

In Search of the Lost Archives

An Incursion into the Archives of the German Ethnic Group in Postwar Romania

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WHEN A historian sets out to study the history of an institution or an organization, ideally, they have a neatly organized archive on their subject at their disposal. Consulting such a treasure trove of chronicles is the most common way to retrace, reconstruct, and analyze the past of that subject, be it an organization or an institution. But when revolutionary changes force institutional metamorphosis, the idyllic dream ceases, and the precious archives get lost in the mists of transition from one regime to another. As such, our historian is compelled to recreate the past from disparate remnants, scattered and compromised by the tumultuous nature of post-revolutionary change.

This kind of postwar account is exactly what this article is about. It is a tale relevant not only in the context of Romania, but of all of Eastern Europe in the days following World War II. Thus, the topic of this study is the fate of the archives of the former German Ethnic Group (GEG) in Romania, an organization that allegedly represented the interests of the country's German minority, but in fact acted as an extension of the Reich in Romania.¹

This article aims to fill in some blanks regarding these archives' postwar journey. Such reconstruction and analysis, even if fragmented and incomplete, could pave the way for understanding the current archival landscape in Romania as it relates to the GEG. It will not only explain where the GEG archives ended up, but also how the political changes that had started in August 1944 led to these records' destruction, seizure, distribution, and later reconstruction in relation to the legislation and the operative needs of different institutions in communist Romania. In other words, I will attempt to trace the archives created by the GEG up until 23 August 1944, and determine which of these documents were taken over by the Romanian state and how or what they were used for, and where they were kept.

I would like to start with several methodological and technical remarks. First of all, although the Nazi-controlled organization that operated in Romania had an essentially centralized structure, the regional archives of its entities enjoyed relative autonomy. The

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GEG archive differs from the archives of the German minority and the institutions of the German community in Romania (which preserved most of its archives quite well). It is not a unitary archive because its creators never classified it as such. The documents comprising it were created and managed in several places: the organization's central headquarters in Braşov; the regional headquarters of the three regions—Banat, the so-called Mountain Region (covering some key industrial areas), and Transylvania (with centers in Timișoara, Deva, Sibiu); the *Kreis* (counties); *Orts* (the equivalent of districts) and localities (townships and rural communities).² Each one of these was structured into sections: labor, women, farmers or workers, finances, propaganda and press, school, health, legal, statistics, etc. This does not mean that these archives were completely free of the organization's matrix in the pattern of their structure, but that their archival classification had a certain degree of freedom and diversity derived from the context of their war-torn time.³

Secondly, it is worth noting that we focus our attention only on organizational documents instrumentalized by the Romanian state and its institutions after 23 August 1944. The fate of other institutional archives of the German communities (be they church-related, financial, administrative, etc.) is not included in this analysis.

Thirdly, the sources we have consulted come from two archival horizons: the first is the former Securitate archives, which had the most significant contribution to our research, since most of the GEG's archives found their way there for operational reasons;⁴ the second is the Romanian National Archives, both central and local, which took other fragments of the GEG's institutional archives and related structures.

Our journey into these two archival universes is guided by different rules of archival selection, classification and operationalization. If in the case of the National Archives and its territorial units, the criteria for sorting, indexing, and archiving are relatively transparent and stick to the legislation of their era, in the case of the Securitate things are more complicated. For example, the institution inherited some archives (from the army, the Romanian Secret Service, the police, gendarmerie, etc.), but it also collected, created or generated documents that enriched the archives. That is, it reorganized and restructured the archive; it collated the archive's original files with files from other archives; it created new files; it reduced or took out the old files; or any combination of the above, all to better serve the operative interests for which these were processed.⁵ This makes it all the more difficult to determine what happened to archives that “went live,” depending on the specific temporary objectives of a secretive agency concerned with managing threats (as opposed to managing archives). In the following pages I will try to address the problem at hand in three distinct parts. In the first, I will attempt to discuss the initial state of the GEG archives when they were first taken over, starting from the fall of 1944 and up to the beginning of 1946. Then, I will outline the problem of structuring these documents in different archival domains after they have been selected. Last but not least, we will try to describe the process of enriching these archival sources by the institutions which had them in custody—the trajectory of these archives. In doing so, I will also identify the documents that survived the selection and are now available for historians to study the GEG in particular, and the Nazi movement in Romania in general.

THE TURNING point of 23 August 1944 influenced the German minority as well, as it had been integrated into the German Ethnic Group and was the subject of some political and legal actions which affected the formerly Nazi organization. After Romania turned against Germany and joined the Allies, and the Soviets moved rapidly across Romanian territory, the legislation changed drastically for the worst for the country's German minority. The Romanian police started detaining people that had been identified as key members of the GEG. The process accelerated under pressure from the Allied Control Commission, with the authorities issuing Minister of the Interior Ordinances no. 4036 and no. 4061 on 11 November 1944, regarding the detention, selection and internment in camps of citizens suspected of collaboration with Hitler's regime, or by Law no. 18 regarding the dissolution of fascist Hitlerite organizations. Extraordinary legal frameworks were established in relation to the members of the German community. Furthermore, at the express order of the commission, many ethnic Germans from Romania were deported to the USSR to take part in the so-called "reconstruction work" starting from January 1945, as part of the postwar reparations. Those that remained were deprived, either by law or by administrative decision, of their political rights,⁹ and suffered impoverishment⁷ and social marginalization,⁸ even if they did retain some of their cultural and educational rights.

In the spring and summer of 1944, in the complicated political context before and during the coup d'état against Antonescu, the leaders of the GEG decided to prepare not only for victory, but also for the eventuality of an evacuation. The pressure of the Soviet army's advance from the east along with the rising tension within Romania meant that the working scenarios of Andreas Schmidt and his associates oscillated between maximalist power grabs like the Germans tried to do in Hungary in March 1945, and a desperate attempt to cut their losses and shelter the postwar destinies of the German communities in Romania. The latter created the special task of figuring out what to do with the GEG's paper trail. Along this line, in the summer of 1944, some of the GEG's archives from its Kreis headquarters were moved to more peripheral regions, where the relative safety of smaller towns meant that they would be less prone to raids and inspections.⁹ This strategy of displacing the archives was meant to protect, as it was a way to obscure data and hide files that could later be used against members of the GEG. This migration of documents might not have been a grand gesture, but it affected the way they were organized at the level of the entities that managed them. In August 1944, when Romania switched sides and started fighting against the Axis, the GEG representatives were in a rush to destroy or move some of the important parts of the archives.¹⁰ Despite this effort, a substantial part of them fell into the hands of Romanian military and law enforcement as soon as the country changed its allegiance.¹¹ The takeover was not systematic, but rather an ad hoc occupation of the GEG's offices throughout the country. In the absence of clear orders or an organized strategy, the military and the police tried to protect the documents by putting them under guard or, in some cases, sealing them until new orders came.

All through the fall of 1944, there was no clear strategy from the central authorities on how to manage the GEG archives. If the arrest and pursuit of GEG leaders proved to be a major concern in the very context of the fighting—with the police detaining the

remaining ones and then sending them to camps—the fate of the archives was not high on the priority list.¹² The war, talks of an armistice, and political crises took precedence over this problem, which was marginal on the government's agenda. The archives were simply out of sight and out of mind, so much so that concerning the dissolution of the GEG and the management of its assets, there is no evidence in the legislative material of the time that any of the ministers and the specialists in Prime Minister Constantin Sănătescu's government even had access to them.¹³ For example, when trying to define the German population's membership in the GEG, Sabin Manuilă, who was the rapporteur of the laws, invoked the registers opened by the Ministry of the Interior at city halls across the country, so citizens could declare their ethnicity during the war, in addition to statistical data.¹⁴ We know for a fact that the GEG conducted a census of the German population in January 1943, and that it was then monitored by the Romanian authorities, yet it was never taken into account.¹⁵

This reality is even better defined if we follow a few of the instances where territorial archives of the GEG were moved. In the beginning, they were taken into custody by the military and the police without a clear order as to what to do with them. In some places, the new local administration established by the National Democratic Bloc or by their allies ordered the immediate takeover of the GEG's headquarters. In Deva, on 28 August 1944, at the request of Petru Groza, the leader of the Ploughmen's Front, the GEG headquarters was surrendered to his party. The archives were stored in the building's basement, in a sealed room in the custody of Groza's deputy, Augustin Almășan, who was later appointed the county's prefect. In the fall, Almășan turned the archives over to the local Soviet command for investigation. As a result, the police couldn't access them until January 1945.¹⁶

This happened in many other places in Romania where GEG archives were neither accessible nor complete.¹⁷ As the situation wasn't clear, on 6 November 1944, the Ministry of War asked to synthesize the archives at the level of the Ministry of the Interior. Thus, as of 14 December 1944, through the General Directorate of Police, the Ministry of the Interior made an inventory of the situation of these territorial documents from the regions of Banat and Mountain Region. The result was a relatively conclusive one: in Timișoara, the local police claimed the former GEG offices as their headquarters, and that hadn't moved the archives; the Deva and Hunedoara archives were sealed in the organization's former offices; the archives from Hațeg, Orăștie, Lupeni, Petroșani, Brad, Lugoj, Alba Iulia, Dumbrăveni, Mediaș, Blaj, Abrud, and Târnăveni were at the police stations of their respective municipalities; the Reșița archive had been destroyed when the town was occupied on 5 September 1944; the archive in Arad disappeared after it had been taken over from Dr. Almășan by the Soviet commandant without a proper procedure; the archives in Oravița met a similar fate, only they had been taken over by the retreating German troops.¹⁸ Then came reports from Brașov and Sibiu, which finally completed the picture with regards to what had happened to these archival collections.¹⁹ The cooperation between the police, the military and the intelligence services produced a clearer, more detailed map of where everything was, without screening or processing the archives, which would have compromised them.²⁰

The Allied Control Commission, in charge of recovering as many wartime archives as possible, gave an incentive to that end. At the end of September 1944, the General Staff's Operations Department was requested by General Fedor Fedenko to turn over all correspondence between the Romanian leader Ion Antonescu and Adolf Hitler, as well as other German military figures. They initially refused, but then surrendered copies of some letters, and eventually gave in to the pressures from Fedenko and Rodion Malinovsky. A small portion of those letters was handed over before November 1944, and the rest fell in Soviet hands only after the establishment of a government led by Dr. Groza. At the Allied Control Commission's request and conforming to Resolutive Order no. 20251 of Minister Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu, on 17 May 1945, all the Romanian army's operation logs from 21 June 1941 to 23 August 1944 (four military crates containing almost one thousand extremely important files and maps) were transferred into Soviet custody.²¹ In the context of launching reconstruction operations in the USSR,²² the Soviets realized the scarcity of documents that would support identifying candidates for forced labor.²³ The lack of name lists that would allow the immediate identification and subsequent deportation of the culprits meant that by 15 January 1945, "all archives of the pro-fascist militarized organizations that were disbanded, as well as all existing related materials were to be turned in."²⁴ The order came suddenly, by telephone, on 12 January, urgently requesting tables containing all the archives requisitioned from these disbanded organizations pursuant to Art. 2 of the Armistice Convention, along with Law no. 485 from 7 October 1944. Its dissemination across Romania was accompanied by an express order to hand over all archival materials to the local police by 16 January 1945. But this didn't happen. Instead, it was a continuing process, but in the context of the request, many GEG archival collections that were taken into custody were flagged.

The party most interested in the takeover of these archives was the Romanian Secret Service. A report by the head of the Fourth Bureau of Minorities at the Secret Service, Agenor Aurite, from 7 February 1945, requested approval for a trip to Brașov, Sibiu, Aiud, and Turda to study those archives. It was granted quickly this time, and he went on a fourteen-day visit to these cities to research the archives' contents. Following his tour, he prepared a brief but substantial report in which he highly valued the seized GEG documents in Brașov and Sibiu, and the documents of the Hungarian community in Romania in Aiud.²⁵ He then asked for approval to have R. Hariton, the head of the team, join him urgently to help sort through the material.

After this, Agenor Aurite went on to take over the GEG archives in some towns in the Prahova Valley. It seems that the catalyst for this visit was a 24 January address from the Counterintelligence Bureau in Section II of the General Staff, announcing that the Secret Service was in possession of the Prahova Valley GEG archives, and that if a delegate did not arrive to study the documents, they would be destroyed.²⁶ Again the visit was approved quickly, and it was established that the operation would begin after the visit of Chief of the Bureau of Minorities at the Secret Service, Agenor Aurite, at the end of February. On the basis of an inventory list, he took over sixteen registers with national reports found in Bușteni, Sinaia and Valea Țapului, and twenty other archival units that included various correspondence, but also files of members, SS recruitments, and economic and administrative documents. These were then taken to Bucharest, where they

were again sorted and reported to the superiors, who then concluded that the rest of the documents were unimportant and therefore ordered their destruction.²⁷

In light of the government crisis at the end of February and early March 1945, which led to the Democratic National Front rise to power through blackmail, the Secret Service's processing of the GEG archives was postponed. Nonetheless, the institutions involved continued to exchange information about the fate of the GEG archives and conducted several inquiries, while competing to find the core of them. Finally, the representatives of the Secret Service, Agenor Aurite (25–27 April) and R. Hariton (30 April–5 May), left for Braşov to consult the archive of the GEG central headquarters. According to a previous announcement from the end of 1944, the archive was ultimately found at the local police and at the Romanian Army's Mountain Troops. On 28 February the local police had taken the documents from the army, so the documents were only handled by the police. This time, the documents were ravaged and stored in the building's attic, with many of the files emptied. As a result, Hariton consulted 150 random files that were still in good condition. He kept twenty-two of them to be urgently transported to Bucharest,²⁸ asking to retain the option of transporting the rest if needed. He thought that the documents he had seen were but a small part of the archive, and an unimportant one, at that. Specifically, he was talking about the thirteen GEG offices of the headquarters in Braşov. According to some witness accounts and declarations made by police members, the other documents had been destroyed in August 1944. Following the administrative steps of 17–24 July 1947,²⁹ the majority of the files inspected by Hariton were transferred from Braşov to Bucharest.³⁰ There, they were processed in order to try and fill in the blanks using other archival materials brought in from different parts of the country, as the Secret Service tried to create distinct archival collections.

In the first few years of the postwar period there was a new player on the market for access to these documents—the General Commissariat for the Administration and Liquidation of GEG Assets.³¹ It had been created on 3 January 1945, through Decree 2/1945, as part of the Ministry of National Economy, as the executor of the Romanian State's rights regarding the GEG. With an extended economic mandate—with the goal of optimizing the profit from the GEG's assets—this agency outranked other state institutions that dealt with the organization's dissolution. As a result, the General Commissariat also had unrestricted access to the GEG's archives for the purpose of identifying, confiscating or seizing assets, having total control over the archives' management.

Like any other institution specific to this transitional period, its beginnings were difficult. First, in addition to its central headquarters, it acquired the right to have another four territorial branches in Braşov, Sighişoara, Sibiu and Timişoara. As early as November 1944, before its legal framework was even defined, Transylvanian Social Democrat Iosif Jumanca was appointed as the General Commissariat's commissioner.³² He took over the role gradually, acting to finalize the organization's structure,³³ but also to identify the assets he had been assigned to manage, which is why he made a point out of assuming control of the GEG's archives. Acknowledging that they were being handled by the Secret Service, he intervened with the General Directorate of the Police so that they either ended up at the commissariat or remained at their original location where they could be accessed. And so, after in June 1945 he managed to prevent the transfer of

the archives of the Saxon University (the self-governing institution of the Transylvanian Saxons from Late Middle Ages and until the second part of nineteenth century) to Cluj, on 3 August, he asked for permission to consult and inventory it. During the war, these archives had been incorporated into the GEG Research Institute, and renamed the Transylvanian National Archives.³⁴ Subsequently, Jumanca considered these archives historically significant and asked to be permitted to inventory them, process the relevant parts and return them to the Romanian State Archives. On 14 August, he got the approval from the Ministry of the Interior,³⁵ then from the Ministry of Education, which, following Jumanca's efforts, established a State Archives Directorate for the Sibiu, Alba and Hunedoara counties.³⁶ By the end of the month, its director, Gheorghe Duzinchievici, took over the entire Saxon archive.³⁷ It was delivered without being inventoried first, because according to Police Inspector Ioan Armeanu, "that's how it was taken, as it was lying around in the building when they got to it."³⁸ Still, it was on this occasion that Duzinchievici also learned that the other relevant documents that he requested were in the town of Agnita.³⁹ As he failed to get a timely response from Bucharest, on 8 October 1945 he sent an official letter in which he highlighted the importance of completing the archival collections of the GEG. He asked the Central Police Headquarters in Bucharest to recover all the GEG Research Institute documents that had been moved to Agnita, where the institute operated during those months. He also suggested they "conduct simultaneous investigations of all German institutions and the families of Transylvanian Saxons' leaders (throughout the country) where documents had been filed."³⁹ He also targeted Transylvanian Saxon churches and presbyteries, even the episcopate.⁴⁰ Though Duzinchievici could not get his hands on the Agnita archives then, he completed his mission in 1946–1948, integrating it with the Sibiu archival collections.⁴¹

In any case, his initiative cooled down the Secret Service's intentions of taking over the other GEG documents in the territory managed by the police. In addition, his collaboration with the General Commissariat, and specifically Iosif Jumanca, paved the way to a more comprehensive approach to handling the GEG archives. Thus, on 7 October 1945, Jumanca sent a protest to the General Directorate of Police and State Security: the regional police had refused to hand over the GEG archives and documents they had taken over between 23 August 1944 and 1 January 1945. Jumanca requested an order for the urgent delivery of the archives from the following locations: Braşov (for Braşov and Făgăraş), Sibiu (Sibiu, Alba, Hunedoara), Sighişoara (Turda, Târnava Mare and Târnava Mică), Timişoara (Caraş, Timiş-Torontal, Arad and Severin), and the General Commissariat for the rest of the country.⁴²

On the surface, things seemed to be going well. A week later, a memo arrived from the General Directorate of the Police, no. 25748S of 12 October 1945, asking police stations holding such archives to hand over their inventories to the General Commissariat, to identify assets for liquidation (with execution reports).⁴³ By 15 October, this was done partially, which led to an operation that had Commissariat representatives visit, search and sort these archives. And so, the GEG archive that the Secret Service had left in Braşov was visited on 20–29 November by Director Traian Bădăluţă of the General Commissariat.⁴⁴ According to his report from 1 December 1945, he had extracted the files and documents that were relevant to his institution.⁴⁵ The remaining archives were

also processed by the local offices of the Siguranța (the predecessor of the Securitate) until German-speaking officers were dismissed from duty. In December 1946, at the request of Duzinchievici, the Sibiu prefect asked the Ministry of the Interior to transfer the files from the Brașov archive to Sibiu, where other GEG archives had already been sent.⁴⁶ The response of the Baicu police department in Brașov from 10 January 1947 specified that it only had 200 files left, three crates with personal files, which had to remain there so they can be of use to the Siguranța.⁴⁷ It seems that that is where these files remained, for we have not been able to find out any further details of their whereabouts.⁴⁸

The Commissariat's efforts to retrieve or consult the GEG's archives continued. Other communications from the fall of 1945, from the regional inspectorate in Cluj, confirmed that the Turda archives had been destroyed, and the Alba archives were not accessible, though the inventories of both had been sent to the Commissariat.⁴⁹ A correspondence with the Alba Inspectorate followed, in which they were requested to send the GEG archives to Sibiu by post. Inspector Mihai Patriciu rejected the request, insisting that the archives had already been taken away by Major Buchin of the Allied Control Commission and that the task of the police was just to guard the files.⁵⁰ Finally, the few files that the Commissariat representatives managed to find in their original locations were left for the Allied Control Commission. Such situations were not only due to Soviet needs, but also to police bureaucracy, and sometimes even to interests derived from information in the files. In Timișoara, for example, there were reports of files extracted from the GEG archive by a lawyer named Ștefan Frecot, aided by Police Commissioner Michelis, with the goal of exonerating certain citizens from belonging to the GEG.⁵¹

The lack of cooperation with the police and the Ministry of the Interior in general sparked a new reaction in Jumanca. On 4 December 1945, he requested the immediate transfer of all inventories in their originals, as the copies were irrelevant to the Commissariat's needs. He repeated it on 2 February 1946, asking the ministry to reissue the request for originals (not copies) to create an inventory of the GEG's patrimonial assets.⁵² The correspondence continued throughout 1946, and eventually the Commissariat succeeded in retrieving certain documents that would allow them to complete their legal assignment.⁵³ However, the majority of the documents remained in the custody of the police departments that were using them, which then either sent them to the national archives or simply kept them. In time, considering the operational needs associated with following and surveilling Romanian citizens of German origins, the Securitate requested and received the documents whenever it deemed necessary.⁵⁴ This effectively scattered what remained of the German Ethnic Group's archives all over the Securitate archives, and today they are available to researchers at the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives.⁵⁵ They can mostly be found in the documentary (general), informative (related to surveillance) and criminal archives. What's interesting is that over time, the archival collections grew, not only through the retrieval of documents that were dispersed between individuals, but also through other archival processing done by the Securitate.⁵⁶ For example, in the mid-1970s materials were recovered from the former office within the SS headquarters in Prague in charge with protecting the families of SS soldiers.⁵⁷ This institution, which had national branches, intermediated between the Reich and the families of ethnic Germans (from places outside of Germany) recruited

in the SS. Both the social assistance and the support for local recruitment efforts in Romania are well documented, as well as the GEG's increasingly crucial mediation role. According to documentation made by the Securitate in 1976 regarding "finishing the sorting, selecting and processing of materials related to Romanian citizens of German descent in 1940–1945," thousands of documents came from the Romanian branch of this office. The operation resulted in 6,395 persons of interest (who had been in the SS or other political bodies such as the GEG and the German National Democratic Party). Additionally, people born after 1920 who had left for Germany in the examined period were also listed in the file. Another 1,804 persons of interest at the county level were the subjects of documents that were to be prepared and inserted into the archive. Thirty-three additional files, all in German, which did not contain important information from an operative point of view, were introduced into the documentary collection. These were mainly name registries, other accounting records for financial aid provided by the German military protection office in Romania.

This was also where they kept the information of persons emigrating to Germany at the time of the war who had been born before 1920 but did not otherwise present any interest. In their report, Lt. Col. Marin Dumitran, head of the Archive Service, and Mr. Ion Protopopescu, head archivist, highlighted documents relevant for understanding the role of this office to the education of young ethnic Germans, with differences between *Straja Țării* (The Sentinel of the Motherland) and representatives of the German community regarding the support given to organizations such as *Deutsche Mannschaft*, *National Arbeiter Front*⁵⁸ and *Deutsche Jugend*.⁵⁹ The synthesis and documentary studies dedicated to Germans from all over Romania (Banat, Bessarabia) are completed with key documents, among which: an order signed on 22 January 1941 by Andreas Rührig, a member of the GEG's general staff, forbidding ethnic Germans from interfering with the conflict between Antonescu and the Iron Guard; a communication from the German embassy from 1941–1942 regarding the proper etiquette and actions of GEG members; orders and communications from the GEG relating to the members' duties; parts of the archives of the German garrison in Bucharest (General Ritter von Mann) and of the German National Democratic Party leader in Bucharest (L. Kohlhammer); various evaluations associated to the perceptions and actions of certain German entities with connections to the switching of sides on 23 August 1944. These documents are crucial for the understanding of the GEG's evolution during the war.

AT THIS point, let us try to draw some conclusions about the fate of the former GEG's archives in the current phase of the research. First, they were ravaged by their creators—the GEG officials who had produced them—with some files missing some documents or completely destroyed. What was left was first handed over to local, regional or county authorities—the police or gendarmerie. Then, at the request of the Allied Control Commission, a new wave of change came over the archival collections surrounding the deportation of Germans to the USSR. Then it was handed over to the Romanian Secret Service, which managed to retrieve some of their missing pieces of operative interest from the GEG's main archival locations. Over the course of 1945, a new competitor appeared on the market for GEG documents—the Commissariat cre-

ated specifically for the liquidation of the organization's assets. With the cooperation of an archivist in Sibiu, this institution was also successful in getting its hands on the documents necessary for its objectives. The sorting process continued at the level of the Siguranța, which prioritized documents they could use for operational purposes. After 1948, the police was obligated to transfer the inventories and documents to the newly formed Securitate, who had taken over the management of the former members of the GEG. The resulting archival collection was organized according to the institution's needs, until finally it was handed over for research at the beginning of the new millennium. These remnants, once lost and now newly found, along with other institutional sources and authorities of that time, German and Romanian, could enhance our understanding of the GEG's inner workings. □

Notes

1. The literature dedicated to the subject is vast and rich. Of the monographic studies dedicated to the subject, we mention: Wolfgang Miede, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933–38: Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik* (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1972); Johann Böhm, *Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1936–1944: Das Verhältnis der deutschen Volksgruppe zum Dritten Reich und zum rumänischen Staat sowie der interne Widerstreit zwischen den politischen Gruppen* (Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York: Peter Lang, 1985); Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuții la cunoașterea istoriei sașilor transilvăneni 1918–1944* (Sibiu: hora, 2001); Ottmar Trașcă, “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 Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, 2018), 113–148.
2. As far as we could tell over the course of this study, there were no archival structures at the low levels of the GEG—street organizations, blocks or cells. When there were communications issued from these inferior structures, the documents were stored by the local organization or network. An analysis of the GEG's organizational structure can be found in Böhm (1985) and the Archive of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Bucharest (hereafter cited as ACNSAS), Documentary coll., file 016485, vol. 5, pp. 7–9.
3. There was a distinction between what is created (all the documents) and what is classified (when the creator sifts through the materials and decides what gets archived), respectively what remains after archival processing (when the creator transfers the archives to whatever party wishes to exploit the materials). This means that any discussion of an archive doesn't include everything that was ever included in the archive, but only the documents that survived the times and made it into the latest archival index.
4. The use of the former Securitate archives in relation to the so-called German problem was discussed in Virgiliu Țărău, “Die Deutsche Minderheit und die Securitate: Schuldzuschreibung durch Gesetz und Ideologie bis 1970,” in *Die Securitate in Siebenburgen*,

- edited by Joachim von Puttkamer, Stefan Sienerth, and Ulrich A. Wien (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 170–186; Corneliu Pintilescu, “The Production of the Securitate’s ‘Truth’: Dealing with the Institutional Practices and Encapsulated Discourses of the Romanian Secret Police,” in *Aus den Giftschränken des Kommunismus: Methodische Fragen zum Umgang mit Überwachungsakten in Zentral- und Südosteuropa*, edited by Florian Kühner-Wielach and Michaela Nowotnick (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet Verlag, 2018), 125–148.
5. The initial files were operationally exploited by placing some selected pages in other files. The process of selection and archival sorting is marked on the used pages of the files, specifying the archival units in which they were subsequently arranged. Many of the files taken from the GEG offices bear this mark of operative distribution of their contents in the first pages of the files containing tables that specify such operations or even detailed reports. See, for example: ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016383, pp. III–IV and file 016384, pp. 1–14.
 6. See the dialogue between Stalin and Romanian communist leaders in Moscow, April 1946, about the restriction of political rights, including electoral, for German ethnics in the National Central Historical Archives of Romania, CC of RCP coll.–Chancellery Department, file 28/1946.
 7. The agrarian reform and the takeover of patrimonial goods from different economic Romanian German institutions consistently affected their financial situation. For the effects of the agrarian reform on the German population in Romania see: ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 11693, *passim*.
 8. Social marginalization became suddenly evident when Romania switched sides mid-war. Without any legislative justification, schools that taught in German ceased their activity, and German teachers were suspended. An assessment of the effects of this situation can be found in the April 1946 memorandum by the representatives of the Ministry of the Interior about the fate of the German population (it is very likely that the memorandum had been redacted in collaboration with the administrative general inspectors) in ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 11693, pp. 12–45.
 9. The Romanian Secret Service, police and gendarmerie had been surveilling the movement of GEG members on Romanian soil especially after April 1944. As a result, truck transports of that kind had been marked if they were suspected of transporting arms into Romania for a possible operation behind the frontlines. But the intelligence was never confirmed. Instead, these archival materials were declared protected in the event of close proximity to the military front. See surveillance reports in ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 011473, *passim*.
 10. The Braşov headquarters archive was thought mostly lost. Parts of it went to the army, then to the police and finally to the Secret Service. From there they were sorted and processed for operational purposes, and finally they were handed over to the Securitate. The lack of an official list of GEG members and official management structure tables was likely to be invoked for the low-quality work of this type of culprit. At the end of the 1950s, when former GEG members started being systematically surveilled as part of the “German problem,” the Securitate turned to the newspapers of the time to fill in the blanks with regards to the organization’s leadership. See the discussion below, in R. Hariton’s report from May 1945, notes: 32–34.
 11. At least two consistent archival collections, from Reşiţa and Turda, were destroyed before the Romanian and Soviet troops ever got to them. See ACNSAS, Documentary coll.,

- file 13125, p. 213. Others, however, like the one in Deva, but also from Hunedoara County in general, were seized by the police, inventoried and sealed. Since the buildings and assets of the GEG were of interest to them, new political groups took over GEG offices, rendering the archives in them inaccessible to police. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 005668, vol. 2, pt. II, p. 57.
12. According to Ordinance No. 44164 from 15 September 1944, the leaders and propagandists of the GEG were to be detained and sent to camps. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0016388, p. 90.
 13. Marcel Dumitru Ciucă, ed., *Stenogramele ședințelor Consiliului de Miniștri: Guvernarea Constantin Sănătescu*, vol. 1, *august–noiembrie 1944* (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2011), 199, 356; vol. 2 (*20 octombrie–29 noiembrie 1944*) (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2012), 49–52.
 14. Ciucă, 2: 50.
 15. In January 1943, as preparations were made to recruit ethnic Germans to the SS, a general census was taken according to the biopolitical criteria of the GEG members. Until then they had been indexed according to their loyalty to the organization—loyal, regular or tolerated, because all their children received a proper Nazi education. The new census placed them in seemingly neutral, racially determined categories, in percentage quarters according to how much German blood they had (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%). See ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 005668, pt. II, p. 91.
 16. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 005668, pp. 57–58.
 17. On 1 November 1944, the newspaper *Fapta* (The Deed) featured a short notice that “all the archives of the GEG have been discovered; they were intact and had all the lists of the members.” See ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, pp. 181, 195. It is possible that the notice referred to the Bucharest branch of the GEG, which was housed in a Siguranța office.
 18. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, pp. 182–183.
 19. In Brașov these were kept both at the police headquarters and in the building of the Martial Court and the Romanian Army’s Mountain Corps. In Sibiu they were kept at the police headquarters in the same building that used to house the GEG, and in Agnita.
 20. There were several communications sent from the Police Headquarters to the Secret Service (14 and 18 December 1944, 9 January 1945) detailing the whereabouts of the archives confiscated from the GEG. See ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, p. 177.
 21. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 8827, vol. 81, pp. 4–6, 8–9, 12, 18.
 22. Hannelore Baier, “Deportare, deposedare, discriminare, 1944–1948,” in *Un veac frământat: Germanii din România*, 149–172; Hannelore Baier, ed., *Deportarea etnicilor germani din România în Uniunea Sovietică 1945: Culegere de documente de arhivă* (Sibiu: Forumul Democrat al Germanilor din România, 1994); Georg Weber, Renate Weber-Schlenther, Armin Nassehi, Oliver Sill, and Georg Kneer, eds., *Die Deportation von Siebenbürger Sachsen in die Sowjetunion 1945–1949*, 3 vols. (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1995).
 23. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 005668, vol. 2, pt. II, p. 57. On 3 January 1945, all county police units were ordered (no. 24229S) to deliver a general report on how they had handled the GEG’s assets taken in the autumn of 1944.
 24. Order no. 22424 of 14 January 1945 in ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 011715, vol. 85, p. 401.

25. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, pp. 175–176. The most important documents were highlighted: the orders of battle of the GEG, the local Germans' National Socialist Party, paramilitary groups, organizational order and circulation, etc.
26. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, p. 170.
27. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, pp. 171–174, 179.
28. The pieces were interesting and reflected the activities of Andreas Schmidt and other Braşov leaders, their correspondence with Berlin and various other documents. The table includes 81 documents. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, pp. 201–203.
29. After Aurite left, the Braşov police informed their superiors about the selection, suggesting that they should not hand over the materials before they got a good look at it themselves. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 13125, pp. 27–33. Ultimately, the chief of the Siguranţa, General Constantin Popescu, authorized the transfer of the archive, at the request of the Secret Service, on 1 June 1945. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 13125, p. 37.
30. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, p. 208.
31. It is an institution dedicated to the German organization's assets. For other enemy assets, the House of Administration and Surveillance of Enemy Assets was founded in February 1945. For this organization's activity, see Florian Banu, "Activitatea Casei de Administrare și Supraveghere a Bunurilor Inamice (1945–1947)," *Xenopoliana* 7, 1–2 (1999): 45–66.
32. The name appeared in *Monitorul Oficial al României* 1, 277 (29 November 1944): 7704. Jumanca kept his position until the Commissariat's dissolution in 1948, even though he had lost the support of the Social Democratic party that had appointed him. He died in prison after his arrest in 1949. See ACNSAS, Penal coll., file 14462 vol. 1, p. 15.
33. He handpicked the regional representatives and experts for the evaluation committees. See, for example, his nomination for the Timișoara region, in *Monitorul Oficial* 1, 253 (5 November 1945): 9737.
34. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 86.
35. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 87.
36. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 119.
37. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 94.
38. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 120.
39. Gheorghe Duzinchievici studied history in Iași and Cluj (where he was a substitute assistant between 1937 and 1941), then became an archivist and then state archives director in Chernivtsi in 1942 and Suceava in 1944. He fled to Transylvania, Sibiu, where he became state archives director, a position he filled until his retirement in 1963. See his archival work in Alexiu Tatu, "Gheorghe Duzinchievici (1904–1986)," in *Arhiviști ardeleni: Dicționar bibliografic*, edited by Liviu Boar (Târgu Mureș: Petru Maior University Press, 2014), 96–104.
40. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 172.
41. Tatu, 102. On the other hand, Duzinchievici's activism was tempered by a domestic incident (he fired a bullet from his balcony, killing a Soviet soldier on the balcony above). He was prosecuted and managed to be acquitted only at the end of 1947.
42. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 132.
43. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 171.

44. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, p. 194.
45. The extent to which they were used is not clear, but they had an undoubtable influence over the GEG archives. According to the inventory list (32 items) drawn up at the end of the mission, the following items had been taken: the inventory of the NSDAP ORTSGRUPPE in Braşov on 11 May 1942, one tab; files with communications between the companies and the industrial section of the GEG to receive credit; GEG contracts with private cinema owners for six cars and a cinema truck; GEG house inventory from Râşnov, etc. There were other administrative documents, important mostly for GEG properties and other real estate assets. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013125, pp. 194–195.
46. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013300, p. 105.
47. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013300, p. 104.
48. Currently, the National Archives of Braşov have a collection titled German Ethnic Group, no. F-00312, containing seven archival units.
49. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013300, p. 213. Report of 12 October 1945 signed by Inspector Mihai Patriciu.
50. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 0013300, p. 260.
51. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, p. 227.
52. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 016386, p. 227.
53. The General Commissariat for the Administration and Liquidation of GEG Assets had relatively rich archival collection (Bucharest, 760) with documents issued over the course of a decade (1948–1950) where they can be found along with their operationalization in the context of liquidation of their respective assets. The Commissariat's collections can also be found at the level of its regional services in Sibiu, Timișoara and Braşov.
54. Țârău, *passim*.
55. The referred ordinance, ordering the transfer of these documents to the Securitate seems to be no. 50682/1948, requiring that police across the country hand over inventories of GEG assets.
56. For example, on 11 March 1950, Gheorghe Crăciun, the chief of Sibiu Regional Directorate of the Securitate sent to Cluj Regional Directorate of the Securitate two tables listing members of the Nazi Party among the Romanian Germans, 19 of them from Turda and 11 from Câmpia Turzii; another example is from Timișoara, where the GEG archive was taken over on site by the Securitate. As a result, a file was identified containing two tables titled “The Enemies of the German People and The Friends of the German People.” They had been requested in Bucharest by the head of the Securitate's Criminal Investigation Directorate, Col. Gavrilă Birtaş in an investigation involving Hungarian nationalists.
57. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 014995.
58. Particularly a school organized in Braşov on 12–25 July 1940 to train the leaders of fascist youth organizations, with his help and support, attracting the attention of those sorting the documents.
59. ACNSAS, Documentary coll., file 014995. Noting the document referring to when the Deutsche Jugend submitted to the National Arbeiter Front lists of all young ethnic Germans born before 1 November 1922.

Abstract

In Search of the Lost Archives: An Incursion into the Archives of the German Ethnic Group in Postwar Romania

This article aims to provide some insights into the post war fate of the German Ethnic Group's archives. We will focus on how the GEG's archival collections were managed and administered by various institutions: police, secret services or special organizations created for dealing with the German assets. After 1948, a part of these collections were incorporated into the archives of the former Securitate, which used these documents for its operational (repressive) purposes. Other parts of the archive are to be found in the custody of the state central archives and of its territorial branches. Discussing the fate of these archives is important for how historians can approach this subject from the perspective of archival sources.

Keywords

archive of the GEG, Siguranța, Romanian Secret Service, Commissioner General for the Administration and Liquidation of GEG Assets