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ITEM No. 2749/53

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16 March
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RUMANIA

POSSIBILITIES OF EMIGRATION

Legal Exit For A Reichsdeutsche
Family.

SOURCE SALZBURG: confidential source, recently
escaped from BUCHAREST.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until 8 February 1953

EVAL. COMMENT I: A very interesting report on the re-
sumption of the repatriation of Germans from Rumania.
Particular attention should be paid to the role of the
French Legation in BUCHAREST regarding repatriation
matters and to the exorbitant taxation of the repatriates'
luggage.

The question of further repatriation of Reichsdeutsche
in BUCHAREST should be treated with care.

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A Rumanian law once said that a foreigner could leave
Rumania within 15 days after application had been
filed. For subsources, this 15 days turned out to
be 18 months, 18 months of frustration and repeated
inquiries and continuous silence on the part of the
regime.

Subsource Family applied for permission to leave the
country in October 1951. They made out the necessary
papers, among them those giving the reasons for their
desire to leave. Answering that they were unable to
find work, they could not live and that they had re-
latives in the West, they were told that everything
was satisfactory - they need now just wait. And wait
they did. At first they made repeated visits to the
authorities, but always got the same answer - no com-
ment. As the months dragged by, they despaired of ever
leaving. Both the son and the daughter sought odd
jobs here and there, and the family somehow managed
to exist.

On 12 December 1952, with no warning whatsoever, a
policeman called at their address and told them to

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report to the Foreign Control Office (Controlul Strainilor - Raionul J.V. Stalin, Orlando Str.,) by now under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry. (Subsource said the Inner Ministry handled their first application in 1951 and apparently jurisdiction was subsequently switched. Both offices, however, were at the Orlando Street address.)

They were thoroughly interviewed again and each family member had to fill out three copies of a four-page questionnaire. But the questioning was the exhaustive thing - who are your friends? relatives? where do you work? how do you live? what are your political ideas? etc. Often during this questioning, police interrogators interrupted an answer with an "Oh, we know that already," which leads Subsources to think that the police really know just about everything about everybody. The son and daughter were questioned separately from the mother; and their home was visited for corroboration on their living conditions (which they had described as very poor.)

After the 12 December interrogation, the subsource family waited again. They inquired once or twice as to what progress had been made, but were again given the "no comment" answer. The holidays passed and so did most of January before they got an answer.

And that, too, came suddenly. On 26 January they were called in and told to give up their German passports. They asked why, but got no answer. They had heard of other foreigners losing their passports permanently in this manner, and after such a long wait, were afraid this would happen to them, too. But they had no choice and gave up their passports. They spoke to French Legation officials about it and were told there just to wait and see. (The French handle emigration for the Germans.)

Late in the afternoon of 3 February, a policeman (Militia-man) came to their apartment with a postcard saying that they should report the Ministry of the Interior at Calea Victoriei, near the King's

Palace. Only the brother and sister were^{at} home at the time, but they went along anyway. At eight o'clock that evening, a lieutenant greeted them cordially and gave them their permit to leave (Ausweis.) The mother got hers early the next morning.

The subsorce family noted an immediate change in attitude on the part of Rumanian officials. Where they had previously been cold and unapproachable, they suddenly became cordial and helpful. The family was given names and places where they must report to prepare for their departure, which, to their amazement, was to be on 8 February, four days hence.

The last four days were a nightmare of rush and confusion. But they had to have everything ready. They were told that if they were not over the Rumanian border into Hungary by 12 o'clock midnight the 8th, they'd be brought back and have to start their processing all over again.

The subsorce family had its train travel arranged through the French Legation; they themselves could not make arrangements through a travel agency. Money came from the Swiss Red Cross, through the German Red Cross. Fare from BUCHAREST to the border town of CURTICI cost 78 Lei per person; the fare from there to PREILASSING in Germany was 244 Swiss Francs for the three family members together. This latter sum could be paid only in the Swiss money. The family's 120 kilograms of luggage cost 134 Swiss Francs. (Subsorses explained that persons who had had jobs in Rumania were allowed 70 kgs of luggage a piece, but those who had been unemployed, which was the case with this family, were only allowed 40 kgs per person. Anyone leaving could take extra luggage with them upon special application to the Foreign Ministry, but this luggage needed to be minutely inventoried and was heavily taxed at a flat rate of 270 Lei.)

Subsorses were told at the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Bursel Street 3, what they could and could

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not take out with them. Subsource Family was not severely bothered by these regulations because they had already sold most of their possessions over the previous seven years; but they were told that jewelry (except a wedding band,) bronze, silver, gold, furs, rugs, and such items were forbidden. So were books, unless you got special permission from the General Direction of Press and Book Distribution attached to the Council of Ministers. Neither could you take out anything that was new, only second hand or used things; nor any strictly Rumanian product such as a national blouse or suit. They were told, too, that they must leave all personnel documents behind. They had surrendered birth and marriage certificates in October 1951, and gave such things as ration card registration cards to relatives. They actually turned nothing over to the police.

And so the family checked with the French Legation, the Bank, the Railroad Station, the Police - and finally they were ready. Their luggage was closely gone through in the BUCHAREST railroad station and was not checked again. It is noteworthy that the Hungarians did not examine their luggage on either border; although Subsources were forbidden themselves to either open or approach their bags. They were not allowed to leave the train at any time during their journey to VIENNA; they ate what food they'd brought with them on the train, as there were no vendors selling anything on the train itself. Other than another German family and two single men from BUCHAREST, they noticed no one else that rode their same train over the Rumanian-Hungarian and Hungarian-Austrian borders. They rode third class the whole way.

Arriving in VIENNA, they said it was like coming into another world - the difference was that great.

Subsource family has no answers as to why and how they were chosen to leave, among the many hundreds of others who are also waiting to get out. They believe at least 100 other Reichsdeutsche families are registered in BUCHAREST. October 1951 was the date of the last legal departure - the long unexplained silence between then and 8 February is still a complete mystery to them. So is the great last minute rush, and the 12 o'clock midnight deadline for being over the Rumanian border.

But the subsources did not ask too many questions in the last days - they were happy enough to be on their way.