

TRANSNISTRIAN REFUGEES IN ROMANIA, IN 1944

На початку 1944 р. Румунії довелося евакуйовувати певну частину населення Трансністрії. Окрім армії та румунських державних службовців, які забезпечували функціонування окупаційного режиму, вона також мала подбати і про місцеве населення, що співпрацювало з румунською владою, для того, щоб вберегти його від радянської помсти. Доля цих переселенців прослідковується за архівними документами.

Ключові слова: *Трансністрія, Румунія, Друга світова війна, Іон Антонеску, етнічна політика*

At the beginning of 1944, Romania had to evacuate Transdnister. Besides the army and the Romanian public servants who had ensured the functioning of the occupation regime, they had to think of withdrawing the local population that had collaborated with the Romanian authorities in order to keep them away from the Soviet retaliation. The fate of these refugees is retraced based on the archive documents.

Key words: *Transnistria, refugees, Romania, World War II, Ion Antonescu, ethnic politics*

As we know, in the summer of 1941, after having freed the territory occupied by the USSR a year before, the Romanian army continued their offensive across the Dniester. This generated protests of the Romanian public opinion but Marshal Ion Antonescu, the Leader of the State, argued that Romanian had to go on fighting along Germany against USSR in order to be sure that the Soviet danger would be completely pushed away from the country's borders. In 1941, the German-Romanian armies occupied wide territories in the west of the USSR, Romania being responsible for the administration of the region between the Dniester and the Bug (Transnistria) which was placed under the control of a civilian administration, distinct from the structures of the Romanian state (The Transnistria Government).

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There are many discussions regarding the future intentions for this region. Germany saw Transnistria as a compensation given to Romania for having lost the North-western Transylvania but this was categorically rejected by the Romanian government. Officially, Transnistria was considered an occupied territory which Romania only administered.

During the meeting of the Ministers Council, on January 26 1944, where they discussed the withdrawal of the Romanian troops and administration from Transnistria, Marshal Antonescu and the prime-minister, Mihai Antonescu, presented a number of considerations regarding the principles on the basis of which the territory between the Dniester and the Bug was administered. One of the tasks given to the Transnistrian authorities by the the prime minister was that they should keep all documents regarding the Romanian administration between the Dniester and the Bug in perfect order so they can be brought to the peace conference after the war: “Transnistria will be a problem at the Peace Conference no matter the result of the war. Russia is a great power and, no matter the result of the war, at the Peace Conference it will bring about the issue of rights and interest related to the war regime. The Transnistrian archive must display all tasks and hardships faced by the Romanian state, the sums spent for investments, to start the factories and the institutions on this territory, the money spent of cultural activities bit also the sums spent for the preservation of this territory: the road building expenses as well as the public works” [8, p. 59].

On his turn, Ion Antonescu said: “as for the purely administrative part, I am held responsible in the face of history and in front of the tomorrow peace conference because, as I have said many times, in Transnistria there was one of the most civilized administrations that has ever been accomplished by any occupant in a modern war ... which gave the population of this province the opportunity to have better households and enjoy a greater freedom as compared to the life they used to have and the regime they used to endure under the Bolshevik domination” [8, p. 60]. The objective of the Romanian administration in Transnistria, economically speaking, was to restore the agriculture and industry in the region so as they could sustain the needs of the local population and those of the Romanian army which continued its offensive towards the East. Nobody intended an occupation regime abiding by the laws of war, through which the goods existing on the

territory between the Dniester and the Bug could be purely and simply confiscated. Obviously, the economy of Transnistria was controlled by the Romanian authorities and it was connected to the Romanian economy but, based on the possibilities of that time, Transnistria was not treated as a simple colony but as an economic and administrative entity with its own budget and its capacity to make commercial trades so as Transnistria could access a “normal” economic circuit, meant to ensure the sustainable growth of the region [7, p. 122-124]¹.

This approach had also a propagandistic side. The “civilized” administration model that Romania suggested in Transnistria was to be perceived in opposition to the Soviet “barbarianism”. Freeing the inhabitants between the Dniester and the Bug was also accomplished through cultural actions, education and promoting religious values. From this perspective one can identify three significant pillars which constituted a reason to be proud for Ion Antonescu and for Gheorghe Alexianu, the governor of Transnistria. They are the Romanian Orthodox Church Mission in Transnistria, the university and the opera in Odessa.

The Orthodox Mission functioned along other smaller missions belonging to other denominations and their purpose was the rebirth of the religious feeling as an opposition for the atheist Bolshevik politics. This mission took in the very few local priests that had survived the retaliations but a significantly important number of priests had to be brought from Romania to make up for the lack of personnel.

Officially, the university in Odessa was in refuge but the Romanian authorities decided to open a “nonbolshevik” university with teaching staff that had chosen to remain in Odessa. The university was opened on December the 7th, 1941, initially comprising three faculties and then seven. The leadership of the university was entrusted to the eminent surgeon Ceasovnikov, a convinced anticommunist. The first faculties were: medicine, polytechnic and agronomy; later on, specialities such as law, history, philosophy, philology and sciences were added. At the beginning of 1944, the university had around 2000 students [1, p. 159].

¹ Some authorities in Romania even accused Governor Gheorghe Alexianu of not supporting more actively the Romanian economic interests and the Germans were dissatisfied because they had to pay for what they considered to be war spoils. Both aspects are underlined in the discussions during the ministers’ council, Ion Antonescu government.

In the speech delivered at the opening ceremony, Gheorghe Alexianu highlighted the objectives of this endeavour: “People establish profound affinities with each other based on understanding, comradeship, friendship ... which are difficult to practice especially during the communism years when the oppressive dictatorship was pressing more and more heavily upon your shoulders ... We are at war, this is it, today you, as everybody else, are suffering; your parents, your brothers and your relatives are fighting and dying on the front to protect your fatherland! We are doing the same trying to protect what has been forcefully taken away from us. I neither discuss, nor politicize this aspect. We are here to understand our sufferings and worries ... the university doors open today for the entire youth of Transnistria, even if one can still hear cannon shots in the distance ... You, the young ones, are called upon to create the foundation of this new life whose purpose is to comfort those who have gone through so many hardships” [1, p. 157].

Trying to rehabilitate Gheorghe Alexianu’s memory, his son, Șerban, recalled among his parent’s major accomplishments the re-opening of the Odessa opera: “Along with the opening of the Odessa University, they also inaugurated the Opera and the National Theater as well, both of them with the same pleiade of actors. No sacrifice was too great for the Romanian administrative authority in order to keep the shows going at the Opera. In spite of the fact that the city was in ruins ... the opera had once again become the symbol of the city and the theater was always full; one of the main factors that contributed to the well functioning of the opera was the artistic personnel ...” [1, p. 161]. On his turn, during the Ministers Council meeting on June 21st, 1944, where the situation of the Transnistrian refugees was discussed, Marshal Ion Antonescu underlined the fact that the Odessa opera ensemble as “perfect”, insisting on the fact that the artists from Odessa that were refugees should be given a purpose worthy of their abilities [8, p. 348].

The Ion Antonescu regime was a nationalist one and this is the reason why the Romanian (Moldavian) minority in Transdnier enjoyed special attention. Moreover, under the coordination of Professor Anton Golopenția, the Institute of Statistics ran ample research to identify the Romanian villages east of the Bug which were going as far as the Caucasus. The plan was to firstly bring them to Transnistria and expose them to a decommunizing program that would restore their national

identity so as, later on, to be brought back to Bessarabia, primarily in the southern part, in the settlements that had been abandoned by the German colonists in 1940.

The protection of Romanian national interests pushed marshal Antonescu toward a xenophobic attitude. The Jews and the Gypsies were subjected to an extermination regime while the Slavs (the Russinas and the Ukrainians) were seen as a threat against the Romanian national space. Hardly had the Soviet authorities occupied Bessarabia in 1940 that they started colonizing the villages abandoned by Germans with population from Galitia. The marshal ordered them to return to their place of origin, planning to replace them with Romaninas from across the Bug. This xenophobic attitude was nevertheless often nuanced in special cases such as those people of other origin than Romanina who manifested loyalty toward the Romanian authorities. On the other hand, Gheorghe Alexianu manifested greater openness towards the Slavic majority of the Transnistrian population, the rights granted to the Romanian population aiming only at restating the national identity destroyed by the imperial Russian and Soviet policies and not at stating the “superiority” of the Latin race over the Slavic one.

All these elements made it possible that in Transnistria one could recruit from the local population those people that were willing to cooperate with the occupation regime: intellectuals, public servants, engineers from the reopened factories, agronomists.

After the Stalingrad victory, in July 1943, the Red Army led a continuous offensive against the German-Romanian armies in Ukraine. The Axes troops had to evacuate the Cuban area, Donetk region, reorganizing along the Dniepre line which was nonetheless broken by the Soviet offensive. The continuous battles, that lasted seven months, exhausted the Axes troops.

On March the 3rd, 1944, the Soviet troops restart the offensive and break the Uman front. The Axes troops are overwhelmed and the Soviets have a clear path crossing the Bug, then the Dniester and the Prut in the northern part, as a result conquering parts of the Romanian territory. With great efforts, the Axes troops manage to stabilize the front in the Lvyv-Ternopil region while, in Romania, the front is stabilized along the strategic line Târgu Frumos – Iași – Chișinău. The Soviet offensive goes on in the south of Ukraine as well, the Soviet troops entering Odessa on April the 10th, 1944, but the Red Army stopped along the line of the inferior Dniester. This frontline was kept till August the

20th 1944 when the great Iași-Chișinău offensive starts and Romania's exiting the war on August the 23rd 1944 led to the collapse of the entire south-east front and to the wide opening of the way for the Red Army towards the Balkans and Hungary [6, p. 217-239].

From January to April 1944 the Romanian authorities were pre-occupied to organise the military resistance, focusing on organising the Iași-Chișinău defence line. Moreover, plans were designed regarding the evacuation of the regions in the conflict zone and these plans referred not only to Moldova, Bucovina and Bessarabia but also the Transnistrian region which had been under Romanian administration since 1944.

As the Soviet troops were getting closer to the Bug, on January 29th, 1944, Marshal Ion Antonescu decided to cease the civilian administration in Transnistria and replace it with a military administration under the command of General Gheorghe Potopeanu; later on, the territory between the Bug and the Dniester got under German military occupation².

The Ministers Council meeting on January the 26th, 1944, discussed the evacuation of Transnistria. Obviously, the discussion referred to the army, constabulary and other Romanian institutions. In addition, the government structures under the coordination of Gheorghe Alexianu became the General Secretary of Asset Administration which took over the Romanian assets in Transnistria in order to administer them in the country. However, the plan also included the civilian population.

The action of organising the refuge of the administration and population from Transnistria, Bessarabia, Bucovina and Moldova was given the code name 1111³ and it was coordinated by the Army General Staff. On February the 8th, 1944, the General Staff representatives of the above-mentioned provinces were instructed about the evacuation procedures. These instructions referred to industrial installations, food resources, animals, public institutions, treasury goods, hospitals but also to population. The fundamental idea at the basis of the entire

² At the middle of March [4, f. 76].

³ The correspondance kept by the General Staff used the following codes: Operation 1111 – the works about the evacuation of goods from Transdnier, regarding the army; operation 111 A – the works about the evacuation of goods from Transdnier, regarding the Transdnier government; operation 1111 BM – the evacuation of goods from Bessarabia, Bucovina and Moldova, reagrdng the army and the civilian authorities. [4, f. 99].

process was that the population movements should be minimum for multiple reasons: there was no intention to deprive some territories of the Romanian population, it was estimated that a massive evacuation would lead to great problems and there was hope that the retreat was just temporary and that, eventually, these territories would get back under the control of the Romanian authorities; this is why they were not to be plundered. Clear instructions were given that, as far as the food (cereals, sugar, and oil) or animals for feeding and traction, only the surplus should be evacuated in order for it to be used to supply the army. “In principle”, the order said, “the men must not be left without the cattle that they need for milk or work.” The cereals, the sugar or the oil were to be evacuated making sure that the population is left with living necessities till the next crop.

As for the industry, they were to disassemble and relocate only those industries that were considered necessary for the war effort, indicated by the Ministry of Army Supply and National Economy, as well as those private factories whose owners were willing to pay for relocation. No factory was destroyed in the evacuated zone, Transdnister included.

As far as the population to be evacuated was concerned, the document clearly mentioned that the interest of the Romanian authorities was not that a large number of people should leave their homes but that the number of evacuees should be minimum. Mention was made that “the priests, the teachers and the public servants with local interests, who are not part of any military element, should remain and act as guides of Romanian life in the occupied territory.” The first to leave were the public servants that were assigned elsewhere, those who had to move to safety asstests of their institutions, the workers that accompanied the disassembled factories. Others, who did not belong to these categories, could join them only with a special approval. The population from an evacuated region was to go to a certain area in western Romania, clearly specified by the authorities, and only there. All the evacuees were to live in the placement area on their own [4, f. 150-157].

The instructions clearly specified that the Jews and other minorities were not to be evacuated [4, f. 150-157]. Ion Antonescu motivated his decision at the Ministries Council through his intention of not bringing non-Romanian population on Romanian territory given the fact that he was forced to leave numerous Romanians at the discretion of the Sovi-

ets. In spite of this, in the case of Transnistria, the marshal agreed that, besides the representatives of the Romanian administration in the area and a part of the Romanian (Moldavian) population in Transnistria, other citizens of different ethnic backgrounds should also be evacuated if they had supported the occupation regime and were facing the danger of being condemned and executed by the Soviet regime⁴.

Thus, in the case of the Transnistrian refugees, there are three categories: the government public servants, who were compactly brought to Bucharest to administer the assests they had been entrusted with, a part of the Transnistrian Romanian population who were to be brought to the counties of Cetatea Albă and Chilia to replace the German colonists, and those non-Romanian inhabitants of Transnistria who wished refuge. For the latter, the Great General Staff, by address no. 698894 of March the 11th, 1944, assigned the following areas in western Romania:

a) For the population of Moghilev, Jugustru and Tulcin counties, Curtici **plasa [a territorial division unit, ranking below county and above commune]** in Arad county, where 6777 people can be accommodated

b) For the population of Balta and Râbnița counties, Sânnicolaul Mare plasa in Timiș Torontal county, where 11233 people can be accommodated

c) For the population of județele Golta and Ananiev counties, Periam plasa in Timiș Torontal county, where 13466 people can be accommodated

d) For the population of Berezovka and Oceacov counties, Jimbolia plasa in Timiș Torontal county, where 7307 people can be accommodated

e) For the population of Dubăsari and Tiraspol counties, Ciulvăz plasa in Timiș Torontal county, where 8945 people can be accommodated

f) For the population of Odesa and Ovidiopol counties, Ceacova plasa in Timiș Torontal county, where 6593 people can be accommodated. [2, f. 136] This upper limit of refugees was never reached, their number being significantly lower.

⁴ A report regarding the organization of the evacuation, between 25 January and 15 March 1944, says: “there have been established the admittance criteria for the evacuation of that part of the population, besides the public servants, who might be exposed to deportation or extermination by the enemy.” (1892)

The evacuation actions started in the first half of March 1944, in the emergency areas, established based on their proximity to the front. The goal, which was finally reached, was to limit the evacuation actions to the areas situated outside the Târgu Frumos – Iași – Chișinău-Cetatea Albă strategic line. The secondary option was to retreat on the Focșani – Galați line. Once the front stabilised on this line, the servants in the regions under the control of the Romanian authorities (who had left already) received the order to get back to their duty immediately.

The evacuation unfolded with difficulty. All the available trains were used and as most of them had a stop in Bucharest, this overcrowded the capital. Moreover, for the counties on this side of the Dniester, marching columns were organized and closely monitored till they reached their destination points.

In the case of Transnistria, the situation was complicated by the Germans' request to evacuate, temporarily, the German minority situated east of the Dniester and the allies of other ethnic backgrounds to Romania. The number of these refugees was estimated between 60,000 and 130,000. The German population was to be placed in the former German colonies in southern Bessarabia. These requests were categorically rejected by Ion Antonescu who motivated again that he can not accept foreigners on Romanian territory as long as he did not accept Romanians and that the colonies in Bessarabia were ment for Romanian population. In the end, the agreed solution was to allow the refugees with German pass to be gathered in the Ismail and Chilia ports areas and, from here, to be shipped on the the Danube to German territory⁵.

The Romanians (Moldavians), estimated to approximately 10,000 people, crossed the Dniester in columns, settled in the villages in southern Bessarabia that had been deserted by the Germans in 1940. The action was supervised by Anton Golopenția and Nichita Smochină, the leader of the Transnistrian Romanians who, between 15 and 17 March, was on a mission in Transnistria and Odessa where he gathered documents regarding the occupation period which were to be used later by the Romanian government. In a statement addressed to marshal An-

⁵ Order 54915 of 18th March 1944: The Great General Staff approved on March 19th the entrance on Bessarabian territory of the German refugee columns from Transnistria through Dubăsari, Tighina and Cetatea Albă. March 27th, the German refugees are embarked at Ismail and Chilia [2, f. 219], [4, f. 69].

tonescu, Smochină suggested that all Moldavians should be crossed over the Dniester for fear of Soviet retaliation [5, f. 2].

In the case of the Transnistrian population that was to be evacuated to western Romania, the means of transportation was the train along the Odessa-Tighina-Românești-Galați-Urziceni-București route so as, later on, other trains might take them to Timiș county via Craiova [4, f. 66].

During the conference of the ministries council on March the 6th 1944, Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu mentioned that “a whole series of people were evacuated from Transnistria without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or asking for approval from the marshal according to case.” Under these circumstances, Mihai Antonescu gave dispositions that the Great General Staff should “take the most severe steps to control the activity and political attitude of these people.” On his turn, the Minister of Internal Affairs, General Vasiliu, explained that these people pose no danger in terms of general security as they had been dispersed and overwatched [4, f. 61-62]. However, a detailed check of the refugees from Transnistria was ordered.

According to a report dated August 28th 1944, the situation of the Transnistrians and east of the Bug refugees was the following:

In southern Bessarabia, the Transnistrian Romanians were colonized as follows: 1201 families with 4544 people in Cetatea Albă county and 3947 families with 3947 people in Chilia county; a total of 8491 people. In addition, in Chilia county there other 200 people were retained as they had entered Romanian territory illegally or carrying German documents. Moreover, there were approximately 500 Tartars and Russians in Constanța county brought by the German troops [3, f. 443]⁶.

The rest of the population coming from Transnistria and from east of the Bug was estimated to 6240 people who were distributed in counties as follows [3, f. 444-445]:

⁶ People of German, Russian and especially Tartar ethnicity were brought by the German authorities to Constanța region. Part of the refugees settle in the area, others stay in the camp waiting to leave to Germany. On August 19th 1944, the Constabulary reported that 195 people had been sent to Germany on July 18th. The Tartars settled in Constanța were 485. There were 42 more people waiting to leave soon and 147 had still to be gathered in the camp for departure [3, f. 472].

County	Urban inhabitants	Rural inhabitants	Total
DOLJ	19	14	33
GORJ	-	11	11
MEHEDINȚI	3	42	45
OLT	1	1	2
ROMANAȚI	32	21	53
VÂLCEA	43	28	71
ARGEȘ	19	22	1
BRAȘOV	21	44	65
SUBURBII CAPITALĂ	161	11	172
ILFOV	21	141	162
DÂMBOVIȚA	5	192	197
MUSCEL	17	22	39
PRAHOVA	14	40	54
TELEORMAN	11	19	30
VLAȘCA	9	86	95
BUZĂU	110	66	176
COVURLUI	68	19	87
PUTNA	49	153	202
RÂMNICU SĂRAT	9	68	77
TECUCI	18	43	61
TUTOVA	1	14	15
BACĂU	-	-	-
FĂLCIU	-	2	2

IAȘI	-	-	-
NEAMȚ	1	1	2
ROMAN	1	-	1
VASLUI	1	1	2
BRĂILA	56	21	77
CONSTANȚA	3	7	10
IALOMIȚA ⁷	84	145	229
TULCEA	14	9	23
ALBA	9	8	17
FĂGĂRAȘ	-	8	8
HUNEDOARA	9	15	24
SIBIU	15	69	84
TÂRNAVA MARE	5	3	8
TÂRNAVA MICĂ	9	2	11
TURDA	11	12	23
ARAD	52	160	212
BIHOR	4	15	19
CARAȘ	13	21	19
SEVERIN	119	37	156
TIMIȘ TORONTAL	400	3210	3610
TOTAL	1437	4803	6240

Of these, 960 family heads were distributed to various factories under the General Secretary of Asset Administration (the former Trans-

⁷ In Ialomița there were a number of workers (tractor operators) that had come from Transnistria even before the sanctuary was organized, as well as a significant number of prisoners used for agricultural works. A document from June 30th mentioned: “I

istriian Government) and 13 to the CRICOM financial and industrial organisation (placed in Periș, Ilfov). The rest, mentions the document, “work wherever they can to support their living.”⁸

As one can see, most Transnistrian refugees were in the Banat area because this region was assigned to them through the plan of the Great General Staff. Particular aspects about the situation of these refugees are to be found in a detailed report made by the Constabulary on May 9th 1944 after having undertaken control ations in Timiș Torontal, Arad and Severin counties. The controls resulted in the following situation [3, f. 1]:

Date	Locality	People with formal authorizations	People with informal authorizations	People without authorizations	People with false authorizations	People with German papers	People added in illegal authorizations	Gypsies running from Trasdnester, evacuated from the country	Total
21.04	Ghilad, Timiș	251	3	-	-	-	-	-	254
22.04	Giulvăz	87	64	2	-	30	-	-	183
23.04	Timișoara	138	30	-	1	2	-	-	171
24.04	Peciu Nou	510	16	-	-	18	-	-	544

have the honour to report that as far as the issue signalled by the State Subsecretary for Administration, regarding the presence in Ialomița county of an alarming number of Ukrainian and Russian prisoners, tractor operators and refugees, Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu has decided that these prisoners should stay in the county till the end of the agricultural works but they should be rigorously supervised and, after that, they will be taken out of the county” [5, f. 232] . Still in Ialomița, in Cuza Vodă commune, there were two Transnistrian refugees, the priests Grafenco Alexandru and Dunai Ioan. They were over 60 years old and did not know Romanian. They lived on the help offered by the Călărași rank. The Ministry of the Religious Affairs was requested to accept them in a monastery where they could be taken care of [3, f. 470] .

⁸ ANIC, the Constabulary General Inspectorate fond, file 158/1944, f. 443. On July 21st 1944, following the dispositions given by Mihai Antonescu on June 23rd 1944, the State Subsecretary for Administration sent to the Prime Minister the numerical tale of the evacuees from Moldova, Bucovina and Transnistria according to their professions [5, f. 234-235]:

State employees distributed	State employees undistributed	Total state employees	Students	Freelances	Smiths	Workers	Farmers	Housewives and children	Total
64228	4735	64963	3168	8245	10475	18470	34414	207783	355668

25.04	Jebel	375	4	-	-	4	-	-	383
26.04	Liebling	496	18	3	-	23	2	-	542
27.04	Tolvadia	313	1	1	-	-	3	-	318
28.04	Lovrin	50	111	10	-	26	-	-	197
29.04	Lugoj-Severin	-	8	9	-	6	-	--	23
1.05	Urban Arad	7	33	6	-	9	-	-	55
2.05	Rural Arad	10	12	14	1	36	-	16	89
	Total	2237	300	45	2	154	5	16	2759

Further on, the report explained the problem of the checked authorisations. Thus, the informal authorisations had been issued by people unauthorised formally to authorise Transnistrian people to enter the country. There were 159 authorisations for 300 people. Most of them (39) had been signed by Anton Golopenția on behalf of the prefecture of the Cetatea Albă county to some Russians who were not supposed to cross the Dniester and to some Moldavians who were supposed to remain in Bessarabia. The fake authorisations had been falsified and trafficked in Odessa; the ones that had been caught with such authorisations were mainly Armenians. The illegal authorisations referred to those authorisations issued by the General Direction of Transnistrian Government Administration which were exclusively addressed to Romanian citizens in order for them to come back into the country and which were found in the possession of people who were not Romanian citizens. In this particular case, the authorisation had been signed by Ilie Popescu, former servant at the Transnistrian Government – Direction of Industry [3, f. 2-4].

Besides the statistics referring to the legal residence status in Romania, the Constabulary also compiled a statistics of the refugees according to their profession [2, f. 413-418]:

Profession	Total no. of people
Informing agents	3
Agronomists	5
Opera artists	29

Circus artists	23
Piano tuners	1
Farmers	10
Lawyers	10
Agronomy assistants	1
Bakers	2
Cooks	6
Balerinas	26
Librarians	2
Associate professors	2
Confectioners	2
Boat captains	3
Watchmakers	2
Opera choir singers	5
Hairstylists	3
Custodians	1
Calculators	1
Constructors	4
Housewives	597
Traders	23
Accountants	62
Shoemakers	21

Taylors	15
Tachnical conductors	2
Children	237
Church singers	2
Museums directors	1
University lecturers	1
Typists	23
Drawers	16
Dentists	6
Electricians	10
Highschool students	197
Electric workers	1
Blacksmiths	2
Pharmacists	5
Hairdressers	7
Photographers	1
Potography lab assistants	1
Functioners/Public Servants	195
Ropers	1
No profession	52
Gardeners	1
Newspaper editors	1
Primary teachers	38

Engineers	215
Nurses	5
Office clerks	19
Physical education instructors	1
Interpreters	2
Stewards	3
Locksmiths	17
Lab analysts	7
Workers	168
Natural sciences BA	1
Doctors	79
Middwives	2
Mechanics	54
Fish processors	1
Musicians	1
Millers	1
Sailors	1
Opticians	2
Trade navy officers	1
Cinema operators	3
Liberal professions	5
Priests	11
Fishermen	3

Piano players	6
Pensioners	9
Leather workers	1
Painters	17
Floorers	1
Pedagogues	2
Teachers	51
University professors	13
Radio technicians	4
Opera Directors	3
Welders	4
Sub-engineers	8
Students	194
Singers	9
Charity nurses	11
Drivers	56
Radio speakers	1
Winery specialists	1
Silk worm growers	2
Sculptors	4
Sub-surgeons	2
Wood industry specialists	1
Medics	5

Turners	11
Railway team leaders	1
Tanners	3
Dental technician	8
Carpenter	5
Technicians	14
Phone operators	14
Printers	2
Wavers	3
Measures and weights supervisors	3
Violin players	3
Vulcanizers	1
Winegrowers	1
Journalists	3
Masons	4
Painters	5

The report ended with a number of considerations regarding the legal status of the refugees, the problem of their sustenance and the danger they might have represented in terms of national security.

Thus, those with non-formal authorisations were to stay “without the possibility of getting back and the total number of evacuees could not go over the number established by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.” Those with false authorisations were to be arrested and trialed, those with German authorisations handed to the German authorities and those without authorisations were to be considered clandestine, gathered and sent to work under supervision. All the unchecked ones (those who had run away from the transport convoys from Odessa

to Timișoara, those taken from stations by different people and brought to other settlements than those established by the MIA or the drivers who came with the car convoys) were to be taken to Timiș Torontal county.

As far as the establishment of their legal status was concerned, the refugees were to receive a refugee card based on their identity documents and authorisations. In Banat there were two categories of people: in Tolvadia there were Romanian (Moldavian) students from the Odessa University. They were to receive the refugee card on the basis of their student card and the evacuation authorisation issued on basis of the list made by the dean of the Romanian Culture Section of the Odessa University, Miss Djonat. The other refugees were to receive the refugee card on the basis of their Soviet passport.

In the students' case, there were some problems as some people whose ethnicity was not Romanian had infiltrated them and some people had been substituted (see photos). The leader of the group of students from Tolvadia, Vasile Bileschi, explained to the Romanian authorities that some Romanian students had preferred to remain in Transnistria with their families and the management of the Romanian Culture Section had accepted other non-Romanian students or young people to take their place under their names [3, f. 1].



Так Елена Никитовна, ранее подшивавшая,
сейчас еще не студентка.
Документы выданы в г. Одессе по случаю звания
ауди с г. Одесса. Документы похоронены от смерти
в г. Гуминской церкви Маргарита Франциска
высшаяшаяся, могу всегда удостоверить
прислов. Если украина, а не подшивала.
Толвадия. 26-4.44.
Так Елена Н.

From the perspective of ensuring the material needs, all refugees had been well accommodated. The feeding was done individually, for those who could afford it, or through the local canteens founded by the cityhalls where the refugees could eat at low prices. In Tolvadia commune there was a canteen for students which served food for free [3, f. 7].

Most refugees had no job due to the fact that they could not find work suitable for their qualifications in their communes. Many were complaining that the material resources were about to finish rather soon. Only a small part, 5-6 specialists, had found work in the industrial factories while others were working for the Swabian peasants (German) in the region who offered them just food, fact which generated dissatisfaction. The refugees went to the authorities asking for help to find a job or to be supported into founding production shops (buttons, sweets, etc.) to make a living.

The Constabulary also draw attention to the fact that a significant part of the university staff as well as the Odessa opera staff were in Timișoara region. The artists of the Odessa opera had been scattered in the villages around Timișoara and they did not have the possibility to either practice their profession or to produce anything. They asked to be gathered together in one settlement, preferably Liebling, where there was a larger hall, to rehearse. They asked to be allowed to have jobs at the Timișoara opera and, if that was not possible, to be hired

by the cityhall in Arad which had offered to form an opera and ballet theatre withem in Arad.

As for order and security, the Constabulary warned that the state of uncertainty and lack of occupation might generate dissatisfaction. Moreover, in the evacuation area of the Transnistrian refugees there were also Soviet prisoners, still loyal to Stalin, who met these refugees at work. The prisoners considered the refugees as “proteges of the Romanian bourgeoisie, who had run from communist Russia. When Russia wins and the moment will come, these prisoners used to say, all those evacuated by the Romanians must die” [3, f. 5].

The reports made by the constabulary were the basis on which the government discussed, in the following months, the situation of the Transnistrian refugees. Thus, in the ministers’ council in May 1944, presided by the Prime Minister, Mihai Antonescu, the minister of National Culture, Ion Petrovici, brought up the situation of the former rector of the Odessa University, doctor Ceasovnicov, who had received in the meantime Romanian citizenship. The latter requested to be hired in the Romanian higher education system but Petrovici explained that, from a legal point of view, this was very difficult to accomplish. Instead, one suggested that Ceasovnicov should be employed in the medical system as a surgeon and later on to identify the legal framework so he can be paid: “It would be a pity that this man, said Petrovici, who can no longer go back to his country, who displayed a hostile attitude to bolshevism from the very first moment, who has refuged in our country and asked for Romanian citizenship, who is very valuable and can provide a great service to the sick and wounded, could not be used” [9, p. 143].

At the council on May 29th 1944, presided by the same Mihai Antonescu, they discussed the report on the situation of the Transnistrian refugees in Banat. Prime Minister showed that they were people “who helped our army and administration, who during the Romanian occupation tightly cooperated with our institutions” [9, p. 210].

The Minister of Internal Affairs, General Constantin Vasiliu, showed that the refugees are gradually given jobs, especially the engineers and technicians, and they can consequently leave the evacuation area. Much more difficult was the situation for university professors and the Odessa opera staff. The Prime Minister gave orders that those who have not been found a job yet should be further supported by supplying them with the money and food necessary for sustenance

[9, p. 211]. Moreover, he orderd Minister Ion Petrovici to send a committee to Timiș Torontal county to solve the problem of hiring refugees: “till we find a use for these people, they should be given means of sustenance so as not to transform a protection measure into a humiliating measure with a deplorable ending” [9, p. 211]. Mihai Antonescu reiterated this disposition in the June 19th meeting as well, when he was asking data about the concrete measures that had been taken. On this occasion, he underlined the fact that these people had to be protected so they do not get to be killed in case of a Soviet invasion, mentioning the rumour according to which one of the most appreciated lead singers of the Odessa opera, Savcenko, stayed and the Soviets hanged him [9, p. 313].

The discussion about the situation of the Transnistrian refugees was revisited at the council on June 21st which was presided by Ion Antonescu himself. He mentioned the fact that there were more than 35,000 soviet subjects in Banat, most of them prisoners working in agriculture, considered potential Bolshevik propagandists. Always pre-occupied by the national question, the marshal opinated that a number this large of “Russians” in an area close to Serbia could generate a “neo-Slavik” danger for Romania: “The Serbian will be a Serbian and, no matter how big the danger of the Russian communism might be, the Serbian is interested in the Slavik issue and would rather live in a Slavicized Europe than a Germanized or Romanianized or fascisized one or what ever kind one might think of” [9, p. 338]. Consequently, the marshal suggested that all Soviet prisoners should be evacuated from Banat. However, those who sought refuge from the Bolshevik danger should be helped to settle down. Ion Antonescu met some of them, considering them as nice people who want to work and stay in Romania, preferring this country over Germany: “We must take into account these great tragedies of mankind, said Antonescu. We could consider them (the Slavs) as enemies of the Romanian people because they want to slavicize us but we have to behave humanly ... solve this problem as fast as possible because these people have become to wish us well. If we keep them in this situation (without a job), they will become our enemies ... We need their work as they are very hard-working and skilful in their profession. And we have great needs” [9, p. 339].

In the following discussions, the ministers reported the progress made in hurring the Transnistrian refugees. On this occasion, the mar-

shal mentioned the value of the Odessa ensemble and his regret for Savcenko's death, who "left himself persuaded by the Soviet propaganda and stayed in Odessa." Antonescu was concerned because the Germans were already trying to convince the Odessa artists to go to Germany and he wanted to avoid this. He suggested a plan, embraced by the ministers, that for the time being the artists should give concerts in Timișoara and later on, through a credit offered by the Ministry of Finances, they should go on a tour around the country.⁹

All these initiatives were stopped by the collapse of the front in Moldova in August 1944. The armistice Convention of September 11th 1944, signed between Romania and the ally states, stipulated in article 5, paragraph 2, that the Soviet and ally citizens, forcefully committed or moved as well as those refuged in Romania who wanted to be repatriated, had to enlist in certain centres in order to receive material support from the Romanian authorities. The Minister of Internal Affairs issued order 3172/1944 which detailed the procedure of filling the statements and organizing the repatriation. The deadline for these requests was no later than October 20th 1944 [3, f. 512, 517-519]. By order 3752 of October 24th 1944, the Ministry of Internal Affairs disposed that the statements should be filled only by those who wish to be repatriated to USSR and that those who do not wish this should not do it [3, f. 513]. It was an attempt of the Romanian authorities to limit the abuses regarding "repatriation", the Soviet authorities trying to get to the USSR all those who had been born east of the Prut while at least most Bessarabian Romanians wanted to remain on Romanian territory, this was wished by members of other ethnic backgrounds as well, who did not see their future in the USSR, many of them being anti-communists. A real hunt against the latter started and the Romanian authorities could not stop it as the Control Allied Committee, which was supervising the situation in Romania, was dominated by the Soviet generals. Thus, many of those who left Transnistria in the spring of 1944 were arrested, sent to the USSR and sentenced to death as "traitors". On the basis of the names identified in the archives and

As a result of the steps taken by the government, by order 6918/7 June 1944 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the following artists of the Odessa opera were allowed to remain in Timișoara: Mihail Constantinov, Ioan Umantiv and Antoniana Rangeva [3, f. 213].

through the cooperation of Romanian and Ukrainian historians, some of these destinies might be reconstituted.

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