

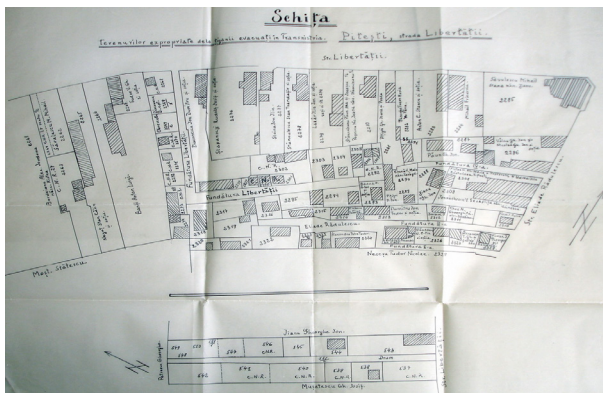
VWI goes to the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance

Wednesday, 12 May 2021, 3:00 pm

Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85379322613?pwd=QUJndDVwS2pHNURwMURyaWhKaEJzZz09>

Petre Matei

Roma Deportations to Transnistria During the Second World War: Between Central Decision-Making and Local Initiatives



Schita terenurilor expropriate dela tiganii evacuatii in Transnistria. Pitesti, str. Libertatii. [Outline of plots expropriated from the Gypsies evacuated to Transnistria. Pitesti, str. Libertatii.]

This presentation focusses both on long-term perceptions by law enforcement agencies such as the police and on the local attitudes towards Roma in interwar Romania. In this context, paradoxically, both nomadism and sedentarisation were likely to trigger tensions. Those Roma who continued to be nomadic were suspected of criminality under fraudulent identities, while those becoming sedentary continued to be suspected both by local authorities and residents. In the latter case, the long-term criminalisation of the group by the police was aggravated by local specificities. There were numerous localities where, long before the reign of Antonescu, there had been tensions over the Roma, including local petitions and plans by the authorities to resettle them, or even proposals to create Roma ghettos. Quite often,

such plans used language vilifying the Roma as 'dirty' and 'uncivilised'. Sometimes, tensions exploded and became visible at the central level, when petitions targeting the Roma were sent to various ministers, vehemently demanding actions against them. This tradition of forced relocation inspired Antonescu's plans in an initial stage in February 1941, when he expressed his intention to remove the Roma from Bucharest and to create ghettos for them in other parts of Romania. In 1942, once the central authorities ordered measures against the Roma, local authorities used those orders as a pretext to solve their own problems. The risk of deportations was thus especially high where there was pressure both from the civilian population and from other local authorities.

Commented by Gerhard Baumgartner

Petre Matei is a Research Fellow at VWI and at the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Bucharest. He has been a research fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, has carried out oral history interviews with Roma and Jewish survivors, has published around twenty articles on Roma history, and together with Vintila Mihailescu co-edited *Conditia roma. Schimbarea discursului* [The Roma Condition. Changing Discourse] (Iasi 2014) and *Roma. Der Diskurswandel* (Vienna 2020). His research interests include Roma history, the Holocaust, compensation, and memory.

Gerhard Baumgartner is an Austrian journalist and historian. He studied History, English and Ural Studies at the University of Vienna from 1977 to 1984, was project manager at the Austrian Historical Commission from 2000 to 2003 and also managed research projects on the history of the Roma and Sinti and on coming to terms with the Nazi past. Since May 2014, he has been the scientific director of the Documentation Archive of the Austrian Resistance (DÖW). His main research interests include: resistance and persecution between 1938-1945, the history of persecution of the Roma and Sinti, the Republic of Austria's handling of the Nazi past and the history of the national minorities in Burgenland.