

## Resettlement Experience by E. Kison

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Note: A letter by E. Kison to a friend telling of what it was like in Bessarabia in 1940 from the time the Romanian soldiers fled back into Romania, the Russians taking over Bessarabia, the exodus from his homeland to the Danube River harbor of Galatz, and the temporary location in the German Reich. Information within [square brackets] indicate translator's comment.

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[Translation Begins]

Copy  
Freising, 20 November, 1940

Most Honorable Mr. Reinsch!

Finally returned to the homeland of our ancestors, to the realm of our great *Führer* Adolf Hitler! I also want to write to you. I have already recovered from the long journey. I found my wife and child here in Freising. They are also no longer in Berchtesgaden from where my wife reported herself. So if my father-in-law Johannes Eichelberg from Friedensfeld should announce his whereabouts now, then we ask that you send him our address immediately or his address to us here in Freising at "Resettlement Camp II of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*—Freising" so that we can exchange correspondence with our parents.

You are more than likely interested in my trip and I will try to describe it to you in broad strokes. If I did the whole journey, I would have to write days and still would not be able to put all the experiences and impressions on paper. However, I decided that when we arrived at our place of settlement—to make a little trip and then maybe also to wander about Jena.

I have written less lately from Romania—but not because we did not think of you—oh no—we were always here in our thoughts and have taken a big part in all the great events of the world by means of the radio, and we toward the last could hardly wait for the hour to arrive for us to depart. We were already fed up with everything. At the end of June—when the Russians came, it became even clear to us that to stay was out of the question. Even the Romanian retreat over the river Pruth had a deterrent effect. Column after column of the Romanian Army withdrew from east to west, from the Dnjester River border to Romania, and many of them took the way through our village. The last to pass through were mean. All our men, who were still at home, had to skillfully haul with all their horses the stuff of the soldiers over the border which is only 20 km [12.5 mi] away from our home. And then what after that? God have mercy! For days we

went back and forth across the border “Pruth,” without food for the horses, or food for the haulers. Since the Russians were already close by and the Romanians no longer felt safe, they had to load up again and went beyond the Pruth River, that is, arrived on Romanian soil. Our men had to come down from the wagons—had to leave all the horses and wagons and harnesses, and to our horror—had to leave everything stand and they sent us back to Bessarabia on foot. After a day, the Russians arrived. At that point, we felt lucky then. But luck did not last long. Soon after, we had a feeling—we knew before through newspapers, etc. In the whole week that followed, for example, I myself, for a whole week with my wife and child, did not sleep at home—because I did not know who was going to stab me. Our wives and children spent two nights in the church.

Soon after, when we heard that we were already as much as under German Reich protection, it became easier for us. I felt safe at the time. My law firm cases made it obvious at the handover, that I was not going to stay with the Russians because I was called a *Kulak* (large farmer). But one of my employees, a foreign man, no longer seems to be alive.

For four months, I was without a job. On 2 October, my wife left for the Danube River port of “Reni.” From here she went up the Danube to Prahova in Yugoslavia, and from there by train to Graz [Austria]—then to Berchtesgaden and from there to Freising. On 7 October, we men set off with the trek. I myself had a loaded wagon with boxes in which I have packed our best, that is, only clothes. However, just before the departure, about 15 horse and wagons were selected and had to be unloaded. The Russians wanted to know why I did not have my own horses or wagon earlier and so it was just taken away from me and I had to load my stuff on to other good people's wagons—otherwise it would have stayed laying there. The journey (trek) took all night to the border station of “Reni.” On the evening of the next day came the Control Examination. All things—like more than 1 of such things as sheepskin coat, cover, etc.—were simply confiscated. As soon as we passed through the Control Examination and came from “Reni” across the Pruth River—finally on Romanian soil, it was in a gallop to the port city of Galatz. Arriving in Galatz, we unloaded our luggage, which was to come later, and is for a fact already here in the camp.

We also gave up our luggage. From the port, we drove to the Airfield-Resettlement Camp. Here we were given food supplies—mainly—oil and lard. Our horses and wagons were lined up in rows. They were handed over to the German Resettlement Commission, some of whom sold the horses to Romanians and Hungarians. We had now given up all our possessions. Of course, wagons and horses will be reimbursed to us later, once we are located on our settlement, which place that is we do not yet know.

In Galatz, we men stayed 8 days in the Resettlement Camp. From here we went to the small ship “Minewa” and sailed up the Danube River. A 4 days beautiful ride on the Danube. Right and left were beautiful wide plains and then also large mountains. Through the Iron Gate, we had to have an auxiliary steamer pull in front, otherwise we would not have gotten through. I also saw the mountain that the English wanted to blow up. Now they have lost all desire to do so.

In Semlin, near Belgrade, Yugoslavia, we got out and spent 4 days in the Resettlement Camp. From here we came to the “German Empire Road” (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*) and drove towards

Germany, the new homeland awaited for so long. In Graz, we got our first noon meal, which tasted excellent. From Graz, we drove to Altötting, a wooded area, where we spent 8 days in the monastery “Franziskus-Haus” where we passed the time with good food. Half of our men went to Burghausen. From here, of course, we went on again—we had to go to our family. On 8 November, we arrived here in Freising—where we met our wives and children. Our women were of course already restless because they did not know if we were all still alive and of course the joy of finding us again after about 36 days was great. —Here in Freising, we will probably stay until we are settled somewhere. It is not bad at all here. Efforts are being made to feed us well. But we are not used to sitting around without work and are of course already thinking about our final place of settlement, which unfortunately we do not yet know.

I myself am resting well, help our Camp Commander a little bit from time to time in his law firm work. Dear Mr. Reinsch! Here we are well taken care of, hope for the best—but—we ought to forget our Bessarabia—but—it will not happen so quickly. It is easy for us to move on, but it is never forgotten. We lived there for 125 years. It was nice to contend with the other ethnic people. If our simple farmer did not always know anything about contention, he often had to experience it. And yet he loved his sod. Yes, he was firmly connected to it. If, in the past, someone had told him that sometime he would leave all his belongings, his beloved land, his house, he would have given up living much earlier. Today, when he is no longer so materialistic and has heard the reputation of our great *Führer*, it has already been easier for him. And—I do not want to praise my own home village, but I am sure that when we will be at our settlement area, we will move on. We are not familiar with being idle.

As far as I am concerned, I will wait until the time of settlement, but then I have to decide either to remain a civil servant or to accept a landed estate because I also had land in Bessarabia. But I do not know which is going to be better.

Either way is okay—it is work—and then the bread will not be missing. Do you think there are officials here in Germany who have a job in addition to their land? I mean like secretaries or village related positions or elementary school teachers?

Are you still at your job? What is your family doing? I heard that your eldest son took part in the Polish campaign and was also present in the West with the French. It has been, and will continue to be, our victory so far. The first and last enemy, the damned Englishman, will and must surrender one day. He feels it every day: Coventry-London and many other cities are bleeding and are partly razed! Victory-Hail to our great *Führer*!

I must finally stop otherwise it might get boring. I will write again later. Greetings also from my wife.

Hail Hitler!  
{signed} E. Kison

Resettlement Camp II of the Ethnic German Department—Freising

[Translation Ends]