Mariana Hausleitner

Transformations in the Relationship between Jews and Germans in the Bukovina 1910–1940

In the Bukovina, a region which is today divided between Romania and the Ukraine, there have been ethnic tensions since the end of the nineteenth century. Until that time, despite its Austrian administration, political power was in the hands of Romanian large estate owners. When a small segment of intellectuals emerged among the Ukrainians there, the Romanian upper class tried to frustrate their political participation. Ukrainians lived mainly in the northern part of the Bukovina, comprising 38.4% (1910) of the population, slightly larger in size than the Romanians, who made up 34.4% of the population and dwelled mainly in the southern area. Germans and Jews lived everywhere. Together they comprised 20% of the population.¹

This article argues that, before 1933, Jews and Germans shared the goal of modernizing the underdeveloped region of Bukovina. The first section of the article discusses how they together developed German culture within Bukovina under Austrian Rule, followed by a second section elaborating upon how, after 1918, Jews and Germans mutually turned against governmental policies of Romanization. The third section focuses upon the subsequent disintegration of this cooperation as a result of the influence of National Socialism. The fourth and fifth sections sketch out the consequences of the National Socialist influence for minority politicians from Romania as well as their contribution to the European Nationalities Congress.

The Cooperation of German-speaking People before and after 1918

Until 1918, German was the official language in Habsburg Bukovina. Despite this, Germans only represented 8% of the population, many of whom were peasants. Thus, the conditions for the social elevation of Jews were favorable. Jews lived mostly in cities (74%) and represented, at over 30%, the largest group of

inhabitants in the capital city of Czernowitz. Consequently, Jews appointed the mayor there several times. Because of legal emancipation, they were present in almost all professions beginning in 1867. Many were judges, administrative officers, and teachers. Some Jews became professors at the University of Czernowitz. German was the primary language in the Franz-Joseph-Universität, and 41% of the students were Jews in 1906 – the largest ethnic group. Primary and secondary schools during Austrian rule offered classes for German, Romanian, Ruthenian (Ukrainian) and Polish speaking pupils. Zionist attempts to establish a Hebrew-language school in Czernowitz inside the state system were unsuccessful. Only a German education promised upward social and economic mobility within the Habsburg Empire. Jews represented 10% of the population, and the administration supported the assimilation of the Jews there into German culture. Fred Stambrook describes the period from 1880 to 1914 as a Golden Age for the Jews in the Bukovina, arguing that they were, during that time, the most fortunate Jews in East Central Europe.

Antisemitic ideas reached Czernowitz through the appointment of professors from Graz, Innsbruck and Vienna. These professors founded the Association of Christian Germans (Verein der christlichen Deutschen) in 1897, which, among other things, spoke out against the usury of Jewish moneylenders. This resulted in a large network of German co-operatives. The new borrowing facilities improved the situation of the peasants and craftsmen. Consequently, in the absence of a specifically Jewish network of moneylenders, antisemitism among Germans in Bukovina remained weak. Only some Romanians from Bukovina, who collaborated with the Liga for Cultural Unity of all Romanians (Liga pentru unitatea culturală a tuturor românilor), published antisemitic articles in Romania.

Because of the introduction of general suffrage in 1907, both the Jewish and the German population were well represented in the Imperial Council (Reichsrat) in Vienna. Benno Straucher represented Czernowitz in this parliament from 1897 to 1918. In 1907 he was elected as president of the Jews’ Club, a parliamentary caucus of Jewish deputies. Although there was, after the Ausgleich in 1910, only a voting curia for the German-speaking population in the Landtag, Germans and Jews were able to agree on the allocation of seats.

Germans and Jews developed a cultural life together in Czernowitz. For instance, they founded and supported a city theatre (Stadttheater) and a music association (Musikverein). The main daily newspapers in German were edited by Jews and read by all educated people in Czernowitz.

The first profound break in the life of the Bukovinian population was the invasion of the Romanian army in November 1918. This event did not bring disunity to Jews and Germans, however, as the social position of both groups was now in danger. At the beginning, the representatives of the Germans believed Romanian promises that their cultural life would remain unfettered, and so Germans took part in the unification celebrations. In contrast, the representatives of the Jews refused to participate as they were not guaranteed full civil rights. At that time, the majority of the Jews in Romania were stateless and thus completely at the mercy of the public authorities. Until 1918, only around one thousand Jews had been granted citizenship, based on special merits.

At the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, the representatives of France and Great Britain demanded a naturalization, en masse, of all Jews in Greater Romania. The number of Jews had risen from 240,000 in old Romania to about 700,000 through the annexation of Bessarabia, the Bukovina, and Transylvania.

10 Hausleitner, Die Rumänisierung, 100–101.
Delegates from minority groups far and wide sent representatives to Paris during the conference. Among these were two Jews from Czernowitz, who worked together with the Comité des Délégations juives auprès de la Conference de la Paix, with representatives from Europe, Palestine, and the United States of America. At the Conference, the Romanian Prime Minister, Ion I. C. Brătianu, spoke out against the naturalization of Jews en masse and walked out in protest. Brătianu declared, in September 1919, that his refusal to sign guarantees for the protection of the minorities in Romania was because such guarantees were incompatible with the dignity, internal security, and economic interests of a sovereign state.

It was only an ultimatum of the Great Powers in December 1919 that forced the new coalition government in Romania to adopt a protective law that guaranteed the equality of minorities in Greater Romania, who made up 28% of the population. The Allies threatened to not recognize Romania’s right to the territories gained at the end of the war, which had increased its size by twofold, unless they agreed to these minority protections.

During the discussion of the new constitution adopted in 1923, an antisemitic movement was rising. It was, above all, supported by students calling for a limitation of Jewish access to universities. Before 1918, Jews in Romania were unable to attend state educational establishments. The subsequent competition for civil positions meant a sudden threat to the social prospects of Romanians.

The emancipation of Jews was included within the constitution, and the government could not completely turn a blind eye to the protection of minorities. However, when Brătianu came to power again, in January 1922, he began a severe policy of Romanization. In response to the antisemitic movement, and the influx of refugees from Russia, Ukraine, and Hungary, the government issued a new law on citizenship in 1924, which turned many Jews once again into stateless persons – especially in the newly annexed regions. Their children were thus barred from state schools.

In the Bukovina, where the majority of the population consisted of 60% non-Romanians, resistance against such discriminatory acts was fiercest. Many Jews and Germans had been pushed out of their positions in civil administration and justice because of the sudden introduction of Romanian as the official language. Romanian had also been introduced as the language of university lecturing. Consequently, many professors who had been appointed from the Habsburg monarchy had to leave the city in 1919. These were replaced primarily by Romanian grammar school teachers. No Jew was appointed professor after this time.  

The fast conversion of the local theatre at Czernowitz into a Romanian institution contributed to its downfall. Only 16% of Romanians lived in the city; other ethnic groups no longer attended after December 1921, when a group of radical Romanians halted a German performance in a violent attack against which police failed to intervene. Afterwards, the statue of Schiller was removed from the front of the theatre. Germans and Jews accompanied it in a procession to its new home in the garden of the German House. Subsequently, German and Jewish members of the Deutscher Theaterverein organized their own cultural program together until 1932.

**Minority Resistance against the Politics of Romanization**

The state of siege, existing until 1928, made public criticism difficult for non-Romanians through censorship and assembly bans. Disputes over language was fiercest at the schools. Romanian schools advanced at the expense of schools for other ethnic groups. Further, the Ministry of Education ordered that Jews must send their children to Romanian schools. Jewish and German deputies alike protested against this order. The majority of Jews in the Bukovina spoke Yiddish or German

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in the household, and did not want to subject their children to another language in primary school. The German deputy Alfred Kohlruß demanded that the autonomy of education, which had been guaranteed in 1918, be maintained. The prescriptions were only changed marginally. All teachers had to pass a test in the Romanian language, and were removed from civil service if their knowledge was deemed insufficient. The Jews reacted robustly, when, in December 1925, the minister of education prescribed the Romanian language for private schools as well. Salo Weiselberger, from Czernowitz, criticized the decree in the Senate, the Upper Chamber of the parliament. Jews from Romania also lodged complaints to the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris, which forwarded their protest to the League of Nations.

As of 1926, external examiners were brought to conduct final examination tests in secondary state schools. These external examiners failed large numbers of high school students based on poor knowledge of Romanian. When disappointed Jewish pupils took a nationalist Romanian examiner to task, they were arrested. At the court proceedings, a Romanian right-wing extremist shot a defendant student in front of the court-house. In addition to Jews, there were also Germans in solidarity at the victim’s funeral. Jewish, German and Ukrainian deputies protested together against the measures of Romanization, citing their contribution to the escalation of ethnic violence. However, these protests were shouted down by nationalist Romanians in parliament. When the Jewish deputy Manfred Reifer was assaulted, his Ukrainian colleague from the Bukovina, and some social democrats, protected him. Jews and Germans were particularly appalled by the Minister of Interior, Octavian Goga, who called the shooting of the Jewish high-school student “a defense of Romanian honor.” The murderer was subsequently cleared by a jury in court.

The social democrats in the Bukovina were an important link between the five ethnicities their members were recruited from. They were influential until October 1920, when the government violently crushed a general strike. However, there was always a social democrat elected to parliament in Czernowitz. Jakob Pistorner, from the General Jewish Labour Union (Jüdischer Arbeiterbund), advocated, together with the deputy of the German conservatives Alois Lebouton, separate
schools for all ethnicities. In the *Haus Morgenrojt*, the social democrats established, with financial support from the US, professional courses in Yiddish.

Given the policy of forced Romanization of all governments in Romania until 1928, representatives of non-Romanians were compelled to form a united front against this policy. After every initiative to improve their standing in parliament was thwarted, the Jewish deputies turned to the League of Nations in 1925. The law of nationality was criticized there because it resulted in statelessness for about 30,000 Jews in Romania. Lucien Wolf, of the Joint Committee, also addressed the prescriptions regarding education. In 1926, the European Nationalities Congress also spoke out against the violation of minority rights in Romania. Subsequently, German, Jewish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian representatives of Romania formed a voting bloc in July 1927. This bloc attempted to generate support from the League of Nations. The Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Joint Foreign Committee, and the American Jewish Committee published the booklet *La situation de la minorité juif en Roumanie*, in Paris, to inform League delegates of the situation in Romania.

In 1928, there was short-lived hope that a minority act in Romania would improve their situation. The National Peasant Party, which had also put non-Romanian representatives and social democrats on their electoral lists, came to power that year. This lifted the state of siege, making assemblies possible. Deputy Lebouton stated, contentedly, that 21 German primary schools had been opened in the Bukovina. The German deputies also received subventions for the two German secondary schools in Bukovina. In Czernowitz, a Jew and a German became vice-mayors. In 1930, again, there were Jewish, German, and Ukrainian representatives on the electoral lists of the National Peasant Party in Bukovina, which formed the government.

Eventually, however, this positive development came to an end when the Great Depression considerably limited the government’s room to maneuver.


Beginning in 1931, the governments ceased authorizing new school classes for non-Romanians – as they were hardly able to pay the Romanian teachers already on staff. The government of Nicolae Iorga closed a school in Czernowitz that was attended by a large number of Jews. The deputies and parents protested vehemently against this attempt to limit the Jews’ access to higher education. The next government rescinded the closing.32

Radicalization of the Germans in Romania after 1933

These years of crisis also put an end to the cooperation between German and the Jewish representatives. German peasants were hit hard by the Great Depression as corn prices dropped by half. Their co-operatives were unable to support them because the system of loans, on the part of the banks, was no longer working. The peasants became unwilling to take their small savings to the banks, which could no longer make good on deposits. The Romanian government backed only Romanian banks through the National Bank. This created problems both for small German banks and the large Jewish-owned bank (Marmorosch), which was driven into bankruptcy.33 The German banks asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin for help. At first they replied that all Germans living abroad were facing these problems. It was only in 1932 that a loan for the Bukovinian agricultural bank was settled – but by this point it was too late.34

Meanwhile, the crisis reached all wood exports in Romania. Many mountain farmers also worked in sawmills, which had only produced small amounts of lumber since 1930. In some parts of the Bukovina, 95% of Germans were unemployed. The agricultural bank could only marginally support these starving mountain farmers.35 The deputy, Lebouton, appealed for a collection of money from the communities, but it generated little support because poverty had also spread among German townspeople.36

In these years of crisis, Professor Cuza’s Romanian “National Christian League,” and the Legionary Movement of his former student, Corneliu Codreanu, gained influence. They organized many antisemitic riots in Bukovina. Both leaders claimed that the economic crisis had been caused by Jews speculating in the stock market, demanding that the Jews be deprived of power. German antisemites also picked up this propaganda. In Transylvania, Fritz Fabritius’s so-called Movement of Self-Help (*Selbsthilfebewegung*) arose, and in 1932 began to gain followers in Bukovina. It accused the conservative representatives of the Germans to be at least partially responsible for the increasing squalor through their support of the rich. Their strategy of negotiation had not led to any concessions from the Bucharest governments. Until then, the conservative leaders generally formed electoral alliances with the strongest Romanian party. In return, they received concessions on the question of education and safe party list positions. While these concessions remained on the drawing board, the radicals accused government leaders of propagating those electoral alliances merely to secure their positions. In the elections of 1932, many Germans no longer supported the government party list but instead cast their votes for Cuza’s antisemitic protest party. Fabritius defended the electoral alliance with this party by claiming that a solution to the Jewish question would also improve the situation of Germans.

The rise of right-wing organizations had already put a strain on the relationship between Germans and Jews in 1932. 1933, however, marked the beginning of a permanent crisis. When, in April, people in Berlin were called on to boycott Jewish shops, fellow travelers in the Bukovina did likewise. In cities like Czernowitz, where the population of Jewish merchants was largest, it was hardly possible to put this into practice. Almost 79% of Jewish men in the Bukovina pursued trade as their occupation. This large amount was partly due to its location, as there was a high percentage of transit trade which crossed the region. Jewish enterprises also held leading positions in wood exports, the textile industry, and sugar refineries.
In this respect, the call for boycott published in the *Czernowitzer Deutsche Tagespost* was little more than propaganda. Yet, it showed how endangered the relationship between Germans and Jews had become. In Czernowitz, 38% of the inhabitants were Jews. The urban population had, for a long time, read mainly two German daily newspapers, which were edited by Jews. These newspapers strictly contained themselves when talking about the boycott. In contrast to this, the paper *Tagespost*, which had been rather unimportant until that time, made the boycott a central issue. In doing so, its editors sought both to win new readers and be granted subsidies by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The senior editor of the *Tagespost*, Bruno Skrehunetz-Hillebrand, who had previously worked on occasion as a proof-reader at the Zionist-owned *Ostjüdische Zeitung* [East-Jewish Newspaper], now fashioned himself into a militant Nazi mobilizing Germans’ social envy.41 In the *Tagespost* Jews were charged with unfairly competing with the Germans because they were supported by the American Joint Reconstruction Foundation.42

In fact, the “Joint” had granted loans for re-building the Union of Jewish Credit Cooperatives in Romania.43 The 12 Jewish cooperatives had 8,394 members in the Bukovina. Consequently, Jewish peasants, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs were able to pull through the crisis a little better than the Germans. From 1933, Germans received money from the Reich above all for propaganda. Thus, an additional hate-mongering newspaper, called *Der Scharfschütze* [The Marksman], was created.44

In April 1933, an assembly of 60 Jewish representatives decided, in Czernowitz, to show their solidarity with the persecuted Jews in Germany by refraining to sell either print products or medicine sent from the Reich. Likewise, German films would no longer be shown in the cinemas that were mostly run by Jews. While these measures were rarely put into practice, they illustrate the dilemma of Jews who had, until then, been the most important consumers of German cultural goods in the Bukovina.45

In the *Ostjüdische Zeitung*, Mayer Teich, a lawyer from the Workers of Zion (*Poale Tzion*) and president of the Jewish community in Suceava, wrote in April 1933: “We do not want to be bearers of the German culture [...] any longer. We have been inclining towards German culture and politics too much. The brain

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41 After the War he confessed that his newspaper received financial support from the Propagandaministerium in Berlin. See Günther F. Guggenberger, *Georg Drozdowski in literarischen Feldern zwischen Czernowitz und Berlin 1920–1945* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2015), 56.
and heart have to unlearn. It is our tragedy that many of us still have to express this in the German language.” (Transl. M. H.) Jews should now orient themselves towards the cultures of France and Great Britain. These states had always made efforts to protect Jews in Romania. As a long-term aim, Teich advocated that private schools begin teaching Hebrew lessons and shift their orientation towards Palestine. Many Jews in Bukovina and Bessarabia, however, began to speak out for schools with Yiddish lessons – while in Transylvania, many Jews still considered themselves to be part of the Hungarian nation.

When the Jewish Party of Romania congregated, German had been the common language up to that point. However, in November of 1933, the delegates from Bessarabia refused to speak German, forcing Mayer Ebner to use the Yiddish he had previously derogated as “jargon.” Ebner had been elected to Parliament in 1926, 1927, 1931, and 1932, and worked closely with the deputies of the Germans as far as school questions were concerned. In 1931, he was one of the founders of the Jewish Party, which received 2.38% of the vote in Romania in 1931 and 1.29% in 1933. In the senate, the Bukovinian Manfred Reifer represented the Jewish Party. He saw an opportunity within the strain between Jews and the German minority to lead the Jews to a Jewish identity.

The Conservative Germans in Romania and European Nationalities Congress

Until 1933, Ebner and Reifer, as well as the German deputies from the Bukovina, had taken part in the meetings of the European Nationalities Congress. In spring of 1933, the Congress meeting was postponed until autumn. Jewish representatives had previously demanded that the Congress criticize the persecution of Jews in the German Reich. This was a difficult task for the director of the Congress, as the

47 Glass, Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft, 381.
49 Glass, Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft, 528.
52 Glass, Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft, 381.
organization was funded primarily by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since the days of Stresemann, it had considered the Congress to be a way of supporting the rights of the German minorities particularly in those areas separated from the Reich. In 1933, senator Hans Otto Roth from Transylvania chaired the confederation of German ethnic groups in Europe. Being regional curator of the Protestant Regional Church, he also held the highest position of layman in the church, which had a large membership. On the 15th of June 1933, he tried, during an audience, to make clear to Hitler the effects of persecuting Jews on the German minorities of the East. The governments in the East might soon push the German minorities, like the Jews in Germany, to the margins of society. Because of this danger, he asked Hitler not to pass any further racial laws and not to undermine the churches’ autonomy. These requests precipitated a fit and a long diatribe from the Führer.53

During the European Nationalities Congress, the German deputies could not bring themselves to criticize Germany’s racial laws, as there were already influential right-wing powers in their states. In September 1933, the Association of Germans (Verband der Deutschen) presented a woolly declaration: on the one hand, they criticized the deprivation of Jewish rights in the Reich. On the other hand, they referred to the peoples’ right for “dissimilation” of alien races. The Jewish delegates left the Congress. While the Congress continued to exist until 1935, its influence waned.54

After the Congress, pressure on the conservative leaders of Germans in Romania increased. Given the growing influence of the National Socialists, the conservatives joined forces in a defensive front. In the Volksbund, there were – apart from the deputies of the Bukovina, such as Lebouton – also representatives of Protestant and Catholic Churches from all regions.55 Now, however, Berlin also supported right-wing extremist forces. They fought the Volksbund with many accusations until it ceased activities in 1935. Now, the moderate National Socialist Fabritius became spokesman of the Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien. This Umbrella Organisation of Germans in Romania was renamed the Volksgemeinschaft der Deutschen in Rumänien.56

The conservative leaders of the Germans had been fiercely discredited by the Nazis. Alfred Kohlruß, who had built the network of the German co-operatives in the Bukovina, was blamed for their financial problems. He withdrew after being accused of misappropriating money. In 1935, Kohlruß died, embittered, at the age

54 Ibid., 128; Glass, Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft, 209.
55 Hausleitner, Die Rumänisierung, 288.
56 Johann Böhm, Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2006), 144; Hausleitner, Die Radikalisierung, 201–202.
of 53. Senator Alois Lebouton was also constantly assailed by the Tagespost from 1933 on, as he occasionally criticized the imitation of the Nazis in Romania as being dangerous. During the elections for the people’s council (Volksrat) in 1935, Lebouton was shouted down by chanting Nazi youths – who received the majority of votes in the Volksrat. When Lebouton died from liver disease in 1936, the priest at the funeral attributed his early death at the age of 55 to the constant assaults. All positions that received financial support from the Reich now went to young Nazis.

The Right-wing Trend and the failed Cooperation of Minorities in Romania

After a number of strikes, the state of siege and censorship were reintroduced in 1933. In December, when Prime Minister Gheorghe I. Duca was murdered by Romanian fascists, the police became more right-wing. The Romanian governments also occasionally fought the excesses of the German Nazis when it was felt that they were too violent. In 1934, the National Movement for the Renewal of Germans (Nationale Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen) was banned. However, because the governments were interested in the economic exchange with Germany, they did not aggressively take action against the Nazi groups being financed by Himmler and the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland from the Reich.

However, it was especially National Liberal politicians who made use of the factionalism within the German minority in order to revoke the concessions on the matter of schools. In the Bukovina, most of the German classes at primary state schools were closed.

The National Liberals were backed by those forces which wanted to marginalize minorities, especially in business. In 1934, Ion Nistor, the Secretary of State for Employment, who hailed from the Bukovina, submitted a law that ordered

private enterprises to preferentially hire Romanians. This intervention was legitimized by an intention to establish a Romanian middle class. In fact, the Romanian share in the urban population had risen only slightly since 1920.62

When the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke out in favor of the German minority, the Romanians claimed that this law was only directed against Jewish influence. Consequently, the Germans did not, like they had done before 1933, protest together with representatives of other minorities. Jewish representatives appealed to the influential associations of Jews in France and Great Britain. The ambassadors of those two states, which had covenanted the protection of minorities in 1919, intervened with the government.63 The representatives of the Hungarian minority, which was strong in Transylvania, appealed in September 1937 to the League of Nations in an interpellation. The law was slightly changed.64 At first, only businesses that had many Jewish employees were prosecuted.65

When it became clear that the protection of minorities, which had been guaranteed in 1919, would only be weakly enforced, the guilds began barring Jews. Beginning in 1935, Jewish lawyers were no longer admitted in the trade associations, which also barred doctors, pharmacists, and others as of 1937. The idea was to force Jews to emigrate. In December 1937, an antisemitic government, of which Professor Cuza was part, came into power. He derided the League of Nations in the German Press and called them a corpse that had to be buried at last.66 Prime Minister Goga, who had already justified the murder of the Jewish pupil from Czernowitz in 1926, was now openly stirring up hatred against Jews. He claimed that more than half a million Jewish refugees from Germany had come to Romania, and that they had obtained Romanian citizenship only through corruption.67 Reasoning thus, he submitted to the government, in January 1938, a law to test citizenship. The Jewish World Congress formulated a harsh protest to the League of Nations in Geneva, but without positive effect for the Jews in Romania.68

Goga’s government collapsed after 44 days, but the law remained in force with little change. By 1939, 255,222 Jews (36.5%) had lost their citizenship.69

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62 Müller, Staatsbürger, 398–402.
63 Iancu, Evreii din România, 241.
65 Glass, Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft, 544.
68 Bureau du Congres Juif Mondial, La situation des Juifs en Roumanie (Geneve: Centre International, 1938).
69 “Report from Bucharest on 27 November 1939 of the French Ambassador Adrien Thierry to Prime Minister Édouard Daladier,” in Lupta internaţională pentru emanciparea evreilor din România
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organizations in Romania did not offer very strong resistance to these developments, for various reasons. The Jews from old Romania were less concerned by the law because of special arrangements. The Jewish Party, which was particularly powerful in the regions that had been annexed in 1918, was in sharp decline. Its members, who were increasingly rendered stateless, could be expelled at once if found to be engaging in any political action.

Some young Jews became increasingly radicalized, given the occupational bans. Because of this, the social democratic Jewish Worker’s Union (Jüdischer Arbeiterbund) in the Bukovina came increasingly under fire beginning in 1936. When right-wing Romanians denied a Jewish group access to the Czernowitz municipal park, the Jews put up a fight. A young Romanian died in the brawl. Only Jews were arrested, and one of them died inside the police station. The fact that he had been frequenting Haus Morgenrojt served as a pretext for closing the premises of the Arbeiterbund.70

While Jews were increasingly being persecuted, the German Reich supported the German minority. Romania was striving for an extension to the economic exchange. The first agreement was reached in 1938, through which the export of crude oil increased by 25%. In March 1939 Romania signed an economic treaty with Germany which was valid for five years. This treaty provided a close linking of the two countries’ economies through coordinated planning and joint companies.71

Within the German minority, a young generation of leaders supported by the Reich grew up, burning to prove themselves within the Reich. In summer 1940, they enthusiastically propagated the resettlement from the Bukovina as “repatriation.” However, it was ultimately due to the Soviet occupation that nearly all of the 43,000 Germans of northern Bukovina joined, during the autumn, in this precarious future.72

Some young Jews who had become radicalized by their marginalization in Romania hoped for a fresh start in the Soviet Bukovina. They welcomed the Red

Army’s invasion in Czernowitz. In July 1940, around 70,000 Jews from across Romania moved to the Bukovina, which had been annexed by the Soviet Union.  

Some wealthy Jews went to Romania, with its fascist ministers. They would survive the years of the war better than those who stayed behind in the Bukovina. Very few Jews were deported from Central Romania. In contrast to this, Jews in northern Bukovina who were considered to be politically suspect, or who were entrepreneurs, were the first to be deported to Siberia by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD.  

In summer 1941, when the Romanian Army, alongside the Wehrmacht, re-conquered the northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, more than 45,000 Jews were killed. The others were deported to the Ukrainian area of Transnistria. In this Romanian occupation zone more than 250,000 Jews died from hunger and deficiency disease. Only around 20,000 Jews remained in Czernowitz because of the interventions of Mayor Traian Popovici and German Consul Fritz Schellhorn.  

Consequently, the common understanding of Jews and Germans regarding their role in the process of modernization in the Bukovina came to an abrupt end. The resettled Germans considered themselves, during the Cold War, to be victims of Stalin. In contrast, Jewish survivors stressed Hitler’s guilt. A few descendants of both ethnic groups are now realizing the consequences of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Together, with today’s inhabitants of the Bukovina, they are seeking traces of commonality in their shared history.