

# Political Position of People within Bessarabia in 1940

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Note: The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, or *VoMi* (Ethnic Germans Coordination Center) was an NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers Party) agency founded to manage the interests of the people of German ethnicity living outside the borders of Nazi Germany. This document is part of a microfilm containing many files captured by the Allied Forces during World War II which focus on events related to Bessarabia. This particular document deals with assessments of 28 individuals holding various leadership positions within Bessarabia in August of 1940. No indication is given who made the assessments. So it is difficult to determine whether the assessments are politically motivated or accurate descriptions of the following men. Information within [square brackets] indicate translator's comment.

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[Translation Begins]

## **The Interior Ethnic Situation in Bessarabia. Broneske Circle (*Kreis*).**

The Circle of Region Administrator Dr. Otto Broneske, which developed as a leading group in the course of the internal ethnic discussions, still dominates the ethnic group of Bessarabia today. To this Circle belong the following:

1. Dr. Otto Broneske.
2. Dr. Gottlieb Hahn,
3. Viktor Mauch,
4. Karl Hasart,
5. Rudolf Neumann,
6. Christian Flaig,
7. Bantel Robert,
8. Imanuel Baumann,
9. Dr. Hugo Erdmann,
10. Christian Fiess,
11. Samuel Heier and
12. Hans Wagner.
13. Imanuel Heer, District Administrator (*Kreisleiter*).
14. Arthur Kräenbring.
15. Konstantin Neuman, Pastor.

16. Hobbacher Arnold, medical dentist, at present practicing dentistry in Vienna. Liaison man of the Broneske Circle to the AST [*Abwehrstelle*=a German intelligence organization organized in 1938 to deal with espionage, sabotage & counter-intelligence] positions in the Reich.
17. Reimann. Region Farmers Director (*Gaubauernführer*).

This group has managed to secure the absolute leadership of Germanism in Bessarabia and to brutally undermine any healthy political movement. For this purpose, it used a spy system, which was extended to the smallest local groups of the NAF [*Nationale Arbeitsfront*=National Labor Front] and the DJ [*Deutsche Jugend*=German Youth]. Young valuable elements of the ethnic group were deliberately kept away from any influence, so that the people of District Broneske, who had previously been reckoned with, were left without any offspring. In the early 1940s, when a new direction was carried into the ethnic group in the sense of the Protection Squadron (*Schutzstaffel*), the supporters of this direction were captured and terrorized by Dr. Broneske. Broneske even went so far as to claim that any order that came from the Reich, and which was not forwarded to him, would not be recognized by him. The direction represented by the Protection Squadron in Bessarabia had been given the task of keeping the 500 young people ready for the *Waffen-SS* [*Waffen-Schutzstaffel*=Nazi Party paramilitary] and handing them over during the resettlement. It was regrettably interrupted by the carrying out of this task and by the establishment of the Protection Squadron in Bessarabia of District Broneske

Although this group pretends to be the only legitimate national socialist leadership in Bessarabia, it is, if viewed more closely, nothing more than a clique composed of a number of men on the basis of a community of interests. Accordingly, the effects of their politics is not national socialism and will consequently be felt and rejected by the general masses.

### **Broneske Circle.**

The people around Broneske are members of a non-partisan community / also quite possibly not NASDAP [*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* = National Socialist German Workers' Party— Nazi Party organized by Hitler 1933] /. They want non-political arrangements in the service of the ethnic community and are opponents of political activity, enlightenment and education.

At the moment of resettlement, they try to align their organization with the Reich-German party organization and as such also support it. From this point of view, the planned direction of "Self-Protection (*Selbstschutzes*)", which is to be linked to the S.A. [*Sturmabteilung* = Storm Detachment, the Nazi Party's original paramilitary ], must also be considered.

**Connection to the O.K.W.** [*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* = High Command of the Wehrmacht (armed forces) of Nazi Germany]**Organization.**

The circle around Broneske had been able to establish connections in the early days with the AST. Especially through close relations with the German Consul Lörner in Galati, and beyond with the concerned circles of the German embassy in Bucharest/ von Haften/.

These relationships were used by Broneske and his circle less to cooperate objectively than to encourage the internal struggle and to strengthen their position of power. On the basis of this commission on the part of the O.K.W., all its internal ethnic ambiguity was issued as an order of the “Reich” /Adolt Hitler/ and every ideological-political opposition against their non-national socialism measures in the name of the Führer was terrorized.

## **The Leaders of the Ethnic Germans in Bessarabia.**

### **1. Baeckmann, Karl.**

Baltic German. Finished medical faculty in Petersburg. During World War I, became a military doctor in Bessarabia and remained in Tarutino after the collapse. Today about 45 years old. Is married to a non-German /Estin/. A son and a daughter.

Tried to get into contact with Fritz Fabritius<sup>[\*]</sup> in 1933. A supporter of the “People's Service” (*Volksdienstes*), who left [spelling unclear] in 1933 in opposition to the sole control of Senior Pastor Daniel Haase. Baeckmann rejected the “Self-help Movement” (*Selbsthilfebewegung*) of Fritz Fabritius in Bessarabia, which was founded in 1933. Baeckmann was subsequently an opponent of the renewal.

[\*—Fabritius founded the National-Socialist Party of Romanian Germans (PNSGR, *Partidul Național-Socialist al Germanilor din România*) in 1933, which promoted Nazi ideas and organized youth camps; members of this party wore uniforms and used the swastika as their symbol. – Wikipedia]

**Assessment:** Very agile, intellectual, loner, not very sociable, psychopathic adaptations. Moves about in international circles. His son is international. His wife roves about with other men.

### **2. Bannasch, Rudolf.**

The parents of Rudolf Bannasch immigrated from Congress Poland. Possibly of Polish origin. The wife of Rudolf Banasch is Polish. Rudolf Bannasch has the largest German cloth factory in Bessarabia. Age around 40 years. Has 3 sons.

His sister, **Adele**, married Karl Römmich, was exclusively in international circles, had very good relations with Romanian officers and was at times a confidant of the *Sigurants* Chief in Ackermann /Cetates Alba/. /Karl Roemmich is an O.K.W. man, currently in the German Reich/. She divorced her husband in 1937. Was often approached by Region Administrator Dr. Otto Broneske about interventions with authorities.

Bannasch was the social center of a semi-intellectual cliché in Tarutino, who was first an opponent of the Renewal Movement, later was involved by Dr. Otto Broneske in the community. Bannasch was the leader of the Tarutino Tarn Club (*Tarnvereins*) for many years, whose activity consisted in the organization of concerts.

**Assessment:** Cunning businessman with international methods. Antisocial behavior towards his workers.

**3. Bantel, Robert.**

Completed his agronomic studies in the Reich. Belongs to the Broneske Circle. Was head of the farmers' office of the Bessarabia Region. Showed himself to be ineffective to manage this office.

**4. Baier, Dr. Liborius.**

Comes from Tarutino. Completed medical studies in Tübingen. Member of the "Black Sea German Colonist Society" (*Schwarzmeerdeutsche Kolonistenverein*) in Tübingen. Went to Tarutino in 1928. Medical practice. School doctor. Evangelical boys and girls gymnasium. About 45 years old. Married. 2 children.

Non-political. Materialist. Joined the NAF only from expediency purposes. Is the head of the state hospital (*Spitels-??* [spelling unclear]) in Tarutino and state district doctor.

**5. Baumann, Arthur.**

Owner of the "German Bookshop" in Tarutino. Former member of the Bessarabian "People's Service". Entered the "Self-help weaving" (*Selbsthilfebewegung*) of Fritz Fabritius with the "People's Service." Has emerged through political articles of hate content in the internal-ethnic dispute. Stands close to Broneske.

**6. Baumann, Imanuel.**

Completed his theological studies in the Reich /Tübingen/. Returned in 1929 to Bessarabia, Tarutino. Pastor in Klöstitz. After filling the vacancy of the Senior Pastor Daniel Haase, he was elected as Senior Pastor /1936/.

As Senior Pastor, responsible for the stormy church dispute in Bessarabia. Good friend to Dr. Otto Broneske. Supported by the Region Administration.

**Assessment:** Confessional church man.

**7. Broneske, Dr. Otto.**

Made his economic doctorate in the Reich. Studied a longer time in Tübingen. Member of the "Black Sea German Colonist Society" (*Schwarzmeerdeutschen Kolonistenvereins*). Returned to Bessarabia around 1928. Participated in the German-Bessarabian economic development. In this way, came into the then "Business Association" (*Wirtschaftsverband*). Took over its administration.

In 1933 he joined the then existing "Self-help Movement" of Fritz Fabritius and was made head of Bessarabia at the suggestion of Arthur Fink. /Region Administrator NSDR/. Currently Region Administrator of Bessarabia. His activity is mainly economical. Proves to be influenced by the clergy in the church-political dispute. In speech lays stress on anti-clerical. Necessity, to express his leadership personality. Founded his position of power on a circle of friends held together by common interests. Has been able to undermine and terrorize any healthy political movement. Basically gentle mannered, given his mood, thus

unclear in decisions, modifiable. In essence and method related to the sectarian Hour-Brotherhood (*Stundenbrüdern*). Inclined to compromise.

**8. Bross, [?]**

Lawyer. Studied at Romanian universities. /Opened his law firm in Tarutino. Married to Helene Fink, sister of Arthur Fink. When the Russians invaded from Bessarabia, they fled to Bucharest. Has found relations with the German embassy and is considered one of the liaison men of the embassy to the Bessarabian Refugee Work (*Fluechtlingswerk*).

Cunning lawyer. Business capable. Very good relations with Romanian officer circles. Rejected by ethnic-hired Germans.

**9. Busse, Fritz.**

Completed the German Boys' High School in Tarutino. Afterwards, a few years teacher in Bessarabia. Came to the Reich in 1936. Completed the Reich Sports Academy in Berlin. Until 1939 sports teacher in the Hitler Youth. Was released by the Reich Confederation for gymnastics (*Leibesübungen*) at the request of the state management for Bessarabia and was admitted as Region Sports Keeper (*Gausportwart*). 27 years old. Married.

Came to the Renewal Movement at a young age. National Socialist.

**10. Deutsche, Johann.**

Graduated from the German Boys' High School in Tarutino. Economic studies in the Reich. Returned to Bessarabia in 1935. Was incorporated into the "Business Association" /Management Broneske/.

Due to disagreements with Broneske, he was expelled from the Business Association in 1936. Since then, he has been in political opposition to Dr. Broneske. Head of the "Peasant Protection" (*Bauernschutzes*), joined due to material difficulties. At the moment, in the private-sector.

Economically very active, good economic expertise. Somewhat unsteady.

**11. Erdmann, Dr. Hugo.**

Chemist. Studied in Tübingen. Member of the former "Schwarzmeerdeutsche Verein," Tübingen. After his return to Bessarabia in 1929/ in the chemical-industrial field. His baking powder and soaps are well known.

In 1933, he led an intellectual movement called "People's Service," which was directed against the person of Senior Pastor Daniel Haase. After the installation of the People's Service in the community of Dr. Otto Broneske, he held the office for Press and Propaganda in the Bessarabia Region Administration.

**Assessment:** Civic progressive. Intellectual.

**12. Fink, Arthur.**

Lawyer. Graduated from the German Boys' High School in Tarutino. Studied in Czernowitz Jurisdiction. Belonged to the German Fraternity Teutonia. In 1933 he took over the youth movement founded by Ernst Krüger. This led to the "National Socialist Self-Help Movement of the Germans in Romania" /NSDR/ and became Region Youth Leader (*Gaujugendführer*) in Bessarabia. 1936 Bessarabia Region Administrator of the DVR / "German People's Party of Romania"/. 1939 Region Administrator Deputy of the appropriate community. Summer 1939 Country Manager for Press and Propaganda. July of 1940 in Litzmannstadt, Office of Returning Emigrants.

**Assessment:** Agile. World-view unclear. Intrigued. Did not completed the Office for Press and Propaganda. Got along well with the Romanian authorities.

**13. Flaig, Christian**

Attended the Protestant Middle School in Hermannstadt. In Bessarabia, temporarily active in the economic field. Most recently, the insurance companies "Viktoria," Berlin, and "Britania."

A member since the beginning of the Renewal Movement /NSDR. District youth leader and most recently district leader of the NAF in Arzis. Belongs to the intimate circle of Dr. Otto Broneske. In 1937, Fritz Fabritius and Karl Hasart of Bessarabia sent him to the Reich for training in the Protection Squadron. Was for a month in the paramilitary unit (*Standarts*) "Germany" in Munich. From there came to a V.D.A. training camp in Kalkhorst. Since then, he has been working for the AST through the mediation of German Consul Lörner in Galati, Romania. In 1939, by means of his insurance company, he connected to AST Vienna and was appointed from here with the management of the Rowa-Rom group for South Bessarabia.

**Assessment:** Agile. Ideologically aligned with Broneske. Showed efforts to maintain a sustainable relationship with both groups of the Renewal Movement. Despite his training in the paramilitary unit "Germany," is an AST-man. Is not prepared to participate in a Protection Squadron in Romania.

**14. Fiess, Christian.**

Teacher. Finished the Teacher Training College in Sarata. Teacher at an Evangelical elementary schools, Bessarabia. Was appointed Region Youth Administrator by Broneske during the internal conflicts.

**Assessment:** Ideologically aligned with Broneske. /32 years old, single./ Incapable and fearful of bringing in co-workers. Terrorizes the followers.

**15. Haase, Erhard.**

Son of the late Senior Pastor Daniel Haase. Graduated from the middle school in Tarutino. Attended the medical faculty in Tübingen, Berlin. Received the medical doctor in Berlin in 1937 /Doctoral thesis: Hygiene and population policy in Bessarabia/. Since 1938, practical doctor in Tarutino-Beresina. Mother: from the Baltic.

Belonged to the student organization known as the *Verein Deutscher Studenten*, Tübingen 1929. A member of the Renewal Movement. Broneske made him the District NAF Administrator in Tarutino. Broneske relieved him of his duties in February, 1940.

**Assessment:** Active. Represents the line of the Protection Squadron

**16. Hahn, Gottlieb, Dr.**

After a very long study, he did his philological doctorate in Tübingen. Returned to Bessarabia in 1928. Was a teacher at the Boys High School in Tarutino. Temporarily in the business association. Also in the Evangelical District Consistory, Tarutino. He held various positions in the Region Administration. Cultural Office, most recently Vocational Questions. Married for 40 years.

**Assessment:** Ideologically alike to the Broneske line, his most intimate friend! Unclear in will and purpose. Squadron. O.K.W. man.

**17. Hasart, Karl.**

Completed the Teacher Training College in Sarata. Teacher at Evangelical schools. Was active within the framework of Fritz Fabritius' Self-help Movement. Managing Director of the Region Youth Organization. Currently Region Organization Administrator of the NAF, Bessarabia. Around 32 years old. Married for 2 years..

**Assessment:** Ideologically the most intimate circle of Region Administrator Broneske. Has influenced Broneske most decisively. Intriguing. O.K.W. man. Organizer of Bessarabia "Self-Protection" called the O.D. /Order Service/ Organization of the ethnic group leader Bruckner.

**18. Heier, Samuel.**

Lawyer. Secular member of the Country Consistory. Over 40 years old. Married. 3 sons.

One of the co-owners of the "People's Service" /see Erdmann/.

**Assessment:** Ties to Broneske. Political intriguer. Clerical.

**19. Kalmbach, Christian.**

Middle school teacher. About 50 years old. Married. 2 children.

Former chairman of the People's Council Bessarabia of the Association of Germans in Romania.

1933 Co-founder of the "People's Service" /see Erdmann and Heier/. Chairman of the "Community of Germans" in Bessarabia /Arthur Fink/

**Assessment:** Reactionary down-to-earth. Clerical.

**20. Keck, Otto.**

Graduated from middle school in Tarutino. Farmer. With the beginning of the Renewal Movement, he turned to the political career. Region Managing Director of the DVR. After that the interior-ethnic freedom region man for neighborhoods. Around 38 years old. Married.

**Assessment:** Active nature. Unbalanced. Apolitical.

**21. Koch, Dr. Robert.**

Completed his medical studies in Klausenburg. Long time active military doctor. Was dismissed. Became a general practitioner doctor in Beresina. Joined the Romanian party of A.D. Cuza and Octavian Goga. Since 1934 leader of the German Cuzists in Bessarabia. Was in fierce opposition to Dr. Otto Broneske.

In the January 1938 parliamentary elections, Koch resigned from the Cuza Party and joined Broneske. Since 1939, general practitioner doctor in Postal and local manager of the NAF. Wife is Hungarian.

**Assessment:** Politically fluctuating. Drunkard. Failed in ethnic-political work.

**22. Kräenbring, Arthur.**

Graduated from the German Middle School in Tarutino. Was for a long time a teacher at the Evangelical folk school. Became an official in the district consistory /Consistory secretary/ and district manager of the NAF. Married.

**Assessment:** Ruthless. Clerical engaged. Materialist.

**23. Kräenbring, Johann.**

Teacher in evangelical schools. About 50 years old. Married. Retired.

Follower of the late Senior Pastor Daniel Haase. After his death, the leader of the reactionary-clerical group of "Hour Brotherhood" /prayer communities/ in Bessarabia. Opponent of the Renewal Movement.

**Assessment:** Farmer-clerical.

**24. Liebram, Karl.**

Middle school teacher at the German Evangelical Boys High School in Tarutino. Editor of the "German Newspaper Bessarabia" (*Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens*). / Liquidated in 1940/.

**Assessment:** Intellectual. Liberal.

**25. Mauch, Viktor.**

Lawyer. Graduated after a long study in Bucharest in Jassy. [double-typed so unclear] 40 years. Married to a Reich German. Has been a member of the Renewal Movement since



1934. Supporter of Dr. Otto Broneske. Managing Director of Region Administration Bessarabia.

Review: Ruthless, brutal. Drinks.

**26. Necker, Dr. Albert.**

Studied medicine in Dorpat and graduated in Tübingen. Was married to a Baltic woman. Died. Married to a woman from Bessarabia. From his first marriage a daughter. About 50 years old.

After returning from the Reich, a general practitioner doctor for a long time. Wittenberg, Benkendorf, finally in Tarutino. Co-founder of the "People's Service" /see Erdmann, Heier/. Since 1935, Region Party Boss for public health.

**Assessment:** Ready to act. Politically colorless. Good-natured, honest.

**27. Neumann, Rudolf.**

Graduate of the Boys High School Tarutino. State medical officer.

Since 1933, he has been active in the Renewal Movement of Fritz Fabritius. Region NAF leader. Then the District NAF leader. Now Local leader of the NAF, Tarutino.

**Assessment:** Ideologically belonging to the Broneske line. Brutal, ruthless.

**28. Wagner, Hans.**

Middle school teacher at the Teacher Training College in Sarata /Werner School/. About 45 years old. Married.

Established the Fritz Fabritius Economic Renewal Movement "Self-Help" in Sarata. Since the existence of the NSDR, Region Administrator and then Deputy. Region Administrator under Broneske.

**Assessment:** Ideologically belonging to the Broneske line.

28 August, 1940

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