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Aryanization Bureaucrats in Post-Holocaust Romania

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Abstract

This article investigates the post-war life trajectories and careers of eight Aryanization («Romanianization») bureaucrats who were involved in the persecution and dispossession of Jews during the pro-Nazi Antonescu regime (September 1940–August 1944). While many of them were removed from the civil service, became unemployed, went into hiding, or were arrested, others thrived – at least temporarily – thanks to their skilful navigation of the post-Antonescu transition, their high-level connections with the political establishment, and the ability to claim certain merits for their behavior before August 1944, either as victims of or by resisting against the Antonescu regime. However, most of these opportunistic bureaucrats were successful only in the short term; eventually their past caught up with them, and they were imprisoned by the communist authorities or had to flee the country to escape arrest. The article shows that the communist revolution was not as radical as the communist leaders liked to boast and that it did not immediately bring a complete transformation of the state, its institutions, and employees holding crucial positions. Especially during the first post-war transitional years, the connections between the two ideologically different authoritarian regimes – fascist and communist – continued on various levels, including the bureaucratic one.

Keywords: Aryanization bureaucrats, Holocaust, Romania, transitional justice



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Aryanization Bureaucrats in Post-Holocaust Romania

This article tackles the following question: What happened with the Axis regimes' bureaucrats from the »periphery« of the Nazi Empire who implemented widespread dispossession policies targeting Jews in World War II (henceforth WWII) Romania during the transition years that followed the defeat of Nazi Germany and its regional partners?

The postwar life trajectories and careers of Nazi bureaucrats, especially lawyers and economists, who were involved in the persecution and dispossession of Jews (the so-called »Aryanization«) during WWII have been thoroughly scrutinized by scholars such as Marc Olivier Baruch, Frank Bajohr, Alfons Kenkmann, Martin Jungius, Wolfgang Seibel, Michael Wildt, and Robert S. Wistrich.¹ Historians who examined the legacy of Nazism found that many former Nazi bureaucrats continued or resumed their careers in postwar Western Europe, demonstrating a certain postwar continuity of the bureaucracy involved in WWII Aryanization. One of the cases illustrating this pattern was that of the lawyer Kurt Blanke, who worked as a Nazi bureaucrat in occupied France. Historians Martin Jungius and Wolfgang Seibel uncovered that lawyers like Kurt Blanke frequently managed to resume their legal careers after 1945 and even participated in postwar politics in West Germany after the partial failure of the denazification process, in spite of their previous involvement in the persecution of Jews.² Ironically, as historian Jürgen Lillteicher has noted, sometimes the former Nazi financial experts involved in the Aryanization of Jewish property were the ones who processed the Jews' applications for restitution in post-1945 West Germany, a fact which illustrates the significant

degree of preservation and continuity of German bureaucracy.³ The life trajectories and careers of Aryanization bureaucrats in postwar Western Europe have been well researched, but historiography still lacks studies on this topic in Eastern Europe, especially in former Axis countries such as Romania – countries that were at the geographical periphery of the Nazi empire and yet, due to their extensive genocidal and dispossession policies, at the center of the Holocaust.⁴

Romania, the largest Holocaust perpetrator outside Nazi Germany, implemented radical anti-Semitic policies, including deportation, mass murder, and Aryanization (domestically known as »Romanianization«). These policies were adopted by a genocidal fascist-military dictatorship led by General Ion Antonescu, who came to power in September 1940 together with the main fascist party, the Legion of the Archangel Michael (henceforth the »Legion«). Having inherited several anti-Semitic laws from the previous dictator King Carol II, who lost popular support as a result of the country's 1940 territorial losses to its neighbors (Northern Transylvania to Hungary, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, and Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria), Antonescu and the Legionaries pursued even more radical policies targeting the Jews and other alleged domestic enemies. These measures included the »expropriation« of Jewish-owned movable and immovable assets and jobs, forced »donations«, and outright confiscations during the wild stage of Aryanization, between September 1940 and January 1941. While the Legionaries favored a fast and violent Aryanization, Antonescu pursued a more gradual approach, which included the dispossession and legal perse-

1 See BARUCH (2016); IDEM (2005); KENKMANN (2005); BAJOHR (2002); JUNGIOUS/SEIBEL (2008); WILDT (2009); WISTRICH (2002).

2 For the continuity of Nazi financial and legal elites in the postwar era see the cases of banker Hermann Josef Abs (the wartime head of Deutsche Bank) and lawyer Kurt

Blanke; WISTRICH (2002) 1–3; JUNGIOUS/SEIBEL (2008) 441–444.

3 See, for instance, LILLTEICHER (2007); KENKMANN/RUSINEK (eds.) (1999); WISTRICH (2002) 1–3 (»Abs, Hermann«).

4 On Romanianization bureaucrats, see ANCEL (2007); IONESCU (2015).

cution of the Jews. An admirer of Hitler who hoped to obtain Germany's protection and to recover the lost territories, Antonescu joined the Axis in the fall of 1940. In January 1941, Antonescu and the Legionaries clashed over disagreements on power sharing and governance methods. The general won, as he was supported by the army and by Hitler, who wanted to avoid chaos in Romania and to ensure a steady delivery of raw materials. The Romanian military dictator continued the dispossession of the Jews in a »legal« and orderly manner, through various laws and administrative decisions. Things worsened for the Jews after Romania joined the anti-Soviet war in June 1941, following a pattern of regional differences regarding anti-Semitic policies. On the one hand, the Antonescu regime engaged in deportation, ghettoization, and mass murder, against the Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina and the occupied Soviet territory of Transnistria, a part of the Ukrainian SSR that was occupied by Romania from 1941 to 1944 and became Romania's main deportation and killing area.

The Jews from these regions were seen as disloyal and as communist agents because they lived under the Soviet regime. On the other hand, the Jews of the Romanian core provinces, such as the Old Kingdom and Southern Transylvania, »only« suffered anti-Semitic restrictions, forced labor, loss of property, occasionally murder – such as in the pogroms from Dorohoi, Galați, București, and Iași – and fewer deportations to Transnistria. The different treatment of these Jewish communities meant that the Jews living in the core areas of Romania still enjoyed some legal rights, including the right to complain to courts about the Aryanization of their assets, some of which were never »expropriated« by the regime (e. g. companies). Meanwhile, Jews living in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transnistria lived under a regime of military occupation and faced a much more radical, in fact almost complete, Romanianization as well as constant mass violence.⁵

For a few years, Romanianization was implemented with partial success until, on 23 August

1944, a putsch organized by King Michael, the opposition parties, and army generals – who wanted to leave the Axis and join the Allies before it was too late – toppled the Antonescu regime. Antonescu, his high-profile collaborators, and some of the lower-level executioners, especially those involved in the persecution of Jews, antifascists, and communists, were arrested by the new pro-Allies transitional governments and later tried in criminal courts (re)organized by the pro-communist popular front coalition that seized power in March 1945.

After the demise of the Antonescu regime, some former Romanianization bureaucrats followed professional and personal trajectories rather similar to those of their Nazi counterparts; however, the scholarship on the Romanian chapter of the Holocaust still lacks comprehensive studies of what happened to them (and other pro-Nazi bureaucrats) in the postwar era. One of the few notable exceptions is historian Valentin Săndulescu, who authored a study on the professional postwar trajectories of Romanian intellectuals who supported the Legion and the Antonescu dictatorship. For many of these intellectuals, Săndulescu found patterns of career continuation and adaptation to the new ideology prevalent in the post-August 1944 society – motivated by opportunism and/or fear of retribution, even though some of them were (temporarily or permanently) purged from their jobs, arrested, sentenced, and served time in prison for their involvement in fascist activities. However, Săndulescu's study focused only on fascist intellectuals and did not investigate the former Romanianization bureaucrats.⁶ Historian Lucian Boia also analyzed the (mostly opportunistic) attitudes of 120 Romanian intellectuals who adapted to no less than seven different regimes between 1930 and 1950, from liberal democracy to fascist military and communist dictatorships. Boia argued, quite persuasively, that from the late 1930s onwards, when Romania slid into dictatorships, the intellectuals gradually lost their independence and autonomy and from 1947 on were subordinated almost completely to the government. Their

5 On Antonescu's radical policies see, for instance, ANCEL (2016); BĂRBULESCU (2021); BLASSEN (2020); CHIOVEANU (2013); DAVIS (2019); DELETANT (2006); DUMITRU (2016); HAUSLEITNER (2019); HEINEN (2007);

IONANID (2022) 45–62; IONESCU (2019); IDEM (2020a); KELSO (2010); MICHELbacher (2020); SOLONARI (2010); TURDA (2008).

6 SĂNDULESCU (2017).

choices narrowed down: They could either support the communist regime (and keep their professions and freedom) or faced prison; emigration became very difficult.⁷ In other notable studies, historians Ionuț Biliuță, Monica Ciobanu, and Ion Popa studied the repression faced by Orthodox priests who had a »troubled past« as a result of their connections with the Legion and the Antonescu regime, including their strategies to adapt to the postwar communist regime as well as their significant role in the anti-communist memorialization.⁸ A few other scholars investigated the life trajectories of some of the major decision-makers of the Antonescu regime, including the dictator himself, during the retributive justice process implemented by the communist regime, but they did not discuss the careers of the former Romanianization cadres.⁹

Overall, little is known about the postwar whereabouts of mid- and low-level bureaucrats who worked for the Romanianization agencies – the Under-Secretariat of Romanianization, Colonization and Inventory (SSRCI) and its department/agency, the National Romanianization Center (CNR), in charge of real estate, the Central Romanianization Office (OCR – employment), and the Ministry of National Economy (MEN – businesses) – and who played a key role in the dispossession of local Jews between 1940 and 1944. Based on ego-documents and hitherto untapped archival sources produced by the government and intelligence agencies, including the communist Secret Police (known as the Department of State Security or *Securitate*), this article explores the lives and careers of eight former Romanianization bureaucrats during the postwar years. While many of them were removed from the civil service, became unemployed, went into hiding, or were arrested, others thrived – at least temporarily – thanks to their skillful navigation of the post-Antonescu

transition, their high-level connections with the political establishment, and the ability to claim certain merits for their behavior before August 1944, either as victims of or as resisters against the Antonescu regime.¹⁰ However, most of these opportunistic bureaucrats were successful only in the short term; eventually their past caught up with them, and they were imprisoned by the communist authorities or had to flee the country to escape arrest.

The authorities that followed the 23 August 1944 regime change adopted legislative and administrative measures aimed at cancelling the racial laws and reversing the dispossession of Jews. As part of their reparatory justice policy, on 31 August 1944 the transitional government re-established the democratic constitution of 1923, which had been suspended during the dictatorships of King Carol II (1938–1940) and Antonescu.¹¹ Without delay, the transitional authorities started to dismantle the Romanianization bureaucracy. On 1 September 1944, the government of Constantin Sănătescu dismantled SSRCI through the »Law no. 445« and created the Office for the Liquidation of the National Romanianization Center's Patrimony and for Resolving the Minorities and Emigration Problems (OLPCNR) – subordinated to MEN – in order to manage the Romanianized assets before a possible restitution could take place.¹² The new officials disagreed on the best method to resolve the problems created by Antonescu's anti-Semitic policies and on how to deal with the Romanianization bureaucrats: to fire them, immediately or later, or to transfer them to other agencies.¹³ Aurel Leucuția, a National Peasant Party (PNȚ) notable who headed MEN, claimed that he tried to dismantle the main Romanianization agency, CNR, as quickly as possible in the fall of 1944 by transferring hundreds of

7 BOIA (2011).

8 BILIUȚĂ (2022); CIOBANU (2021); POPA (2017) 77–80, 98–102.

9 DELETANT (2006) 147–185, 245–261; FRILINIG et al. (eds.) (2006) 311–331; HARWARD (2021) 265–266; MURARU (2010); CIUCĂ (ed.) (1995); CERCEL (2017a); GREC (2020).

10 See the cases encountered by lawyers Hurmuz Aznavorian and Miron Butariu, who defended several Jews in court who struggled to keep their properties targeted by CNR. After

August 1944 Aznavorian and Butariu provided legal help to Jews who tried to recover their Romanianized assets. During a few such trials, Aznavorian and Butariu were outraged by the demagoguery and hostility of two magistrates who during the Antonescu regime had worked as judges and persecuted Jews, and achieved their recusal. AZNAVORIAN (2007) 18–19, 33; BUTARIU (1991).

11 GIURESCU (1996) 80–82; DELETANT (2020); BENJAMIN (ed.) (1993) 371–

372. By reestablishing the 1923 democratic constitution, the constitutional decree no. 1626 of 31 August 1944 indirectly abolished any discrimination based on ethnicity, race, or religion, which included Antonescu's anti-Semitic laws. See CIUCĂ et al. (eds.) (2011) 65.

12 CIUCĂ et al. (eds.) (2011) 65, 373–375; ANR, MEN-DS 21/1944, 1–2.

13 See the 31 August 1944 minutes of the Sănătescu government meeting, in: CIUCĂ et al. (eds.) (2011) 65–66.

former bureaucrats to the Commissariat for the Administration and Surveillance of Enemies' Properties (CASBI), a new agency tasked to manage the assets belonging to companies and citizens of enemy (Axis) countries.¹⁴ As a result of these institutional transformation, Romanianization bureaucrats lost their positions related to the surveillance and administration of Jewish companies and real estate. This affected the Romanianization field agents in particular – the commissars, inspectors, controllers, and other bureaucrats – who lost a major and easy source of income.¹⁵

After the collapse of Antonescu regime, many people left the Romanianization agencies, whether willingly or unwillingly, trying to keep a low profile and avoid a scrutiny of their past. Others, including some of the former field agents, wanted to continue the surveillance of companies belonging to the (new) categories of domestic enemies.¹⁶ Following the shifting political context, a number of bureaucrats obtained commissar positions at German and Hungarian companies that after August 1944 became objects of suspicion for the post-Antonescu government, which was fighting on the side of the Allies against the Axis troops.¹⁷ Some of the former Romanianization agents carried on just as they had done during the Antonescu regime. Complaints against them showed that the commissars took bribes, rarely came to work, and remained ignorant about the operations of the companies they had to monitor. This illustrates how, after the regime change in August 1944, bureaucratic structures and activities remained almost unchanged.¹⁸

This continuity of bureaucratic structures and the opportunism displayed by the new surveillance agents was not an isolated phenomenon in post-Antonescu Romania. In order to avoid retribution, to secure their positions, and/or for social advancement, many other people, such as former politicians and public intellectuals including former members of the abovementioned fascist Legion of the Archangel Michael, joined the emerging communist-led popular front coalition.¹⁹

Keen observers of the post-Antonescu society noted not only the opportunism of former Romanianization bureaucrats and other officials but also the continuation of the practice of »camouflage« – a wartime Jewish legal resistance strategy against the confiscation of property: the fictitious transfer to gentiles – among local citizens, who now shifted from hiding Jewish property to cloaking German assets. For example, in an article dated 1 October 1944 Nicolae Carandino, a leading Bucharest journalist working for the PNȚ newspaper *Dreptatea*, decried the persistence of property camouflage and the opportunism of bureaucrats and ordinary citizens after 23 August 1944: »Jewish fortunes had been camouflaged to avoid Germanization [and Romanianization], and now German properties are about to change their [ownership] label to avoid being transferred to [ethnic] Romanians. Sometimes, due to their flexible morality, the same people engaged in all possible camouflages, transforming from notorious CNR members into no less devoted liquidation [OLPCNR] commis-

14 Ciucă et al. (eds.) (2013) 47–48; see also ANR, Comisia Română pentru Aplicarea Armistițiului (CRAA) 990/1945, 14–16.

15 On Romanianization field agents, see IONESCU (2015) 66–88.

16 See the 30 December 1944 petition to the head of CASBI by an engineer from Bucharest by the name of Nămandrescu (who was appointed economic commissar by Antonescu's officials), in which he requested to be appointed administrator for the surveillance of one of the companies with »fascist capital«. ANR, SSRICI-DC 64/1941, 50; see also the case of Viorica Olariu, a former CNR employee who was hired on 26 August 1945 at CASBI but fired a few months

later (October 1945) for borrowing money from one of the petitioners to CASBI. ANR, CRAA 990/1945, 14–16.

17 According to Zevedei Barbu, a former Under-Secretary of State for Nationalities in the Groza Government, as a result of the communists' pressure the coalition governments imposed the surveillance of German-owned companies through specialized agents. BARBU (2016) 86; on surveillance agents, see the applications of lawyers, economists, and engineers – some of whom were former Romanianization agents – who requested commissar jobs in companies owned by the new »domestic enemies.« ANR, CRAA

941/1945, 96; SSRICI-DC, 64/1941, 50–51.

18 ANR, SSRICI-DC, 64/1941, 52; on the activity of CRAA field agents, see ANR, CRAA 1029/1945, 140; CRAA 990/1945, 14–16, 21; CRAA 85/1946, 21, 46–48; on the Romanianization agents' unprofessional and corrupted behavior, see IONESCU (2010); SUVEICĂ (2019).

19 See SĂNDULESCU (2017); TISMĂNEANU (2003).

sars.«²⁰ Various archival sources and ego-documents support Carandino's argument.²¹ For example, citizens who camouflaged Jewish businesses under German names during the Antonescu regime continued to conceal the same businesses from the post-Antonescu authorities as being under Jewish ownership. Thus, they avoided state supervision, confiscation, and other negative consequences tied to German property. This opportunism surprised a Jewish communist and Transnistria survivor, Matei Gall, who temporarily lived in the house of one of the camouflage partners and who recounts the case in his memoirs:

In spite of the racial laws, I found small companies that belonged to Jews in practice, while legally they functioned under the cover of the German names of the co-owners. [...] Their products were sold to the German army. I bumped into a similar case in Bucharest, during the period when I had to hide in the house of an acquaintance, a Jewish lawyer [...] who lived with a beautiful German woman from Transylvania. [...] I discovered the secret of the lawyer's prosperity. Since the racial laws had been implemented, he could not practice his profession. [...] In the new context, a business partnership was created between the Jewish lawyer and his German girlfriend. They registered a company using the name of the Aryan lady and started to make various products for the Romanian and German armies. Being of good ethnic origin, she obtained the necessary orders from the army. After August 1944 [...] the lady's company did not have a good ethnic origin anymore. Thus, the firm was deleted from the Registry of Commerce. However, a new company was registered using the lawyer's [Jewish] name, which, at that moment, did »correspond« from all points of view.²²

The continuation of camouflage practices was usually enabled by corrupt and unprofessional surveillance agents, some of whom were acquainted with the same practices from the time

of their involvement in Antonescu's bureaucracy. Some of these civil servants tried hard to adapt to the new political context by abandoning their previous anti-Semitic and authoritarian ideas and discourses – at least in the public space – and embracing postwar democracy, either in its liberal version or as the Marxist-Leninist »people's democracy«.

One of these opportunistic former Romanianization bureaucrats was Mihai Răutu, who had a successful (albeit short) political career in the post-Antonescu years. A member of PNTȚ, Răutu occupied the function of a Romanianization field bureaucrat during the Antonescu regime – working as an administrator (*administrator girant*) in charge of the surveillance of the Textile Industry of Arad (ITA), which was owned by the Jewish industrialist Baron Francisc von Neumann. According to a diary entry dated 30 July 1946 by Ioan Hudiță – one of PNTȚ's leaders, who had spoken with Răutu and with a trusted aid and envoy of Baron Neumann by the name of Beilis – after the collapse of the Antonescu regime Răutu wanted to keep a position in the company he had overseen as a Romanianization bureaucrat and asked Baron Neumann to include him in the board of ITA. The Jewish industrialist refused Răutu's request and discharged him, albeit with a financial compensation.²³

In spite of the regime change and the setback in pursuing another lucrative career at the same Jewish-owned company, after August 1944 Răutu quickly climbed the country's political-administrative ladder. In November 1944 he became the Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Communication in the Sănătescu and Rădescu transitional governments as a result of his affiliation to PNTȚ – one of the partners in the coalition government.²⁴ In spite of such a promising start, Răutu's post-Antonescu political career was short-lived: In March 1945 the pro-communist popular front coalition seized power and Răutu lost his important post. Subsequently, some of his PNTȚ colleagues noticed that Răutu started to change his political attitude, cultivating good relations with

20 CARANDINO (2000) 61-62 (unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author). 46-48; CRAA 867/1945, 38-39; CRAA 973/1945, 7-20.

21 On the camouflage of German-owned companies in post-Antonescu Romania, see ANR, CRAA 85/1946, 22 GALL (1997) 268-269.

23 HUDIȚĂ (2014) 260.

24 NEAGOE (1995).

politicians who belonged to the pro-communist coalition.²⁵ Whether this reflected Răutu's intentions or was just the perception of some of his PNȚ colleagues is not clear. Other evidence – such as police informers' notes and police reports – suggest that Răutu remained a committed PNȚ member and an active anti-communist and anti-Soviet politician, heading the PNȚ Dorohoi county branch up to the moment when the consolidated communist regime banned PNȚ in 1947.²⁶ According to a report of the Dorohoi secret police the local PNȚ organization, led by Răutu, disseminated anti-Semitic mouth-to-mouth propaganda as well as anti-communist and anti-Soviet ideas and managed to influence a large part of the local intellectuals and youth.²⁷

Overall, Răutu could not hide his previous participation in the Romanianization project. As a leading PNȚ member, he remained under surveillance by the police, whose officers investigated his Romanianization past. For example, on 29 November 1949, a police informer (code name »Ionescu«) provided a report on Răutu's biography, including the information that he had enriched himself through his participation in Romanianization rather than his legal practice: »He barely practiced [law], but instead [became rich] through interventions and other [problematic] methods, such as those used during the Antonescu regime when he was the government's representative at [the Jewish owned] textile industry in Arad.«²⁸ Another police informer reported in 1946 that Răutu derived substantial wealth from one country estate with hundreds of hectares and had a luxurious apartment in the capital as well as numerous shares in various companies. The same informer reported a rumor that Răutu had substantially increased his wealth during the Antonescu regime thanks to his high-level connections.²⁹

The communist regime perceived Răutu as a political threat and indicted him for his postwar activity and affiliation with the PNȚ leadership as well as for his involvement in an anti-Semitic incident. On 16 September 1948, Răutu was arrested, tried, and sentenced (in July 1949) by the Iași Military Tribunal to one year of imprisonment and a 10 000 lei fine for »political instigation, offence to the nation and the new republic, and racial (anti-Semitic) slurs.«³⁰ This last accusation was based on a 13 September 1948 statement Răutu made while drinking in a Jewish-owned bar in Botoșani. According to eye-witnesses, Răutu said that in the case of a regime change all the Jews would be killed and that he would personally participate in the shooting of the »Yids«.³¹ Other sources support the portrayal of Răutu as anti-Semitic. According to police reports, on 27 June 1945 Răutu held a lecture in front of his PNȚ colleagues on *Past and Current Antisemitism*, focusing in particular on Soviet anti-Semitism and comparing it to the local prejudice against Jews. Răutu emphasized the global ubiquity of anti-Jewish sentiments, even hatred, and the political opportunism of using anti-Semitism, arguing that only the winning Great Powers can afford to allow anti-Semitism to thrive: »Russians can be anti-Semitic because they won [the war]. We cannot afford that because we lost.«³²

In addition to his criminal sentence, Răutu also faced material losses. Ironically, a few years after he promoted Antonescu's policies targeting Jewish property, the former Romanianization agent became the victim of communist nationalization: In April 1950 the communist authorities confiscated Răutu's apartment in Bucharest, pursuant to the annex list of Decree Law no. 92/1950 for the nationalization of urban real estate. This was a part of their sweeping nationalization of private urban real estate.³³ In the end, the authorities released

25 HUDIȚĂ (2013) 121.

26 On the communist persecution of PNȚ and its members, see TISMĂNEANU (2006) 132–133.

27 See the surveillance files of Mihai Răutu, located in the CNSAS archives of the former secret police. CNSAS, Mihai Răutu I 758349, vol. I. See the undated (probably 1946) report (*Dare de Seamă*) from the *Siguranța* bureau of the Dorohoi Police. CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, I 758349, vol. I, 47.

28 CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, I 758349, vol. I, 16.

29 *Ibid.*, vol. I, 6.

30 CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, P 094966, vol. I, 87–88, 91.

31 *Ibid.*

32 CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, I 758349, vol. II, 13–14.

33 *Ibid.*, vol. II, 104; see also the Annex of the Decree Law no. 92/1950 for the nationalization of urban buildings <http://illick-auftakt.blogspot.com/>

2013/01/decretul-921950-nationalizarea.html (consulted on 26 October 2014). Răutu's nationalized apartment is located at no. 147 on the list of nationalized real estate from Bucharest. On communist nationalization of private property from the new categories of domestic enemies, see BAIAS et al. (eds.) (2001); CHELCEA (2012); SERBAN (2019); STAN (2006).

Răutu from prison, and after several failed attempts he fled Romania to Yugoslavia and, following a complicated journey (1949–1950), eventually found refuge in France.³⁴

Another Romanianization bureaucrat who fared particularly well in the immediate post-Antonescu environment was Emil Ghilezean. During the Antonescu regime Ghilezean held the position of Romanianization commissar at the Ardeleana Bank in Bucharest, a Hungarian Jewish-owned bank; there – so he claimed later – he camouflaged Jewish capital and Jewish employees.³⁵ According to a note dated 29 October 1955 written by a certain V. Bologa, a *Securitate* informer, during his WWII activity as a Romanianization commissar Ghilezean camouflaged Hungarian Jewish capital from Budapest and also profited from various cases of »Romanianization of hotels and companies« and »engaged in numerous businesses« together with an associate (Nelu Macavei), who acted as a middleman.³⁶ After the demise of Antonescu, Ghilezean's affiliation with the PNT secured him the post of Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Finance in the Sănătescu and Rădescu governments, where he served between November 1944 and March 1945 and even helped write the anti-racism laws that reversed Romanianization. According to a postwar interview, in his new position as a legal expert on Romanianization and its reversal, Ghilezean opposed the inclusion of the legal criterion of *restitutio in integrum* (complete restitution) in the relevant laws and attempted to protect several categories of Romanianization beneficiaries, but failed in the end. As he complained in the interview, this failure was due to the opposition of a communist delegate named Solomon.³⁷ During his tenure in the post-Antonescu government, Ghilezean expanded his previous businesses and acquired significant wealth, which helped his political career.³⁸ However, when the pro-commu-

nist coalition seized power in March 1945, Ghilezean lost his official post. As he was heavily involved in PNT politics, after 1946 when the communists falsified the elections and started to arrest opposition leaders, Ghilezean started to look for a way to leave Romania.³⁹ Helped by various smugglers – including, ironically, Jews working for Zionist organizations – in 1947 Ghilezean managed to flee the country by clandestinely crossing the border into Hungary, from where he made it to Austria and France. He temporarily moved to the US but, after several unsuccessful attempts as a farmer, he eventually settled in Italy, where he became a prosperous businessman.⁴⁰ While in exile, Ghilezean maintained good relations with some of his former Jewish associates, who had settled in Israel and Switzerland and now helped him correspond with his impoverished mother in Romania – this way, his letters avoided the communist censorship.⁴¹

Răutu and Ghilezean were not the most outrageous cases of former Romanianization bureaucrats who temporarily thrived after the war. Some of the most compromised Romanianization bureaucrats, whom Antonescu had arrested and sent to camps on charges of corruption, saw a great opportunity in the 23 August 1944 regime change and tried to clear their names by presenting themselves as victims of previous dictatorships. Octavian Mălai, a lawyer who had a doctorate in economics, was one of those opportunistic bureaucrats. Working as a CNR official during the first two years of the Antonescu regime, in the post-August 1944 era Mălai claimed that he was an innocent victim of Romania's military dictator, who had sent him to a concentration camp under a false accusation.⁴² In fact, as several archival documents show, Antonescu ordered Mălai's camp imprisonment following an investigation which uncovered that he had abusively evicted an elderly Jewish woman, Natalia

34 CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, I 758349, 2 vols.; CNSAS, Mihai Răutu, P 094966, 2 vols.

35 See the extensive interview with Ghilezean in: NICULESCU (ed.) (1998).

36 See V. Bologa's »Informative Note« of 29 October 1955 and Pop's »Informative Note« of 9 October 1956 in: CNSAS, Emil Ghilezean, I 0003330, vol. I, 120–124, 171.

37 NICULESCU (ed.) (1998) 110; CIUCĂ et al. (eds.) (2013) 18–23.

38 See V. Bologa's »Informative Note« of 29 October 1955 and Pop's »Informative Note« of 9 October 1956 in: CNSAS, Emil Ghilezean, I 0003330, vol. I, 120–124, 171.

39 On the 1946 elections, see CIOROIANU (2005); GIURESCU (2015); TISMĂNEANU (2006); IDEM (2003).

40 NICULESCU (1998); see also Silviu Craciunaș' statement (dated 17 February 1951) in: CNSAS, Emil Ghilezean, I 0003330, vol. II, 376–377.

41 See V. Bologa's »Informative Notes« of 26 October 1955, 31 October 1955, and 20 February 1956, and Nica's »Note« of 14 October 1952, in: CNSAS, Emil Ghilezean, I 0003330, vol. II, 125–127, 183–186, 254.

42 CNSAS, Octavian Malai, I 570033.

Bronzescu, from her Romanianized apartment in the center of Bucharest in order to move in with his family and the family of a Romanian director from the Odessa city hall in Transnistria. The Jewish victim described the eviction as follows: »Within two hours, he and five porters had thrown me out into the street with all my belongings, without any explanation.«⁴³ This action outraged even the anti-Semitic dictator of Romania, Antonescu, who sometimes invoked legality and the respect for legal formalities during the implementation of his authoritarian and genocidal policies.⁴⁴

During the war years, Mălai had become infamous for being corrupt and abusing his position as a director of CNR. In January 1942, Antonescu dismissed him and in February 1942 sent him to the Targu Jiu concentration camp and evicted his family from the previously Jewish-owned apartment, a decision that was swiftly carried out by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MAI). In July 1942, Mălai was liberated from his five-month internment and from then on kept a low-profile lifestyle. After the demise of Antonescu in August 1944, Mălai contested the dictator's decisions. The judicial proceeding moved slowly, and the case eventually ended up in front of the Supreme Court (*Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție*), which in December 1944 decided to reinstate all of Mălai's employment rights. A Royal Decree dated 6 February 1945 implemented the court decision, and so Mălai – who in the meantime had joined the Social Democrat Party (PSD, part of the post-Antonescu government coalition), and in 1947 switched to the Communist Party (which in 1948 merged with PSD and formed the Romanian Labor Party, PRM) – temporarily returned to his old position as director at the Prime Minister's Chancellery.⁴⁵ Subsequently and until 1947, Mălai worked as a director in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce at the Department for the Liquidation of CNR (DLCNR); ironically, he could use his previous

experience in promoting Romanianization for reversing the consequences of that anti-Semitic policy.⁴⁶ On 5 March 1946, he tried to use his position as a director at DLCNR – in the meantime the agency had been subordinated to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC) – to stop the security police (*Siguranța*) from investigating his involvement with Antonescu's Romanianization. He petitioned the head of the Bucharest police prefecture and claimed that he was just an innocent and apolitical victim of the power games and revenge interests of Antonescu and Titus Dragoș (the head of SSRCI, which included CNR between December 1941 and November 1943):

I was dismissed from my job on 5 January 1942 due to my democratic ideas and my request to end the abuses committed during the administration of property expropriated from Jews, and I was interned in a camp for six [in fact, five] months because I did not give up the court case I filed against the state in an administrative court. [...] I was sent to the camp illegally only because the new head of the [SSRCI/CNR] department, Titus Dragoș, wanted to impress Marshall Ion Antonescu. [...] I have never been involved in politics.⁴⁷

Mălai's case is an example of successful political opportunism and cunning reframing of a wartime biography, common among high-ranking bureaucrats. In the end, the communist officials uncovered Mălai's problematic past activities in the Romanianization bureaucracy, purged him from the communist party in 1950, and denied him further access to any influential position in its bureaucracy. After Mălai lost his job as a director in the MIC bureaucracy, he held a series of jobs at the local level: head of the cadre department at a factory in Baia Mare, accountant at a forestry company, and clerk at the Cluj city hall. The

43 On Natalia Bronzescu's complaint against Mălai and on Antonescu's order to send Mălai to a camp for »abusive behavior«, see CNSAS, I 570033, vol. II, 4–7; ironically, when police and court officials arrived at the apartment to evict Mălai's family, they were surprised to find that part of the apartment was occupied by the furniture of the family of the Transnistrian bureaucrat, whose rooms

were locked. The authorities managed to evict the latter only after a month. CNSAS, I 570033, vol. II, 10–12.

44 On Antonescu's discourse supporting legality and the reality behind that legalistic stance, see BUCUR (2022) 189–193; CERCEL (2017b) 142–150; IONESCU (2020b).

45 TRĂȘCĂ / DELETANT (eds.) (2007) 385.

46 CNSAS, I 570033, vol. II, 15–16.

47 Ibid.

Securitate kept Mălai under surveillance; its internal correspondence mentions his previous (problematic) Romanianization credentials, his exclusion from the communist party, and his unreliable »petit bourgeois« background.⁴⁸

George Ungureanu was another former Romanianization agent and a member of the Legion who fared well in the short term after the collapse of the Antonescu regime. Working in Northern Transylvania, Ungureanu took refuge in a territorially-diminished Romania after the province was lost to Hungary in the summer of 1940 as a result of the Second Vienna Award. Ungureanu struggled with his refugee status and unemployment, and at the beginning of the Antonescu regime, he handed over a petition to the dictator himself to request help, as a Legionary and refugee. A few weeks later, Antonescu appointed him Romanianization commissar at a Jewish textile company (Întreprinderea Textilă Română Norbert Juster) in Bucharest. As a result of his rising conflicts with the Legion, in early January 1941 Antonescu dismantled the Romanianization commissar positions, a decision which remained final after the failure of the Legionary Rebellion against Antonescu, which took place from 21–23 January 1941. As a consequence, Ungureanu lost his lucrative position and moved to his native town, Câmpulung Moldovenesc. There, he took over a Jewish store and thus became a practitioner of Romanianization.⁴⁹ This initially proved to be a profitable business; however, it eventually folded due to the adverse development of the war for the Axis powers.

In 1944, as the Soviet troops advanced, Ungureanu took refuge with his family in Transylvania, where, after his discharge from the army in October 1944, he took over another Jewish store. Located in Boroșneul Mare (a village close to his wife's birth place), the store had become an »abandoned property« following the deportation of its owners to Auschwitz by the Hungarian and German authorities, who controlled the region between fall 1940 and fall 1944. Ungureanu ran his

new business successfully until spring 1948 and claimed that he enjoyed great relations with his local customers and neighbors – *Szekeler* (Hungarian) villagers – the returning Jewish owners, and communist authorities; he even claimed to have voted for the pro-communist coalition in the 1946 elections.⁵⁰ During this time, Ungureanu negotiated with local authorities to buy another Jewish »abandoned property« – a factory – in the same region but failed to acquire it due to the communists' nationalization policies. He expresses his regrets in his memoirs: »I could have become an industrialist in Miercurea Ciuc if the political context had not turned hostile to private industry.«⁵¹ During his time as a shopkeeper in Transylvania, Ungureanu claimed that one of the sons of the former Jewish owner of the premises that housed his business returned to the village but did not request his family property back. On the contrary, Ungureanu said that he lent him money to start a business and that, when the Jewish man became rich, he invited Ungureanu to emigrate from Romania with him, which the latter refused. Ungureanu's version of his relation with the Jewish heirs of the property he used for his business suggests that they had reached a deal (quite common among gentile profiteers and returning survivors) in which the legitimate Jewish owner would give up his claim to the real estate in exchange for a sum of money.

After the communist regime consolidated its power, a military tribunal sentenced Ungureanu *in absentia* to three years of imprisonment for his fascist past. To avoid arrest, in 1948 Ungureanu went into hiding for seven years but was eventually arrested by the communist secret police, indicted again, and sentenced to death. This verdict was later transformed into prison time – and Ungureanu was finally discharged in 1964, when the communist authorities released the political prisoners.⁵² While still in prison, Ungureanu became a paid collaborator of the *Securitate*; after his liberation, he collaborated with the Câmpulung Moldo-

48 CNSAS, I 570033, vol. I, 11, 14–17.

49 UNGUREANU (2010) 78–87, 102–103.

50 See Ungureanu's »Autoexpunere« in: CNSAS, Gheorghe Ungureanu, I 102858, 140–166.

51 UNGUREANU (2010) 102–104.

52 UNGUREANU (2010) 107–113, 128; Ungureanu's depiction of his alleged

postwar Philosemitism should be regarded with caution: he wrote his memoirs in the 2000s after the collapse of communism and seemed to have reframed his life story to depict himself as an innocent victim of troubled historical times by refraining from mentioning any

involvement in anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence. On the former prisoners of the Romanian communist regime (including former fascists) who acted as agents of memory in the post-communist era and the problematization of their narratives, see CIOBANU (2021) 19–33.

venesc branch of the *Securitate* under the alias »Moldovanu Dorel« and denounced the hostile statements and activities of his former Legionary comrades, relatives, friends and acquaintances, including a number of his former commercial partners. He continued his denunciations until December 1965, but then had a change of attitude and stopped delivering information from 1966 on, which prompted *Securitate* officials to exclude him from their network of informers.⁵³

In his autobiographical confessions, written in 1964 while still in prison, Ungureanu recalls that in 1945 the government adopted several laws that forced ethnic Romanian buyers of Jewish assets to return the Romanianized businesses and properties or compensate the former Jewish owners.⁵⁴ Even though he considered the restitution laws »unjust« because they allegedly »forced him to pay twice for the same property«, Ungureanu claimed that he had reached an understanding with the former Jewish owners of his property (and their heirs) to pay them the value of the assets he bought from CNR during the Antonescu regime. Thus, contrary to other Romanianization beneficiaries, he avoided court litigation.⁵⁵

Other Romanianization agents fared well even in the long term, such as the lawyer and journalist Ghiță (Gheorghe) Ionescu. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) in 1940, from where he was temporarily assigned to SSRCI's commission for the control of oil companies' shares.⁵⁶ After his prosperous wartime career at SSRCI, when in addition to his salary Ionescu received »gifts« and other assets and moved into an »expropriated« Jewish villa, the privileges ended in August 1944. Ionescu worked for the Romanian Commission of Armistice with Allied Forces for several months, but he struggled with uncertainty about his future. Then, a few days before the communists seized power in Romania in March 1945, Ionescu fled to Turkey and from there to Western Europe, where he worked for various Romanian refugee organizations. He settled in England in 1947 and became

a well-known political science professor at the London School of Economics and the University of Manchester, positions he held from the 1960s through the 1980s.⁵⁷ Specializing in communism, political thought, governance, and European integration, Ionescu authored numerous books, but he never used his professional expertise to investigate the Romanianization project in which he participated and from which he profited. For example, in the 30-page section of his book *Communism in Romania* in which he discusses the dictatorships of King Carol II and Antonescu, Ionescu makes no reference to the Romanianization project.⁵⁸

Another former Romanianization bureaucrat who temporarily fared well after August 1944 was the lawyer Dumitru (Dem) Teodorescu, who occupied a post as general director of CNR during the Antonescu regime. The transitional government of Constantin Sănătescu appointed him for a short while (4–21 November 1944) as the head of OPLCNR, the agency in charge of liquidating the main Romanianization agency, despite warnings they had received from intelligence agencies about his wartime activity.⁵⁹ For example, in September 1944 a secret report of the main intelligence agency, the Special Information Unit (SSI), recommended to the new government that it was imperative to investigate the case of Teodorescu »because it would be regrettable that Mr. Teodorescu, a stained element, remain in his leadership position today, a time when the regime needs clean elements.«⁶⁰ During his previous tenure one of the directors of CNR, Teodorescu was suspected of corruption: As a result of a 1941 investigation ordered by Antonescu, the High Court of Accounting and Audit found that Teodorescu had erased a word in one of Antonescu's hand-written decisions in order to favor specific individuals who wanted to acquire Jewish property. Teodorescu denied the accusation and claimed that he was the victim of calumnious denunciators who aimed to remove him from that important position, where his honesty made him an obstacle for the shady trans-

53 CNSAS, Moldovan Dorel, R 318870, 7–27.

54 On the restitution of Romanianized property and the status of Jews in post-WWII Romania, see IONESCU (2022); ROTMAN (2005); VAGO (2010).

55 See Ungureanu's »Autoexpunere« in: CNSAS, I 102858, 152.

56 On Ghiță Ionescu's profitable wartime career at SSRCI, see ANR, MEN-DS 15/1940, 58; SEBASTIAN (2000) 387–388, 443, 445.

57 GOȘU (2014).

58 See IONESCU (1964) 56–86; GOȘU (2014); CAMPBELL (1996); IONESCU (1972); IDEM (1991);

IONESCU / GELLNER (eds.) (1969); IONESCU / MADARIAGA (1973).

59 NEAGOE (1995).

60 ANR, PCM-CSR 48/1944, 1–2.

actions with Jewish assets.⁶¹ Ironically, as the head of OPLCNR, Teodorescu temporarily headed the commission in charge of drafting the law for the restitution of Jewish property nationalized during the Antonescu regime.⁶² Despite the suspicions concerning his wartime activity – when he pushed for more radical Romanianization laws to prevent Jews from defending their property rights in courts and forged official documents to favor some Romanianization profiteers⁶³ – Teodorescu continued to head OLPCNR, with the rank of Under-Secretary of State, and participated in government meetings until 21 November 1944, when he resigned from this important post.⁶⁴ His whereabouts during the communist regime are unknown.

Not all former Romanianization agents were so lucky in the early post-Antonescu years, and many of them faced negative consequences for their wartime activity. After August 1944, their previous involvement in Romanianization came back to haunt many bureaucrats, who were suspected, denounced, and investigated by the new authorities. The Romanian Communist Party (PCR), for instance, wanted to appoint a certain Radu Paul to the post of Secretary at the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Welfare (MMSOS), but when his wartime activity as a CNR building manager for a Romanianized Jewish block of flats was revealed by an anonymous denunciation, the party leaders decided to investigate his past.⁶⁵

The downfall of many former Romanianization bureaucrats offered victims some measure of satisfaction, if not justice. Sașa Pană was a Jewish writer and physician from Bucharest whose house had been expropriated by CNR; he went on to work for the communist underground and, after the collapse of the Antonescu regime, joined the pro-communist press. Shortly after the war, he saw

his former army comrade, Captain Teohari, and recorded his demise in a diary entry. »He who had been a Romanianization inspector during the Antonescu regime«, Pană wrote, »was now struggling to work as an extra for a Bucharest film studio in exchange for a little money and food.«⁶⁶

Other Romanianization bureaucrats also struggled during the post-Antonescu years. Eugen Pavelescu was one of them. Born in Iași into a petit-bourgeois family, in the decades following WWI Pavelescu worked in the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Interior. He continued as General Inspector at the National Institute for Cooperatives, as well as a university professor of political economy at the University of Iași and Czernowitz Polytechnic School. He was also active in radical right-wing politics: According to several police documents, Pavelescu belonged to the leadership of the Legionary movement (Horia Sima's faction) in Suceava county and promoted local Legionaries in key positions within the Romanianization bureaucracy.⁶⁷ On 28 May 1941, Antonescu appointed Pavelescu as the head of the SSRCI/CNR Directorate of Bukovina based in Suceava and later in Czernowitz. During that time Pavelescu became notorious for corruption and abuse. Traian Popovici, the mayor of Czernowitz, who was declared a »Righteous Among the Nations« for his role in saving thousands of Jews from deportation, had a negative opinion about Pavelescu and his role in the persecution of local Jews; he believed that Pavelescu was responsible for his removal as mayor in December 1941.⁶⁸ In 1943, Antonescu eventually sacked Pavelescu and had him indicted on counts of corruption and various abuses related to the redistribution and administration of »nationalized« Jewish property, such as the Zarojani sugar factory. Sentenced to five years in prison,

61 ANR, MF-CSIS 277/1941 and 278/1941.

62 On the works of the commission that drafted the restitution laws, which was headed by Teodorescu, see: *Restituirea bunurilor evreiești (1944)* 4.

63 For an example of Teodorescu's efforts to convince the authorities to adopt more radical Romanianization provisions, see the SSRCI memo dated 14 August 1941 sent by Dem Teodorescu (General Director) and Stefan Iosif (head of SSRCI's legal

department) to the Antonescu government. ANR, MJ-DJ 127/1941, 184.

64 See the minutes of the 20 October 1944 government meeting, in: CIUCĂ et al. (eds.) (2011) 21–24; see also ANR, MEN-DS 21/1944, 1–2, 15–16.

65 See the minutes of the PCR meeting from 26 March 1945, in: CIUCEANU et al. (eds.) (2003) 368.

66 PANĂ (1973) 552.

67 See the Personal Fiche of Eugen Pavelescu (dated 4 March 1943) from MAI Secret Service and the

»Informative Note« of 28 June 1941 from DGP in: CNSAS, Eugen Pavelescu, I 665291, 210–212, 222–223; on the Legionary movement, see CLARK (2015); CĂRSTOCEA (2017); HEINEN (1986); IORDACHI (2023).

68 See POPOVICI (1945) 420; on Popovici's role in the rescue of Jews in WWII Czernowitz, see HAUSLEITNER (2020).

Pavelescu did not serve this sentence due to the war turmoil, political changes in Romania, and his high-level connections.⁶⁹

After the demise of Antonescu, Pavelescu continued to teach at the University of Iași, where he enjoyed a relatively peaceful life, until 1947. However, in the end his past caught up with him. Fearing the consequences of his wartime activity and abuses perpetrated against Czernowitz Jews – which the post-Antonescu authorities started to investigate in 1945 – and following the advice of a friendly public prosecutor, Pavelescu acquired forged papers and went into hiding by assuming several false identities (a monk and, later, a lumberjack). His evasion strategies succeeded until 1952, when a denunciation led to his arrest by the police. As a result, Pavelescu served two years in jail for his past activities.⁷⁰ The *Securitate* kept Pavelescu under close surveillance, including during his time in prison, as they suspected him of spreading subversive political-religious ideas. A former cellmate who had befriended Pavelescu in prison informed the secret police about Pavelescu's plan to establish a new political organization which he would call the »National Christian Central Party«. ⁷¹ According to several denunciations provided by his cellmates, Pavelescu discussed his pre-jail life with them and boasted about his »achievements« at the Czernowitz Romanianization Directorate, such as getting rich from the gifts received from local Jews and from gentile would-be profiteers. Pavelescu also mentioned to his cellmates that although Antonescu's prosecutors had indicted him for Romanianization abuses, he had successfully dodged the judiciary and avoided doing time in jail due to his high-level connections. Additionally, it seems that during his imprisonment in the 1950s Pavelescu remained a dedicated anti-Semite and Romanianizer: He boasted to his cellmates that when he spearheaded the Romanianization in Czernowitz, he never made any concessions

to the Jews because he always fought for the Romanian nation and Christianity.⁷²

During WWII, the communist economist Bucur Șchiopu worked for SSRCI, the main agency in charge of the »nationalization« and management of real estate owned by local Jews and other minorities, and obtained one of the apartments confiscated from Jews. As the communist activist Liuba Chișinevshi complained in a postwar interview, Șchiopu Romanianized her sister's apartment in Bucharest and did not return it to the legitimate owner after the collapse of the Antonescu regime.⁷³ The 23 August 1944 regime change allowed Șchiopu to climb the socio-political ladder and make a very successful career in communist Romania. As a reliable communist party member, he held the position of Under-Secretary at the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce between 1946 and 1948, the year when he was appointed as Minister of Commerce (a position he occupied until 1949). He worked as the Minister of State Farms (from 1955 to 1965) and as the Minister of the Food Industry (from 1967 to 1969). During the postwar years, Șchiopu enjoyed a public presence as an expert in the modernization of local agriculture following the Soviet model and authored and co-authored several books, but he never mentioned his participation in Antonescu's project of dispossessing Jews.⁷⁴ Another ironic aspect of Șchiopu's postwar career is that he was included in Romania's delegation (as a »technical counsellor« and communist activist) at the Paris Peace Conference negotiations in summer 1946 – which discussed, among other things, the restitution of Jewish property and rights.⁷⁵ Thus, the former Romanianization agent who implemented the dispossession of Jews during the war negotiated the economic clauses of the peace treaty with the Allies, including the restitution of Jewish assets and rights. Towards the end of his career, Șchiopu served as

69 CNSAS, Eugen Pavelescu, I 490733, 27; I 655291, 3–6. On the economic Romanianization of Bukovina and its problems, see HAUSLEITNER (2001); IONESCU (2016).

70 CNSAS, Eugen Pavelescu, I 655291, 3–235.

71 Ibid.

72 According to his statements as reproduced by the informer Dumitru Ion, just like other WWII anti-Semites,

Pavelescu had his own »Jewish friend«, a Czernowitz woman who he claimed to have protected from deportation, to whom he gave gold coins and for who he arranged the marriage. See the »Informative Notes« made (in 1958) by Stancu Marin and Dumitru Ion, two Văcărești prison cellmates of Pavelescu in: CNSAS, Eugen Pavelescu, I 655291, 93–97, 180–185.

73 ȘIPERCO (2016), vol. II, 64, 86, 98.

74 DAVIDESCU et al. (eds.) (1964); ȘCHIOPU (1966); IDEM (2002).

75 »Lista Delegațiunii Române Prezentate Secretariatului General al Conferinței de Pace« in: AMAE, CPP (1946), vol. I, 187; for more details on the intense debate about the restitution of Jewish property at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference negotiations, see IONESCU (2022).

Romania's ambassador to Canada. He never admitted to, nor was he ever held to account for, his involvement in Romanianization.

The above investigation into the post-Antonescu biographies of former Romanianization bureaucrats has shown patterns familiar to students of post-Nazi societies and bureaucracies. Some of these agents of Romanianization thrived in the short term – due to their high-level political connections, skillful navigation of postwar society, and the need for experienced bureaucrats by the post-Antonescu transitional governments and subsequently the communist regime. The new communist regime in particular had to attract skilled cadre during the first postwar years. Banned during the interwar years, the communist party now struggled to recruit members among the ethnic Romanian majority – it failed to appeal to the peasants and to the nationalist public, as it supported Comintern's stand defining Romania as an imperialist state that should be dismantled. After they came to power in August 1944 – first in a coalition of democratic parties, and from March 1945 on in a popular front coalition they controlled – the communist decision-makers started a massive campaign to recruit new members regardless of their former political affiliation. From about 1000 members at the end of the Antonescu regime, PCR recruited almost one million members over the next four years, including former fascists and lower and mid-level bureaucrats who had served under Carol II and Antonescu and managed to (temporarily) hide their previous political and /or professional affiliation.⁷⁶ Some of these new members with a stained past were purged in the late 1940s, and gradually, PCR recruited new cadre from within the youngsters socialized during the postwar years.

Thus, several former Romanianization agents who participated in the surveillance of Jewish companies and the dispossession of Jews continued in their jobs after the demise of Antonescu by targeting the new categories of domestic enemies (mainly the Germans) and their properties and businesses. However, in the long run, the past caught up with most of them, and they were either marginalized and arrested by the communist authorities or had to emigrate. The scrutiny of the lives of former Romanianization bureaucrats

revealed that many civil servants continued on their professional trajectory; faced with the gradual loss of their independence and even autonomy, they negotiated their careers and adapted to the ideological requirements and policies of various political regimes of the late 1930s and 1940s, from liberal democracy to fascist, military, and communist dictatorships, interspersed by short transitional periods. Cases of such opportunistic Romanianization bureaucrats, who joined the pro-communist coalition after the collapse of the Antonescu regime to save their positions, assets, liberty, and /or life, occurred all over the country.

Ironically, some former Romanianization agents became decision-makers in the restitution process. This was the case of Emil Ghilezean, who worked in the commission that drafted the restitution laws and opposed complete restitution, and Dumitru (Dem) Teodorescu, who temporarily headed the agency in charge of the administration and the restitution of Jewish property and who also contributed to the drafting of the restitution laws. This resembles what happened in West Germany, where some former Nazi economists processed Jewish applications for restitution and reparation. Very few of the former Romanianization bureaucrats, such as Bucur Şchiopu, thrived in the long term due to their close affiliation with the ruling circles of the communist party. By 1948–1950, the consolidated communist regime achieved the total subordination of those former Romanianization bureaucrats who had stayed in the country – they either submitted, willingly or unwillingly, to the new political requirements and adjusted to the new system of governance, or they spent long years in prison. The scrutiny of documents related to the life trajectories of former Romanianizers suggests that those at the lower level of the bureaucratic hierarchy were more likely to escape postwar arrest and trial and slip through the cracks of the dragnet than those who had held more prominent positions in Antonescu's bureaucracy.

While the patterns of continuity in the professional lives of former Romanianization agents resemble – at least in the short term – the postwar lives and careers of their German Aryanization counterparts, in the mid- and long term diverge, as most of Antonescu's Romanianizers were ar-

76 DELETANT (2020); TISMĂNEANU et al. (eds.) (2006).

rested or had to emigrate from Romania to escape retribution. However, even those who were tried for their wartime activities received rather lenient sentences, many of which were later reduced. Usually, they were released after a few years' imprisonment and eventually adapted to living in the communist nationalist dictatorships of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and especially Nicolae Ceaușescu, who promoted their own versions of Romanianization from the 1960s to 1989.

Overall, my interdisciplinary investigation of the careers of these Romanianization agents shows that the communist revolution was not as radical as the communist leaders preferred to boast and that it did not immediately bring a complete transformation of the state, its institutions, and employees holding crucial positions. Especially during the first postwar transitional years, the connections between the two ideologically different author-

itarian regimes – fascist and communist – continued on various levels, including the one of the bureaucracy itself: it involved a certain degree of transferring legal practices and institutions that participated in policing the lives and property of local inhabitants, particularly those seen as unreliable, such as minorities and various categories of real or imagined enemies. This exploratory investigation underlines the need for more in-depth prosopography studies and institutional studies – rooted in history, legal studies, and transitional justice – in order to scrutinize the careers of the individuals who held crucial position in the fascist and communist regimes of Central Eastern Europe and the mechanisms of the transitional era that resulted in retributive justice (criminal trials, purges) or recruitment and re-education. ■

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