

## **Call for Papers**

### International Workshop

From Self-support to Foreign Control:

Towards a Political History of Germans in Romania, 1933–1938

Organizers: Institute for German Culture and History of Southeastern Europe at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (IKGS); Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (ISPMN, Cluj-Napoca); Research Group for Transylvanian Studies (Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Heidelberg and Sibiu/Hermannstadt).

Dates: 25–26 September 2019

Venue: ISPMN, Gavril Muzicescu Street, No. 5, Cluj-Napoca 400697, Romania

The workshop aims at analyzing the history of Germans in Romania in a decisive period for Central and Southeastern Europe, from the ascendance to power of the National Socialists in Germany to the ideological “alignment” (Geichschaltung) of German kin groups in Europe. It focuses on processes of transfer and exchange occurring at different regional, state and international levels that led towards complete external control over the German minority in Romania.

“Greater Romania” emerged as a consequence of the implosion of Empires following the First World War, when the kingdom on the lower Danube incorporated the multicultural regions of Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, Banat and Partium. There emerged a post-imperial multi-national state, in which – as the historian Pieter Judson has noted – the old and new political elites did not abandon the concept of a unitary national state. Within the framework of the institutional and mental process of unification caused by the incorporation of the new territories as a consequence of the Paris Treaty from 1919/1920, ethnic and religious minorities had to adapt themselves to the new context. Especially the Jewish and German minorities, but also the Hungarian and other non-Romanian groups experienced a situation with a high degree of ethno-regional, religious and linguistic disparity. These minority groups and communities attempted to form large ethno-national organizations in the first decade after the First World War. In this way, they tried to protect previous privileges and to claim minority rights as they were foreseen by the Minority Protection Treaty from 1919. From the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward there emerged a tendency among German groups to orient themselves towards Germany as the “Motherland”. It gained strength due to ethnic mobilization as well as by real and perceived experiences of being treated as second-class citizens. Simultaneously, they received increased support from governmental and non-governmental organizations in the German Reich.

With the ascendance to power of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) in Germany and the end of national-peasant party governments in Romania in 1933, which had disappointed in respect to their minority policies, minority politics in Romania took a

completely different turn. On the one hand, this new dynamic influenced the relationship between the Romanian state and its ethnic German citizens. On the other hand, the traditional political accord within German groups, that was generally useful for attaining community goals, was shattered. The “self-support” movement, already established in the 1920s among Transylvanian Saxons, became an engine for political and social radicalization. The movement aimed at creating a modified version of Nazi ideology and political practice. Germans’ self-representation, traditionally framed in confessional and regional terms, changed under the increasing influence of ethno-national (völkisch) Germanic ideas. Important factors leading to this development included ideological infiltration of the churches from 1933 onward, the adoption of an ethno-national strategy (Volksprogramm) in 1935, and the increasing questioning of the traditional political authorities and practices within the different German groups.

At the state level, the advancing erosion started to produce effects in the already weak democratic structures. A paradigm shift occurred in foreign relations: The hitherto relatively passive attitude of the German Reich transformed into a proactive ethno-national policy towards Germans in Romania, effectively controlled and censured by the SS and the Nazi authority for Germans abroad VoMi (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle). The preferred treatment of Germans in Romania – in comparison to other ethnic minorities in the country – especially after the establishing of royal dictatorship in 1938, was additionally encouraged through good bilateral relationships between Germany as a “kin-state”, and Romania as a “host-state”, based on shared geopolitical interests. The preferential treatment of German reached its peak in 1940, when the “German Ethnic Group in Romania” (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien) was officially recognized as a legal entity of public law.

Paper proposals should interact with the following research questions:

How did the effects of the First World War (agrarian reform, currency reform, the expropriation of the Saxon university) and of the worldwide economic crisis influenced the political radicalization of the 1930s and what other factors facilitated this development? What role did churches, the interdependence of church institutions and political representative bodies, and the varied sources of institutional support for different forms of youth movements play in this process of radicalization? What type of debates concerning economic and social policy took place during this period? What forms of resistance to radicalization existed?

Traditionally, the politics of Romanian Germans had been dominated by the “large” groups of Germans from Banat and especially from Transylvania. How did the Germans in Bessarabia, Dobruja, Bukovina and the “Old Kingdom” position themselves vis-à-vis these other groups? What new alliances and collaborations emerged between the German minority and other political participants/blocks in Romania? How can the contribution of international organisations to these developments be described: as constraining or enabling? Case studies may focus on the League of Nations, the Congress of European Nationalities or international church organizations, among others.

How were imperial German (reichsdeutsche) or national socialist ideologies, institutions and practices adopted at regional and national levels adapted and how were they adapted to the specificities of the Romanian context? How did the diverse political factions within the German groups try to utilize their relationships to the Third Reich and instrumentalise international politics for their own purposes? In this context, what kind of relationship existed

between forms of self-organization of the minority groups and the external influence of ethnic organizations (“Volkstumorganisationen”) from the Third Reich and Austria? What roles did German intellectuals from Romania play, who were living in Germany and held leading positions there? How was the political and ideological change of the 1930s reflected in churches, in culture and in literature?

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Workshop languages are German and English. Passive knowledge of German is required.

A selection of papers will appear in a thematic volume within the series „Veröffentlichungen des IKGS“ (Publications of the IKGS), published by Friedrich Pustet Publishing House in Regensburg. A Romanian translation will be printed by ISPMN.

Please send the title and abstract of the paper (up to 350 words), together with a short CV and your contact details until 15 April 2019. Applications should be sent as a single pdf file to [ikgs@ikgs.de](mailto:ikgs@ikgs.de)