{128}

Why did Burg insist so much on keeping the Yiddish language alive against all odds? Similarly to Paul Celan and Gregor von Rezzori, Burg felt at home only in his mother tongue. One might think of his writings as a dialogue with the vanished world - an exercise in nostalgia for a time that was forever gone. His protagonists are people “who have not been in this world for already a long time, the Avrahmele’s with glowing hearts, who (...) strove for a new world like butterflies for light.”\textsuperscript{129} They are tailors, shoemakers, melamedim, foresters “who work, love, suffer, and most of whom were killed in the Holocaust.”\textsuperscript{130} The landscape of his stories is scattered with ruins of the past: an old neighbor he runs into, who reminds him of his mother, old books from the library of an old friend that bring back sad memories “of the fate of the great Yiddish mame loshn.” But Burg did not hold on to the Yiddish language for purely sentimental reasons, but because he believed the essence of Jewish identity was in this language. Like Celan, Burg had an almost religious reverence for the language “in which mother used to speak, in which father used to tell stories.” Although he was fluent in other languages too, Burg felt he owed it to his parents and to the many Jews who had been murdered in the Holocaust to write only in his mother tongue.

\textsuperscript{128} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Interview with Josef Burg, \textit{Tshernovitser Bleter}, no 61, 1999, 3.
As a speaker and writer of Yiddish, Burg also embraced a conception of Jewishness that came into conflict with Zionist notions of Jewish identity. He imagined the Jewish homeland to be not in the promised land but there, where “our graves lie, and there where Yiddish is still spoken and sung.”

His nationalism looked to the past rather than the future, its final aim being to recover the roots that had been cut off, to repair the broken ties between a people and its native land with the help of language. Burg chose to write in Yiddish also because, as the Bal-Shem put it, “with God, one speaks Hebrew and with the people Yiddish.” Hebrew was a sacred language, whereas Yiddish contained within it the “cultural heritage of our people”: “this very thousand-year-old Yiddish, with the scent and color of lands and times, (...) made holy through the deaths of martyrs, (...) filled with faith, still wanders around the world.”

Because for him the language was the main vessel for national identity, Burg believed that no literature could be considered truly Jewish unless it was written in Yiddish. Jewish authors like Celan, Stefan Zweig, and Joseph Roth were in Burg’s opinion first and foremost Austrian and not Jewish writers because they wrote in the “German of Goethe, of Heine, or of Hoelderlin. For the Yiddish language they often had only contempt left, for instance Paul Celan who demonized Yiddish as a spoilt German.”

The greatest mistake Jewish writers had made was, in Burg’s opinion, to have written about Jewish themes and issues in a language other than their own, for that distanced them both from their own people and from the other nationalities whose languages they were using and who never really accepted them as one of theirs. “A national literature can be created only in the national language,” Burg wrote, which “in our case is Yiddish, the language that can bring out clearly and persuasively the particular character of the

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133 Ibid.
life of the Jewish people (fun dem idishn folks-lebn) and of Jewish work; to bring out through the Yiddish word, the Yiddish song, with which our mothers cradles us and planted within us love and devotion to the same Yiddish word.”\cite{135} Another reason why Burg pleaded for a return to the mame loshn was, paradoxically, that Yiddish was also a world language, “for Yiddish is spoken both in the far East, in Birobidjan, in Russia, in Ukraine, in the USA, as well as in South Africa…”\cite{136} Hebrew, which was spoken only in Israel, was associated with a narrower, more limiting conception of Jewish identity and culture. In Yiddish, Burg saw a way to reconcile Jewish national particularism with the international, global dimensions of Jewish culture. And the fact that he had readers all over the world - in the United States, Israel, and South Africa - seemed to indicate that he had indeed succeeded.\cite{137}

Burg’s stories all take place in the Yiddish-speaking, Hassidic world of rural Bukovina. By the late 1980s, and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was renewed interest in this world among West Europeans. To many of them, especially Germans who felt responsible for the destruction of Eastern European Jewry, Burg’s writings offered a cathartic experience. Burg wrote a lot about displacement and homelessness. He wrote about coming home to his native Wischnitz after the war to find that none of his relatives and friends were still there. In one of his most moving passages, he writes: “then I had the feeling that the stones under my feet were crying. Of course, starting anew is always difficult. But I practically started life all over again on my native land.”\cite{138} Burg’s characters also discover, sooner or later, that they cannot go home again. Lyova Gurin, the protagonist of Ein verspaetetes Echo, decides to go

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{135} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, “Tsi ken men zeyn a idisher shreyber in a fremder shprakh?,” Tshernovitser Blieter, no. 31, 1995.
\item \footnote{136} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Claus Stephani, “Sein ‘Mameloschn’ ist eine Weltsprache: Gespräch mit dem jiddischen Schriftsteller Josef Burg aus Czernowitz,” Israel Nachrichten, Tel Aviv, 10 July 1992.
\item \footnote{137} Stefan Sienerth, Dass ich in diesen Raum hineingeboren wurde: Gespräche mit deutschen Schriftstellern aus Südosteuropa (Muenchen: Suedostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1997), 104.
\item \footnote{138} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Interview with Josef Burg in Doba, 3 June 2003.
\end{itemize}
back to his old “Heimatstadt,” where he hopes to be reunited with old friends and acquaintances but finds only “the ruins of his house, blackened by smoke, with fresh graves swept by the winds.”\textsuperscript{139} The narrator in another one of his autobiographical stories, \textit{Meine Genesis}, returns to his native city to look for the house of his old friend and mentor. As he stands still in front of the house “with two white birch trees,” the old owner appears before his eyes as he used to half a century before - and then he remembers seeing him “for the last time that summer evening when he was standing with a small package under his arm at the train station waiting for the train East.”\textsuperscript{140}

Burg also writes about the difficulty of making himself understood to the younger generation, born and raised in a completely different world. He reflects on the lack of continuity among the generations, on how ruptures and upheavals have fractures collective memory. “My daughter walks the same earth,” he writes, “yet she does not understand my worry, my pain, my suffering (...) sometimes I suffer because of this and then it seems to me once again that she does not have the duty to bear the grief of my generation. She grew up in the rhythm of another song, and her language is different too.”\textsuperscript{141} One of the few people fortunate enough to survive the war and return home, Burg no longer felt at home anywhere. On several occasions he was invited to move to Austria, but each time he refused. The old writer also rejected invitations to move to Israel with the offhanded remark that “there are so many of you here and I am alone at home, I am needed there much more.”\textsuperscript{142} Burg felt it was his duty to stay in Bukovina. He stayed also because he was so profoundly attached to his native land. In one interview, he confessed that he would only move to another country if “the Carpathians and the Cheremosh” could be moved

\textsuperscript{139} Josef Burg, \textit{Ein Verspätetes Echo/ A Farshpetiker Echo} (Muenchen: P Kirchheim Muenchen, 1999), 67.
\textsuperscript{140} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Josef Burg, “Meine Genesis,” 1.
\textsuperscript{141} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Josef Burg, “Mein vergessenes Lied,” 7.
\textsuperscript{142} OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Interview with Joseph Burg on the occasion of his jubilee, \textit{Molodyi Bukovinets’}, no 40, 28 April 1997.
there too. At the end of the day, Josef Burg - a man who over the course of his lifetime had four different citizenships and spoke five different languages - identified as “neither Austrian, nor Romanian, nor Soviet or Russian [nor Ukrainian], but Bukovinan…I was born here. Overall I am a Bukovinan.”

Curiously, Burg’s most enthusiastic readers were in fact not Yiddish-speaking Jews around the world but non-Yiddish speakers and non-Jews who could only read his works in translation. Burg owed his unexpected success with Western European audiences to their increasing preoccupation with the forgotten eastern half of Europe that had bequeathed such an invaluable and powerful cultural and intellectual legacy before it was profoundly and irrevocably transformed in World War II. For the first time after the war, West Europeans were realizing that Europe was no longer the same without Eastern Europe’s large Jewish population. A whole world had disappeared in the war but Europeans had never truly reckoned with this loss because their attention had been so fully occupied with the Cold War, the Iron Curtain, and the sudden and unexpected Soviet collapse and reunification. Stories like Burg’s were now very appealing because they opened up a world new generations of West Europeans had no other way of seeing and experiencing. Many foreign readers were enchanted with Burg’s Bukovinan shtetlakh. Paradoxically, some felt more at home there, in this half-imagined, half-remembered vanished world, than in the present. “And I gladly let myself be carried off to other places and other times,” one reader wrote Josef Burg, “and after many years, I once again felt completely at home, I was happy about all the beautiful things and suffered because of the difficulties of which you wrote - but it was for me simply and plainly ‘at home,’ a feeling of home that erupted in me and demanded its rights, because here it is painfully lacking: I miss the closeness to nature, miss

the closeness to people, miss the mentality, emotions, the tangle of languages and cultures, I miss the immediacy of experience.” The reader was a German woman who could not read a word of Yiddish: “I naturally regretted very deeply that I can’t speak Yiddish and must depend on translations.”

For people like her, Burg’s world embodied everything Western capitalist society was not: the immediacy of feeling and experience, the closeness of contact, the genuineness and authenticity that modernization and rapid globalization had swept away. Like Burg, Konradt - though of a different generation - was also pining for roots, for a return to a simpler, more harmonious world. Then there were German readers who were feeling guilty on behalf of their parents and grandparents for the destruction of “the Yiddish world of yesterday.” “The shadow of the Shoa,” one couple wrote to Burg, “throws pain like a wound into my soul; it hurts deep inside (…) your memories are a warning to us: let us change ourselves, our thinking, our feelings, our attitudes; let us become more sensitive, more human, or else history will repeat itself - also for this Germany of the year 2000.” German readers were also turning to Burg’s books to the questions their parents and grandparents had always avoided answering: “where did the Jewish neighbors go, how come so many barbaric things happened in a Christian country for twelve years, why did father have to die in October 1945 in Ukraine?”

Already in his late eighties, Burg suddenly found himself winning one literary award after another. In 1992, he received the Israel Segal prize for literature and the following year, the honorary title of “honorable cultural figure of Ukraine.” In 1997, he was awarded the Austrian honorable cross [Ehrenkreuz] for science and art, 1st class; and in 2009, shortly before his death, the writer also received the Theodor Kramer prize for Yiddish literature. This sudden ascent

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144 OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, 117/98, Bestand VL, Edith Konradt letter to Josef Burg.
from obscurity to literary fame took not only Burg by surprise, but also Chernivtsi society - for until then, Josef Burg had been pretty much unheard of at home. For Burg, as for Paul Celan and Gregor von Rezzori, the German language was a way out of obscurity. Once his writings were translated into German, he was able to reach audiences that were not only more numerous than the Yiddish-speaking readers he originally addressed, but also, ironically, more drawn to this kind of literature. His first book in German translation, *Ein Gesang über alle Gesängen*, appeared in 1988 in the GDR, with the Christian publishing house St Benno Verlag in Leipzig. When invited to go to Berlin to launch the book, Burg discovered an interested and eager audience in East Germany. Even though East Germany was on the ‘right’ side of the Iron Curtain, Burg’s connections abroad tainted him in the eyes of fellow Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union. Most of them were grouped around the official publication *Sovetish Heymland*, which under the controversial editorship of Aron Varngelis had turned into an “anti-Israeli forum.” Although Burg too had published a few pieces in the magazine and two self-standing books - *Dos lebn geyt vayter* and *Iberuf fun tsaytn* - with the magazine’s publishing house, his colleagues did not consider him one of the “real writers, who were really builders of Soviet Yiddish culture and really suffered a lot (...) during the Stalinist repression.” And so, while other Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union repudiated him, Germany and Austria, of all places, wholeheartedly embraced Josef Burg. It was here, in the fatherland of the perpetrators and not in Israel or even in Ukraine, that the old Yiddish writer became a literary celebrity.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new ideas of Europe were floating in the air, while Germany and Austria were both invested in changing their negative image and forging new ties with Eastern Europe. To prove its commitment to the *Wiedergutmachung* process, Germany

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organized events such as the *Teg fun idisher kultur* - the Days of Yiddish Culture in Berlin, where “the language of the murderers and that of the victims” were brought together on a day “that coincided with the day of the liberation of Auschwitz.” The organizers were naturally interested in Burg not only as a Yiddish writer but also as an exponent of the Yiddish-speaking world of Eastern Jewry. So they invited him to participate. Burg accepted, thrilled to see that the festival’s chosen slogan was “*dos lid geyt vayter,*” which meant that “the Yiddish song hasn’t been interrupted and suffocated in the gas chambers.”

Austria also had reasons to reclaim Burg as an Austrian writer, the most important one of which was that people like him challenged the notion of a German-centric Austrian culture, showing that “Austrian literature does not encompass only German-language works.” Burg was a welcome reminder that Austria had once been much more than the small, “*lebensunfähig*” republic it had become at the end of World War II. Fortunately for Burg, his nostalgia for the *mame loshn* was perfectly compatible with Austria’s nostalgia for its Habsburg days. The Austrian cultural authorities agreed not only to keep his Yiddish-language newspaper afloat but also to take over his entire personal archive.

Once Burg gained a vote of confidence from Austria and Germany, Ukraine also became interested in him. Given his success with foreign audiences, Burg was a promising cultural ambassador of Ukraine in the West. While the spotlight was on him, Ukrainians could also take the opportunity to put forward a new image of Ukraine: not the ethnically homogeneous product of Soviet nationality policy it had become, but a multicultural and multilingual place. After the collapse of the Soviet empire, Ukraine became an independent nation-state in need of a new history and identity - new myths, symbols, and images - and a new *raison d’être* to prove its distinctness from the Soviet Union and dissociate itself from the Soviet disaster. It was at this

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147 OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Josef Burg, “*Dos lid iz geblihn,*” *Mame loshn,* 2 July 1997.
time that Burg - the old Czernowitzter who had returned home to live among ‘foreigners’ -
became an honorable citizen of Ukrainian Chernivtsi and a representative of Ukrainian culture
abroad. The discovery of Josef Burg in Ukraine went hand in hand with the rediscovery of
multicultural Bukovina. By embracing Burg so wholeheartedly, the local Ukrainian authorities
were giving to understand that independent Ukraine was not simply a continuation of Soviet
Ukraine, but a return to a more authentic, tolerant, and diverse Ukraine that could no longer be
confined to the periphery of Europe. This new Ukraine would no longer be an outlier, for it could
teach Western Europeans a thing or two about what Europe should look like. When Burg’s
stories appeared in Polish translation in 2001, the Bukovinan literary critic Peter Rychlo wrote
that “thanks to the translation of his work in Yiddish into other languages, Burg takes
Bukovina’s culture once again into the orbit of multilingualism.”149

Burg himself encouraged this narrative, even though his attitude towards the Soviet
Union was more nuanced. Although he was the first to admit that “behind the beautiful
declarations and promises of equality [of the Soviets] was hiding an analogy to German
totalitarianism,” Burg also recognized that the Soviet Union perversely saved his life and the
lives of many other Jews. At the same time, the writer never brought into question the image of a
tolerant and multicultural Ukraine that the local authorities were interested in promoting even
though, on one occasion, he did confess that his mother had been killed “in a Ruthenian massacre
in 1941.”150 If anything, his stories suggested that before the onset of Soviet power, all of
Bukovina’s nationalities got along just fine. “This place where you and I used to live,” he said in
an interview, “used to be very multinational, here a diversity of languages used to exist, many
cultures intersected, they used to influence each other - Ukrainians, Romanians, Poles, Jews used

149 OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Petro Rychlo, “Iosif Burg zagovoryv pol’skoiu,” Molodoy bukovynets’, 2 August
150 Raphaela Kitzmantel, Die Jiddische Welt von Gestern, 22.
to live here and they could all develop their own cultures.” Once the Soviets arrived, the multinational fabric began unraveling.

Like Celan and Rezzori, Burg was not only a writer but also a symbol of a world that had ceased to exist. Everywhere he was invited to give readings and lectures, Burg was regarded as a living museum object. Readers were fascinated with this old man above all because, as the Polish writer Krzysztof Czyzewski put it, he was “the last Czernowitzer of the old type, a guardsman of Yiddish culture which already seems to have died long ago.” Others called him a “patriarch of literature” and “last Mohican” - much to his chagrin, for as he emphasized over and over again, Burg did not see himself as the last in a line of extinct Yiddish writers but a writer who breathed new life into the Yiddish language and inspired new authors to return to their mame loshn. Only a few years before, Burg had been completely unknown - even in his own city. He faded into oblivion after publishing one book in the Soviet Union because the literature he produced - nostalgic, melancholy, introspective - was not to the liking of Soviet critics, who urged him to be more future-oriented and happier about the present. Everything that made Burg so unattractive during the Soviet period made him extremely appealing after the Soviet collapse. In his old age, he became one of Chernivtis’s tourist attractions. No journalist, critic, or literary person who came to Chernivtsi in search of the world of yesterday could leave without paying old Josef Burg a visit. His home turned into a pilgrimage site for all those who wanted to lay their eyes on the last representative “of that great world, of which nothing is left but the stones and pages in books once written here.” And indeed, Burg was one of very few people who had been born and raised around Chernivtsi, and still lived there decades later.

Czernowitz was a city inside out, for its former residents had scattered to the four winds and their places had been taken by non-locals. Josef Rudel, another writer from Bukovina who left for Israel at the end of the war, explained it best: “there are Czernowitzers everywhere in the world, in New York, Munich, Paris, Caracas, but one of the few cities in which there are no native Czernowitzers is Czernowitz itself.” Burg often reflected on this paradox too. For him, staying in Chernivtsi was as difficult as leaving the city. Although the city looked almost the same, it no longer felt like home. It was profoundly changed in every other way. “Yes, the city,” Burg said, “it has not remained like in the olden days. The houses yes, the gardens yes, but not the people. There are different people. There are different people who have almost nothing in common with the old Czernowitzer.”153 In this environment, Burg stuck out like an exotic bird.

In his old age, Josef Burg became a living link between the vanished world of prewar Bukovina and the “old Czernowitzers” and their descendants scattered all over the world. People everywhere - from Vienna to Freiburg, New York, and Jerusalem - wrote Burg to ask if he knew or remembered their relatives. Old Czernowitzers suffering from homesickness asked him to send them pictures of the city. One man from Vienna, to whom Burg had sent a postcard of the Jewish house in Czernowitz, wrote: “I cried. How often I passed by there as a child and student and we had no idea what misfortune would soon come upon us. (…) If you can, please write me something about Czernowitz. I lament and cry every day because I long for my home town so much.”154 People searching for lost brothers, sisters, and cousins after the collapse of the Iron Curtain turned to the ‘last mohican’ in Chernivtsi for help. Georg Mailath from Vienna asked Burg to help him track down his long-lost brother who had been deported to Donbas in 1940 and then become separated from his family for the next fifty-seven years. The search had gone on for

decades, in Israel, Romania, and Ukraine, but the family still had no news of the vanished brother because “we didn’t find anyone who was reliable enough to do the search” properly. Another one of Burg’s correspondents was an Israeli woman whose father was also named Josef Burg and was originally from Czernowitz. “As you surely know,” she wrote “Uncle Josef” in Chernivtsi, “there are many Burg’s here from Czernowitz or around there, some of them bearing the name Josep (…) and many are still searching for their father, who disappeared somewhere or died, and are hoping for a miracle.” One man Forest Hills, New York, wrote Burg to ask him if he by any chance recalled his family, the owners of a big “steam bakery in Czernowitz and a steam mill in Manasteriska,” as well as large forests and agricultural property in Wischnitz, Wijenka, and Rivnia. While leafing through a Viennese paper, the man had come across a picture of the “rabbi’s palais” in Wischnitz and found in it “a deceptive similarity with the facade of our property.” It was already 1990, almost fifty years after the family had emigrated yet their longing to call these places “our property” was as strong as when they had first left them behind.

Like Celan and Rezzori, Burg had an exceptional fate. Under his very eyes, “the map of Europe was redrawn many times, the ideas and moral values of yesterday were declared obsolete, new ideas of ‘blood and soil’ were propagated instead.” In East-Central Europe, however, his life trajectory was far from extraordinary. Most East Europeans had to switch citizenships four or five times over the course of their lives, to adapt to very different forms of governance, ideas, and value systems, to speak multiple languages, to make themselves at home in different environments. But even though Josef Burg’s life reflected the specific circumstances of this region, it also captured the essence of the twentieth century in Europe and the world as a

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156 OeLA, Josef Burg Nachlass, Letter to Burg from Judith Lavon, Israel.
whole. Burg lived long enough to see it all. He was ninety-seven when he passed away in
Chernivtsi in 2009. Born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he had grown up in Romania, lived in
the Soviet Union for twenty years after the war, and finally become a citizen of independent
Ukraine after the Soviet collapse. Like Rezzori, Burg felt like a living anachronism, for history
moved too quickly for him to be able to keep up with it.

The twentieth century was, in his own words, “a horrible, violent, sick century, a
psychologically ill century that gave Hitler and Stalin.”159 It was a century full of *deja vu’s.*
History seemed to be going in circles, although every event always felt new and unprecedented:
“in Heinrich Heine’s words, it is an old story, and yet it always remains new, and he to whom it
just happens, his heart breaks in two.”160 When World War I broke out, Burg’s father went to the
front and his mother and siblings went into hiding in the forests and then fled all the way to
Budapest. When they returned to Bukovina several years later, they had to rebuild their lives
from scratch. Only three decades later Bukovina was visited by yet another war - and none of
Burg found that none of his previous experiences had prepared him for this second catastrophe.
After he left Czernowitz in 1940, the writer began a new life in the Soviet Union, where he
worked as a German language teacher first in the Volga region, in Cheliabinsk, and then later in
Tashkent, Ivanovo, Stalingrad, and Moscow. When he returned to Chernivtsi twenty years later,
Burg felt like a stranger once again. The feeling of continuity and stability he longed for all his
life was nowhere to be found in a world permanently in motion and transformation.161

161 Ibid., 17.
Conclusion

“One must have a home in order not to need it, just as in thinking one must have mastery of the field of formal logic in order to proceed beyond it to more fertile regions of the mind,” Jean Amery writes. The preoccupation with home and homelessness pervaded twentieth-century European culture and literature. In the case of the protagonists of this chapter, this preoccupation was deeply rooted in personal experience. They all came from a part of the world where homelessness was the default state of mind. To be part of this place - from where powers came and went, and where official languages often changed overnight - was to be placeless. But this was not just an East European experience, but a global one - and the positive reception Celan, Rezzori, and Burg enjoyed abroad proves it. People who had never seen Chernivtsi and had no connection with Bukovina read the works of Bukovinan writers and felt ‘at home’ in the half-real, half-imagined worlds they evoked. This is because homelessness has been such a crucial element of modernity – both a concrete experience and a metaphysical condition, a common denominator between people with very different backgrounds, from very different places.

Homelessness - the longing for roots and pining for vanished homelands - has been like an undercurrent running through the entire cultural and intellectual history of modern Europe, bridging the divide between East and West. Orphic, Gnostic, and Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages thought of the soul as a prisoner of the body and assumed “the earthly realm to be a place of imprisonment, captivity, deception, and immense suffering.”\textsuperscript{162} With the onset of modernity, this preoccupation with humanity’s homelessness did not go away but became even more intense as older belief systems were eroded and former certainties came into question. Its

symptoms were a loss of meaning and a feeling of disorientation and purposelessness. “We children of the future,” Nietzsche wrote, “how could we be at home in this today? We feel disfavor for all ideals that might lead one to feel at home even in this fragile, broken time of transition; as for its ‘realities’ we do not believe that they will last. The ice that still supports people today has become very thin.”

A good deal of nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophy revolved around the problem of homelessness, also known as alienation. For Marx, this was a social and economic problem that started at the base and manifested itself on the level of the suprastructure. Hegel found the cure to man’s homelessness in the laws of history - the only certainty one could hold on to after most other truths had ended up on the chopping block. In the twentieth century, no thinker engaged more closely and fully with the problem of homelessness than Martin Heidegger - for whom Celan, as we have seen, had a certain intellectual affinity even though he could never forgive the philosopher’s past entanglements with the Nazi party. In *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger writes: “homelessness is the symptom of oblivion of being. Because of it the truth of being remains unthought” and that “for a truly joyous and salutary human work to flourish man must be able to mount from the depth of his home ground up into the ether.”

Heidegger’s thoughts on homelessness echo those of *deracine* East European intellectuals. “And those who stayed on in their homeland,” he writes in *Discourse on Thinking*, “often they are more homeless than those who have been driven from their homeland.” Yet Heidegger attributed this feeling of being driven from the homeland not to the effects of political ruptures and increasing mobility on man’s ability to feel at home in the world, but to modern technology. For him, the feeling of *Heimat* dissolved when “hourly and daily [people] are chained to radio and television. Week

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163 Ibid., 38.
164 Ibid.
after week the movies carry them off into uncommon, but merely common, realms of the imagination, and give the illusion of a world that is no world.”\textsuperscript{165} Perhaps Heidegger was right. This might explain why Western readers, though far removed from the world of Rezzori, Celan, and Burg, felt so drawn to these writers and so moved by their longing for their lost homelands.

Rezzori, Celan, and Burg were all haunted by the ghosts of a vanished world, yet each one of them experienced homelessness very differently. Rezzori chose to remain a stateless person because he believed that intellectual freedom required a lack of attachment to places, an ability to make oneself at home anywhere in the world. He considered himself lucky to have been born in a part of the world where, as he writes in \textit{An Ermine in Czernopol}, laughter had been elevated into an art form, “a folk art of unparalleled authenticity, stemming from a broad tradition, and widely cultivated to a degree of finesse, sophistication, and extraordinary piquancy - an art form understood and appreciated by all, drawing as it did from everyday life, and well endowed with the most vivid references, not to mention all manner of innuendos.”\textsuperscript{166} This place, where five different languages were spoken and people lived “amidst so many contradictions that we scarcely can find anything to hold against anybody,” had taught Rezzori a crucial skill that many West Europeans lacked: skepticism of ideologies, a taste for freedom and unpredictability, and a dislike of uniformity. Unlike his father, who yearned for “the Reich, the sunken Roman empire of the German nation,” Rezzori grew up to be a true “\textit{Balkankind}” - one who thrived among the Gypsies and Jews, the Romanians and Ruthenians, the Byzantine world buried under a layer of cultural varnish by “cultural viceroys” of the Habsburg empire like his parents.

Paul Celan also yearned for the lost “East,” although his life trajectory took him in a completely different direction. His ancestors were not German-speaking Habsburg bureaucrats,
like Rezzori’s, but religious Jews from the Bukovinian and Galician countryside who moved to
the city and became assimilated. For Celan, the German language thus had none of the stiffness
of an official imperial idiom; it was the language in which he dreamed, the language of his
beloved mother, and of Rilke and Trakl and Goethe. When the dream of a humanist, universalist
German Kultur was shattered by the Nazis, old Czernowitz - the city where Celan had grown up
surrounded by German books - became for the poet a symbol of this vanished world of poetry
and beauty. This placeless world was what he yearned for while in exile in Paris.

Josef Burg, on the other hand, came to symbolize the vanished world of the Yiddish-
speaking East European Jewry - doubly victimized, first by the Haskalah and then by World War
II and the Holocaust. To keep this world from being completely forgotten, Burg continued
writing only in Yiddish, even though his audiences could only read him in translation. Rezzori’s
nostalgia, Celan’s yearning for the “Toepfergasse” of German poets and writers, and Burg’s
longing for the submerged Yiddish-speaking world of Bukovina were, on the face of it, very
similar. And yet, the homelessness of a Jew who not only lost his homeland but also the
conviction that he ever had such a thing was very different from the flirtations with melancholy
of a cosmopolitan who celebrated statelessness as a ‘moral’ condition. It might just be that, as
Amery argued, one must first have “compatriots in a village and city streets if the spiritual ones
are to be fully enjoyed, and that a cultural internationalism thrives well only in the soil of
national security.”167 It might be indeed that a person “needs much home, more, at any rate, than
a world of people with a homeland, whose entire pride is their cosmopolitan vacation fun, can
dream of (…) What remains is the most matter-of-fact observation: it is not good to have no

167 Jean Amery, At the Mind’s Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities (Bloomington:
home.”

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168 Ibid., 60-61.
Conclusion

Czernowitz, Cernăuți, Chernovtsy, Chernivtsi was a frontier city in all of its iterations. Located at the margins of states, empires, and cultures, Czernowitz experienced many different regimes and forms of government, and underwent many transformations. The various state authorities, national bureaucrats, and imperial officials that came through Bukovina approached the borderland province and its capital as a wild, uncivilized, and potentially dangerous place in urgent need of ‘civilizing.’ The stakes of this game were very high. Bukovina and especially Czernowitz were supposed to demonstrate the essence of the state or empire that laid claim to them, and the particular way of life they represented, as well as to exhibit their success to neighbors across the border. The battles carried out here were not just over territory but also over ideas about culture and civilization.

As the capital of the easternmost province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the city was supposed to represent an island of urban, German civilization in an Eastern European sea of mud and backwardness. The Romanians, who took over the city in 1919, reimagined it as the northernmost bulwark of Romanity, a city that would demonstrate the success of the new Greater Romanian state and the high point of its efforts to build a national Romanian culture. The Soviet occupation authorities that arrived in Cernăuți in March 1940 also acknowledged the special role of this frontier city in showcasing a new kind of civilization – this one Soviet Ukrainian and internationalist. Finally, the border city of Chernivtsi and its particular cultural universe became instrumental to the national mythology of diversity and tolerance that the Ukrainian nation-state embraced after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The many obstacles with which the different empires and states that claimed Czernowitz
as their cultural bastion were met often thwarted their ambitions. The humanist and supranational
*Kultur* that imperial officials and institutions were supposed to build in Czernowitz and
Bukovina was meant to cure poverty, one of the gravest illnesses from which the empire’s
eastern borderland suffered. The conviction that *Kultur* was the answer to every riddle led
Austrian imperial officials to pursue an intensive cultural reform policy that consisted of building
schools, opening a national theater in Czernowitz and a philharmonic, and even founding a
university in the capital of Bukovina in 1875. Without the necessary infrastructure and economic
support, however, these ghosts of Vienna and emblems of sophisticated Austrian *Kultur*. In
Czernowitz, *Kultur* remained more of a dream than reality. It owed its appeal precisely to the
remoteness of Czernowitz from Vienna and it expressed the infatuation of provincials with an
ideal of modernization, civilization, and sophistication that had not yet materialized but was
always in the process of being attained. So enamored were Czernowitzers of this idea, in fact,
that they suffered from a particular illness that local newspapers described as ‘*Studierwut*’ or
‘studying fury.’ The result of this was the over-production of intellectuals whom the local
economy could not support and also the emergence of an intellectual proletariat.

To the extent that it ever came to fruition, Austrian imperial *Kultur* made its presence felt
in Czernowitz and Bukovina to a greater extent when the empire collapsed than when it was still
alive. The achievements of the empire’s cultural reform in Bukovina then manifested themselves
in the difficulty with which imperial subjects from the extinct empire’s easternmost province
fitted on the new national map. This became the main obstacle to Greater Romania’s cultural
ambitions after the ‘unification’ of Bukovina with the other Romanian provinces. After the
province’s occupation by Romanian troops, many Czernowitzers felt that the sudden
transformation of the city from an imperial provincial capital to a mere provincial city of a
nation-state put an end to a process of modernization and civilization that had been problematic but nevertheless promising. Through a series of drastic decrees that were meant to evict languages other than Romanian from public space, the new administration attempted to remake the city into a bastion of Romanian national culture. And yet, Czernowitzers continued to speak German and feel that Vienna was their real capital. As late as World War II, when after a one-year Soviet occupation the Romanians returned to Czernowitz with a new government headed by Marshall Antonescu and a new vision of the province’s place in Greater Romania, Czernowitz had still not become a fully national, Romanian city.

At fault was the mutual suspicion between the province and the new capital Bucharest. In the eyes of the new administrators and cultural officials who arrived to Czernowitz from the Old Kingdom, all Bukoviners – including ethnic Romanians – were suspicious. Long into the interwar period, Romanians from Bukovina felt that they the new national administration had banished them to a peripheral role in the political and economic life of their new motherland. In addition to its reluctance to involve local elements in their cultural nationalization efforts in Bukovina, the Romanian administration suffered from another great handicap. The population in the newly annexed Czernowitz, former imperial subjects who had grown up reading Goethe and Schiller, perceived them as yet another form of imperial rule, this time carried out by a colonizer that was culturally inferior to the colonized.

The cultural transformation that the Soviet occupation authorities began in Northern Bukovina in 1940 and continued after their return in 1944 met with even greater obstacles given all the intermingling residues of Kultur and national Romanian culture that permeated everyday life of the province. Unlike the Austrians and Romanians, the Soviets moved into Czernowitz at the beginning and not upon the conclusion of a war. For this reason, they were able to implement
much more daring policies in a much shorter period of time. Their efforts at reforming and transforming the province and city culturally were aided by the demographic changes occasioned by the war, and by their own drastic measures to rid the province of suspicious, bourgeois elements. The Soviets also capitalized on the rural population’s old resentment of Czernowitz and its ‘cosmopolitan’ residents, promising civilization to the villages and a democratic culture to the illiterate masses. By the end of the 1940 deportations to Siberia and the ‘Heim ins Reich’ campaign, much of Czernowitz’s German-speaking population was gone. A large number of Romanians fled the province along with the Romanian occupation authorities in 1944. The remaining German-speaking Jews were murdered in the camps of Transnistria and the few surviving ones emigrated in the first few years after the war.

Even so, it took the Soviets more than a decade and many efforts to make headway in reinventing Northern Bukovina as the ancestral land of the Ukrainian people and transforming Czernowitz into Chernivtsi, a provincial town at the south western margins of the Soviet Ukrainian republic. In the midst of recurring acts of banditism and attacks by Ukrainian nationalist and terrorist groupings, Soviet cultural officials proceeded to build village libraries and ‘reading huts,’ hiring staff to carry books personally to workers in factories and kolkhozes. Although they were much more successful than the Austrian and Romanian regimes that preceded them, the Soviets also had trouble reaching the deepest countryside. Large, scattered ethnic-Romanian pockets remained untouched by Soviet cultural propaganda for the simple reason that none of the cultural staff could communicate in ‘Moldavian.’

How to build a new culture in such a linguistically diverse and complex place was a recurring question with which all the different administrations that came to Bukovina were confronted, be they imperial or national. The relationship between language and culture, and
especially the tensions between the particularism of national languages and the universalism intrinsic in any culture of international significance, were issues that preoccupied both the rulers and the ruled. How were all the different languages spoken in Bukovina – German, Romanian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Polish – to be coordinated so as to make public and institutional life possible? The ambiguous status of the German language complicated the issue especially under Austrian rule. Although German was not the only official language in Bukovina, in practice, it took precedence over the other *Landessprachen* (official languages of the province), particularly in schools.

The question of language use and the problematic status of German in public institutions and schools were intimately tied with two of the thorniest problems with which Austrian imperial officials were faced in Bukovina: the socio-economic problem and nationalism. As provincial politicians and nationalist intellectuals pointed out, the omnipresence of the German language in primary schools, far from being the key to *Kultur* and prosperity, in fact put a damper on the education of non-German students and caused stagnation and poverty. Forced to translate from Greek to German and from German into their own native languages, non-German students ended up unable to speak any language correctly. In addition, the uncertain status of the German language not only did not solve the national issue but invited criticism from both ethnic Germans and non-German nationals in the province. As the number of parallel classes in Romanian, Ukrainian, and Polish in primary schools increased, ethnic Germans in Bukovina felt increasingly neglected. On the other hand, Romanians and Ruthenians were angered by the unspoken but unquestioned hegemony of German.

Through questions such as that of language, every attempt to reform and ‘civilize’ Czernowitz and Bukovina brought to light tensions between national and non-national
understandings of culture. Reshaping the local population into a coherent community that reflected either the idea of a homogeneous national culture or that of a supranational culture that transcended particularism was always one of the most important objectives of cultural policy in Bukovina. Nationality became an inescapable and decisive element of individual identity, one that mattered much more than any one individual’s actions, choices, or decisions. Whether they actively sought to combat or promote nationalism, the various imperial and national authorities that ruled Bukovina in different ways furthered this process of rigidification of national identity.

To anyone who had eyes to see – and the young Romanian nation-state certainly did – the experience of the Austrian empire in Bukovina showed that clear national categories and an intransigent nationality policy were the only way to avoid disaster. While the Austrian census divided the population only by language spoken, the 1910 elections in Bukovina introduced voting by national curias, which could but did not have to coincide with language spoken. Nationalist leaders regarded the vague national categories with which Austrian imperial officials operated as late as 1910 in Bukovina as veiled attempts to de-nationalize the population.

Vagueness and flexibility did not foster harmony, but sowed the seeds of further nationalist agitation.

The triumph of the principle of national self-determination, however, did not necessarily translate into greater tolerance, freedom, and well-being for the nationalities that lived in Bukovina. The Romanian national authorities, for instance, were the first to recognize the Jews of Bukovina as a separate nationality, distinct from the Germans. Since different nationalities were defined, among other things, by the different languages they spoke, the Romanian authorities recognized as Jewish only those individuals who spoke the ‘Jewish’ language. For Jewish students who wished to study in the ‘Jewish’ language, they reserved the former III.
Staatsgymnasium in Czernowitz. But, as the Jewish nationalist leader Mayer Ebner wrote in the pages of the interwar periodical *Czernowitzer Morgenblatt*, this was not victory, but defeat. First of all, the vast majority of the Jewish population in Czernowitz spoke German. Second, there was no common understanding as to what constituted the ‘Jewish’ language – was it Yiddish or Hebrew or German? In this context, the creation of a separate Jewish high school was in fact just a first step towards segregation and discrimination.

Since it was no longer possible to be of one nationality and speak the language of another, the cultural uniformization policies pursued by the Romanian authorities in Bukovina had to be gradually replicated at the level of minority communities too. The triumph of the Ukrainian nationality in Bukovina, who saw its age-long dream of a Greater Ukraine finally accomplished under the auspices of the Soviet Union, was equally uncertain. At the same time as they were cleansing the province of ‘foreign’ elements and reinventing Northern Bukovina into a cradle of the Ukrainian nation, the Soviets were also imposing a particular understanding of Ukrainian nationality – one that was national but not nationalist, and defined by its friendship with the Russian people. The transformation of Czernowitz into Chernivtsi, a Soviet Ukrainian city, was also a double-edged sword.

Running in parallel and often in conflict with the attempts of state officials to impose a coherent culture and civilization on the province were the efforts of the nationalist intelligentsia to reform, unify, and enlighten a nationally indifferent population. Nationalists in Bukovina, some of them future officials of the Romanian nation-state and others minority leaders, were often inspired in their ambitions to enlighten the population by the rhetoric and practices of Austrian imperial authorities. Both nationalist intellectuals and the imperial officials they criticized attributed all problems to nationalism and national frictions between Romanians,
Ruthenians, Germans, and Jews in Bukovina. All of them believed that culture was the key to power. Culture, both the empire and its critics thought, could solve the issue of nationalism – whether by making some form of cooperation or compromise possible, by establishing the victory of one national group over the other, or by getting rid of nationalism altogether. This belief in culture as the cure-all explains why nationalist leaders in Bukovina continued to build one gymnasium after another to prove their superiority to each other at a time when waves of emigration of poor Ruthenians and Romanians to America were leaving schools empty. The competition between different national groups in Bukovina also led to an escalation of national demands. As soon as the Ruthenians were granted the right to open a few more parallel classes in the Ruthenian language, Romanians also demanded that they receive parallel classes, whether they needed them or not. The nationalist work of the Bukovina historian Raimund Friedrich Kaindl was emblematic of this process. Spurred on by the sense that every other national group except for the Germans benefited from privileges under the imperial administration, Kaindl urged ethnic Germans to become more nationally conscious before it was too late. Drawing on his historical scholarship, Kaindl argued that Germans across Eastern Europe were a united community that no physical borders could divide. To put these ideas into practice, he initiated a pan-German movement that sought to bring together all ethnic Germans across the Carpathian territories (Karpathenlaender).

In implementing their visions of national culture, the nationalist intelligentsia resorted to measures that were anything but democratic. The rather indifferent efforts of imperial cultural officials to win over the population to the idea of a supranational Austria paled into insignificance when compared to the aggressiveness with which nationalist intellectuals urged locals to embrace the national idea. In their newspaper Bukowiner Bote, the leaders of the
Christian German movement admonished ethnic Germans in Bukovina for failing to think and act as one united community. One of their most glaring failures was, apparently, their reluctance to subscribe to the newspaper and support it financially. The *Bukowiner Bote* memorably described the lack of involvement of the ‘nationals’ in the name of which national battles were being fought as a war in which the generals went to the battlefield, while the soldiers stayed behind and watched. The indifference and even resistance of the local population to the national idea and rigid national categories also appeared in the pages of the teachers’ journal *Freie Lehrerzeitung*, where, well into the 1900s, profession and estate were more important and defining than national solidarity. Countless issues of the *Lehrerzeitung* document the recurring frictions and battles between ethnic Romanian priests, teachers, and peasants who were all involved in school life in some capacity but could not find common ground. Although they later erased this particular episode from their national history, the Romanians were also far from united in their attitude towards the Austrian empire. Not all of them were secret irredentists at loggerheads with the oppressive empire. Some notable figures like the Romanian politician Aurel Onciul in fact preferred the idea of a Romanian autonomous province within the bounds of the empire to that of seceding and joining the Old Kingdom.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Czernowitz and Bukovina became emblems of a lost multi-national, tolerant paradise, this resistance to nationalism was framed as ‘cosmopolitanism.’ With its far reach into the eastern provinces, the Czernowitz and Bukovina nostalgics decried, the empire had turned a formerly illiterate population into cosmopolitans fluent in five languages and marinated in Goethe, Schiller, tolerance, and humanism. To what extent was this true? And if it was true that radical nationalism was less appealing here than elsewhere, why was this the case? Nationalist ideas were slow to take root because they required
individuals to go out of their way to assert their national affiliation. Preserving and asserting one’s national language in an environment in which it was necessary to speak or at least understand a bit of five or six different languages on an everyday basis always required taking an extra step. Most people, it seems, were not eager to take it. Especially for non-Germans who received their education in German institutions like the Czernowitz Francisco-Josephina university, the temptation to go over to the German language was too great. The nationalist Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, leader of an organization that sought to further the cultural unity between Romanians in the Old Kingdom, Bessarabia, Transylvania, and Bukovina, acknowledged this fact in his book ‘The Contributions of Bukovina to Romanian culture.’ “Is this an inferior place? Did the people who live here have fewer qualities than those who lived in other Austrian territories?,” he asked, pointing to the weak Romanian cultural and literary production. Iorga’s answer was that a culture of the sort the empire sought to cultivate in Bukovina, one that wasn’t rooted in a national language and national soil, was doomed to extinction. If nothing else, Iorga’s verdict is a useful warning against overly romanticizing the ‘cosmopolitanism’ of Czernowitz and Bukovina. More often than not, cosmopolitanism did not mean perfect fluency in five languages but rather, the inability to claim any of these languages as one’s own. In numerous reports to the ministry of education, Austrian school inspectors noted that children in utraquist (bilingual) schools made the same glaring mistakes in both German and their native languages.

My dissertation also suggests we must rethink the notion that turn-of-the-century Eastern Europe was primarily defined by the conflict between nationalists and imperial authorities and institutions. The diversity of nationalist ideas that inhabited Bukovina’s early twentieth-century cultural and intellectual landscape shows that nationalism could come in many forms, not all of
them incompatible with the institutions of empire. Not all nationalists saw the nation-state as a perfect translation of their ideas into practice. The most important element of Raimund Friedrich Kaindl’s nationalism was, in fact, his rejection of the German nation-state centered on Prussia. Kaindl believed that for the German Volk, a people defined by their need to grow and expand, the boundaries of a nation-state were nothing but an impediment and paralyzing constraint. Since no nation-state could possibly encompass the entire German people across the European continent in their great diversity, Kaindl advocated a federal formation modeled on Friedrich List’s Mitteleuropa and reaching from the Rhine to the mouths of the Danube.

Not only were nationalists in Bukovina not all irredentist and anti-Austrian, but they also envisioned the conflict in which they were engaged as more than a fight against empire. All the nationalist publications that had sprung up by the early 1900s in Czernowitz believed that they were waging a battle on behalf of democracy and against conservatism. Whenever they referred to nationalities and national rights, they did so in the context of broader debates about democracy and economic prosperity. Two important conclusions follow from studying the debates in nationalist periodicals. First of all, nationalism and social democracy in turn-of-the-century Bukovina were intimately tied. Nationalists resorted to a social democratic rhetoric of economic justice emptied of internationalist and working class tones, promising to lift the large peasant population out of poverty and alcoholism and elevate them to a superior economic position. Second, the main weapon with which nationalists in Bukovina waged war against conservative thinking and politics was anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism served as a bridge between the different estates and religious camps that continued to divide ‘national’ groups. The move from conservatism to democracy by way of nationalism was thus also a shift towards a much more openly anti-Semitic and intolerant politics.
One of the main concerns of this dissertation has been to understand how the transition from a world of empires to one of nation-states in the years following World War I affected the nationalist cultural and intellectual landscape of Bukovina. Most importantly, the triumph of the nation-state and the advent of Romanian rule in Czernowitz and Bukovina brought with them a crackdown on every form of non-Romanian nationalist activity. Since the new rulers had insider’s knowledge of the great dangers that national cultural activity could pose to a state that tolerated too much of it, they were especially careful to ban all the seemingly inoffensive cultural organizations of minorities, from newspapers and reading circles to schools. Living as a national minority with a distinct culture in a world in which the nationality principle had emerged victorious proved to be more difficult and dangerous than living and creating national culture under empire. What the various nationalities of Bukovina experienced under Romanian rule was an imperialism pursued by a nation-state that did not stop to apologize for the severity of its policies and did not try to make concessions or please everyone.

To the largely German-speaking, Jewish population of Czernowitz, this new form of imperialism was especially painful because it was coming from a young, poor, and in many ways still backward state. Once plagued by the inferiority complex of provincials whose love for Vienna was sadly unrequited, Czernowitzers now suffered from superiority complexes. Former imperial subjects who grew up reading German literature in Viennese cafes could not bear to be ‘liberated’ or colonized, as it were, by a state whose army consisted mostly of illiterate soldiers in shabby clothes. The more surprising consequence of Bukovina’s transition from empire to nation-state was that not only minority groups but ethnic Romanians too experienced a cultural decline of sorts. The cultural and literature societies that had been so active just a few years before, under imperial rule, one by one fell prey to political infighting and became as good as
inactive. Several publications from the interwar period by ethnic Romanians from Bukovina complained that, ever since responsibility for Romanian culture had shifted from private institutions to the state, the cultural and intellectual life of Romanians in Bukovina had sunk into lethargy.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that nationalism in its pre-1918 and postwar forms framed and defined all of everyday life and culture in Czernowitz and Bukovina, and by extension, in East-Central Europe at large. Nationalism in the region cannot be understood properly except as one manifestation of a much bigger and deeper problem, namely of the changing relationship between people, culture, and places. As Eastern Europe entered the age of modernization, the world grew bigger, faster, and more interconnected but also more unstable and fragmented by borders. In this context putting down roots in any one place became increasingly difficult. In border cities like Czernowitz, where one went to bed in Austria and woke up in Romania, even the lucky few who managed to stay put for more than a few decades were afflicted with feelings of dislocation and displacement. One of the reasons that anti-Semitism and nationalism were so intertwined in this region was that they were both facets of the same problem: a deep anxiety about this condition of displacement and rootlessness. The Jews of Czernowitz attracted the fear and hatred of Romanian nationalists not so much through their striking difference or blatant ‘otherness,’ but rather because they seemed to embody in an extreme form something that all residents of this city shared, whether they liked it or not. This was the ability to move between different worlds and languages, and its flipside: an incurable feeling of homelessness and a lack of roots. Mobility and displacement were a source of anxiety not just for the local population, but also for the ruling regimes, who found that Czernowitz was a city always in transition, where everything was destined to remain provisional. One aspect of
this problem was immigration from Bukovina, which peaked during the late nineteenth century and first post-World War II years. For the Austrian empire, the immigration agents who were going from village to village under cover, persuading peasants to sell their belongings and board the ship to Canada or Brazil, were invisible enemies as dangerous if not even more threatening than nationalist irredentists. And yet the historiographic literature on the period has been too concerned with national conflict in the region to pay attention to the problem of immigration.

It is also important to note the impact of Czernowitz’s peripheral location on its cultural life. The imagination of the imperial and national authorities that laid claim to Bukovina was fueled by an abundance of ethnographic accounts that presented the province as a land of wild bears, replete with shanties drowned in mud. Fearing that Bukovina might slide out of the hands of Europe and into those of Asia, Austrian cultural officials subjected the province to rushed cultural reforms that were meant to bring it over to civilization practically overnight. The empire focused almost all of its Kulturarbeit in Bukovina on Czernowitz, a city they built practically from scratch to serve as a bastion of German culture. While the Friedrich Schiller theater, the Francisco-Josephina university, and the German-language gymnasium may have pushed the ‘mud’ and ‘bears’ of Bukovina further into the background, they never did away with them completely. By the turn of the century, one of the biggest concerns of Czernowitzers was that their city seemed suspended in a limbo, somewhere between a village and a Grossstadt. The city had all the modern institutions it needed, and yet none of them functioned properly.

Everything here seemed makeshift and provisional and not quite finished. Both Vienna and Czernowitz were aware of the gaping distance between them, a distance that no number of gymnasiums and modern hotels and cafes could reduce. And yet, it seems to me that the remoteness and seeming unreachability of Vienna was, paradoxically, one of the most powerful
centripetal forces of the empire. The more Czernowitzers complained that Vienna treated them like a ‘stepchild’ of the empire, the more deeply they loved it. While the Austrians regarded Czernowitz as an oasis of civilization in the midst of a cultural desert, for the Romanians, the city was a hub of criminal activity, full of radicals and rebels who refused to recognize the authority of the new state. Many of the cultural policies they implemented were meant to put an end to Czernowitz’s contaminating effect on the countryside, which they viewed as the real seat of civilization in Bukovina.

The local intelligentsia also appropriated the rhetoric of a wild frontier life and image of Bukovina as a land of pioneers and missionaries who were risking their lives to fulfill a noble dream here, in the middle of nowhere. In this way, they tried to justify ideas and projects that were often running counter to those articulated by western contemporaries. The best example of this is Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, whose writings and socio-political activity brought him into sharp conflict with both Austrian and German historians, and with political movements that had gained the upperhand in Vienna and the western provinces of the empire. Kaindl called for a Greater Germany at a time when Schoenerer and his plans to secede from the non-German, eastern provinces of the empire and join the German Reich were immensely popular in the west. Aware of the disagreement between his ideas and those of his contemporaries, Kaindl consciously attributed this divergence to his experience of living in the easternmost borderland of the empire. Unlike historians and politicians in the west, who looked upon the eastern provinces of the empire with fear and suspicion, Kaindl had grown up in Bukovina, surrounded by other nationalities with aspirations of their own, but also deeply aware of the crucial role that ethnic Germans had never ceased to play in the region. This awareness became reflected in his idea that the potential of the German people and the expansionist impulses that were so defining
of its identity could only find expression in a large, federal Central European formation that transcended state frontiers. Indeed, Kaindl’s personal background and the detailed knowledge he gained by researching the centuries-long history of ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe made him skeptical of states and sensitive to the other kinds of ties – be they of language, culture, or traditions – that forged communities more enduring and solid than those contained merely by state boundaries.

In the imagination of intellectuals and writers from Kaindl to Gregor von Rezzori and Paul Celan, Czernowitz became a symbol not only of peripherality but also of rupture, displacement, and reinvention – all experiences that profoundly shaped their work. The two world wars were critical to this cycle of displacement and reinvention. By destabilizing the region politically and socially, the two world wars both opened up new possibilities for transformation. Both the regimes that ruled the province and the local population seized the new opportunities created by war to pursue new projects that seemed impossible to achieve under normal circumstances. In hopes that the war experience would erase memories of old conflicts and mistakes, the empire sought to rebuild and consolidate itself and its cultural mission even as it was falling apart. With their unflagging faith in the power of Kultur, Austrian officials used refugee camps as a form of cultural propaganda and advertisement. In these camps they opened schools for poor Ukrainian children who, as the newspapers emphasized, had never before benefitted from such modern, superior educational and cultural institutions. Those imperial subjects enamored of Vienna but disappointed by its negligence saw the war as an impulse from the outside for a long awaited process of transformation from within. Deep in the throes of war, Czernowitzers felt that their city was finally in the same time zone as Vienna, not lagging behind or running ahead, but pulsating in the same rhythm. The German-speaking Jews of Czernowitz
who fled the city and took refuge in Vienna and the western Austrian provinces, in particular, remembered the war years as the happiest time of their lives.

World War II brought with it similar hopes for renewal and transformation, both to the Romanian administration that returned to the province under the new authoritarian government of Marshall Antonescu, and to national minorities such as the Ukrainians. Both camps thought about the war as a continuation of old plans and projects that had been accomplished neither in the first war, nor during the interwar years. Ukrainian nationalists had never been nearer to seeing their age-long dream of a Greater Ukraine realized. They oscillated between German, Romanian, and Soviet patrons, depending on who was more likely to bring them closer to achieving their nationalist and irredentist ambitions. This explains the involvement of Bukovina Ukrainians in both National Socialist and Soviet communist organizations. In addition, seemingly new aggressive Romanization and anti-Semitic policies introduced by the Antonescu government were a continuation as well as radicalization of the fruitless efforts made by the various Romanian governments that ruled Bukovina during the interwar period to turn the province and its capital into an emblem of Romanian national culture.

They were meant to transform Czernowitz once and for all, a city that had not only maintained, but even deepened its Jewish character during the interwar years. A manifesto and program for the administration of Bukovina and Bessarabia, authored by Marhsall Antonescu himself, explicitly defined the World War II occupation of the provinces as an opportunity to fix mistakes and accomplish what the interwar governments had failed to achieve: the full integration of these provinces into the Greater Romanian nation-state. This observation is important because it suggests that Antonescu’s anti-Semitic policies were not simply the Marshall’s concession to Hitler and Germany, from whom he hoped to curry favor and support
for Romania’s own ambitions in the region. They were not simply meant to deprive the Jews of rights and exclude them from public life. They were also supposed to strengthen the ethnic Romanian community by ‘stimulating national consciousness.’ Whatever concessions were made to the Jews, whatever moderation there was in Antonescu’s anti-Semitic program, was not due to any hesitation about the rightness of these policies but simply to the fact that Bukovina’s economic life depended entirely on the fate of the Jews.

In addition to bringing into relief such continuities across the great divide of the two world wars, the broad time framework of this project led me to adopt a comparative perspective. The comparative viewpoint was far from an arbitrary methodological choice. While shifting in and out of the city, and from one regime to other, both locals and state authorities in Bukovina practiced and refined the art of comparing. Repeated occupations in the two world wars, in fact, turned the province into a laboratory of comparative politics. While trying to find a modus vivendi under all the regimes that ruled over them, the local population experienced first hand some of the twentieth-century’s biggest and most important questions. What was the difference between life under empire and under a regime that proclaimed itself to be democratic? How did Bolshevism change Russia’s relation to Eastern Europe? The answers were not always obvious and predictable. The same Russian occupation that sent Czernowitz’s German-speaking Jews running in horror made a favorable impression on other elements of the population. Whatever popularity they had with the locals, the imperial Russian occupation forces in World War I gained by undoing what the Austrians had struggled to achieve in their century and a half of rule in Bukovina. They exempted the peasants of rules and regulations such as the highly unpopular school obligativity law introduced by the Austrians, and proceeded to take apart the opaque Austrian bureaucratic system imported into Bukovina by getting rid of the old intellectual and
political elite. In both World War I and World War II, the rival empires that fought over Bukovina were very preoccupied with how they compared with each other in the eyes of locals. Both Austrian and Russian occupation authorities, for instance, sought to take advantage of the most vulnerable element of their rivals’ relationship with the local population: the nationalities question.

Although they took pains to distance themselves from the regimes that preceded them, occupation authorities in Bukovina were often aided in their policies by the transformations that had already occurred in the province under previous occupations. For instance, the social revolution set into motion by the Soviets during their one year of occupation in Bukovina paved the way for the thefts and crimes that occurred under Romanian rule. To escape internment or execution at the hands of the returning Romanian authorities, individuals who had worked for the Soviets hurried to demonstrate their loyalty by denouncing others and offering their services as executors of Antonescu’s most violent policies.

The various regimes and occupation authorities that came and went from Czernowitz presented surprising continuities and similarities in their ambitions and approaches to remaking the city and province. One of the most important ways in which they diverged was in their endurance, or the persistence of the cultural projects and way of life they imported into Bukovina. The rapidity with which wildly different regimes and civilizations were put together and then taken apart in Bukovina during the First World War is remarkable and unique to that period. The Bolshevik revolution, for instance, reached Czernowitz a mere two weeks after it had happened in Petersburg. Here, it took the form of marches, parades and demonstrations, and promises of equality and justice to all the nationalities of Bukovina. However, the red flags harbored in Czernowitz’s main square vanished quickly when the Austrian army returned a few
weeks later. The revolution was forgotten and Czernowitzers returned to their former way of life – for another couple of months, until the monarchy collapsed and revolution returned to Bukovina under the guise of Romanian rule.

With all its weaknesses and vulnerabilities, the Austrian empire refused to go to its grave. As the new Romanian rulers were quick to discover, Austrian Kultur in its posthumous variety was exasperatingly vigorous and enduring in Bukovina. No number of ordinances and decrees could evict the memory of Franz Joseph from the minds of his loyal subjects, or ‘Wienerisch’ German from public life. While some ‘old Austrians’ fled to Vienna, many of the people who had inhabited and run Austrian cultural institutions in Czernowitz stayed put. The young Romanian nation-state, poor and overstrained as it was, had no choice but recycle this ‘dowry’ that the defunct empire had bequeathed upon it. The ghost of Austrian Kultur and the people who embraced it and gave it meaning were a nuisance not just for Greater Romania but also for Austria, who found itself flooded with requests for asylum and financial support from the former pioneers of Kultur in the eastern borderlands of the empire, a people it did not even recognize as fully Austrian.

What was it like for Czernowitzers to experience so many different regimes, revolutions, and occupations? How did they adapt to so many different systems? How did they relate to the ambitions of those who came to rule the city? As they shifted between citi-

zenships, cultures, and languages, Czernowitzers developed a skeptical attitude towards the plans and policies transferred to them from above and from abroad. Those who remembered the Austrians and Russians coming in and out of the city during World War I were inclined to look upon the Soviet occupation of the city in 1940 with distrust. Rather than rush to follow directives from above regarding the nationalization of property, the largely peasant population of Bukovina preferred to
wait until the authorities interfered directly. Cultural officials reporting on the state of the province in 1940 diagnosed Bukovina with a general ‘lack of enthusiasm’ which they attributed to the province’s lack of a solid communist experience. For all the difficulties with which they were met, the Soviets left a more lasting imprint on the province in their one year of rule during World War II than the Romanians had managed to in more than two decades of rule in Bukovina. To the exasperation of the returning Romanian administration, by the end of the first Soviet occupation, in many respects Bukovina looked as though the Romanian state had never even set foot in it before. And yet, Czernowitz’s restlessness was lasting enough to disrupt even the boldest and most zealous Soviet plans for the city. Even in 1944, when all doubts about the permanence of the Soviet ‘occupation’ were removed by the Soviets’ victory in the war, Czernowitz was still very difficult to stabilize. Well into the postwar years, Czernowitz served as a big waiting room for people who were preparing to scatter to the four winds in search of new homes.
Postface

“The Local”

Lillya Andreevna has been living in Chernivtsi for the past forty years. She lives in the old city center, in an apartment right across from the university library, together with her cat. When her granddaughter suggested that she move into one of the newer apartment buildings built by the Soviets, Lillya Andreevna would not even hear of it. She refused for the simple reason that Soviet apartments have low ceilings. When she watches television or talks with her relatives in Russia on the phone, Lillya Andreevna likes to have a sense of space. In the old Austrian apartments, one may daydream undisturbed, for the ceiling is always high enough to accommodate even the longest and most distant gazes.

Lillya Andreevna was born in the Russian city of Gorki. Because her father was a music teacher, her family lived in one of the wings of the local music high school. When the war broke out in 1941, Lillya’s father left his wife and four daughters to fend for themselves, and went to the front. The front got close and the music high school, which had been a dormitory for the theological seminary in Tsar Nicholas II’s day, was converted into military headquarters. Housing was scarce in Gorki. So as not to kick the family into the street, the military staff allowed Lillya’s mother and her daughters to make a home for themselves in the basement of the building. The women lived there, in one damp room until the end of the war. While her mother was away working in a factory from dawn to dusk, Lillya and her sisters would play in the street, right across from the public library. Through an open window, little Vera and her playmates would sneak into the library stacks to search for treasures. It was pitch black in there. From time to time, a mouse would scuffle across the wooden library floors. The children lit candles and
took them into the stacks to look at the books. “Just think, we might have set the entire library on fire!,” Lillya Andreevna remembers, beaming with delight. From the bottom shelves, the children pulled out heavy tomes with thick golden covers. Some of them were embroidered and locked, like big jewelry boxes. They dragged the books into the street and used them as toy chairs and tables, or bricks for their fortresses. If they were too heavy, the children ripped off some of the pages.

Three days before the armistice was signed, a letter arrived, saying that Lillya’s father had just died in combat. Once the war was over, the family moved out of the basement. But it was too late, for the damp air had already made the girls sick with tuberculosis. Lillya had been in school for just a few months when she and her sister had to move into a sanatorium. There she spent four or five years, on and off. Afterwards, Lillya tried to catch up with the other children for a while but then she gave up. Neither the teachers nor her mother bothered her about her bad grades so she sank to the bottom of her class. Lillya remembers almost nothing of her high school days except her stellar physics professor. Even now, she can recite the theory of gravitation by heart thanks to Professor Friedlich, ‘a little Jew [evreichik] who taught Physics and Math,’ and who liked to illustrate every theorem and formula with a little drawing on the board. To explain electricity, he drew little people walking along an electric cable. To explain the refraction of light, he drew the sea and the sun and a dolphin that turned its head in amazement to look at the children in the classroom. By the end of the school year, Lillya’s physics notebook was filled with drawings of cats and dolphins, birds and violins, little boxes and ribbons. Her mother, who never understood much about physics, leafed through the notebook and scolded her daughter for doodling in class.

For better or worse, Lillya Andreevna finished school and started working at a factory.
that produced radio parts - back then, a fine piece of Soviet technology. Her responsibility was to oversee a big workshop where people dressed in white robes worked behind glass cases with pieces so small they could only be seen on the microscope. The workers and their supervisors spent every Saturday afternoon cleaning every square inch of the workshop with dusters and water. At the end of a bout of cleaning, Lillya Andreevna would pick up a black duster and test a few places: a doorknob, the underside of a table, a random chair. If there were still traces of dust left, the workers would have to clean the workshop all over again. Cleanliness was absolutely necessary for this line of work. Periodically, laboratory workers would come to the workshop to take samples of air and test it for purity. “If they came to my apartment now, I would be fired,” says Lillya Andreevna laughing and pointing to the thick coat of dust on her kitchen TV-set.

It was at that factory that Lillya Andreevna met her future husband, Evgenyi Pavlov or Genya. Genya was the kind of person who only got ‘fives’ in school - the highest grade possible. Unlike Lillya Andreevna, who could never spell anything properly, Genya quickly learned German, French, and Ukrainian. He was a member of the Soviet intelligentsia - so he always wore a necktie, even when he accompanied his wife and two children to the beach. He quickly reached the top of the professional ladder. As a reward, he was sent from Moscow to Chernivtsi, to serve as the director of a brand new factory the Soviets had opened in the provincial Ukrainian city. Genya and Lillya sold all of their furniture except for a bed and wardrobe, and got on the train to Ukraine to see their new home. By now, they were in their forties. Neither one of them had ever seen a city like Chernivtsi before. Lillya took a quick liking to the Habsburg architecture. She and her husband moved into a huge apartment that Genya had been given along with a personal driver and an impressive salary. Lillya and Genya were prosperous enough to buy a dacha in the suburbs of Chernivtsi and decorate their garden with artificial hills and ponds.
In memory of her father, who had been a musician, Lillya sent her daughter Anna to a local music school. But Anna did not have an ear for music so she barely got herself through school, graduated with a public performance of a Chopin ballad she deeply hated, and then flew off to Kazan to attend an engineering school.

Years went by. One day, Lillya and Genya woke up in a world they no longer recognized. The Soviet Union collapsed and Genya’s factory closed. Hundreds of workers were fired and Genya found himself without any source of income. Capitalism arrived to Ukraine in the form of bankruptcies and thefts. Anna started a business with a partner who took loans in her name and then ran off with the money. Unable to pay off her debts, she risked going to jail. She divorced her husband and, leaving her child in the care of Lillya Andreevna, she ran off to Russia where nobody could track her down. The Soviet collapse had also robbed her little brother Andrey, a fourth year student at the Chernivtsi university, of the posh car he had been promised as a graduation gift. Broken-hearted, Genya fell ill. He needed expensive surgeries and medications Lillya Andreevna paid for by selling all of their belongings, one by one. The first to go was the luxurious Habsburg-era apartment in the center of the city. The Pavlov’s were surely the last in a long series of families who had lost that apartment, likely confiscated from its Jewish owners before the war. Then went the jewelry and expensive clothes Lillya Andreevna had enjoyed as the spouse of an important Soviet intelligent. Then went all of their life savings. Now in her late fifties, Lillya, who had quit her factory job years before, had to re-learn how to work. What could the wife of a former Soviet factory director do in the new fast-moving, rapidly changing capitalist world in which she now found herself? She took a job as an apartment cleaner. Her hands, once beautifully manicured and heavy with rings, grew tough and wrinkled. When Genya died, Lillya Andreevna thought she had no reason to continue living.
And yet she did. This time, she says, she is living only for herself. “For years I ran from work to the kitchen, and from there, to the shop to carry tens of kilograms of food home. Then I had to feed the family and only after I was done could I rest. And then I would fall asleep instantly. For years I dreamed of a time when I could sleep as much as I wanted to. And now that time has come.” Lillya Andreevna plays Sudoku and does crosswords to ‘keep the wheels turning.’ But her real passion is aerobics. Ten years ago, she started an aerobics group for retired people in Chernivtsi. Now she is much older but by no means out of shape. Her entire week is filled with classes. “Lillya Andreevna, don’t be so strict, we come here to get enjoyment. This isn’t jail,” the seventy to eighty-year-old students complain. But Lillya Andreevna is all about discipline, like in the good old days. “You come here for your health, not for your enjoyment. If you want enjoyment, go to the disco,” she admonishes ‘the girls’ – as she calls her students. They nod and dutifully resume their exercises, which go on for one hour and a half without a break.
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