

EVACUATION FROM BESSARABIA & BUKOVINA, 1940

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A couple of land regions near the Black Sea were of particular interest to the Germans in 1940. The pages of documents that follow focus on two territories in an area near the Black Sea. To understand why Germany had an interest in the people of these regions, we review briefly the historical background of the area.

The area of concern involves the nations of Romania and Russia. Romania started off as two principalities, dating back to 1350, known as Walachia and Moldavia. Walachia was bordered by Bulgaria to the south and east, Hungary to the west and north, and Moldavia on the northeast side. Moldavia was on the east of Hungary, south of Poland and Old Lithuania, and followed the Dnister River to the Black Sea as its eastern boundary. Until the early 1800s, the Turks ruled in these areas. In the Treaty of 1812, as a result of the Russians defeating the Turks, the two principalities were taken over by the Russians. In the early 1830s, representative government was set up by the Russians. Russian troops withdrew from the principalities in 1834. However, the eastern part of Moldavia remained part of Russia. This is what became known as Bessarabia and was settled by Germans. It did not take too long and the Russians became embroiled in another war which brought European troops into the Crimea. In 1856, at the end of the Crimean War and the defeat of the Russians, the southern portion of Bessarabia was given to the principality of Moldavia. In 1861, Romania became a recognized nation when the principalities of Walachia and Moldavia joined to form one nation. In 1878, the Russians once again took back the portion of Bessarabia that had been governed by Romania.

Until World War I, Bukovina was a territory of the Austria-Hungary Empire. However, because Romania left the Central Powers in 1916 and joined up with the Allied Forces, at the end of the war in 1918, it was rewarded by receiving three regions of the defeated Empire. Bukovina became part of Romania, located in the north central part of the country, with Moldavia on its eastern border. It was also rewarded by receiving administration of Bessarabia.

In September of 1939, Germany began its aggression into various nations, starting World War II. By 1940, it had conquered much of western Europe and was moving south and east into eastern Europe. German troops occupied Romania by October of 1940 and Romania joined the German side of the war. At the same time, the Russians were moving westward into Bessarabia and reclaiming land they once ruled.

This sets the stage for the following translated and transcribed documents. The records consist of information about the organizing of transport and logistics to relocate ethnic Germans as agreed upon between the Soviets and the Germans. These Germans, living in Bessarabia and Bukovina were to be led out of the area to harbor town where they would be transported westward into the German Reich. This work would be carried out mainly by the German SS [*Geheime Staatspolizei*; Gestapo; Secret State Police;], in consultation with the Soviet authorities.

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