Post-Imperial Policing: The Police in Bessarabia from the Russian Empire to the Romanian Rule

Abstract
Combining theories on the evolution of police systems with those on nation-building, this article analyzes the central characteristics of the post-imperial policing system built by Romania after 1918 in the former imperial Russian province of Bessarabia. How much of the new system was built upon tsarist legacies, and how much was created in opposition? To answer these questions, I focus on the career of a former tsarist policeman and district chief, Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii. Using employment records from both tsarist and the Romanian rule, as well as documents from the Romanian police and secret police, this article shows that Romania opted for a centralized police system. This resulted in an influx of bureaucrats from the Romanian Old Kingdom who had meager training and no language skills. Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii pursued a position in the Romanian police system via an unofficial method, by using one of its many loopholes.

Keywords: Police, Bessarabia, Russian Empire, interwar Romania, post-imperial policing

Introduction
When Romanian troops marched into Bessarabia, formerly a region of the Russian Empire, in early 1918, the 51-year-old Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii fled with his 39-year-old wife, Anna Georgievna, in the direction of Kyiv. Brazul'-Brushkovskii had worked as a district chief in Bessarabia, at the Western borderlands of the Russian Empire, between 1908 and 1918.¹ As a representative of the tsarist regime, he and some of his colleagues feared reprisals by the Romanian army, presuming that they would not maintain their positions under Romanian rule. The possibility that Bolshevik forces, which Romania had driven east of the Dniester by the end of January 1918, might advance into the region also influenced Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii to flee.² Rumors had it that his two sons, the 21-year-old Vsevolod and

¹ State Archives of the Russian Federation, Moscow (GARF), 103, 328, [Delo Departamenta Politii. Formularniy spisok Slub Benederkago Uzdanago Ispravnika, Tituliarnago Sovtnika Yevgeniiia Semenovicha Brazul'-Brushkovskago].
the 20-year-old Leonid, had joined the White Army. One of his brothers, Boris Semionovič Brazul'-Brushkovskii, was in Harbin—a White stronghold—when the February Revolution broke out.

Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s reaction to Romania’s occupation of Bessarabia was certainly not unique. As long as there were territories of the former Russian Empire with unclarified rule that were thought to be safe from the Bolsheviks, the functionaries wanted to serve in the Russianized towns there. However, there was no mass exodus towards these towns. When the former tsarist official arrived in Kyiv around March 1918, the coalition forces of Germany and Austrian-Hungary had just entered the city during "Operation Faustschlag," the goal of which was to secure access to the "granary of Europe." Brazul'-Brushkovskii left again for Bessarabia at the end of November 1918 when the Central Powers lost control of Ukraine. With the advance of the Bolshevists, Ukraine was plunged into chaos. Bessarabia was part of Greater Romania from March 1918 until June 1940, when Red Army troops occupied it. While for Bucharest the region represented a dangerous periphery that was difficult to govern, for many who suffered due to the Russian Civil War or had later troubles with the Soviets, Bessarabia was either a stop along their escape to the West or a permanent refuge. Jews, former members of the tsarist state apparatus, officers of the White Army, clerics, and peasants affected by collectivization and the famine of 1932–33 fled to Romania across the 1,000-kilometer border along the Dniester.

This study follows Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s biography in order to understand how he transitioned from being a leading imperial bureaucrat to losing this privileged status after 1918. As a district chief, a position to which Brazul'-Brushkovskii was promoted after 23 years in the tsarist regular police, he had been an administrative agent of the empire. With

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3 Arhivele Naționale ale României (ANR), Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 47, 14 [Copy of a report sent by Constantin Domânescu to Husărescu concerning Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s activities in Bessarabia of 3 February 1926].
4 State Archives of Kharkiv Oblast, NKVD Ukraiinskoi SSR, P6452, 1, 66950, 1-2 [Spravka Brazul'-Brushkovskii Boris Semenovich, February 1938].
8 Irina Livezeanu, Cultură și naționalism in România Mare 1918-1930 (București: Humanitas, 1998), 111-156.
this self-perception, he returned to Bessarabia and pursued a position in the Romanian police system. What kind of system was Romania creating there and which of the applied policing strategies made the former Tsarist official consider continuing his career under the new regime? And did he achieve this?

The study of elite reaction to regime change often focuses upon intellectuals and politicians. Regardless of how their biographies unfold, these reveal as much about the past regime as it does about the new one. While members of the political and cultural elite generally have a broad social network and trajectories that may therefore be easier to reconstruct, civil servants, because they have less room to maneuver, are easily lost from view and neglected in sources. By examining Brazul'-Brushkovskii's attempts to acquire a position in the Romanian administration, this study contributes to the history of the Romanian police system in the interwar period in two ways. First, it emphasizes the social profile of civil servants who "provided most of the direct interaction between state and society" and not on the central bureaucrats who were usually responsible for drawing up reform plans.10 Second, it contributes insight into the transition from imperial to nation-state administrative structures, thus illuminating the beginnings of the state-building process at Romania's eastern periphery.

There has been much interest in recent years in the new states that emerged after 1918 and in how these integrated the regions of a former empire into national-state structures. Pieter M. Judson has called the new states "little empires" and suggested that several of them "discretely retained imperial laws, imperial structures of rule, imperial judicial system, and even the same personnel in positions of authority."11 Many valuable studies deal with or mention the repressive politics of the Romanian state towards ethnic and religious minorities, but little is known about the policemen and gendarmes who were responsible for implementing the nationalistic politics and state security they were part of. In each of these new nation-states, the security systems were central instruments in and of the state- and nation-building. Compared with the history of police systems in the communist period, for which extensive studies are available, the security apparatus of the interwar period has been scarcely researched.12 In the case of Romania, apart from some regional studies on the

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12 This research gap has been recently addressed by Oliver Jens Schmitt in: Oliver Jens Schmitt, Der Balkan im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine postimperiale Geschichte (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019), 100.
gendarmerie responsible for maintaining order in the rural areas and general works on the police system, comprehensive studies are lacking.13

The police and the gendarmerie were the cornerstones of Romania's security apparatus after the emergence of the modern state in the second half of the 19th century. It was internal upheavals, as is often the case, that determined the expansion of the police system. The event that led to the foundation of the secret police, the Siguranța, was the Peasant Uprising of 1907, and the next turning point was WWI and the emergence of Greater Romania.14 Along with the new territories that Romania acquired were post-imperial legacies consisting of several security apparatuses with different structures, traditions, and social compositions. Their reorganization led to a redistribution of resources and personnel between institutions and regions. The gendarmerie in Bessarabia, for example, was established with resources from the army and from the gendarmerie in the Old Kingdom.15 Following economic crisis and political change in the late 1920s in Romania, when the National Peasant Party replaced the National Liberal Party in the government, the security apparatus underwent profound reforms. A model of increasingly independent institutions with small and professionalized personnel gained popularity. The gendarmerie was transferred from the control of the War Ministry to that of the Interior Ministry, and it began to receive separate intelligence service. The existence of several competing services made Greater Romania, as Oliver Jens Schmitt has explained, a "police and intelligence state."16

Researchers that deal with the evolution of police distinguish broadly between two models of policing: policing as public administration and policing by consent. The two models have been recently described by Murray Frame, who explains that in the first, the state takes "responsibility for the welfare of its population." This generally means that the police have a wide range of activities and that the police system is "more active than passive, more interventionist than reactive." Policing by consent, on the other hand, implies a police system that focuses on "the interest of citizens rather than the state." It means a decentralized police

13 Pavel Moraru, La hotarul românesc al Europei; Pavel Moraru, Organizarea și activitatea serviciilor de informații și siguranță românești din Basarabia în perioada anilor 1918-1944 (Institutul de Istorie al Academiei de Științe a Moldovei, Teză doctor habilitat, 2016); Ovidiu Marius Miron, Jandarmeria Română în perioada interbelică, 1919-1941. Mit și realitate (Lugoj: Dacia Europa Nova, 2003); Ilie Nuțu, Jandarmeria 1918-1940, legislație și organizare (Bacău: Editura Cadrelor Didactice, 2012); Alin Spânu, Istoria serviciilor de informații și contrainformații românești, în perioada 1919-1945 (Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg, 2010).
14 Moraru, La hotarul românesc al Europei, 23-25.
15 ANR, Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei, 1891 / 1, 18-19 [Historical Record of the Gendarmerie, entry from 27.3.1918 concerning the organization of the gendarmerie in Bessarabia].
force that derives its legitimacy from the people. Its function is to protect the safety of the public rather than to carry out state-administrative tasks.\(^\text{17}\)

There is broad agreement that while tradition plays a critical role in building up police systems, major historical events, such as revolutions and wars, might be even more influential regarding the adoption of novel policing concepts.\(^\text{18}\) As Andreas Wimmer showed, post-imperial nation-building can provide opportunities to build upon, not in opposition to, former structures.\(^\text{19}\)

The topic of discussion here is not which model Romania applied after 1918. There is no doubt that the government imposed the first model of policing—policing as public administration—the same the country had used before WWI. The ruling elites did not question the implementation of a centralized police system in Bessarabia because Romanian troops occupied the region. As David Bayley put it: "If the legitimacy of new state institutions is jeopardized, administrative resources often the state will be mobilized centrally in their defense."\(^\text{20}\) Bessarabia was also the only new region whose place in Greater Romania was not internationally recognized—the belonging of Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, regions of the former Habsburg Empire, to Romanian was ratified by the Treaty of Trianon. The Red Army reconquered almost the entire territory of the Tsarist Empire; the western periphery from the Baltic to the Black Sea was the only exception.\(^\text{21}\) The Soviet Union never gave up its claim over Bessarabia.

The aim here is to further understand the evolution of certain characteristics of the Romanian police system in Bessarabia. To comprehend Brazul’-Brushkovskii’s tactics, the study provides insights into how centralization was reflected at a regional level and how it influenced the social composition of the security staff. The focus lies thus on the development of the police station and the intelligence service in the provincial town of Soroca, in the district with the same name, which was led by Yevgenii Brazul’-Brushkovskii from 1908 to 1915. As the district bordered the Soviet Union, with the Dniester as a natural border, building up the police had higher priority there than in the inner districts. Based on reports by the Romanian secret service and by regional and central authorities on Yevgenii Brazul’-Brushkovskii’s employment records for the pre-1918 period and on the criminal file of his

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brother Boris Brazul'-Brushkovskii, who remained after 1918 in what would later become Soviet Ukraine, this study is a step toward an understanding of a post-imperial police system.

In favor of co-opting former civil servants, spoke the hasty speed at which Romania proceeded with nation- and state-building in Bessarabia. The Autonomous Soviet Republic, which was founded on the right bank of the Dniester in 1924, served as a propaganda platform for the Soviets and put pressure on Romania. Allowing former policeman to resume their work would have made sense because of their many years of experience. Additionally, confronting revolutionary forces had been their main task for the past decades. Also, the working conditions in Bessarabia were so complex—the region was one of the most multi-ethnic in the Russian Empire—that former civil servants in the administration would have provided a better transition because they knew the local language(s).

I argue that the association of tsarist policeman with both the old and new regimes made hiring former security personnel an exception. During the tsarist regime, such positions belonged to Russian speakers from all over the empire, and one of the aims of the new regime was to fill the ranks with Romanians. Given that the expansion of state authority generated various forms "popular resistance" in parts of Bessarabia, centralized resources, like personnel, were allocated to stabilize the region. Regarding the question of necessity, the central government most probably considered retaining former security personnel to be superfluous, since it had a sufficient number of army personnel.

Tsarist Regular Police in the Western Borderlands

Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii belonged to a noble family of low rank with roots in Wallachia. As tsarist troops crossed the Danube principalities during the Russo-Turkish wars of the 18th century, the family joined them. Eventually ennobled, although without owning estates, various members began to serve as officials in the tsarist administration. In the middle of the 19th century, the tsarist government, due to internal upheavals, began to extend

22 Besides resistance backed by the Soviet Union, such as the Tatarbunar Rebellion from 1924, there were serious signs of opposition against the Romanian administration also among the local Romanian population in Northern Bessarabia. The so-called Old Calendarist movement, arose first among orthodox believers that rejected the calendar reform. The peasants’ discontent towards church renewal developed at the beginning of the 1930s into a general hostility towards Bucharest and the Romanian Orthodox Church, when security forces forced them to accept the calendar reform. For recent studies on Tatarbunar see: Igor Casu, “Exporting Soviet Revolution: Tatarbunar Rebellion in Romanian Bessarabia (1924),” The International Journal of Intelligence, Security and Public Affairs, 22:3 (2020), 224-243. On the history of the Old Calendarist movement see: Andreea Kaltenbrunner, “Modernization Struggles in Interwar Romania: Old Calendarists, Church and Government in Bessarabia in the 1930s”, Slavonic and East European Review, 99: 3 (2021), 520-543.


its police system.\(^{25}\) Thanks to a decision from 1862, the police no longer had to rely on transfers of active-duty soldiers but could hire civilian personnel.\(^{26}\) Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s father was born in 1840 in the Chernihiv region and joined the police as prison warden in the city Novyi Oskol in the Belgorod district of the Kursk Governorate. In fact, many senior police officials came at the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century from the class of "poor nobles," most of which were of Russian origin and Orthodox faith.\(^{27}\) Young Yevgenii received a private education and opted for a career as policeman. Due to the difficulty associated with filling the police ranks, admission requirements were not strict, and professional training was neither required nor provided.\(^{28}\)

In July 1884, aged seventeen, Brazul'-Brushkovskii started working in an administrative position for the police in the Berdychiv uyezd (district) of the Kyiv Governorate, and he climbed the professional ladder in subsequent years by taking various positions in the regular police and in the provincial administration. He became a policeman at the age of 36 in the Kovel’ uyezd of the Volhynian Governorate.\(^{29}\) When he arrived in Bessarabia in 1908, he was 41 and was an experienced administrator and policeman. In Soroca, he was promoted to the position of district chief (corresponding to the post-1918 position of prefect). Brazul'-Brushkovskii had ascended to the top of the regional hierarchy: he was centrally-appointed and subordinate only to the provincial governor.\(^{30}\)

The environment in Soroca must have been familiar to him. He never worked in the core of the empire but always in the Western borderlands, in ethnic homogenous places that, like Bessarabia, were part of the pale of settlement and had therefore a considerable Jewish population. Besides Russian, he most likely understood some Ukrainian and Yiddish, and during his time in Bessarabia, he acquired basic knowledge of Romanian. As district chief in Soroca he had little interaction with the countryside, where the majority of the Romanian-speaking population lived.\(^{31}\)


\(^{26}\) Weissman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914," 52.

\(^{27}\) Daly, *Autocracy under Siege*, 29.


\(^{29}\) GARF, 103, 328, 5 [Delo Departamenta Politsii. Formularnyi spisok Slubʺ Benederkago Uʺzdanago Ispravnika, Titularnago Sov"tnika Yevgeniia Semenovicha Brazulʹ-Brushkovskago].

\(^{30}\) GARF, 103, 328 5 [Delo Departamenta Politsii. Formularnyi spisok Slubʺ Benederkago Uʺzdanago Ispravnika, Titularnago Sov"tnika Yevgeniia Semenovicha Brazulʹ-Brushkovskago]; For more details on the role of a district chief the see: Weissman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914," 47.

\(^{31}\) Weissman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914," 49.
At the time of his arrival in Soroca, the security forces were just recovering after nearly collapsing during the Russian Revolution of 1905.\textsuperscript{32} In the provinces, at the local level and in rural areas, mass revolutionary movements in the late 1890s led to an expansion of the security police system.\textsuperscript{33} Despite this, a main characteristic of the tsarist regular police remained a low ratio of patrolmen compared to the population, with exceptions in St. Petersburg and Moscow.\textsuperscript{34} As a district chief, Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s primary task after the revolution was to maintain the existing order. As Nail Weissman has shown, the tsarist police were "universal administrators."\textsuperscript{35}

In 1915 Brazul'-Brushkovskii was moved to Bender, on the western bank of the Dniester. In both places, he fulfilled his duties in an exemplary manner. His work necessitated a combination of administrative tasks and the organization of public events meant to stage and publicize imperial rule. For example, in 1912 Brazul'-Brushkovskii organized a celebration of the centennial of the Patriotic War for which he was granted a medal in 1913. There was no mention that 1912 also marked 100 years since Bessarabia had been conquered by the Russian Empire. The district chief helped the army in 1914 by mobilizing the troops and organizing a celebration for the 300th anniversary of the Romanovs. The Governor of Bessarabia was impressed that Brazul'-Brushkovskii had "repaired the buildings of the Soroca prison, with considerable savings of treasury funds."

As the end of the tsarist regime approached, Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s awards continued to accumulate. From the Governor of Bessarabia to the Ministry of Interior, all thanked him for strengthening the regime. He was an honorary member of the Red Cross and was a member of the Bendery uyezd School Board. He also did not neglect his relationship with the Orthodox Church; the Orthodox Kamchatka Brotherhood recognized him "as Honorary Trustee of the Brotherhood with the right to wear the Brotherhood's Cross of the First Degree." Just a few months before the outbreak of the February Revolution of 1917, the Governor expressed to Brazul'-Brushkovskii his "gratitude for the exemplary order in Bendery."\textsuperscript{36} This appreciation from both local and administrative representatives almost certainly strengthened his loyalty to the regime and cultivated his identification with the empire.

\textsuperscript{32} Daly, \textit{Autocracy under Siege}, 185.

\textsuperscript{33} Daly, \textit{Autocracy under Siege}, 51, 140.

\textsuperscript{34} Weissman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914," 46-47.

\textsuperscript{35} Weissman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914," 56.

\textsuperscript{36} GARF, 103, 328, 4-10 [Delo Departamenta Politsii. Formularnyi spisok Slubʺ Benederkago Uʺzdanago Ispravnika, Tituliamago Sov"tnika Yevgenii Semenovicha Brazulʹ-Brushkovskago].
From Policeman to "Terrorist"

On the 4th of December 1918, Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his wife entered Romania through the border town Otaci on the southwestern bank of the Dniester. Their sons returned in 1921.37 There is no exact information about Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s whereabouts during the previous months. The last entry in his tsarist employment records is from the 10th of May 1916. He told Romanian authorities that he had worked as a policeman and had tried to enroll his sons at the University of Kyiv. Kyiv was the capital of both the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian State under hetman Pavlo Skoropats'kyi.38 The government supported by the Central Powers recruited imperial-era officials “to run ministries and establish local government offices, and the forms imperial officers created military units.”39 The fact that Brazul'-Brushkovskii left the area just when the German army retreated and the Bolsheviks were advancing indicates that he might have collaborated with the occupying forces.

Before 1917, a former tsarist official could expect a retirement plan and his sons would have a foreseeable career, most likely in the security system, but this safe course of life was now no longer an option for Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his family. According to reports of the Siguranța, Brazul'-Brushkovskii was unemployed after 1919, and the family invested its savings in real estate and was involved in money exchange.40 Other than that, there were not many options left. Soroca was not a thriving place. The Romanian Encyclopedia of 1938 gives a dull description of the town: The place was less important than Hotin, and it was a small "fortress against the Tatars hastily constructed in the time of Stephen the Great." The Encyclopedia omits mentioning the Russian rule and its impact on Soroca. Only the synagogue and the seventeen "Jewish houses of prayer" are indicators of the large Jewish community there—of 14,000 inhabitants, 5,417 were Jewish.41

37 State Archives of Kharkiv Oblast, NKVD Ukraïnskoi CCR, P6452, 1, 66950, [Postanovlenie, Boris Semenович Brazul'-Brushkovskii, 16 February 1938].
39 Plokhy, The Gates of Europe, 210-211.
40 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 14 [Copy of a report sent by Domănescu to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 3 Februar 1926 concerning Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s activities in Bessarabia after 1918].
41 Enciclopedia României, Volumul 2, Țara Românească (București: Imprimeria Națională, 1938), 674-675; Recensământul General al Populației din 1930, Volumul II, Neam, Limbă Maternă, Religie (București: Editura Institutului Central de Statistică), 422.
Brazul'-Brushkovskii, together with his wife and sons, went from the most respected family in town to refugees with unclarified status. Furthermore, the Siguranța registered Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his sons as "terrorists." There were two categories of suspects: to the first belonged those who had committed various illegalities and to the second the so-called "terrorists." The latter were newcomers from Bolshevik Russia who were perceived as secret agents. It seems that a Siguranța employee automatically considered him a "terrorist" because he was a Russian speaker and had just returned from areas under the control of the Bolsheviks. Asking around would have confirmed the danger for Siguranta representatives, as locals would likely have identified Brazul'-Brushkovskii as the main representative of tsarist rule in Soroca.

The working conditions at the Soroca police station hindered in-depth research of the persons entering the country. The first police bureau in Soroca was located in a rented two-room house with rented furniture and no heating system. A report from 20 October 1920 showed that there was a concerning lack of personnel and that the existing workforce was "totally unsuitable to work for the secret police." According to the report, the situation was worrying because Soroca "was a large district," and was located on a border "where the foreigners' crossings" were "so frequent."42 The station had 120 registered suspects, a much higher number than in the neighboring district of Orhei, which had a similar population and in which only 51 people were under surveillance. By 1932, the number of suspects in Soroca had grown to 160.43

Being registered as a "terrorist," Brazul'-Brushkovskii could not hold any public office, could not obtain Romanian citizenship, and could not move freely from one place to another. Local informants and agents, both Russian and Romanian speakers, were responsible for surveilling him. The Siguranța had three categories of informants: former and current army members who used their contacts to sell information very expensively, civil servants, and university students and manual workers. Browsing through the documents of the administrative departments of the Interior Ministry and the police, who were responsible for the approval of informants, the first impression is that, especially (though not solely) in provincial towns, the Siguranța was a well-paying "company." Informants were sometimes recruited, but people often applied or even begged for a position in the Siguranța. An informant earned between 1,500 and 3,000 lei per month, and high-ranking informants could

42 Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova (ANRM), Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1415, 9 [Report of the Soroca Police to the Regional Inspectorate of the Chișinău Police of 25 October 1920 concerning the condition of the police station in Soroca].
43 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 75, 32–36, here 33 [Inspection Report of the Orhei City Police by the Regional Inspector Constantin Maimuca, sent to the General Director of the Police, Bucharest, September].
gain up to 6,000 lei monthly. A gendarme got between 850 and 1,000 lei, and 1,500 lei was roughly equivalent to the monthly salary of an Orthodox village priest or village teacher.\textsuperscript{44}

Many of the sources regarding the informants date from 1929. Due to the political change mentioned above, the informants network was reformed in that year, and in the following years, new informants were appointed. Those who lost their jobs pleaded to be reaccepted, while others who had heard about job’s salary applied for a position. The war invalid Constantinescu, for example, lived "a comfortable life as informant for a few years." According to his own account, in 1929 he was dismissed and intervened to regain his position.\textsuperscript{45} Some members of minority groups touted their language skills. A resident of the Durostor district explained that he would be perfectly suited as an informant because he had mastered Bulgarian, Greek, and Albanian.\textsuperscript{46} Other applicants to the Siguranța, like the law student Gheorghe Brăileanu, had financial problems. Originally from Bacău, where his impoverished mother lived, Brăileanu went to Bucharest to study, but he soon realized that he could not afford life in the big city. Working for the Siguranța was "his last hope." If he got a job, he would perform his duties with "enthusiasm and determination."\textsuperscript{47} Out of pity, he was accepted as an informant.\textsuperscript{48}

Working for the Siguranța was also an option for refugees without asylum status—refugees like Brazul’-Brushkovskii. The Siguranța could help these people, who from a legal point of view were in vulnerable position, by offering them the prospect of obtaining legal papers. Refugees mentioned in their declarations that in order "to be allowed to stay in Romania" they had to work for at least "three months as informant in favor of Romania."\textsuperscript{49} This arrangement appealed to Iftode Spătaru, who risked his life to stay in Romania. A 31-year-old peasant who was married with three children, he had fled from Soviet Ukraine to Romania when the collectivization was at its peak in 1930. Since he spoke both Romanian

\textsuperscript{44} ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 90, 80 [D.A. Dospinescu's request to the Interior Minister from 25 June 1932 entering a position in the Siguranța].
\textsuperscript{45} ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 90, 127 [Ion Constantinescu’s request to be reaccepted in the Siguranța addressed to the Siguranța General Director in October 1932].
\textsuperscript{46} ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 90, 70 Dionisie Culețu’s request addressed to the Police General Director, from August 1932 to work as informant for the Police of Silistra, in the Durostor district]; 69 [Recommendation of the Administrative addressed to the Police General Director from August 1932 concerning employing Dionisie Culețu as informant].
\textsuperscript{47} ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 89, 136 [Gheorghe Brăileanu’s request to the Siguranța General Director from 29 May 1932 concerning finding a position for him in the Siguranța].
\textsuperscript{48} ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 89, 170 [Report of the Administrative Department of the Siguranța to the Siguranța General Director from 30 May1932 concerning Brăileanu’s request to work for the Siguranța]; 138 [Report of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of Interior from 30 May1932 concerning hiring new informants].
\textsuperscript{49} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1, 3522, 38 [Declaration of Iftode Spătaru, by the Regional Inspectorate of the Police Chișinău from 8.1. 1932].
and Russian, he started working for the Siguranța in Soroca as an informant. His mission was to cross the Dniester and collect information.\textsuperscript{50} After three successful missions, the Soviets took notice and put a warrant out for his arrest. Spătaru received asylum but, since he could no longer work under cover, he was no longer of "value" to the Siguranța. As he was too dangerous to remain in Bessarabia (Spătaru knew too much), the Siguranța placed him in compulsory residency in Craiova.\textsuperscript{51}

A report from 1926 states that the situation was improving at the Soroca police department. The Interior Ministry was at that time renting a house with five rooms that accommodated both police and secret police. There was proper heating, and for the first time, the station had a telephone connection.\textsuperscript{52}

However, personnel remained a pressing issue. At the beginning of the 1920s, the Siguranța in Soroca was led by the 51-year-old civil engineer Constantin Constantinescu from Târgu Jiu, Gorj district. Constantinescu started working for the Siguranța in November 1918, when he became an officer in the southern Bessarabian district of Ismail. From there he was sent to Banat, and in 1920 he was sent back to Bessarabia. In each location that he worked, Constantinescu triggered multiple complaints.\textsuperscript{53} Four months after he arrived as auxiliary police at the border station Stamara in Banat, the Regional Police Inspectorate in Timișoara gathered enough evidence to demand his immediate demission: "Since he has started working on the border he only thinks how to make more money."\textsuperscript{54} Among the accusations against Constantinescu was that he had hired his wife as an informant (with a monthly salary of 1.500 lei) and that both had asked for money from persons entering the country. While intended to be a disciplinary transfer, Constantinescu turned his stay in Soroca into a "gold mine." Even after being warned by the Siguranța in Bucharest that if he displayed in Soroca the same "detestable behavior like in Banat" he would be "bitterly punished," the

\textsuperscript{50} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1, 3522, 41 [Declaration of Iftode Spătaru, 12 January 1932].

\textsuperscript{51} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1, 3522, 34 [Report of he Police in Chișițău sent to the Regional Police Inspectorate in Craiova, 8 January 1932, concerning Iftode Spătaru’s forced confinement and surveillance in Craiova].

\textsuperscript{52} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 42, 1-5 [Report to Central police and secret police office in Bucharest from 20 February 1926 concerning inspection at the police Soroca].

\textsuperscript{53} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1415, 75, 78 [Report of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Ismail to the Siguranța bureau in Chișițău from 20 May 1922 concerning violations committed by Constantinescu].

\textsuperscript{54} ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 1415, 26 [Report N. Ștefănescu’s to the Central police and secret police office in Bucharest from 1 August 1920 concerning Constantinescu's illegal activities in Banat].
civil engineer found new ways of earning extra money. Besides, there were more opportunities to make money at the Bessarabian border than in Banat due to elevated illegal border crossing and smuggling activity. Constantinescu exploited both phenomena.

Romania was confronted with a surge of refugees after WWI, mostly Jews from the Russian Empire. The government admitted between 40,000 and 100,000 refugees, expecting them to leave the country immediately.

The district administration noticed early and reported to Chișinău that Constantinescu "maintained suspicious relations” with the Jewish communities. Constantinescu's relations with refugees can be exemplified by the Jewish community of Zgurița in the Soroca district. Zgurița had 3,028 inhabitants, of which 2,541 were Jews. In 1921 the Jewish community provided aid to 2,579 Jewish refugees who had arrived from the "Kyiv, Podolian and Kherson" governates. A Jewish charity committee provided many products and services, from accommodation to food. The committee president explained that the refugees were "waiting for money from America" and for their travel visas.

Refugees were allowed to move around only with an internal visa issued by the police. Checking the documents of Jewish refugees, policeman from other districts kept noticing that their visas had been issued by Constantin Constantinescu. A commission looked into the case, suspecting that Constantinescu had accepted bribes in exchange for the visas. There were also suspicions that Constantinescu had worked with the Jewish communities to allow further refugees to cross the border.

When Constantinescu released a group of imprisoned smugglers from Odessa in exchange for a bribe, he was dismissed from the Siguranța. His successor, Liviu Murgău, was also involved in corruption and was eventually suspended for bribery. Throughout this
Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii was able to observe the flaws of the new administrative apparatus and eventually decided to take advantage of them.

From "Terrorist" to "Loyal Citizen"

After reading a report about Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s personality and career, Zaharia Husărescu, the head of the Siguranța in Bessarabia, decided to remove him and his sons from the list of terrorists in December 1924. Four years after the family’s flight to Bessarabia, Brazul'-Brushkovskii was no longer a persona non-grata; he could move freely and acquire Romanian citizenship.

As the second of three chiefs of the Bessarabian intelligence service, Zaharia Husărescu crafted an impressive career between 1920 and 1930. Unlike most of the Siguranța staff in Bessarabia, Husărescu had a connection to the region and could speak Russian. When he was born in 1876 in Kitai in the Ismail district, the area was known as Bugeac and had belonged to Romania for two decades. His family moved to Tulcea in 1878 when Romania lost these districts to Russia.

The report Husărescu received was written and signed by Constantin Arghiropol, the new head of the Soroca secret police—a 54-year-old civil servant who had been born in a Moldovan village. After attending eight years of school, Arghiropol worked in various administrative positions from tax inspector to prison warden. He first arrived in Bessarabia in 1921, when he assumed the role of vice-prefect of Soroca.

Arghiropol stated that he knew Brazul'-Brushkovskii well and argued that putting him on the list of terrorists had been a mistake made "due to biased information." The report contains some hints of why Husărescu did not hesitate to remove Brazul'-Brushkovskii from the suspect list and not ask for a closer examination of his records. Arghiropol’s strategy was to depict Brazul'-Brushkovskii as a Romanian patriot. Instead of giving the Russian version of his name, for example, Arghiropol called him "Eugen Breazul." The report offers no exact

\[^{63}\text{ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 8 [Request of the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia to the General Siguranța Office in Bucharest and to the 4th Army in Iași from 7 February 1925 concerning eliminating the named suspects from the suspects lists and lacking them of further control]; 10-11 [Complaint of Constantin Domănescu to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 3 February 1926 concerning removal of Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his sons from the suspect list of the Soroca’s police].}\]

\[^{64}\text{Moraru, } La hotarul românesc al Europei, 210.}\]

\[^{65}\text{ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 230, 4 [Employment records Constantin Arghiropol’s issued in November 1924].}\]

\[^{66}\text{ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 6 [Report Constantin Arghiropol’s to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 1 December 1924 concerning Eugen Breazul’s (Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s) rehabilitation].}\]
details on Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s career before 1918, but it does claim that he had relations only with trustworthy persons in Soroca, that he was intelligent and willing to work, that he was about to acquire Romanian citizenship, and that he hated "the current form of government in Russia." The last points mentioned by Arghiropol are revelatory: Brazul'-Brushkovskii would do "in each position a great job," since he was a monarchist and a member of the People’s Party. As Arghiropol was formulating his report, the People’s Party was a promising political party on the cusp of taking over the government for the second time after 1918. It is not known whether Husărescu was a party member, but it is known that both Arghiropol and the prefect of Soroca, Dimitrie Iov, were. "Rehabilitating" Brazul'-Brushkovskii was thus a purely political affair, meaning that the ruling party was focused on placing its members in leading positions in the provincial administration. In exchange for his removal from the suspect list, Brazul'-Brushkovskii most probably accepted, as will be further shown, to work as an informant for the Siguranța.  

The People’s Party was led by the army general Alexandru Averescu, known in Romanian history for helping to suppress the Peasant Revolt of 1907 and for his achievements in WWI. After 1918, Averescu gathered the available conservative forces, mainly military officers and big landowners, and founded the People’s Party with a populist message that was addressed to the peasants.67 In March 1926, after a dispute inside the ruling National Liberal Party, King Ferdinand appointed Averescu as prime minister. As it was common in interwar Romania that ruling parties with no majority in Parliament could request new elections. The People’s Party set the dates for the new election in May and June 1926. In Bessarabia, the party enjoyed great popularity due to Averescu’s personality and to the fact that he was originally from Ismail.68 The party won the election in 1926 and received 56.3% of the votes in Bessarabia, but it proved to be an unstable political force and lost power in subsequent years.  

In December 1924, two weeks after Arghiropol’s appointment in Soroca, he sent the report in favor of Brazul’-Brushkovskii to Chișinău. It was decided to remove Brazul’-Brushkovskii and his sons from the suspect list in February 1925. Immediately after, Arghiropol took paid leave due to health issues, and he never returned to Soroca. Arghiropol led the Soroca secret police for a very short span of time, and it seems that one of his main  

68 Svetlana Suveică, Basarabia în primul deceniu interbelic (1918-1928): Modernizare prin reforme (Chișinău: Potons, 2010), 85.
tasks was to rehabilitate Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s reputation. This suggests how well-connected the former tsarist official was within the district administration.

The fact that Brazul'-Brushkovskii built closer ties to the district administration between 1924 and 1925 might be explained by his realization that remaining in Romania was a safe option. In the Soviet Union, beginning in 1924, former police officers of the tsarist regime were put on a special list. The criminal codes of 1924 and 1926 "made it a crime to have worked for the imperial Russian security police. Between 1927 and 1950, lists of gendarmes and other security policemen compiled by Soviet archivists were printed and distributed to security police officials across the country, presumably to assist in hunting the imperial officers down."69 For Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s brother, who had remained in Kharkiv (at that time Soviet Ukraine) and worked in the Finance Department of the Northern Railway, life became difficult. In 1927, he was arrested for the first time.70 It was not only the family's history and noble origins that were suspicious in the eyes of the Soviet regime but also the family's deep roots in the tsarist police system.

Post-Imperial Policing

When Arghiropol left Soroca, the district administration lost its contact person inside the police station. The Interior Minister appointed the 51-year-old Constantin Domănescu to take Arghiropol’s place. Unlike Arghiropol (whose colleagues from Hotin, less than enthusiastic that he was not a policeman, called "electoral agent" and politician), Domănescu’s professional background was in the rural gendarmerie of the Old Kingdom. After attending six years of school (four years primary and two years secondary), Domănescu worked as gendarme in the Wallachian Mehedinți district in the Southwest of Romania. After WWI, Domănescu was a border guard before being sent to the former Habsburg region of Banat, where he started working for the Siguranța in the city of Lugoj. After acquiring basic knowledge in the Siguranța, the Interior Ministry sent him to Bessarabia. He had learned French in school and some German while staying in Banat, but these skills were not of much use in Northern Bessarabia.

By examining the names of the people Bucharest appointed to the Soroca police and by looking over the list of employees of the Soroca police station at the beginning of the 1930s, one can notice that the government preferred sending ethnic Romanians with no

69 Daly, The Watchful State, 217.
70 State Archives of Kharkiv Oblast, NKVD Ukrainskoi CCR, P6452, 1, 66950, [Postanovlenie, Boris Semenovich Brazul'-Brushkovskii, 16 February 1938].
connections to Bessarabia to lead the Siguranța district bureaus.\footnote{ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 42, 14-16, here 15 [Report of Constantin Domănescu's to Secret Police in Chișinău from 31 January 1926 regarding the situation at the police station Soroca].} Even army members who were stationed in Bessarabia after WWI were not a source the Interior Ministry used to fill the ranks of the secret police. Choosing officials with no relation to the local population was both an anti-corruption measure and a way for the central government the assure the loyalty of the district chiefs. Officials from the other end of the country were motivated to transfer to Bessarabia, as accepting the position brought them a promotion without automatically requiring a permanent posting. However, Bucharest's strategy had the great disadvantage of appointees who knew little about the local population, and most importantly, had no Russian language skills. These findings, currently available only for the Soroca district, are contrary to the strategy discussed by Andreas Wimmer. Instead of a slowly "indigenizing bureaucracy" that would have maintained "high levels of professional competence, recruited and promoted on the basis of merit and developed an ethos of dedication to the public good," the Romanian government built the police system with bureaucrats outside the region.\footnote{Wimmer, \textit{Nation Building}, 78.}

Arriving in Soroca, Domănescu began organizing the police force from the ground up. One can identify in his reports a certain mindset that he likely brought from the Old Kingdom: he had arrived at a dangerous periphery where minorities were to be mistrusted and perceived as enemies of the Romanian state. Domănescu wrote in one of his first reports to Chișinău that "in this corner of Bessarabia at the bank of the Dniester, our role is very important in matters of State Security and therefore a titanic work is required."\footnote{ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 42, 14-16, here 16 [Report of Constantin Domănescu to Secret Police in Chișinău from 31 January 1926 regarding the situation at the police station Soroca].} The main issues Domănescu identified were the high number of refugees and the meager surveillance of the Jewish communities. He had a strong belief in meritocracy and was convinced that if he did his best, he would be rewarded with a permanent position of officer in one of the bigger Bessarabian cities. He built a network of informants and began to grasp the situation at the border. He asked for more resources to register and supervise all the refugees and an interpreter to get along better in the city—his bureau had no interpreter at all.

While reviewing Arghiropol's work, Domănescu came across Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s case and could not believe his eyes. He considered his rehabilitation a mistake but had no
power to rescind the decision, as the legal term had passed. He reported the case to Husărescu, whom he indirectly criticized by implying that the latter had made mistakes.74

In order to prove that Brazul'-Brushkovskii was a "terrorist," Domănescu sent to Husărescu a summary of the reports of secret agents who had supervised the former policeman between 1918 and 1925. Domănescu's report offers valuable insights into how the day-to-day surveillance took place. The most incriminating fact about Brazul'-Brushkovskii was his collaboration with the Jewish community, although few details are provided that explain what this collaboration looked like. Probably due to language barriers, the secret agents only noticed that Brazul'-Brushkovskii regularly met well-off Jewish inhabitants of the town. Thanks to his connections, the former tsarist official had at one point found for one of his sons a job as a driver. The transport company his son worked for was owned by a Jew, and it was also the only way to travel to Soroca by taxi, as the nearest railroad station was 30 kilometers away. This meant that Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his son were aware of who entered and left Soroca, and to the Siguranța, this was utterly suspicious.75

Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s unpatriotic feelings were revealed to Domănescu by the former’s reaction to a speech by Ion Zelea Codreanu, the father of the future fascist leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu76, that was delivered in Soroca in 1919. Upon hearing about the greatness of Greater Romania, secret agents reported that Brazul'-Brushkovskii was not at all enthusiastic. Admittedly, expecting a former tsarist official to clap and cheer at Codreanu’s speech might have been a bit unrealistic. Although Brazul'-Brushkovskii realized that the old tsarist rule no longer existed, giving up his identity, only a year after his return to Bessarabia, and absorbing the Romanian nationalistic discourse was impossible, especially considering how hostile his welcome to Romania had been. He must have been relieved that Romania had halted the Bolsheviks, but his family certainly still suffered. Members of his extended family lived in areas occupied by the Bolsheviks, and his two sons were allegedly active in the White movement. It also remains unclear how much of Codreanu’s speech Brazul'-Brushkovskii actually understand. In 1919 he had only been in Bessarabia for ten years, during most of which time he had served in a Russian-speaking administrative system.

74 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 10-11 [Complaint of Constantin Domănescu to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 3.2.1926 concerning removal of Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his sons from the suspect list of the Soroca’s police].
75 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 10-11 [Complaint of Constantin Domănescu to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 3.2.1926 concerning removal of Brazul'-Brushkovskii and his sons from the suspect list of the Soroca’s police].
76 For more details on Ion Zelea Codreanu’s activities in Bessarabia see: Oliver Jens Schmitt, Căpitan Codreanu. Aufstieg und Fall des rumänischen Faschistenführers (Wien: Paul Zsolnay, 2016), 22-23.
In the summary, Domănescu cherry-picked the most incriminatory accusations to pass on to Husărescu. He included copies of the reports of the secret agents, but they got lost in the files that I could access in Bucharest. Surely Domănescu did not omit any details, since his aim was to stop the "terrorist" from escaping. Overall, however, the accusations against Brazul'-Brushkovskii were ultimately harmless, and his story can be regarded as one that recounts the struggle of a member of the former elite to use his connections to regain a respected position and provide for his family.

Brazul'-Brushkovskii was obviously enjoying his new status. In fact, Domănescu revised the case only because "a respected official from Soroca" had informed him that the former policeman was telling everyone how easy it had been to clear up his records. Domănescu’s predecessor, Constantin Arghiropol, supposedly visited Brazul'-Brushkovskii at home and took with him the registers and the reports of the secret agents. The former Tsarist official was not only aware of who surveilled him but also had an insight into how the Siguranța in Soroca functioned. He was proud of himself, and his house became, as in the old times, a place where important people in the town would gather.

There was a mix of reasons related to real and symbolic power that made Domănescu intervene against Brazul'-Brushkovskii. Arriving in Bessarabia and noticing that representatives of the former tsarist elite were still influential must have been frustrating for Domănescu. Unlike Brazul'-Brushkovskii, Domănescu could not easily connect with the local elite due to language barriers. Behind his determination to punish Brazul'-Brushkovskii was his need to prove himself and his hope, as he explicitly suggested, to acquire a permanent position. However, the timing was unfavorable for this kind of strategy. Accusing Russian speakers of Bolshevik collaboration, even without convincing evidence, worked in 1918—as Brazul'-Brushkovskii's case shows. In 1925, however, with the rise of the People’s Party to power, the regional organizations needed influential supporters who had no relations to the ruling parties, and Brazul'-Brushkovskii was perfect in this regard.

Domănescu did not know that by digging into the work of his predecessor and complaining to Husărescu, he blew up the political calculations of the district administration. The reactions from Chișinău were clear. A few days after Domănescu complained, Husărescu sent a commission to inspect his work. It could not find any irregularities.

77 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 14] Copy of a report sent by Domănescu to the General Inspector of Siguranța Bessarabia from 3 February 1926 concerning Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s activities in Bessarabia after 1918.
78 ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 42, 1-5 [Report to the Central police and secret police office in Bucharest from 20 February 1926 concerning inspection at the police Soroca and the employees of the station].
moved over the next months to positions in remote places for which he was overqualified. After some time, when the possibility for Domănescu to return to Soroca was open, the prefect of Soroca, Dimitrie Iov, warned the Siguranța in Chișinău: "With the bad atmosphere he created here and with the troubles he made, even to our people, please let the [Interior] Minister know that there is no way Domănescu can return to Soroca."\(^79\)

A report about Domănescu that was sent to Chișinău after he left Soroca provides additional insights. The prefect, Dimitrie Iov, was furious because Domănescu opposed hiring "various persons," "electoral agents" who helped the Peoples’ Party during the election campaigns, most probably among them Brazul'-Brushkovskii as well as any secret agents working for the People’s Party.\(^80\) Domănescu put them on a waiting list and waited to see if they would provide any valuable information. Since they did not, as these were working for the party, he explained: "Government positions are not for people who do not produce anything. The positions are to pay persons for important information strictly concerning the state security."\(^81\) In short, Domănescu made Iov clear to not even try to force the security office to contribute financially to the electoral campaign of the People’s Party.

The exchange in the next months between Domănescu and his superiors reveals how bitterly he paid for confronting the district administration and the People’s Party. As the winter of 1926 approached and Husărescu ordered him to go Rezina, a remote town on the right bank of the Dniester, Domănescu explained: "my wife will die there." She suffered from an illness for which it was difficult to find the necessary treatment.\(^82\) Domănescu made Bucharest revise his case and a commission concluded that the accusations against him "were politically motivated. Having been removed from Soroca, Mister deputy D. Iov should be pleased."\(^83\) However, Husărescu continued to move him around. "I've never backed down from duty (…). I'm morally stricken," complained Domănescu to Chișinău.\(^84\) Seven months later, still without a permanent position, Domănescu wrote to Husărescu that this "has been

\(^{79}\) ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 885, 29 [Telegram Dimitrie Iovs to Husărescu from 29 August 1926 regarding Domănescu's activities in Soroca].

\(^{80}\) For more details on Dimitrie Iov’s activities as prefect of Soroca see: Svetlana Suveică, Basarabia în primul deceniu interbelic (1918-1928): Modernizare prin reforme (Chișiınău: Potons, 2010), 101-102.

\(^{81}\) ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 885, 39-40 [Report of Dimitrie Iov to Husărescu from 27 August 1926 regarding Domănescus potential return to Soroca].

\(^{82}\) ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 885, 37 [Telegram sent by Constantin Domănescu to Zaharia Husărescu on 3 October 1926 regarding his transfer to Rezina].

\(^{83}\) ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 885, 51 [Report of I. Negoescu to the Siguranța Bureau in Chișiınău from 11 September 1926 concerning investigating the complaints against Domănescu].

\(^{84}\) ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 885, 54 [Telegram sent by Constantin Domănescu to Zaharia Husărescu from 14 November 1927 considered leaving Bessarabia due to unsuitable working conditions].
the toughest punishment” he had received in his entire career. A medical certificate from that time attested that staying in Cahul, where again he could not find medical treatment for his wife, would probably lead to her death.

In March 1927, Domănescu was transferred to Crișana, where he became chief of the Siguranța in Salonta—a Hungarian-speaking town roughly the same size as Soroca and not far from the border with Hungary. Whereas in Soroca almost half of the population spoke Romanian, in Salonta only 2,061 out of 15,297 inhabitants were Romanian. In any case, Domănescu had by then gained some experience getting along in surroundings he poorly understood.

While there is no indication that Brazul'-Brushkovskii got a paid position as a secret agent, at least with the help of Arghiropol he clarified his legal status, which allowed him to acquire Romanian citizenship. In 1927, Brazul'-Brushkovskii, who was then 60, was still settled in Bessarabia. A return to the Soviet Union, where some of his relatives were still living, would most likely have led sooner or later to persecution. His younger brother was dismissed from the Northern Railway and fell victim to the Great Terror in 1938. He was accused of criticizing the Soviet system and praising the old times, intentionally disorganizing tariffing of goods, and spying for Japan—a common accusation at the time.

The highly-politicized administration at the Siguranta in Soroca mirrored that of the central office in Chișinău. The political change of 1929 also brought the removal of the influential Siguranța head in Bessarabia, Zaharia Husărescu. Husărescu depicted the investigation as "communist conspiration," and surely one cannot ignore the political momentum of his replacement. But still, a so-called "disciplinary commission" of the Interior Ministry made some interesting remarks about the way Husărescu managed the Siguranța in Basarabia. Among the main accusations was that Husărescu employed ten agents and 47 informants between 1920 and 1930 and had been unable or unwilling to identify these persons to the new staff of the Interior Ministry. The commission could find neither reports nor indications that the agents and the informants had ever worked for the Siguranța. The members of the commission also could not determine whether Husărescu had himself spent the money earmarked to pay the mysterious informant network or simply did not want to

85 ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranța din Basarabia, 680, 885, 57 [Telegram sent by Dimitrie Iov to Zaharia Husărescu from 22 February 1927 concerning Domănescu’s return to Soroca].
86 State Archives of Kharkiv Oblast, NKVD Ukrainskoi CCR, P6452, 1, 66950, [Postanovlenie, Boris Semenovich Brazul'-Brushkovskii, 16 February 1938].
87 Moraru, La hotarul românesc al Europei, 227-229.
88 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 58, 1-9 [Summary of the documents of the Disciplinary Commission addressed to the Minister of the Interior regarding the penalties imposed to Zaharia Husărescu, 18 November 1930].
reveal their identities. It was hard to believe that the Siguranța in Chișinău could have functioned all these years without agents and informants: "It is inconceivable that a security service as complex as that in Bessarabia was not supported by an intelligence staff."

Furthermore, it was alleged that Husărescu used employees of the Siguranța for "his personal interests." Thus, so-called "Agent Caloianu" was in reality the tailor of the Husărescu family, "Agent Magdar Teodor" managed one of his estates near Pașcani, and another Siguranța employee worked in his home in Chișińău. Thus, so-called "Agent Caloianu" was in reality the tailor of the Husărescu family, "Agent Magdar Teodor" managed one of his estates near Pașcani, and another Siguranța employee worked in his home in Chișińău. Husărescu was offered another position at a lower level in the Siguranța, but he chose to retire.

Conclusion

Based on this case-study of the Soroca Siguranța station, we can draw the following preliminary conclusions regarding post-imperial policing in Bessarabia under Romanian governance. The price of an excessive centralized police system was a lack of staff. Since Bucharest had appointed all the newly acquired regions' secret police chiefs from the Old Kingdom, there was suddenly a huge demand for personnel. The lack of police chiefs was even more detrimental because the new appointees were not related to the army but to the regional administration and the border guards.

An obvious consequence of this policy was poorly trained officials. The new appointees did not identify with the local population and felt no responsibility toward it because they had no immediate superior in the district administration. Secret police chiefs were aware that Bucharest could not easily dismiss them, as they could not be immediately replaced. This led to power abuse and corruption.

Bucharest reacted to corruption in two ways. All secret police chiefs mentioned in this article were over 50 when they arrived in Bessarabia and were due to retire in the near future. The Interior Ministry planned assignments in this way in order to negate the chiefs’ abilities to build alliances and acquire power. The argument that the chiefs were more experienced, and therefore were transferred due to merit, is not valid; as shown, many of the new officials had scant experience in working for the secret police. The Interior Ministry also used disciplinary transfers to make the chiefs respect the rules. Overall, hiring poorly trained civil servants and sending them to the other end of the country for a short period of time was neither popular nor effective. This system also stymied the emergence of a meritocratic tradition rule and supported only meager professionalization.

89 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției-Personal, 58, 1-9 [Summary of the documents of the Disciplinary Commission addressed to the Minister of the Interior regarding the penalties imposed to Zaharia Husărescu, 18 November 1930].
The chiefs’ lack of language skills influenced the way they perceived their new surroundings—mostly in a very hostile way. The relation of the new functionaries to the Jewish population, which in many Bessarabian towns represented a considerable group if not the majority, requires further research. This article contains evidence of district chiefs that financially exploited the Jewish communities, as well as district chiefs with antisemitic resentments.

The corresponding political forces that tried to control the Siguranța district bureaus were another complicating factor. It was not unusual for civil servants to run for public office and vice versa. Constantin Arghiropol, a member the People’s Party, was vice-prefect of Soroca in 1921. When he was appointed to lead the Siguranța in Soroca in 1925, the prefect, Dimitrie Iov, was also a member of the People’s Party. Nothing qualified Arghiropol to lead the secret police bureau other than his party membership.

Regional inspectorates often mentioned how severely the illegalities and scandals affected the relationship of the police to the population and damaged the image of the Romanian administration. Still, this did not convince Bucharest to rely on former imperial civil servants, who were better qualified and suited to work in ethnically heterogeneous regions like Bessarabia. Both strategies, building upon old imperial structures or against them, required intensive resources. Romania opted for the latter. Was this due to a deep mistrust of the new region's administrative apparatus and its population?

Yevgenii Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s transition from imperial civil servant to would-be member of the Romanian police system required that he lower his expectations. Realizing that his family had no asylum status and that he was perceived as a dangerous suspect, informants reported how Brazul'-Brushkovskii threatened various persons in Soroca that someday he would "be again district chief." It is hard to imagine that all former policemen were registered as terrorists and put under surveillance, as this would have skyrocketed the costs. In the border districts further to the south, like Cetatea Albă, where border crossings were even more intensive than in Soroca, the stations and bureaus had more refugees (that is, suspects) to monitor. The People’s Party gave Brazul'-Brushkovskii another chance and ignored the incriminatory reports against him, as the party needed well-connected people with no relation to the ruling parties in order to ascend to power.

90 ANR, Direcția Generală a Poliției, 1924 / 27, 12 [Report from 1925 of the Siguranța in Hotin concerning Brazul'-Brushkovskii’s activities in Bessarabia].
91 ANRM, Inspectoratul regional de siguranță din Basarabia, 680, 64, 336-344, here 344 [Report of the Regional Police Inspectorate Chișinău, concerning the police activity in February 1932].