

The German Ethnic Group in Romania's Propaganda Practices As Perceived by the Romanian Authorities

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Introduction

OVER THE years, scholars have provided various definitions to the concept of propaganda, but they have not been able to agree on a set of common elements.¹ In an elusive attempt to define it for the purposes of this article from a historical perspective, propaganda means “to disseminate or promote particular ideas,” and the most frequently used synonyms for propaganda are “lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, mind control, psychological warfare, brainwashing, and palaver.”² This term is “associated with control and is regarded as a deliberate attempt to alter or maintain a balance of power that is advantageous to the propagandist,” having a precise institutional ideology and a clear goal “to convey an ideology to an audience with a related objective.”³ Or, in Nicholas Jackson O’Shaughnessy’s words, effective propaganda is the manipulation and synthesis of myth, symbolism, and rhetoric; its content is primarily emotional rather than rational.⁴

Joseph Goebbels, minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, made sure to exploit every cultural, artistic, educational, and institutional tool at his disposal in order to politically mobilize the masses. In this respect, a key concept is that of *Gleichschaltung* (alignment, consolidation), a process of “coordinating the political will of the nation with the aims of the state.”⁵ According to Goebbels, “to be perceived, propaganda must evoke the interest of an audience and must be transmitted through an attention-getting communications medium.”⁶ The most efficient ways to reach the audience were over the radio, newspapers, motion pictures, and newsreels, as pictures are more convincing than words.⁷ In Goebbels’s view, all media types must be employed at the same time, constantly labeling “events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans” that “evoke desired responses which the audience previously possessed.”⁸ The propaganda’s tentacles were wrapped around education and culture, values and traditions, and the public discourse, and it expanded outside Germany, as we shall point out in this article.

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This paper aims to identify and analyze the propaganda practices of the German Ethnic Group in Romania (GEG) from the end of the 1930s up to 1944, while also assessing the way the Romanian Special Intelligence Service (SSI)⁹ and the *Siguranța*¹⁰ perceived them and their impact. In this contribution, mostly drawing on the records identified in the National Archives of Romania and the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, we will focus on two main aspects: a) identifying the most frequent propaganda practices used by the German Ethnic Group in Romania, and b) attempting to create a framework for understanding the Romanian authorities' institutional mechanisms, reactions, and perceptions with regards to this organization. To provide an adequate methodological approach to the Romanian archives on the Nazi movement among the Romanian Germans, it is necessary to trace how the Romanian authorities dealt with the GEG and how their policies towards it changed from one period to another.

The issue of the ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*)—referring to the concept used by the Reich in the late 1930s and early 1940s to define German-speaking groups living outside the Reich and the policies of Nazi Germany concerning these populations during the Second World War, the recruitments to the Waffen-SS and their causes¹¹—has generated a rich historiography. Among the many contributions on these topics, we mention those authored by Jochen Böhrer and Robert Gerwarth,¹² Heinz Höhne,¹³ Wolfgang Miede,¹⁴ Johann Böhm,¹⁵ Paul Milata,¹⁶ Florian Kühner-Wielach,¹⁷ Vasile Ciobanu,¹⁸ Ottmar Trașcă,¹⁹ and Corneliu Pintilescu.²⁰

In terms of structure, this article is comprised of three sections. In the first section, we will focus on the key concepts and propaganda practices that we will refer to along with the current literature on the German Ethnic Group in Romania (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien, GEG). In the second section, we will analyze the Romanian official perception of the GEG—a legal political entity formed in 1940 under Andreas Schmidt's leadership—but also its policies of *Gleichschaltung*, which aimed to seize control over the political, economic, social and cultural life of the German minority in Romania. Finally, in the third part, we will draw some conclusions about the main consequences of these propaganda practices as well as of the GEG's activity in Romania.

This article will strictly refer to the case of the Romanian Germans (*Rumänien-deutsche*), a group made up of various German-speaking communities who arrived in different periods in territories that in 1940 pertained to Romania. Having been previously colonized by the Hungarian kings, the Habsburg monarchy, and the Russian tsars in different historical contexts, enjoying different status along history, speaking different dialects, and belonging to different denominations, the Romanian Germans entailed different groups, which due to their specificities had a different perception of Nazi propaganda.²¹ The German minority in Romania had its own political and institutional representation, a local dynamic press (such as *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt*, *Bukarester Tageblatt* and *Banater Deutsche Zeitung*),²² and schools with a long tradition.

The GEG was an organization created in November 1940 under Andreas Schmidt's leadership. Its purpose was to manage the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the Romanian Germans. It was comprised of several departments called offices, such as: the Administrative Office (Stabsamt), the Financial Office (Schatzamt), the Legal Office (Rechtsamt), the Office for Statistics and Population (Amt für Statistik und Bevölke-

runge), the Office for the National Economy (Amt für Volkswirtschaft), the Office for Education (Schulamt)²³ and the Office for Propaganda and Press (Amt für Presse und Propaganda). The latter coordinated not only the press, but also film and theater, supervising the entire process of political and ideological education. To illustrate the magnitude of its activity, in 1942 and 1943 it ran no less than four propaganda campaigns: *Für die Deutsche Schule* (For the German school), *Volksbeitrag* (The contribution of the people), *Alles für die Front* (Everything for the front) and *Waffen-SS ruft Dich* (Waffen-SS is calling you), and five film campaigns.²⁴

The fragility of interwar Romanian politics and the economic disparities plaguing various cities gave rise to local German political parties and movements inspired by the NSDAP (the Nazi Party), but also to youth and women's organizations. The situation also favored the emergence of vocal figures such as Fritz Fabritius, Waldemar Gust, Wolfram Bruckner, and Andreas Schmidt. A complex topic that deserves a separate discussion is the tense relationship the German minority and its various political and economic institutions had with the Romanian government during the 1930s,²⁵ as well as the changes that occurred after 1940 in reference to their discussions with Ion Antonescu.²⁶ We mention this because the radicalization of Romania's ethnic Germans and their increasingly close ties with the Reich's policy and ideology had a major impact on its status within the Romanian state, as well as on the Romanian authorities' perception, actions, and reactions in relation to them.

The Romanian Authorities' Records. Case Study: The Perspective of the *Siguranța* and the Romanian Intelligence Service (ssi)

THE COMPETITION between Romanian German factions in the mid-1930s over the Reich's validation and support highlights not only their growth but also the minority's closeness to the Reich. Germany's defiance of the League of Nations and its aggressive attitude, including several international actions (the Saar episode in 1935, the annexation of the Rhineland in 1936, and the *Anschluss* in 1938),²⁷ increased its popularity amongst its sympathizers. Regarding the Romanian political spectrum of 1938, it is worth noting the authoritarian measures of King Carol II and the ascension of right-wing extremist groups (the Iron Guard), which created an auspicious environment for a more aggressive and dynamic activity of the Nazi movement among Romanian Germans in its new phase: its reorganization by Fritz Fabritius, based on National Socialist principles,²⁸ and a restructuring in 1940 under the new leadership of Andreas Schmidt, who closely followed the Reich's instructions.²⁹

Aside from the Romanian institutions that directly interacted with the German minority's organizations, there were other institutions that kept a close eye on them. The ssi, the *Siguranța*, and the Military Intelligence produced many documents about the German minority during the 1930s and 1940s, but due to the limited space of this study

we will focus mainly on the *Siguranța* and on the ssi's activity on the Nazi organizations of the Romanian Germans. In the 1930s, the ssi was a veritable institutional labyrinth, with numerous departments and offices, with both internal and foreign attributions.³⁰ In 1940, the ssi's structure and organization changed when Ion Antonescu came to power, but its main activity stayed the same. Simultaneously, the German military intelligence service (Abwehr) created, with the help of the ssi, a local unit named Abwehrstelle Rumänien, which operated until 1944.³¹

The ssi had been monitoring the activity of vocal members of Romania's German community (for instance, in the 1930s there were numerous reports monitoring Fritz Fabritius' activity, public statements, and meetings³²), their interactions with other Germans or with Romanians,³³ their visits to Germany, local political conflicts, etc. More importantly, the ssi paid close attention to their institutional, political, cultural, and educational organization.³⁴ For example, a detailed report issued in the mid-1930s described the organizational structure of the Nazi movement among the Romanian Germans and analyzed their propaganda practices.³⁵

In terms of the Romanian authorities' perception, the abovementioned report highlights the fact that these German organizations were very focused on mobilizing the local German population for voluntary work.³⁶ The *Siguranța* reports frequently noted how the Germans in Romania were adopting the Reich's work leitmotif and the process of replicating the Nazis' organizational structures, as the workers were targeted as a future asset for the Reich's expansion.³⁷

Towards the end of the 1930s, the reports expanded to include not only descriptions of the GEG's activities, but also brochures, press article excerpts and concerns about its increasing cultural and public propaganda activity. A report drawn up by the ssi illustrated the concern surrounding propaganda actions: "We are on the threshold of intense political activity that the Germans of the Reich will carry out in Romania" and soon" the German community will become an annex of the NSDAP."³⁸

The same report also reveals the ssi's institutional focus at that point on the leaders of the German minority, their connections and interactions with the Reich, along with constant observation of Germany's foreign policy and propaganda:

*Romania had to keep an eye on two dangers: one external, coming from Berlin [interference from Nazi Germany, my addition], another internal, the German minority's increasingly radicalizing political leadership. . . . Both the German minority's press and the Reich's press have made great efforts to guide Romanian public opinion closer to Germany.*³⁹

This brief excerpt demonstrates the ssi's awareness of the German minority's increasing susceptibility and eagerness to follow the Reich and Hitler, and their temptation to join the SS and to engage in propaganda actions. In fact, the Romanian diplomatic staff and the secret services were already aware of the effects of German propaganda in other states with a German minority, or where Germany had growing diplomatic and economic ties. Additionally, at the end of the 1930s, Romanian decision makers began to develop a conciliatory attitude towards Germany's actions and towards the German Ethnic Group.

Nazi Germany's international actions were intensely promoted via every available channel. In 1940, local police inspectorates in Romanian areas with a high concentration of German inhabitants witnessed an impressive amount of such propaganda. For instance, the Police Inspectorate of Alba Iulia reported the distribution of a German bulletin news edited by Deutsche Korrespondenz Berlin-Grünwald and smuggled into the country, "probably through diplomatic couriers."⁴⁰ In March 1940, the Police Inspectorate of Cernăuți confiscated 200 copies of a German bulletin (*The Death Camp of German Compatriots in Poland*) and an entire supply of booklets (*Folk and State Studies: For the Peasant Professional Competition*).⁴¹ In the same month, the Police Inspectorate of Suceava reported that 300 copies of anti-English propaganda had arrived at the German consulate in Cernăuți (today Chernivtsi)⁴² and anti-English and anti-French propaganda in the Romanian language had been confiscated after being delivered to the Roșiorii de Vede city hall.⁴³

Although the Romanian authorities were aware of the organizational structure of the GEG and were trying to confiscate or ban materials that were not aligned with the Romanian legislation, the Office for Propaganda and Press (Amt für Presse und Propaganda) issued detailed instructions for each city and village they had targeted to act faster and more efficiently. For example, there were clear instructions to spread eye-catching posters in as many cities and localities as possible and to use as many storefronts and bulletin boards as possible, but to make sure to get the local authorities' permission when organizing public meetings or events of a larger scale. Usually, these types of work instructions were brief and specific, issued for each city or region describing the means of propaganda (slides or showcases, promotional materials, bulletin boards, rallies), how many copies and where to place them to maximize visibility. For example:

Four bulletin boards can be placed monthly in the Brașov area, two in the Banat region (these will be paid) and they must prove their use for the purposes established by the Office of Press and Propaganda. It is desirable, especially in Brașov and in larger localities, to be considered as those in Banat, in about 150 localities

and "in those places where there are no boards, the photos should be placed in the sellers' windows. You will receive colorful posters in the following period."⁴⁴

A significant portion of these forms of propaganda targeted the local German minority, but there were also leaflets, posters, brochures, and calendars in the Romanian language for the Romanian population. Propaganda materials even used customized slogans depending on the targeted group.⁴⁵ Cheerful, dynamic messaging and colorful pictures were compulsory even for the public events. For instance, the instructions of the Office for Propaganda and Press for the events of 30 January 1942 were detailed and meticulously planned: the main decoration was to be the swastika and the country's flag; all the decorations and flags had to be placed one by one, in rows, and in connection with a group of flags as the same instruction report explained, "to dominate the space"⁴⁶ to create the impression of a grandiose event, in a gothic atmosphere generated by the usage of "a large silver victorious rune."⁴⁷

The same cited document precisely indicates that “a picture of the Führer—as the one who, through his brilliant spirit, allowed this victory—surrounded by fir garlands, occupies a place of honor.”⁴⁸ Last but not least, another essential part of the décor were the torches, which, according to these written instructions, were “a symbol of the light that illuminates the future,” consequently all the participants must carry torches. Also, all the participants had to be precisely aligned in two rows to give the impression of a well-organized and disciplined space.⁴⁹

This was just one brief example among dozens of similar ones issued by the Press and Propaganda Office. Just by observing how this was issued and how closely the office was monitoring all these events, it is no wonder that the *Siguranța* and the SSI paid special attention to it. In fact, their monthly reports almost always included an entire separate chapter dedicated to the GEG Office for Propaganda and Press and its activities, especially in relation to the local press. For instance, in 1939, the Romanian authorities observed that the Nazi movement had not managed to replace the chief editors of the main German language newspapers in Romania, some of them opposing the *Gleichschaltung*:

*as for the press, it is noteworthy that many of the very influential local newspapers still have the old leadership that is difficult to fit into the National Socialist political mentality. Instead, their shared vision is to give up any controversy or internecine fight.*⁵⁰

Another similar report describes German propaganda in Romania as dynamic and efficient owing to its forms and characteristics, as illustrated in a *Siguranța* report entitled “[Nazi] Propaganda and its Methods under Fabritius’s Leadership.” In the eyes of this Romanian institution, the local German propaganda “operates with bombastic phrases and the impressive theatrics of the National Socialist demonstrations,” and all local German community institutions were used as instruments to disseminate it: “the church, the theater, the old costumes and customs, conferences, gatherings, sports fields, work teams, etc., everything is put at the service of the National Socialist propaganda.”⁵¹

The same report lists not only the ways and techniques of propaganda, but also the messages and the psychological tools it used. This report identifies the press as the most effective means of propaganda, but also underlines the extreme importance of events, conferences, rallies, and celebrations with the purpose of “awakening moral values such as: self-confidence, national pride, the fight against alcohol and nicotine, saving the land, reserving certain professions and living places for Germans.”⁵² This example demonstrates what Johann Böhm observed about the purposes of GEG propaganda: all the festivals, concerts, rallies, and meetings were meant to become traditions, and the main aim was to reshape an old lifestyle into a new one, based on other values and ideas fueled by National Socialism.⁵³

There is overwhelming evidence for the ways propaganda exploited human psychology, values, and morals in order to make Nazi ideology attractive to various social groups, but also to the Germans living outside the Reich. The emotional appeal was key to transforming the German people into ardent believers and supporters of the Nazi cause, in Erich Fromm’s words.⁵⁴ This is a complex topic and there is no shortage of

literature about it, so we will not focus on these aspects here, but for the sake of understanding the layers of the cited report we chose to highlight the Romanian authorities' perception of the psychological and emotional instruments of propaganda.

Similarly, traditional and cultural German values and myths were also used as an instrument to link the past and present because “propaganda is best understood if placed in its historical context and in consideration of its psychological background.”⁵⁵ The impact of the “bombastic phrases and the impressive theatrics of National Socialist demonstrations” on the Romanian Germans noted by the Romanian secret services illustrate the power of the rhetoric and propaganda strategies used by the local Nazi organizations.⁵⁶

Since the GEG's actions grew hostile towards the Romanian authorities, in 1941 and 1942, inside the Ministry of Interior there were constant signals that the GEG was defying the Romanian local authorities and the Romanian laws, and that punitive actions should be taken against it. As a consequence, with Ion Antonescu's approval, Romanian authorities were required to monitor the organization's activity and act accordingly in case of further law-breaking or altercations with the local authorities.⁵⁷ The reports issued over the following months and years indicated that these measures were futile, as Andreas Schmidt was unwilling to cooperate. As a matter of fact, Schmidt's style of leadership and understanding of National Socialism were aggressive and delusional. Johann Böhm even goes as far as describing Schmidt's political vision as a form of illusion merged with reality, and his spirit of equilibrium lost in lies.⁵⁸ This situation negatively affected the German minority in Romania, which was merely instrumentalized by the GEG in order to provide human and economic resources to the Reich.

Conclusions

THE ACTIVITY of the GEG and its connections with the Reich were constantly under the watchful eyes of the *Siguranța*, the SS and the Romanian Military Intelligence. During the late 1930s and more intensely during early 1940s, these Romanian intelligence agencies monitored not only the political activity of the GEG, but also the German minority in Romania in general, and how the latter reacted to the Nazi propaganda messages and techniques. Thousands of notes and reports issued by these institutions provided to the Romanian government detailed descriptions and analyses of the Nazi propaganda practices of the GEG and their impact on the German minority in Romania. Andreas Schmidt's appointment as leader of the GEG accelerated the coordination of the GEG's political, economic, and propaganda apparatus with the Nazi ideology and institutional model (the so-called *Gleichschaltung*), while pushing the German minority into a tense relation with the Romanian authorities. Schmidt—a fanatic follower of Nazi ideology and a servile instrument of the SS leadership (with which he had personal connections through his marriage to Christa Berger, the daughter of SS-*Obergruppenführer* Gottlob Berger, the head of the SS-*Hauptamt*)—played a key role in this direction.

The propaganda practices used by various organizations of the GEG after 1940 employed many channels to spread the noxious messages of National Socialism and to secure the Romanian Germans' devotion to the Nazi cause. The GEG's propaganda functioned to a certain degree similarly to the one in Germany in terms of its attempt to bridge the gap between the leaders and the people.⁵⁹ Manifests, booklets, posters, books, poems, films, photos, events, speeches, conferences, parades, songs, slogans, uniforms, symbols, symbolic/totemic items—all these served as channels through which to transmit the Nazi ideology. As a last note, from the very beginning, the police and the secret services noticed the increasing popularity of National Socialist ideas among the Germans in Romania, as well as the gradual emergence of propaganda practices in the 1930s, peaking in November 1940, when the GEG was officially established. Thousands of reports issued during these years indicate a close monitoring of the Romanian Germans. However, due to the fact the Nazi organizations in Romania were protected by the Reich, the Nazi propaganda actions among the Romanian Germans were not prevented during the late 1930s, as the Romanian authorities would have liked to do, even though many propaganda items were confiscated. By analyzing these propaganda materials, the information collected by the intelligence services, corroborating the GEG's representatives' public statements, the Romanian authorities were constantly trying to anticipate Nazi Germany's next steps. During the early 1940s, drawing on the reports drafted by the secret services about the GEG, the Romanian authorities were increasingly worried about the tendency of the GEG to become a state within the state and about the defiant attitude of its leaders towards the central authorities in Bucharest. Romania's switching of sides in the war in August 1944 led to the dissolution of the GEG, the arrest of many of its leaders, while the Romanian Germans were left to deal with the long-term postwar consequences of the Soviet and postwar Romanian regime's perception of them and their involvement in the war.⁶⁰



Notes

1. Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, translated from the French by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, with an introduction by Konrad Kellen (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, rev. edition (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2001); Anthony R. Pratkanis and Marlene E. Turner, "Persuasion and Democracy: Strategies for Increasing Deliberative Participation and Enacting Social Change," *Journal of Social Issues* 52, 1 (1996): 187–205; Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). See how public opinion is defined in Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, with a New Introduction by Michael Curtis (New Brunswick–London: Transaction Publishers, 1998).
2. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 6th edition (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015), 2–4; see also Ellul; Pratkanis and Aronson. Fellows argues that propaganda during the 1940s had a higher degree of sobriety, it was less

- moralistic, and it included more information; see Erwin W. Fellows, “‘Propaganda’: History of a Word,” *American Speech* 34, 3 (1959): 182–189.
3. Jowett and O’Donnell, 2–4. See also Ellul; Pratkanis and Aronson, and Fellows.
 4. Nicholas Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 115, 216–217.
 5. Richard Taylor, “Goebbels and the Function of Propaganda,” in *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*, edited by David Welch (London–New York: Routledge, 2015), 36–37.
 6. Leonard W. Doob, “Goebbels’ Principles of Propaganda,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 14, 3 (1950): 419–442.
 7. Doob.
 8. Doob.
 9. *Serviciul Special de Informații* (Romanian Special Intelligence Service), or in short SSI, was the main intelligence agency in Romania under Ion Antonescu’s regime.
 10. *Direcția Poliției de Siguranța* (The Directorate of the Security Police) was the secret police in interwar and Second World War Romania.
 11. Paul Milata, *Intre Hitler, Stalin și Antonescu: Germanii din România în Waffen-SS* (Bonn–Hermannstadt: Schiller Verlag, 2018).
 12. Jochen Böhrer and Robert Gerwarth, eds., *The Waffen-SS: A European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
 13. See Heinz Höhne, *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf: Die Geschichte der SS* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1984).
 14. Wolfgang Miede, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933–38: Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Völkstumspolitik* (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1972).
 15. Johann Böhm, *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und die Weimarer Republik 1919–1933*, with a literature research by Wolfgang Knopp (Ippesheim: AGK-Verlag, 1993), and *Die Gleichschaltung der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien und das ‘Dritte Reich’ 1941–1944* (Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2003).
 16. Milata, 217–239, 301–303.
 17. Florian Kühner-Wielach, “The Romanian Germans and the Securitate Heritage: An Outline of the Problem and Research Potential,” *Euzeinos* 19/20 (2015): 57–67.
 18. Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuții la cunoașterea istoriei sașilor transilvăneni 1918–1944* (Sibiu: hora, 2001).
 19. See Ottmar Trașcă, “Andreas Schmidt and the German Ethnic Group in Romania (1940–1944),” *Euzeinos* 19/20 (2015): 16–19; id., “Grupul Etnic German din România în ‘era’ Andreas Schmidt. Septembrie 1940–august 1944,” in *Un veac frământat: Germanii din România după 1918*, edited by Ottmar Trașcă and Remus Gabriel Anghel (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, 2018).
 20. Corneliu Pintilescu, “The Nazification of the Rural Transylvanian Saxon Press: Case Study—‘Landwirtschaftliche Blätter’ (1935–1941),” in *Politics and Peasants in Interwar Romania: Perceptions, Mentalities, Propaganda*, edited by Sorin Radu and Oliver Jens Schmitt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 483–512.
 21. Milata, 13–16.
 22. For further details on the press, see Mihai A. Panu, ed., *Capcanele ideologiei: Opțiuni politice ale etnicilor germani în România interbelică* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2015).

23. A brief description of these offices' activity and structure is to be found in Mihai A. Panu, *Filiere și mecanisme de propagandă nazistă în Banat 1933–1945* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2014), 109–116.
24. Panu, *Filiere și mecanisme*, 11–115. See also Harald Roth, "Die 'Deutsche Jugend' (DJ) in Siebenbürgen 1939–1944," *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 10 (1987): 60–69.
25. Florian Kühner-Wielach, "Drumul spre 'alinierarea' la național-socialism: Pentru o istorie politică a germanilor din România între 1933 și 1940," in *Un reac fământat*, 77–112.
26. For this complex and separate topic see Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940–1944* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire–New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
27. See more on the European international interwar context in Zara Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
28. Ciobanu, 213–215.
29. Trașcă, "Andreas Schmidt and the German Ethnic Group," 16.
30. Alin Spânu, *Istoria serviciilor de informații/contrainformații românești în perioada 1919–1945* (Iași: Demiurg, 2010).
31. For a deeper understanding of the subject, see Ottmar Trașcă, *Relațiile politice și militare româno-germane: Septembrie 1940–august 1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2013).
32. The Archive of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Bucharest (hereafter cited as ACNSAS), Documentary coll., file 8630, "Report on the Organization and Activity According to the Political and National Socialist Spirit of the German Community (Völksgemeinschaft der Deutschen in Rumanien) Under the Leadership of Mr. Fritz Fabritius."
33. In fact, at the end of 1930s the secret services and the border police were monitoring even the Germans that came to Romania from the Reich for business purposes and who had no connection with the German minority in Romania. After 1940 the reports even included closer surveillance of the German military staff that came to Romania, in ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 8430.
34. It is worth mentioning here that during the interwar years, the Germans consolidated and expanded the community via educational institutions rather than via the church. Katherine Verdery, "The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity: Transylvania's Germans," *American Ethnologist* 12, 1 (1985): 62–83.
35. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3150.
36. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3150, fol. 9.
37. Stephen Salter, "Structures of Consensus and Coercion: Workers' Morale and the Maintenance of Work-Discipline, 1939–1945," in *Nazi Propaganda*, 88–116.
38. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3150, fols. 92–93.
39. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3150, fols. 124, 132.
40. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3375, fol. 28.
41. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3375, fol. 48.
42. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3375, fol. 70.
43. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3375, fols. 103–104.
44. Central National Historical Archives of Romania (hereafter cited as ANIC), German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 8–9.

45. ANIC, German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 8–9.
46. ANIC, German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 14–15.
47. ANIC, German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 14–15.
48. ANIC, German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 14–15.
49. ANIC, German Ethnic Group coll., file 25/1942, fols. 14–15.
50. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 8630, fol. 540.
51. “The fact that this movement has gained momentum today is due, in addition to the actual support given by Selbsthilfe to its members, primarily to the talented propaganda of Fabritius. This propaganda operates with bombastic phrases and the impressive theatrics of the National Socialist demonstrations. The church, the stage, the old costumes and customs, conferences, gatherings, sports fields, work teams, etc., etc., etc., all there are put at the service of the National Socialist propaganda. The most effective means of propaganda are the press, the so-called ‘Sprechabende’ conferences, rallies, and celebrations. . . . The conference program is designed to awaken some moral values such as: self-confidence, national pride, the fight against alcohol and nicotine, saving the land, preserving various professions, and living places for Germans; also gifts to support schools and churches.” ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3149, fol. 9.
52. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 3149, fol. 9.
53. Johann Böhm, *Nationalsozialistische Indoktrination der Deutschen in Rumänien 1932–1944* (Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2008), 113.
54. Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, 2nd edition (London–New York: Routledge, 2001), 182.
55. Diane Kohl, “The Presentation of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in Nazi Propaganda,” *Psychology & Society* 4, 1 (2011): 7.
56. See the chapter “The Magic Force of the Spoken Word: The National Socialist Approach to Rhetoric,” in *Landmark Speeches of National Socialism*, edited with translation by Randall L. Bytwerk (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 1–13. As Bytwerk argues, “Nazi rhetoric also proclaimed a worldview of religious reach . . . The Nazis drew upon existing German values, incorporating as their own great figures of German history such as Bismarck and Frederick the Great. They claimed to support a ‘positive Christianity’ that transcended differences between Protestants and Catholics. Germans did not support Hitler because they expected him to lead them into ruinous war, but rather because he and his party drew upon deeply rooted values and beliefs . . . The trajectory of Nazism is also clear. In 1925, Hitler’s movement was insignificant, but he prophesied Nazism’s triumph. Up through 1942, Nazi rhetoric was triumphant, able to claim success after success” (10–11).
57. Trașcă, “Grupul Etnic German din România,” 131–132.
58. Böhm, *Nationalsozialistische Indoktrination*, 113.
59. For a detailed analysis for the German case see Taylor, 36–39.
60. See for example the process to confiscate the GEG’s properties by the communist authorities: ANIC, CASBI coll., file 165. Also, Hannelore Baier, “Deportare, deposedare, discriminare 1944–1948,” in *Un reac frământat*, 149–172.

Abstract

The German Ethnic Group in Romania's Propaganda Practices As Perceived by the Romanian Authorities

The aim of this study is to analyze how the Romanian authorities perceived the increasing influence of the Nazi movement within the German minority during late 1930s and early 1940s, its successful propaganda, and its subordination to Nazi Germany. The Romanian secret services were particularly concerned about the increasing number of German Ethnic Group (GEG) propaganda actions. After the autumn of 1940, when the Nazi-controlled GEG became the political organization in charge with managing all key areas of the everyday life of the Romanian Germans, the Romanian authorities tried to document in detail and analyze the GEG propaganda practices and the reactions of different social groups of the German minority to it.

Keywords

Nazi propaganda, German minority in Romania, Romanian secret services, German Ethnic Group in Romania