

DOBROGEA BETWEEN 1916 AND 1918 IN GERMAN HISTORICAL SOURCES*

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Abstract. The article examines some documents created by the German Stage Administration of Dobrogea, which began to organize itself since October 1916 on an area of 7,700 km², which included the county of Constanța and a strip in southern Tulcea. In the absence of historical sources destroyed by war and occupiers, the remaining historical sources from the German administration are essential for knowing the situation of an important area of the region between the Danube and the Black Sea. Essential information is included in the **Memorandum of the German Stage Administration of Dobrogea issued in mid-April 1917**. Knowledge of demographic realities is possible from the data in two statistics: **Statistics of the Inhabitants of the German Stage Administration in Dobrogea, 15 May 1917** and **Statistics of the Inhabitants of the German Stage Administration in Dobrogea, February 15, 1918**. Another document, **Report on Conversations that took place between commanders charged with the exploitation phase, supply officers and commanders of regiments and battalions**, refers to 16 themes. “Curierul Dobrogei” periodical is published in German by the German Administration, later with a supplement in Bulgarian and Turkish. The German government printed **Images from Dobrogea**, a valuable collective volume, with the contributions of major German scientists.

Keywords: Dobrogea, WWI, German Stage Administration of Dobrogea, wealth exploitation, demography

The campaign plan prepared by the General Staff under which Romania entered the war in the summer of 1916, for achieving the major national objective, first against Austria-Hungary and later against the Central Powers, implied a major front in southern Dobrogea, the “strategic defensive” against Bulgaria’s military reaction, while covering the landing and stopping the Russian and Serbian troops south of Cernavodă – Constanța line. Later, from Dobrogea a “limited attack” was expected up to the line Rusciuk – Șumla – Varna in order to stop the troops from Bulgaria, Germany, Turkey and Austria-Hungary and

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eliminate the possibility of an attack toward and across the Danube, which would have threatened the strategic operations in Transylvania.¹

After the Romanian Army entered the war on the evening of 14/27 August 1916, the fighting on the front in Dobrogea, as well as that across the Carpathians, in Transylvania, was affected by the disaster at Turtucaia (August 24 – September 6, 1916), where Romania faced a heavy and humiliating defeat.

The evolution of the frontline between the Danube and the Black Sea was but a series of successive attempts to stop the enemy offensive. Although subsequently Romanian and Russian-Serbian units opposed a staunch resistance until December 22, 1916, when most of Dobrogea was occupied by Bulgarian, German and Turkish troops, except for the Danube Delta, which Romania still controlled.²

The advance of the troops of the Central Powers caused in Dobrogea, especially among Romanian representatives of the state, a certain state that evolved from concern to panic. In Constanța, the events after the country's entry into war and the dramatic day of 9 October 1916, when the city was evacuated by the authorities, military convoys and other populations, are known to us through studying original historical sources.³

The population of Constanța began to leave the town in a hurry in early September 1916. The events were precipitated under the impact of the aviation bombings carried out by the German and Russian military authorities' decisions. The decision of Admiral Patton, commander of the Russian squadron in the port of Constanța, to reload, at night, the materials on the quay and go to Sevastopol strongly affected the morale of the people in Constanța.⁴ Aware that the petroleum products stored at the petrol station could not be evacuated, prefect O. Mumuianu obtained from General A.M. Zaiioncikovski, commander of the 47th Russian Division, in the morning of October 9, the approval for the deposits to be burned,

¹ Constantin Kirițescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României, 1916-1918*, 2nd revised and completed, vol. I. Editura Casei Școalelor, București, 1925, pp. 444-445; 473-478. Colonel dr. V. Alexandrescu, ș.a., *Istoria militară a poporului român de la cucerirea independenței de stat până la înfăptuirea Horii Unirii de la 1918 în anii înfăptuirii Primului Război Mondial*, București; 1988, pp. 431-437; *Campaniile din Dobrogea. Rapoarte de război din Marele Cartier General*, in *Bilder aus der Dobrudscha 1916-1918 / Imagini din Dobrogea 1916-1918*. Trans. Gustav Rükert, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2011, pp. 316-334.

² Valentin Ciorbea, *Evoluția Dobrogei între anii 1918-1944. Contribuții la cunoașterea problemelor geopolitice, economice, demografice, sociale și ale vieții politice și militare*. 2nd revised and completed edition. Foreword by Acad. Florin Constantiniu, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2008, p. 34.

³ See *Idem*, *Constituirea sistemului româno-rus pentru apărarea portului Constanța august 1916*, in *Tradiție, Istorie, Armata* (Coord. Olimpiu Daniel Glodarenco), vol. I. Editura Sitech, Craiova, Editura Muzeului Național "Regele Ferdinand", 2015, pp. 445-449; *Idem*, *Evoluția Dobrogei*, pp. 30-43.

⁴ Romanian Military Archives, the Sea Division archive, file 18, f. 34.

the order not being executed by Admiral Patton “under the pretext that Constanța would be saved”.⁵ The approval for the evacuation on October 8 was also late, as troops of the Central Powers were ready to break through the southern part of the city. The goods of the state, army and institutions could not be evacuated. People sought refuge in a haste “with a small suitcase, or even less”; the first concern was to ensure the transport of the wounded, of the documents and archives of the Council, as reflected in a report of the prefect on October 11, 1916, to the Government and to the High General Command.⁶

We find out what happened to the city archive from a document from 1919 entitled “Memorandum on the damage done by the enemy in Constanța city” submitted by the City Hall to the Interior Ministry. It is confirmed that the archive “was mostly saved” and taken to Brăila. Subsequently, by order of the German Stage management it is returned to Constanța, being stored in the cellars and attics of the building occupied by the Stage Commandant. At the request of the traders in Constanța, who lacked wrapping paper, the files of the City Hall were sold to them. Everything was lost.⁷

During the German occupation, which lasted from October 9, 1916 to November 1918 there were kept a few documents in the Archive of the City Hall of Constanța owned by Constanța County National Archives, where there are several files of the German administration that offer information on different aspects (wood supply, wages, education, etc.) regarding the evolution of the city.⁸ For other places no such sources were kept. However, through historical documentary sources created by the German military authorities in charge of an important area of Dobrogea we have access to some information. The first presentation of some documents had been done in the review “Archives of Dobrogea” in 1919, as we will see further.

The causes that determined Germany to build up its own Stage administration between the Danube and the Black Sea come from the most important German historical source: **Memorandum of the German Stage Administration of Dobrogea drawn up in mid-April 1917.**⁹

After the occupation of Dobrogea, the Bulgarian government created and installed its own structures “with prefects, vice-prefects, mayors and three member committees”¹⁰ for the administration and theft of goods in the region. In

⁵ “Dobrogea Jună” (Constanța), an XIV, no. 3, December 25, 1919.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Apud Stoica Lascu, in “România de la Mare”, I, no. 1/1992, p. 29.

⁸ National Archives Constanța branch, the Archives of the City Hall of Constanța, files 1-10/1917; 1-13/1918; Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Regimul ocupației militare la Constanța* (oct. 1916 – dec. 1918), in “Analele Dobrogei”, new series, IV, no. 1, Constanța, 1998, pp. 95-102.

⁹ *Denkschrift der Deutschen Etappen Verwaltung in der Dobrudscha. Abgeschlossen Mitte April 1917 / Memoriu al Administrației germane de Etapă din Dobrogea* (Eds. Valentin Ciorbea, Constantin Cheramidoglu, Walter Rastatter), Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2012. (Passim)

¹⁰ C.B., *op. cit.*, p. 127.

Constanța a prefect of Dobrogea was appointed, subordinated to the government in Sofia. The territory was divided into six sub-sections based in Constanța, Medgidia, Cernavodă, Rasova and Silistra. Actually, the respective organization was structured on the basis of the military liaison points.

To send a strong signal to the Bulgarian society, Prime Minister Rodoslavov came to Dobrogea and participated in the installation of the Bulgarian mayors in Constanța, Caraharman¹¹, Hârșova, Cernavodă, Rasova and Silistra. In the first three places, police stations and law courts to apply the legislation of the neighbouring state were installed. The Romanian magistrates, rejected, were arrested according to “war procedures” on charges that they harmed the interests of the Bulgarian state.¹² Bulgarian was imposed as the official language.

The Memorandum unequivocally states that the objectives of the civil and military Bulgarian authorities, in the first weeks, were concerned only with “the spoliation of the population on the territory for the army, deserters tracking and gathering cattle”.¹³ The document emphasizes that the work of the Bulgarian administration was “directed to enslave the last economic forces still existing to Bulgarian interests and to the private interests of the officials.”¹⁴

Through the policy applied in Dobrogea, Bulgaria put its partners – Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey – at a disadvantage, creating difficulties to them. Very quickly “the allies were not on the same side”, as supply issues and the measures in Sofia to solely control Dobrogea turned it into the main cause of friction in the alliance of the Central Powers.¹⁵ Germany was experiencing a shortage of engine oil and strategic materials, oil, cereals, etc., which were, according to Lt. Col. Van Bergh, Chief of Staff of the German Administration of the Danube and Black Sea, “the nerve of the war” and Dobrogea held such products.¹⁶ On the other hand, Bulgaria wanted to exploit the province for its own purposes, an attitude that led to misunderstandings and even military clashes in Dobrogea, which imposed the adoption by the management of the German army of certain measures to deal with the actions of the Bulgarian troops. The government in Berlin decided to install between the Danube and the Black Sea a military stage administration as it had done in the other occupied regions.

The order for establishing what was originally called **the German Territorial Administration of Romanian Dobrogea** was issued on 24 October 1916. Subsequently, the military structure was renamed **the German Stage**

¹¹ Caraharman – today the village of Corbu.

¹² *Denkschrift*, p. 27.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

¹⁵ Von Björn Opfer-Klinger, *Eine kleine Region spaltet den Verbund – Die Dobrukscha als Konfliktregion im Ersten Weltkrieg*, in “Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik”; Heft No. 1u.2/Herbst 2014, p. 47 și urm.

¹⁶ C.B., *op. cit.*, p. 119.

Administration of Dobrogea. At its command was appointed Lieutenant General Kurt (Curt) von Unger as inspector, under Field Marshal Mackensen, commander of the German troops in the occupied territory of Romania. The main mission of the military administration “was collecting and distributing supplies and commissioning a new economy of war production”.¹⁷

The territory in Dobrogea, where the German Stage Administration was installed, was 7,700 km². It included the county of Constanța and a strip in Tulcea County bounded by an imaginary line east of Cape Doloșman, the extension Jurilovca – Slava Rusă and Ostrov to the west. In the north of the Danube, the control was held by the 3rd Bulgarian Army.

The Stage Administration had five military, economic and administrative structures. For instance, the **Staff** had been assigned five officers having as chief, as stated above, Lieutenant Colonel Van den Bergh. **The economic staff** coordinated the economic activity of the Economic Commission, commanded by the cavalry captain Kreth as president, having five subordinate officers responsible for the agricultural department, the technical department and department of industrial materials. The other two had office and other responsibilities of command. The economic staff included the **Service of raw materials of war**, the command of which was held by a captain.

A third structure, the **Administrative service**, was assigned to officers and civilians who were responsible for intendency; civil administration, the board of war and justice issues. **The Health service, the Veterinary service, the Directorate of constructions** and a military priest were subordinate to the same service.

For economic and military reasons the area was divided into six stages commandments:

A. Constanța (262) staffed with four officers; B. Medgidia (294) with three officers; C. Caraomer (274) with three officers; D. Cuzgun¹⁸ (295) with two officers; E. Hârșova (293) with three officers; F. Cogealac, two officers with economic responsibility and also for the coastguard between Cape Midia and Cape Doloșman, subordinated to the commandment in Hârșova. Each stage commandment was divided into sub-regions, and the towns in sectors.¹⁹

A fourth structure of the Administration was represented by the German troops deployed in Dobrogea: the 1st Regiment of Reserve Hunters Troops, the 12th “of Landsturm” / 19th Battalion and “Landsturm” XVIII / 55th Battalion.²⁰

¹⁷ Günter Klein, *Ocupația germană în România din anii 1916-1918 în lumina memorialisticii germane despre Primul Război Mondial*, in “Buletinul Arhivelor Militare. Document”, XI, no. 4 (42), 2008, p. 5.

¹⁸ Ion Corvin.

¹⁹ *Denkschrift*, p. 1.

²⁰ C.B., *De sub ocupația germană în Dobrogea*, in “Arhiva Dobrogei”, vol. II, no. 2, April-June 1919, p. 117-118.

Most troops were installed in Constanța for evaluating the productive capacity and the products in the warehouses, which had to be transported to the partners in the Central Powers.

To organize the transport of raw materials and technical maintenance of pipelines that bring raw oil from the port of Constanța oil station, the **Fuel service** was created. Another structure took over the maintenance of electrical installations in the port and city of Constanța to ensure the lighting, technical supervision of the silos and the installations of the water plants at Murfatlar (Basarabi) and Cernavodă, supervised by four officers and “many technically qualified teams or locksmiths”.²¹

The Section for agriculture was concerned with organizing the agricultural works executed by German soldiers as well as “the management of larger lands”.²²

To purchase products from the area controlled by the 3rd Bulgarian Army and the civilian purchasers, who took over various items from the population, a centre was organized **For raw materials**, handled by four officers.

The Memorandum informs us that until March 27, 1917 when the employment of military personnel for all structures was over, the **Stage Administration** “was initially powerless”²³, as the Bulgarian officials refused to collaborate with the military Germans, in the context of a lack of regulations established at government level between Germany and Bulgaria. From late November 1916 the leaders of the German Administration started replacing the Bulgarian officials, an operation conducted “with many difficulties, after long negotiations and with great discontent that were about to deteriorate the relations between comrades”, in the opinion of historian Constantin Kirițescu.²⁴

The reality is confirmed by Gen. Erich Ludendorff, who would emphasize in his memoirs, published in Romania in 1919 that “Bulgarians caused many hardships in Dobrogea to the German authorities and the German government suffered from such harassment.”²⁵

As the city council imposed in Constanța by the Bulgarian occupiers was not representative it was changed with citizens “of the most respectable of all nationalities in the city”.²⁶ The Bulgarian side reacted immediately arresting rejected members, bringing war provisions as justification.²⁷

Until January 5, 1917, when the leaderships of the two armies, German and Bulgarian, signed the Convention at Pless, there was “an unacceptable and

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

²⁴ Const. Kirițescu, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

²⁵ *Memoriile generalului Ludendorff despre războiul mondial și prăbușirea Germaniei*. Editura “Răspândirea culturii”, București, 1919, p. 437-438.

²⁶ *Denkschrift*, p. 27.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

damaging situation for the prestige of the Stage Administration”, which failed to control its territory and fulfil in good conditions the orders for which it had been established.²⁸

The document reports that the two key officials in Constanța, the prefect and the police chief, had to be subordinated to General Von Unger. The prefect’s duties were limited to the role of “helping the consultative organ” of the head of the German Civil Administration for the activity of villages and the representation of the Bulgarian population.²⁹ Until February 15, 1917 the Bulgarian officials were dismissed, the entire administration reorganized, the stage and economic commandments replaced the prefect, vice-prefects and mayors. Some larger villages due to the small population were treated as small ones, and Cernavodă and Hârșova as rural areas.³⁰ In Constanța an Austrian mayor was appointed, namely Sidorovicz, who had lived in the city for 18 years, only up to the arrival of the administrative officer who took over the affairs of the town hall.

The population was warned, through notices, that the entire administration “is led only by the economic and stage commandments.”³¹ Later, at the insistence of the Bulgarian government, Germany agreed that the stage commandments be led by a Bulgarian officer, with the status of a representative, and in localities with Romanian and Bulgarian populations be installed Bulgarian mayors, Muslim mayors in the localities with Turkish and Tartar populations and German mayors for German communities. Regarding the ethnic problems in Dobrogea, the last word was reserved to the government of the Reich.³²

The war had affected “the region to a large extent”, **the Memorandum** states. Most of the villages in the fighting areas “had been burned and completely destroyed.” “The refugees led their lives among the ruins, being robbed of all the necessary means to resume their economic activities”. The image of “the territory devoid of humans and animals, made through the wilderness, a desolate impression, with the exception of a few villages”.³³

Until April 1917, when **the Memorandum** was drafted, the number of the existing population in the Stage was unknown, a census being impossible to be conducted. In mid-February 1917, an approximate total population of about 80,000 was estimated, of which 26,300 Romanians (32.1%); Turks and Tatars 25,100 (30.6%); 20,800 Bulgarians (25.7%); Germans 5,300 (6.5%); Greeks and Armenians 4,500 (5.1%). The population of Constanța had diminished by 7,100 inhabitants, as before the war it had been 34,000, according to the figures included in the document.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 29-30.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

³² Von Björn Opfer-Klinger, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

The Turks and Tatars numbered 3,100, 800 Bulgarians, 300 Germans, 180 Austrians, 700 Greeks, 250 Armenians, 110 Albanians, 1,300 Romanians.³⁴

The first task of the leadership of the Stage, given the consequences of the war and the lack of legal certainty, was to restore public confidence, to support it to resume economic activity. Gradually, groups from Dobrogea returned from their refuge, an activity controlled by a structure created to this effect, the Refugee reception centre in Brăila. In Cernavodă and Ostrov, there were established pickup points of those who returned to the region. After the medical examination, vaccination and deworming, compact groups were guided to their settlements. Until April 1917, 15,296 people from Dobrogea came back to the right of the Danube, through Brăila, with 5.562 cattle. Through Fetești and Piua Petrei, there were large columns that were not medically controlled or counted. The same situation has happened in Cernavodă and Hârșova.³⁵

The awareness of the demographic changes imposed the leaders of the Stage Administration the performing of two censuses whose data were published on May 15, 1917 and February 15, 1918, in the form of brochures. Unfortunately, they were not preserved; the content is however known through the analysis done immediately after the war by Constantin Brătescu, the renowned professor from Constanța, the first researcher interested in the German Administration in Dobrogea.³⁶

The first, actually a statistical entitled **Einwohnerverzeichnis in Bereich der Deutschen Etappen – Verwaltung in der Dobrudscha, nach dem stande vom May 15, 1917** (*Statistics of the Residents of the German Stages Administration in Dobrogea*, 15 May 1917) comprises the “overall figures of the nationalities of the six subdivisions managed by the German stages”.³⁷ According to the census, the number was 5,333 that is 33 more than the best approximation in 1917. The Bulgarians had risen to 28,910, meaning 8,110 inhabitants more. The growth of the Bulgarian population is explained by the installation of their administration by the government in Sofia. The Turks and Tatars also recorded an increase of 9,966 souls, being 35,066 in total. The figure for Romanians was 87,990. The number of Russians, Armenians and Jews etc. was 6,065. The census in Constanța included 26,708 residents. Before entering the war, Constanța had 33,918 inhabitants.³⁸ Comparing the data, a difference of 7,210 inhabitants is detected. We appreciate that the number of refugees was higher. The increase can be put in relation to the Bulgarians recently arrived in

³⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 9.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

³⁶ C. Brătescu, *Două statistici etnografice germane în Dobrogea, 15 mai 1917; 15 februarie 1918*, in “Arhiva Dobrogei”, Journal of the Society for the Research and Study of Dobrogea, vol. 2, no. 1, 1919, pp. 60-71.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

³⁸ *Tomi-Constanța*. Monograph by Colonel Ionescu Dobrogianu, professor. With the design of the city and street indices, Constanța, 1931, p. 97.

the area. In Medgidia, 31,464 were registered, at Caraorman (Negru-Vodă) 15,388, at Cuzgun (Ion Corvin) 32,154, 27,916 in Cogealac, 35,682 in Hârșova. The German Stage Administration in Dobrogea stated that in May 15, 1917 the total population in the area counted 169,322 inhabitants.

The second set of eight pages was named **Einwohnerverzeichnis in Bereich der Deutschen Etappen – Verwaltung in der Dobrudscha, nach dem stande vom** February 15, 1918 (*Statistics of the Residents of the German Stage Administration in Dobrogea*, 15 February 1918).³⁹ The census specifies the number of localities existing in the stage, a total of 247, and the sub-phases as follows: Constanta 32; Medgidia 48; Caraorman 39; Cuzgun 49; Cogealac 37; Hârșova 42.

Secondly, this situation also presented the percentage of the residents: Romanians 51.97%; Turko-Tatars 20.71%; Bulgarians 17%; Lippovan Russians 3.65%; Germans 3.15%; Armenians, Greeks, Jews, etc. 3.52%.⁴⁰ The statistics of the Stage Administration supports, through figures that may not be suspected of pro-Romanian partisanship, that the Romanians, although in difficult conditions, were the majority population in the **Stage Administration of Dobrogea**.

It must be noted that during the Stage the movement of people was controlled and strictly regulated. On 15 January 1917, through an order of the day completed with application instructions, citizens could travel, in sub-phases, with an identity card issued by the structure management across its validity. For travel outside the sub-phases a “pass” signed by the local commander was needed.⁴¹ Entering the Stage area was made based on the specifications of a new order of the day of 27 January 1917, made only with the approval of the German Administration. Its application, according to **the Memorandum**, faced difficulties from the local Bulgarian government headquarters, who granted passports to their citizens “without approval even if only in one case.”⁴²

Communication with the population was made through the leadership of the administrations of the sub-phases through notices, as mentioned, and with the subordinate troops by a periodical publication whose first three issues bore the name of *Deutsche Etappen Verwaltung in der Dobrudscha* (the first edition was not preserved; most likely it was printed on November 21, 1916, and the next two issues on 22 and 23 November the same year). Starting with the fourth issues, the newspaper changed its name to *Dobrudscha Bote*.⁴³ Since 1917, the *Courier* published “a supplement in Bulgarian and Turkish on the same sheet”.⁴⁴

³⁹ C. Brătescu, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Denkschrift*, p. 39.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ Dumitru Constantin Zamfir, Octavian Georgescu, *Presa dobrogeană (1879-18980). Bibliografie comentată și adnotată*, Constanța, 1985, p. 113.

⁴⁴ Emanoil Bucuța, *Cincizeci de ani de presă dobrogeană în 1878-1928. Dobrogea cincizeci de ani de viață românească*, București, 1928, p. 739.

To be able to perform the main tasks regarding the raw material necessary in the war for Germany and its allies, the German Stage Administration of Dobrogea put to the fore the issue of taxes and the improvement of the economic situation. The taxes introduced by the Bulgarian officials were removed and there was a return to the fees charged during the period of the Romanian administration. Due to lack of documents regarding the precarious economic situation and the tax system, Constanța had to be fully recovered. From what the Bulgarians had cashed from the taxes on the sale of bread and fish amounts were allocated for administrative needs. The money did not cover the expenses so that the City received a loan of 30,000 lei from the Financing Deposit of the territory controlled by the leadership of the Stage.⁴⁵

In order to determine the quantities and types of existing products, the economic situation was evaluated. They began with the sub-phase of Constanța. On 5 November 1916, in the port silos there were 10,340 tons of wheat, 60 tons of rye, 3,050 tons of flour, 3,750 tons of corn, 1,090 tons of oats, 13,500 tons of barley, 500 tons of bran and 2,600 tons of beans.⁴⁶ From the surroundings, 685 tons of barley and 556 tons of beans were gathered. The quality of the stocks was poor, the most part being affected by high humidity, which is why the barley, for example, had sprouted. From what they could use, a part was allocated by the end of the year to German troops, the 3rd Bulgarian Army and the inhabitants of Constanța.

Most cereals were distributed to Turkey under the Convention in Sofia signed on 2 December 1916 by the authorized leaderships of the armies of the Central Powers. The requisitioned or purchased grain were given to the 3rd Army for consumption, and the peasants retained the seed and food for animals. The villages that could not provide for their food were also given some grain.⁴⁷

The leadership of **the German Stage Administration** decided to strictly control food supplies, grain and animals, to ensure the feeding of their troops and of the population. The information coming from the territory was alarming. The Stage headquarters reported that a large cereal deficit cannot “cover the food needs of the population and the sowing ones”.⁴⁸ To determine the peasants to “openly” give the grain stored it was decided that the takeover is paid in cash.⁴⁹

The same decision was applied in the case of “animals purchased for slaughter”.⁵⁰ The commanders inventoried the livestock. In the territory, they found 29,000 horses, 20,000 cattle, 78,000 sheep, 1,100 goats and 5,500 pigs.⁵¹

⁴⁵ *Denkschrift*, p. 37.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

The capacity of the owners to feed the animals, as outlined, was “bad” because of the harsh winter, with deep snow. Only about 100 kg of meat was ensured, which was quite insufficient for the German troops. It was considered that “meat eating for the population was out of the question.”⁵²

If they initially ensured the residents in villages various foods, the task of purchasing the essentials was transferred to mayors. Where localities could not resolve the issue for themselves, compensation plans were approved.

The market in Constanța lacked products such as coffee, tea, sugar, oil, vinegar, etc. “but – **the Memorandum** mentions – this situation exists in the country and the population must accept it.”⁵³

The activity of the mills, except those controlled by the Bulgarians, was placed under military watch. From what was being grinded, those who worked were allocated 500 grams of flour and 250 grams of corn meal for a child. The residents who were not engaged in work for the benefit of the occupants received only corn.

The needs for food increased as groups of refugees returned home. Crossing points at Ostrov, Hârșova and Cernavodă were arranged as food distribution centres.

The attention of the German and Bulgarian occupiers also targeted the existing inventory of oil products in the ports of Constanța, Medeea and Palas, the requisition and the division among occupants of these products.

Two evaluations were performed. The first completed before November 4, 1916, when Russian ships bombed the oil deposits, revealed that the total inventory by product category was as follows: petrol 133,000 tons; oil 55,000 tons; 27,800 tons of fuel oil; Diesel 21,390 tons; 1,150 tons of engine oil. 150 barrels, each with 175 kg engine oil, were also found.

The attack of the Russian ships destroyed seven storage tanks and five were damaged, losing 16,300 tons of oil, petrol and diesel. The second inventory data showed that the first report was not in accordance with reality.⁵⁴ New measurements were taken and the composition of the stored products was analysed. The quantities found and presented **the Memorandum** show that in Constanța there were 118,214 tons of light and heavy petrol; 63 tons of oil; 10,198 tons of Diesel; 32,763 tons of fuel oil; 149 engine oil and 16 tons of naphthalene. At Medeea were inventoried 100,000 centres of tin and wooden barrels.⁵⁵

The Sofia Convention, in paragraphs 3-4, specified that the expeditions had to be made according to the transport possibilities. Germany reserved the gasoline for light aircraft and the Diesel was required for submarines. The other products went to Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria-Hungary. The requirements being pressing,

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 49.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 49-50.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

a new shipping protocol was drawn up, the first products being from the endangered stocks, those that belonged “to enemy states” and, thirdly, products from the companies including the German captain.⁵⁶ In reality, the shipments depended on the number and capacity of the railway tank wagons. In the stringent conditions, water transport was used as well. From Constanța, vessels and ships were sent to Istanbul, Turkey, and Germany, loaded barges and tankers at Rusciuk and Cernavodă. Since 19 January 1917, when the plant transfer of products from cars to barges started functioning at Cernavodă, the first ship was loaded. Between November 1916 and March 1917, there were shipped by rail 24,888 tons and 647 tons by carts. It was expected that after the improvement of the weather and the use of trains to transport petroleum products, to send 20,000 tons in April.⁵⁷ Until 31 March, Germany took over 14,170 tons, Bulgaria 8,587 tons and Turkey 2,241 tons.

A new issue emerged in the Romanian-Bulgarian relations regarded the refinery in Cernavodă, which the Bulgarians had seized together with 24 tons of petrol, oil and engine oil. The refinery had been taken over by **the Stage Administration** on February 26, 1917 “after long disputes with the Bulgarians”.⁵⁸ The inventory conducted highlighted the existence, in tanks and barrels, of an amount of engine oil of 48 tons, 78 tons Diesel, petrol 375 tons, 170 tons raw oil and 174 tons oil. Small amounts of engine oil were shipped to Constanța for needs and quality improvement. The lack of staff made the other quantities remain stored.

The increase of the intensity of the operations related to oil products made the Accounting Service and the headquarters of sub-phase to increase their staff from 34, in December 1916, to 371, out of which: 136 German soldiers, 14 Turkish soldiers, 32 civilians and 170 Romanian prisoners. The Turkish soldiers were used in barrel repairs activities and the Romanian prisoners and civilians in reconditioning activities.

The German administration wanted to improve the shipping capacity. In the absence of the plans of the buried pipelines, new pipelines were installed on the surface. Another problem was related to the change in pipeline valves to change the direction of transport from tanks to tank wagons. The record was for a tanker to be loaded in 6 minutes and 50 ships per day.⁵⁹ The activities were affected by fires with some installations, situations that imposed that the fire brigades be maintained “in permanent alert”.⁶⁰

Until 5 November 1916, **the Stage Administration**, through its **Centre of raw materials for war**, carried out specific detection, assessment, confiscation / purchase of various raw materials in Constanța and its surroundings. That

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

category mainly included animal products and by-products, such as various types of leather, beef, sheep, goat, pork, venison, horn, hair, wool and oil, linseed, sown and wild rapeseed, mustard, poppy, sunflower seeds, sesame, oil resulting from processing, olive oil and flax, opium, tobacco and silk cocoons. To these we could add ferrous products, copper, nickel, brass, tin, zinc, lead and various alloys, chemicals for tanning and waste rubber. On the first assessment, it was appreciated that those products amounted to 2,500,000 Marks.

The activity spread across the region among the 200 civilian purchasers, mayors and “other adequate persons” who worked under the coordination of officer economists. The raw materials lacking owners were confiscated; others acquired and stored in organized centres near the rail and truck access roads.⁶¹ They took care to leave seed to producers for spring sowings.

On April 1, 1917 the value of the war raw materials had gone to 5,209,616.60 German Marks, the purchases being rated as “satisfactory”⁶². The requisitions could be higher but there were difficulties because the Bulgarians took over such products and there was failure in the continuity of transport because of the lack of horses, wagons and of the bad roads.

Germany mainly took over the oilseeds, the other products being distributed for the needs of their troops and for those of the Bulgarian troops, and through the Commission in Budapest who managed the requisitions.

The mine from Altân Tepe was taken over by the Centre for raw materials and Technical service. After inspecting the deposit, 3,000 tons of copper and sulphur were found. Since the installations had been destroyed and the wells flooded, preparatory work for the resumption of the production that could provide manpower was undertaken. The estimates revealed that they could count, in June 1917, on the extraction of 100 tons of copper ore.⁶³

The 1916 autumn sowings were much reduced and thousands of hectares of corn not harvested because of the transformation of the region between the Danube and the Black Sea in a theatre of military operations. What the farmers managed to raise, they stored, as it was the practice in Dobrogea, in holes dug in their households. The big landowners resorted to silos harvest storing.

Agricultural machinery were found “in large numbers” due to the lack of manpower and large surfaces on which specific works⁶⁴ were being done, but most of them were damaged. Their redeploying required spare parts hard to find. There was a lack of manpower and draft animals. The peasants who remained there were afraid to go out into the field with carts as the Bulgarian officials

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 95.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

would confiscate them all. Research conducted in villages revealed that except for the localities where Bulgarians lived “almost no piece of land was ploughed.”⁶⁵

As the German troops made their presence felt in the countryside “feelings of safety and legality was awakened among the villagers and since then the spring sowings were started under the supervision of the headquarters and of those in charge”.⁶⁶

To stimulate production and attract farmers to undertake agricultural work, the German administration took some measures. The producers kept their lands, crops were purchased in advance advantageously “priced with cash money”; also plots were leased to 20 lei per hectare for 30,000 ha.⁶⁷ Seven estates of a total of 19,000 ha were managed directly by the German military.

The problem of the lack of draft animals was partially solved by buying through the Administration “a large number of animals that were lent to peasants. Carts owned by the German soldiers were also provided for a certain price. It was hoped that the return of more refugees across the Danube would increase the number of labour arms, a sector in which the situation was regarded as oppressive.”⁶⁸

Based on estimates regarded as “unsafe”, the areas sown in autumn were of 24,699.5 hectares, and in the spring of 1917 16,595.6 hectares were intended to be sowed.⁶⁹ Oilseeds and maize crops were primarily considered by the Stage Administration.

In the Stage area there were 400 ha of vineyard. They did not count on a “satisfactory” harvest, as they were not able to carry out the spraying with copper sulphate, which could not be purchased.⁷⁰

Steps to revitalize fishing, which ceased because of the fact that the Bulgarians requisitioned the boats and nets and 70-80% of the crop, were also taken. The fisheries in the sectors of Constanța and Jurilovca were conducted under the supervision of the Administration Stage. At Jurilovca fishing was restricted “because of its proximity to the territory of operations and the absence of a significant number of fishermen.” The average daily production was of 5-6,000 kg of fish.⁷¹ The Stage administration has showed its interest in the forestry sector as well. It was discovered that they could use oak bark for tanning, linden peel for manufacturing wrapping materials, charcoal burners and firewood.

The **Memorandum** appreciated Dobrogea for “hunting on the water, in one of the richest hunting regions in Europe.”⁷² The German authorities banned

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 85.

hunting for civilians and only the officers were allowed the hunt if they had a permit, while observing the ban rules and protecting the birds, especially the herons whose feathers were exported to Vienna.

The state of **the industry and technical enterprises** was not avoided. From the outset it was found that Dobrogea “was poor in industrial enterprises”.⁷³ The only cities that had “larger industrial plants” were Constanța and Cernavodă. Mechanized mills and oil mills could be found in many places, but the majority were damaged. The large lime kilns from Canara, Murfatlar (Basarabi) and Hârșova did not function, as the facilities had been “taken or damaged”.⁷⁴ At the beginning of 1917 in Bucharest were purchased tools and plants in order to manage to operate the existing equipment.

The installation of the silos in the port of Constanța, which housed, cleaned and loaded cereals, was considered “the best and largest in Europe.”⁷⁵ After making it function again, 5,800 tons were processed and loaded in ships until April 1917. The city power plant was equipped with 5 diesel engines of 200-400 C.P. and a large battery, but they were damaged and they could not be put into operation. From the Oil Factory a combustion engine was brought to partially operate the power plant, though much of the electricity grid had been affected by the bombings.

There were efforts to ensure water supply in Constanța as the water installations had been destroyed. Three small pumping stations were started; barrels of water were brought from Anadalchioii, Ovidiu and Murfatlar after they had been restored to service.

The **Stage administration** brought parts from Ghent, Belgium, to repair the largest mills in Constanța, which could grind 20 tons in 24 hours. Some workshops remained closed lacking production parts and raw materials. Some “factories” of beer, ice, soap were also put into operation. A printing press, taken over by the Stage Administration, ensured the prints required.

The cement plant in Cernavodă was estimated to require a capital of 250,000 German Marks to be operated. The 300 tons of cement and lime fine, in the factory’s warehouse, were requisitioned for military works. From the Screws Factory, the entire production was divided among Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. The Refinery in Cernavodă was placed partially in service, only the diesel production capacity from the raw materials brought to Constanța.⁷⁶

In the final chapters, the IVth, the Vth and the VIth of the **Memorandum**, the cases of the rail and sea transport, communications, health problems of the inhabitants, German troops and money circulation are presented.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 93, 95.

Upon entering the war Dobrogea had two main rails, the double-lined Constanța-Cernavodă and Medgidia Boteni on a single line. The latter had been built in Bazargic in 1909 and in 1913 was linked to the rail taken from Bulgaria.⁷⁷ During the military operations the rail and stations were partially destroyed. The occupants restored the rail to secure the transport of the goods looted from Dobrogea. The rhythm of the functionality of the rail was affected, according to the document, by the shortcomings of the rolling stock and personnel. The bad weather, with snow, in the winter of 1916 and landslides played their part in reducing transport. Another issue that affected the operation and movement came from the fact that the **German military Directorate of railways** in Dobrogea had to obey “the head of the Bulgarian railways”, a relationship that actually turned the structure into “an executive body of the Bulgarian Central Railways”⁷⁸. From the middle to the end of November 1916, 880 tons of various products were transported by rail. Beginning from January 27, 1917, grain shipments to Istanbul were opened to 10 wagons per day. There were periods of disruption because of the transports in Bulgaria’s interest.

On the main line of the Stage, Constanța-Cernavodă priority was given to transport shuttle tankers with oil products that were going to the petrol station to the loading port on the river. The first shipment was done on January 18, 1917, resumed at intervals of three days for a start. On March 31, 1917, 46 tankers were transported. Provided the extra 10 wagons to be received, they could go to 60 cars.

From Medgidia to Babadag the rail was built up to Ester.⁷⁹ It was intended to make an extension towards Prince Nicholas, by two campaign rails to ensure the 3rd Army supply and transport of ore from Altân Tepe.⁸⁰

Given that priority was given to the transport of strategic goods taken from the region, passenger transport was done “under less favourable conditions” in a regular rhythm. On Constanța-Dobrici-Varna one could travel within 24 hours and to Sofia the journey lasted 18 hours more.

The bridges over the Danube were no longer operational. The Borcea one was dynamited by the Romanian troops to prevent the passage of the Central Powers units to Muntenia and the bridge at Cernavodă was not included in circulation as the upper and lower belts had been affected by mild explosions. The German Stage leadership planned to repair the bridges and resume transport on this section of the railcar so as to ensure a good connection with Field Marshal Mackensen’s Command in Bucharest in 12-14 hours.⁸¹

⁷⁷ George C. Mănescu, *Evoluția căilor ferate în Dobrogea de la 1877 până în zilele noastre, din punct de vedere constructiv, în 1878-1929, Dobrogea cincizeci de ani de viață românească*, Cultura națională, București, 1928, p. 449.

⁷⁸ *Denkschrift*, p. 97.

⁷⁹ Ester, also called the Gorges of Dobrogea, in the area of Târgușor (Constanța county).

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 97.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

Shipping was done through the **German maritime section** of Constanța. Turkey was supported for freight, old sail repair, guidance for entering and exiting the port, conducting dredging and checks on Constanța-Varna line and beyond to ensure a navigation lane without mines. A special service of security and surveillance mission carried out by planes was ensured in the case of important shipments. They installed coastal observation stations on the Romanian and Bulgarian coast, coastal batteries at Mangalia, Șabla, in Caliacra and Balcic. Between December 1916 and April 1917, 72 vessels with grain and petroleum products, ships and sailing boats went out of the port of Constanța.⁸²

The most important river port was Cernavodă, where tank barges were loaded. From mid-January until the end of March 1917, 5,703 tons of various goods, corn, barley, wheat, oil and gasoline were loaded.

The German administration took over the existing telephone and telegraph networks in Dobrogea, to which they brought improvements to secure the connections in the territory. By the Army Communications Service telephones were installed “in the most important points” in military terms, such as the coastal observation stations. For communication with the authorities of the major places in the Stage the telegraph was also used. The Constanța-Istanbul cable line, which had been decommissioned by the Romanian authorities before retreating, was switched on February 22, 1917.⁸³

In terms of health, the Memorandum states that at the settlement of the Stage Administration there were risks of epidemics. There were cases of cholera spread by Russian and Romanian soldiers.⁸⁴ The troops deployed from Macedonia and Asia Minor came from areas with poor health and hygiene. The looting and destruction had affected all the pharmacies and drugstores, which no longer had any medication. The Romanian doctors had all fled.⁸⁵ In the rural area “the hygienic conditions were very poor.”⁸⁶

The entire population undertook vaccination against cholera, typhus and smallpox, an operation conducted with many difficulties because they were few doctors, great distances between settlements and the roads were bad.

Until the drafting of the report vaccination had been carried out in the localities on the main road networks “as well as everywhere where there were garrisoned troops”⁸⁷ to the stage of completion.

In the villages there were health committees under the leadership of the mayors in charge of the hygiene conditions and reporting suspicious disease. It

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 101.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, pp. 103, 105.

⁸⁴ Vezi Costel Coroban, *Potârnichele gri. Spitalele femeilor scoțiene în România 1916-1917*, Târgoviște, 2012, pp. 80-111.

⁸⁵ *Denkschrift*, p. 105.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

was ordered that soldiers and locals did not live in the same room. As measures of deworming the document mentions the use of the installation at the Military Hospital in Constanța. For the troops deployed in sub-phases, in the absence of disinfecting steam machines, there were improvised facilities in rooms where hot air was introduced. The troops were provided boxes of naphthalene, some quantities of petrol, oil and powder neozol. For smaller subunits, they had water disinfection devices and bathing wagons that travelled to the places of deployment, enabling all to take the regular hygiene precautions.⁸⁸ To avoid contamination by water, consumption was to be made only from bacteriologically verified sources or if boiled.

Hospitalizations were done in the military hospital in Constanța, where there were 30 beds and in the lazaretto, where 200 beds were arranged. Sections were organized for surgery, internal diseases, contagious diseases, a bacteriology laboratory, a dental clinic and a pharmacy. For civilians in Constanța, there was a “special lazaretto” in which two doctors, seven nurses and three assistants called from Bucharest were working. By special order, providing medicines to the population and the opening of a pharmacy were regulated. In addition to the civil hospital, there was an annex where an observation function centre for up to 1,000 refugees was arranged. A lazaretto was organized for prisoners of war. Territorial dispensaries were opened with sanitary sub-officers with doctors who had returned home. At Cernavodă, lazaretto-boats were arranged.

Applying the above mentioned measures prevented epidemics and the typhus spread to the civilian population was controlled. More cases of deaths were recorded among Romanian prisoners because of poor nutrition and physical exhaustion. In such a camp 600 prisoners fell ill, of which 200 died.⁸⁹

The veterinary situation was kept under supervision. All the horses were investigated, the sick being slaughtered, isolated, permanent under notice so as not to extend the danger of contamination and produce larger losses. There were 73 horses infected with scabies and they were isolated and treated. A lazaretto for horses was arranged at the racetrack in Constanța where they could take care of 150 horses.

Cases of varicella occurred in the flocks of sheep of the army and the flock of a shepherd. The number of sick animals was 6,762 and they had to be isolated and treated. FMD was detected in a herd of cattle that belonged to the Bulgarians. Through quarantine measures the outbreak was removed.⁹⁰

The German administration approved of the circulation of the leu, leva and mark. The exchange rate between the mark and the other two coins was made based on a decision of the Ministry of War. On February 23, 1917 new banknotes

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 113.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 115, 117.

made by the National Bank of Romania were put into circulation, a decision well received by the population. In the occupied territories Germany introduced the so-called “requisition currency”. In Romania, only eight pieces printed on the front circulated.⁹¹

Since all the banks had ceased their activity they tried opening a new bank, but the idea was dropped when a fund was received through which municipalities could borrow to support their administrative expenses and for the peasants deprived of financial means.⁹² The economic and financial policy of the Administration aimed to help “the completely stagnant economic life” (sic) through the purchase of all products paid by cash or paying the work done in a tariff system.

A new assessment of all the issues that had caught the attention of the Administration was made after two months from the publication of **the Memorandum** in April 1917. On 16 June 1917, a “congress” was held in Constanța, with the participation of representatives “of the military administration and of the services economic exploitation of Dobrogea.”⁹³

Niederschrift der Besprechung mit den Etappen und Wirtschaftskommandanten, den Wirtschaftsoffizieren und Regiments und Bataillonskommandeuren (Report on the conversations that took place between the stage commanders and the commanders charged with the exploitation phase, with the supply officers and the commanders of regiments and battalions). The document was lost, but we know the content through a presentation in the journal “Archives of Dobrogea” in 1919, made by Professor Constantin Brătescu, by summarizing and quoting “as a whole the most important parts of this brochure, those which have documentary value.”⁹⁴ The following issues were discussed: 1. German Stage Administration tasks in relation to their allies; 2. Germany’s economic status and the German Stage Administration facilities; 3. Preparation of harvesting, autumn ploughing, renting the fields, wood purchasing; 4. Fishing; 5. The issue of supplies; 6. Technical problems; 7. Mineral oils; 8. Raw materials of war; 9. Communal administration; finances, taxes; 10. Communication routes; 11. Civil and criminal law; service compensation; 12. Health Service; 13. Fighting epidemics; 14. Regulating movements of civilians; 15. Gypsies payment; 16. Miscellaneous.

Lieutenant Colonel Van den Bergh, the main collaborator of Lieutenant General Kurt (Curt) von Unger, stressed in his address to the audience: “Romania’s entry into the war was lucky for us. Without it we can hardly imagine how Austria-Hungary would have managed this year regarding cereals, Germany regarding the oils, and all the allies together and in terms of the raw materials of

⁹¹ Petre Covacef, *Un punct de vedere german. Doi ani de ocupație militară în Dobrogea (1916-1918)*, in *Povestea farului genovez*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța 2007, p. 257.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 119.

⁹³ C.B., *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 116-133.

war.”⁹⁵ Then Van den Bergh pointed out clearly that “the main purpose of the German presence in Dobrogea targeted the acquisition of grain and raw materials for the industry, especially for the war one.”⁹⁶ He urged those present “to use their energy to increase productivity and the exploitation of the province since the duration of the war cannot be predicted.”⁹⁷

The head of the Agricultural section of the Economic Commission of the Stage Administration, Captain von Lösch presented the priorities of agriculture: preparation of harvesting, the operation the workshops that repaired tools and agricultural machinery that should be solved through the participation of “people capable of work and unemployed townfolk.”⁹⁸ For autumn ploughing, rapeseed sowings increased by 2%, as they produced the oil and fat products deficient in Germany. Abandoned arable land had to be distributed preferably to Germans, Turks and Bulgarians. Romanians and Roma were subject to compulsory work for the different wood and charcoals needs.

Lieutenant Colonel Van den Bergh also referred to the winter and spring crops. He identified the main causes of the poor results in agriculture: the delay of specific works, the fleeing population, the destruction of many villages, tools and agricultural machinery, as well as the losses caused by the Bulgarians. All the officers in charge of the sub-phases presented reports on crops, wood supply, the state of the agricultural machinery etc.

“The question of providing” consumer products was presented by intendancy officer Presting. Product supply to feed the military and the population was made on the Danube with ships that were unloaded at Cernavodă and transported by rail to Constanța. The transportation difficulties imposed, according to the officer, compliance with “the supreme principle” to provide food from Dobrogea.”⁹⁹ Presting drew attention to “the issue of feeding the horses.”

The cavalry captain Cuntze, in charge of the fishing in the Stage Administration, showed that when the German administration had settled “fishery had ceased”, the causes being the departure of fishermen, the seizure by the Bulgarian soldiers of fishing tools and the fish caught in a proportion of 70-80%. After discussion with the Bulgarians, which did not lead to the expected results, the Stage Administration took the fisheries from the Romanian state “and thus the fishermen in Dobrogea began to fish in more favourable conditions.”¹⁰⁰ The fishing zones were marked and supervised, the German military being forbidden from fishing. In the lakes on the Black Sea coast, in April and May 1917, there

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 118.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 119.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 123.

were caught 265,821 kg fish, distributed to civilians (88,808 kg), military personnel (67,103 kg); a quantity was also sent to Germany and to Brăila and 51,423 kg were pickled.¹⁰¹

The situation of the industrial capacity was presented by Captain Alisch, Head of Section. To what it had been found in the **Memorandum**, the situation in the industrial sector had not progressed significantly. The conclusion of the officer was that the industrial plants “are partially or completely unusable or destroyed.”¹⁰² Several workshops were put into operation.

The lieutenant Brabant, the chief of the Industrial materials section, assessed the situation of the petroleum products found when the Stage Administration settled in. 232,000 tons of various products were found; 20,000 tons were lost in the bombing carried out on the oil port of Constanța Station on 4 November 1916. The officer made reference to the products division, under the Convention of December 2, 1916, among the partners of the quadruple alliance. The measures for the purchase of oil, sunflower, furs and skins, wool, war raw material products were stated. All the bells had to be confiscated or the owners were issued vouchers.

The state of the administration, finances and schools was brought to the attention of the captain Cuntze, who coordinated the civil administration, too. In his report the officer resumed the situation found when the German soldiers installed, as shown in the **Memorandum** published in April 1917. It was stated that “before the arrival of the German-Bulgarian-Turkish armies, all the civil servants, especially the mayors, their staff, fled, taking the official seals and documents of value.”¹⁰³ Until January 5, the German government was installed; the Bulgarian one was replaced, except for some officials in Constanța. Cuntze stressed in his report that the Bulgarians constituted “the most upsetting element in the province” because “they obviously hinder our administration through agitations and their secret activity.”¹⁰⁴ The commanders of the sub-phases were ordered to have full authority to work according to the local practices. The financial situation was disorganized. It was decided that the taxes be paid on localities at three month-interval, “according to the financial capacity of each”, the amounts having to cover administration costs.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*. In “Arhiva Dobrogei”, vol. 2, no. 1, 1919, p. 83-84, G.M. Ionescu published under the title *De sub ocupație germană* data found in an existing folder in Constanța City Hall Constanta on the sale of fish. Every day, between April 1, 1917 and October 7, 1918 is entered into a spreadsheet that included data on the quantity, species, proceeds, the price per kilogram. Carp was most exploited. In 1917, they sold 82,728 kilograms and cashed 92.119 lei and in 1918, 67,337 kg in, which brought 101,475 lei. Statistics show that the population of Constanța (including Anadalchioii district) had 12,589 persons, a much diminished figure if compared to the figure from the census.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 125.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

The essay on school work pointed out that before the occupation, in the settlements in Dobrogea, a school and a “garden” (kindergarten) functioned. Moreover, the schools of the communities of Turks, Tatars and Russians were subsidized by the Romanian state. The occupation caused the cessation of school activities, “the school buildings were destroyed or employed for military purposes; foreign teachers were missing, being hospitalized or in the war; the Romanian ones largely fled. And teaching equipment was stolen.”¹⁰⁶

The Stage Administration took some measures to resume the educational process. In the Romanian-majority population villages they could reopen “the gardens” “to unburden the parents” forced by the occupants to carry out various jobs. German schools reopening was seen as a political obligation to “lift up and support the German spirit” among children.¹⁰⁷ Regarding the Bulgarians, the document stated that schools were set up in all localities with Bulgarian teachers being brought from Bulgaria after being demobilized. It was recommended to the sub-phases commanders not to rush the reopening of Romanian, Turkish, Tatar and Russian schools, the children being required to attend work with their parents. During the harvesting and threshing, schools were to be closed.

The architect Soppart, the head of the structure of transport routes and constructions, analysed the 512 km of roads in the Stage area. The main conclusion was that the situation was “largely bad”, extensive work on 200 kilometres being needed.¹⁰⁸

During the meeting there was the question of awarding compensations to the “Central Powers’ subjects” for the damage caused by war and requisitions. There was also concern for human health in the analysis.

Captain Cuntze drew attention to the movement restrictions to be imposed “to prevent espionage”¹⁰⁹. Six months travel permits were ensured to farmers only. Merchants received approval to travel only if they specified the goods. They drew attention not to grant permits for trading spirits and food, their sale being prohibited. The Stage borders had to be guarded to avoid uncontrolled immigration.

A problem for the German administration was the “Gypsy plague”. The president of the Economic Committee, the cavalry captain Kreth, expressed outrage over this category of people that could not be used in compulsory labour “because they disappear with tents and everything.” Only in Medgidia and Cararoman they could use a few Gipsy craftsmen for various repairs.¹¹⁰

To organize forced labour the Superior Command order was put to work; it compelled the listing on profession, age, sex and ability to work and the exact

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

fulfilment. The tables of 18-year old girls and boys between 12 and 16 years were included.

From the brochure on the June 16, 1917 meeting we find out that, of the 512,181 hectares of arable land, there were 214,255 hectares of autumn ploughing, 5.19%, and 35.6% for the spring ones. Professor Constantin Brătescu's conclusion on the reduction of cultivated areas is eloquent: "Just those regions which gave a number of Romanian refugees, those regions also gave the lowest percentage of cultivated land in 1916/1917".¹¹¹

The most notable contribution to the knowledge of the 12 themes of the region between the Danube and the Black Sea reminiscent from the Stage Administration is **Bilder aus der Dobrudscha – Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Etappen – Verwaltung in der Dobrudscha** (*Images from Dobrogea – edited by German Stages in Dobrogea*, printed by the **German Stage administration in Dobrogea in 1918**, probably a few days before leaving the region.¹¹² On the one hand, the volume responds to the needs of knowledge of the area between the Danube and Black Sea, and on the other, it was a response to the propaganda the Bulgarians made through committees that had received approval to enter the German Stage territory on the grounds that they were doing scientific research and the Bulgarian Army 3rd, which edited the "Dobrugea" journal in an aggressive tone.¹¹³

Seven personalities of German science (some of them drafted into the army) had been invited to do research on the topics suited to their specializations: Friedrich Freiherr von Huene (geologist), Robert Ritter von Dombrowsky (biologist), Carl Schuchhardt (archaeologist), Dr R. Marcus (biologist), Dr H. Südhoff (economist) and Dr Paul Traeger (historian and ethnographer). The volume opens with a *Study on the geology of Dobrogea* (pp. 1-32), done by the professor at the University of Tübingen, von Huene, troops engineer lieutenant. His research focused on the geology and history of the region. The second article, *Mammals and birds in Dobrogea* (pp. 34-44), is written by von Dombrowsky, a researcher captivated by Dobrogea, about which he had written in his youth that it was "synonymous with El Dorado".¹¹⁴ The fauna is analysed in relation to the geography and climate of the region.

Dr R. Marcus, troops engineer lieutenant, has two contributions in volume: *the Danube and the Black Sea* (pp. 45-69) and *Fishing in Dobrogea* (pp. 70-91), which proves that the author was capable of a geopolitical understanding of the role played by the Danube and Black Sea in the historical evolution of the region. It outlines the characteristics and water changes according to the seasons. The

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

¹¹² *Vezi Bilder aus der Dobrudscha 1916-1918. Imagini din Dobrogea 1916-1918* (Passim).

¹¹³ Von Björn Opter-Klinger, *op. cit.*, p. 50-51.

¹¹⁴ *Bilder aus der Dobrudscha*, p. 32.

second article describes the lifestyle of the fishermen in Dobrogea, the production procedures, etc.

The director of Economic School in Bucharest, Dr H. Südhoff highlights *the Economic importance of Dobrogea*, focusing on agriculture and animal farming. There is also important information about the structure of the soil and the role of climate factors in the productivity of these branches.

Professor Carl Schuchhardt, director of the Museum of Ethnography in Berlin, the famous archaeologist, very informed on Dobrogea since 1884¹¹⁵, deals in his study with *Archaeological research in Dobrogea* (pp. 110-130), subjects of great importance for understanding the ancient period of the region: Trajan's Wall, the Monument in Adamclisi, the excavations conducted in the fall of 1917 at Cernavodă and Constanța mounds. Schuchhardt inserted in his book his experience between the Danube and the Black Sea. *A trip to Dobrogea 32 years ago* (pp. 293-315) takes us through Cernavodă, Constanța, Hârșova, the places visited by the author by train and wagon. We remind for our readers his conclusion: Dobrogea "has lost none of its old special geographical position, the cause of all its political destinies."¹¹⁶

The most valuable scientific contribution, also in relation to its length (pp. 131-392), belongs to Dr Paul Zelendorf-Traeger in Berlin.¹¹⁷ Under the heading *Studies on Dobrogea*, the author addresses four topics of major interest for knowing the history, ethnography and anthropology of the Danube and Black Sea region: 1. *Knowledge of the ancient tombs in Dobrogea*; 2. *German villages in Dobrogea*; 3. *Russian sects of Dobrogea*; 4. *Regarding the history and ethnography of Dobrogea*.

In the first article, Traeger continues the research done by the Anthropological Society in Vienna since 1871 for knowing the mound-tombs in European Turkey; he himself informs us that "I studied in 1900 and 1901 particularly the large mounds of the plains of Macedonia and Albania".¹¹⁸

From the research done in the field, Dr Paul Traeger concludes: "The largest number are in the eastern part of Dobrogea, the ancient road that used by the peoples along the coast of the Black Sea."¹¹⁹ The second article, *German villages in Dobrogea*, comes to meet a curiosity that occurred with the German soldiers when they met villages inhabited by their countrymen. The natural question was asked: "How did these populations get here?" Traeger provides information

¹¹⁵ Carl Schuchhardt's contributions to the archaeological research of Dobrogea, see Octavian Bounegru, *Carl Schuchhardt și cercetarea arheologică a Dobrogei (1884-1918)* in *Dobrogea 1878-2008. Orizonturi deschise de mandatul european* (prof. univ. dr. Valentin Ciorbea), Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, pp. 385-389.

¹¹⁶ *Bilder aus der Dobrudscha / Imagini din Dobrogea*, p. 293.

¹¹⁷ Valentin Ciorbea, *Realități dobrogene dintre anii 1916-1918 în izvoare germane*, pp. 101-105.

¹¹⁸ *Bilder aus der Dobrudscha 1916-1918 / Imagini din Dobrogea 1916-1918*, p. 135.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

covering the establishment of German families between the Danube and the Black Sea, the origin of the German settlers, the settlements founded, the waves of arrivals since the 1840s, the establishment of “colonies” etc. Conclusions of great scientific interest were left to us by the author on the ethnography and the folklore of the Germans in Dobrogea.

In *The Russian sects in Dobrogea*, Traeger analysed for the first time five sects “as far as I am aware, and from the information received”: *Lippovans, Scopits, Molokans, Subotnics and Nemokiots*. The impressions he collected on field trips after visiting localities where the Russians lived allowed Traeger to explain the characteristics of the sects, the physical appearance, the habits, the traditions that characterized them and the appearance of the villages and places of worship.

In the fourth article, *On the history and ethnography of Dobrogea*, the author reconstructs the region during the past since “the first important historical event, following which we hear about Dobrogea”, a campaign led by Darius against the Scythians in 513 BC.¹²⁰ Traeger tells us about the medieval and modern ages, presents us the consequences of the wars that hit the region and gives us data on representative populations of Dobrogea.

The latest study, *the Campaign in Dobrogea. War Reports from the German Headquarters* (pp. 316-333) has no author, but most likely it was developed by the management and administration of the German stage and is divided into three parts: 1. *The Offensive*, 2. *The Penetration*; 3. *The Aftermath* – presented from the German perspective, the fighting that led to the occupation of the region by the troops of the Central Powers.

The value of the volume *Images of Dobrogea* for understanding certain aspects of the life of the region is amplified by the 328 photographs with images of the population, various localities, churches, institutions, monuments etc., and reproductions of the works of the painter H. von R. Conifius made in the area of Dobrogea.

With its riches and its reserves of strategic raw materials, the labour fruit of the people of Dobrogea and the modernization and development policy after 1978, Dobrogea fully revealed its major geo-economic role. In fact, the German military documents admit that everything that was looted and requisitioned helped in the “economic resilience of the alliance, the victory obtained here being of the utmost importance.”¹²¹

In conclusion, we can state that the documents brought to the public attention are among the main sources for the knowledge of the realities that evolved in an important area of Dobrogea, between October 1916 and November 1918, during the most dramatic period in the history of the region in the twentieth century.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

¹²¹ *Campania din Dobrogea. Rapoarte de război din Marele Cartier General*, p. 333.

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