SCHWABEN, BANATER, DEUTSCHE: FORMULATING GERMANNESS IN THE GREATER ROMANIAN BANAT, 1918–1935

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Abstract

In this thesis I examine the process by which leaders of an ethnic German minority community, the Banat Swabians, came to promote different conceptions of "Germanness" during the interwar period in the state of Greater Romania. I ask how Swabian leaders conceived of and transmitted conceptions of belonging and affiliation to the wider German-speaking community from the last days of the First World War, when the Banat became dislodged from Austria-Hungary, until 1935, when the local German-Swabian political leadership was incorporated into the newly transformed National Socialist umbrella organization of ethnic Germans in Romania. Using a source base primarily composed of local press and contemporary publications, I examine the fluctuation between consensus and disagreement over what "being German" in the Banat meant, and how different components—a connection to a wider German cultural community, Catholic faith, regional rootedness, and ethnicity—were often emphasized to different degrees, at different times, by different groups. The argument that I ultimately advance regarding the form of "Germanness promoted by Swabian leaders in the Banat rests on a perceived link between "the political" and "the cultural." Driven by political necessity, Swabian leaders—many of whom before the war had bought into the Hungarian nation-state project—quickly came to espouse a Germanness rooted in an ethno-cultural sense. Through the process of mediating the accompanying cultural image of the German Banat Swabian to the wider community through the 1920s, I argue that an exclusivist discourse on Banat Germanness was established that paved the way for more extreme political demands and calls for radical social reorganization in the 1930s.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

In late April of 1916, as the First World War grinded forward on all fronts, Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn, a native of then-Southern Hungarian Banat, composed an agitated letter to Josef Geml, the mayor of Temesvár (Timișoara),[1] the unofficial capital of the region. Writing from Habsburg Vienna, Müller-Guttenbrunn, who had already achieved renown as one of the most popular German-language authors and personalities of the Banat, expressed his extreme displeasure over a meeting between Geml and Field Marshal von Mackensen, the commander of the German army operating in Southern Hungary. As it came out in a later letter from Müller-Guttenbrunn, the initial meeting had taken place after the German general had heard of a song sung by Hungarian soldiers, "Mégis hunczut a német," that disparaged their German allies, and as a result he wanted to have an assessment of the "situation of Germandom" (*Lage des Deutschtums*) in the Banat.[2] In his letter, the writer chastised the mayor for his weak presentation of German national spirit in the region—"Did you have any idea how painful it must have been for the current leader of the German army to realize that those [Banat] Germans are in great danger of losing their nationality…?"—and for presenting the great disparity between the high number Transylvanian Saxon German-language institutions and the lack of such for Banat Swabians as natural and according to law.[3] Bemoaning all of the Swabian children who, through the pull of social advancement would pay the "price of their nationality" and join a Hungarian "nation of eight million" instead of a German of "hundred-million nation"

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[1] In the narrative, I will mostly refer to places by the names used by the governing administrations at the time I am referring to, while providing alternative names in parentheses.

[2] Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn, "Ein unhöflicher Breifwechsel," in *Deutsche Sorgen in Ungarn. Studien und Bekenntnisse* (Vienna: Ed. Strache, 1918), 155.

[3] Ibid., "Ist Ihnen keine Ahnung davon aufgegangen, welch ein Schmerz es für den Führer der heutigen deutschen Armee sein mußte, zu erkennen, daß jene Deutschen in Gefahr schweben, ihre Nationalität Einzüßen." All translations are my own. For longer passages, I will include the original German in the footnotes.

(*Hundermillionenvolk*), Müller-Guttenbrunn called out Geml, himself a Swabian, for his apparent embarrassment over his own Swabian heritage. Lastly, in a parting shot, Müller-Guttenbrunn added that from what he had heard, General von Mackensen had been none too convinced of Geml's explanations for the apparent lack of a German consciousness.

In his response to the writer (published by Müller-Guttenbrunn), Geml showed himself to be unbowed by the harsh criticism of his countryman. He began conciliatorily, expressing "what warm recognition Hungarians wholeheartedly and honestly pay to German culture and language, as well as the excellent virtues of Germans."[4] Regarding the writer's reference to his Swabian heritage, he insisted that he was not deeply aggrieved (*nicht schmerzlich berührt*) to be reminded of his "German roots," but maintained that his pride lay with his *Heimat.* Finally, Geml, writing in German, made it plainly clear where his allegiances lay: "I have no reason to blush at the adulation of freedom in Hungary and am not ashamed, rather I am proud to be a Hungarian patriot."[5]

Such an exchange, less than two years before the end of the war, highlights to what extent nationalist aspirations had failed to catch on among German-speaking Swabians of the Banat in the decades before the First World War. Although a small German national movement did emerge around 1900, its leaders largely failed to attract neither the Swabian farmers in the Banat countryside nor the masters (*Herren*), as the urban bourgeoisie came to be called by their rural neighbors, identified strongly as German in a national sense. To the former, local village-based allegiances continued to hold sway, while for the city-inhabiting intelligentsia and prosperous farmers, the opportunities provided by the Hungarian language facilitated assimilation into

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[4] Ibid., "welch' warme Anerkennung die Ungarn der deutschen Sprache und Kultur, sowie den hervorragenden Tugenden der Deutschen rückhaltslos und ehrlich zollen."

[5] Ibid., "Ich habe keinen Grund zu erröten bei Verherrlichung der Freiheit in Ungarn und schäme mich nicht, bin im Gegenteil stolz, ein ungarischer Patriot zu sein."

Hungarian society through the educational system.[6] Like many other German-speakers in the Habsburg Monarchy, the Banat Swabians may still have thought about themselves as somehow German, with regards to language, traditions, or ancestry, but only few would set themselves within Müller-Guttenbrunn's "hundred-million nation" centered on Reich Germany, and many, like Geml, were not afraid to say so.[7]

The war experience, the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, and Hungary's cession of most of the Banat to Romania and Yugoslavia changed much of this. The annexation of the East Banat with Temesvár—the geographical focus of this thesis—into the expanding state of Greater Romania provided the space and impetus for a broader re-conceptualization of Banat Germanness on the part of both those who, like Müller-Guttenbrunn, had been convinced of their national affiliation before the war, as well as those, like Geml, who had previously expressed themselves as stalwart Hungarian patriots. To be sure, the imaginings and prescriptions of German belonging did not stay static as Swabians accustomed to life within a new state, but remained a site of potential contestation for leaders of the minority. Additionally, these efforts to define what it meant to be a "German Swabian" in the Banat played out not only among themselves, but also in relation to Romanian authorities, who had their own program of nationalization; organizations, both governmental and unofficial, from Reich German newly interested in their fellow co-nationals, the "Germans abroad" (*Auslands-* or *Volksdeutsche*); and the leaders of other "Germans" in Romania, most notably the Transylvanian Saxons.

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[6] Günter Schödl, "Am Rande des Reiches, am Rande der Nation," in *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Land an der Donau*, ed. Günter Schödl (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 422, 433.

[7] Pieter M. Judson, "When is a Diaspora Not a Diaspora? Rethinking Nation-Centered Narratives about Germans in Habsburg East Central Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed Krista O'Donnell, Nancy Reagin, and Renete Bridenthal (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005): 219–47.

The efforts by Swabian elites within this relationship—what Rogers Brubaker describes as the "triadic nexus"—took place against the backdrop of a general radicalization in Eastern-Central and Southeastern European politics, a shift to authoritarian, exclusivist agendas conditioned by economic crisis, disillusionment with the current political order, and a drive to restore tarnished national glory.[8] As with nearly all of the communities of Germans abroad to the east of Reich Germany, National Socialism made inroads into Banat Swabian politics by the early 1930s. In 1935, the German-Swabian National Community (*Deutsch-Schwäbische Volksgemeinschaft*), the organization founded in 1921 to represent Swabian interests and manage communal affairs, subordinated itself to the National Community of Germans in Greater Romania (*Volksgemeinschaft der Deutschen in Großrumänien*), a previously meaningless umbrella organization representing all "Romanian Germans" that had recently been reconfigured along National Socialist principles and gained new political authority. Although as with the rest of the ethnic German communities in Romania, the actual *Gleichschaltung* of Swabian institutions with those of the Third Reich occurred only after 1938,

In this thesis, I ask how Swabian leaders conceived of and articulated a sense of Germanness—a notion of what it meant to be German in the Banat—and how this conception shifted across the interwar period. In some ways, the shift in self-representation represents an abandonment of the inclusive, hybrid identities (Hungarian-German, for example) that came under pressure but still prevailed at the end of nineteenth century in favor of narrowly defined affiliations based on purportedly objective characteristics—a shift shared by Germans abroad

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[8] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 56; Martin Broszat, "Fashismus und Kollaboration in Ostmitteleuropa zwischen den Weltkriegen," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 14, no. 3. (1966): 229–40.

around the globe.[9] Yet the dynamics of such a shift, and the significance for the overall community, was neither necessarily straightforward nor linear. As John C. Swanson writes of German-speakers' sense of belonging in twentieth-century Hungary, "at first glance the story could be described as a metamorphosis of German-speaking Hungarians into Volksdeutsche (ethnic Germans), but what was taking place was not a transformation; it was not about gaining national consciousness. Ideas concerning belonging were continually being negotiated."[10] Indeed, for Banat Swabian leaders, national imaginings quickly gained valence in the period immediately after the war, but such notions continued to exist alongside senses of Germanness rooted in local, regional, ethnic, and religious dimensions.

It is intriguing to consider how "the great Swabian bard" (*der große Schwabendichter*), Müller-Guttenbrunn, and the former Temesvár mayor, Geml, would have interpreted the "National Program of the Germans in Romania" (*Volksprogramm der Deutschen in Rumänien*) passed by the new all-German organization in Romania in October of 1935, had they lived to see it.[11] Among its points, the program declared the unity of all Germans, including the "totality of all Germans in Romania, and declared to see "in every national comrade [*Volksgenosse*] the brother of the same blood."[12] This sense of all-German commonality and inclusion in a broad German nation naturally accorded with the writer's conception of a "hundred-million nation" expressed in 1916. Yet as I mean to suggest, throughout the 1920s and the 1930s, Swabian leaders who before 1919 had espoused forms of belonging much more in line with the Hungarian state-patriotism of Geml played a key role in transforming the discourse on Germanness in the

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[9] H. Glenn Penny and Stefan Rinke, "Germans Abroad: Respatializing Historical Narrative," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 41, no. 2 (2015): 177, 179, 183.

[10] John C. Swanson, *Tangible Belonging: Negotiating Germanness in Twentieth-Century Hungary* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2017), 10.

[11] Müller-Guttenbrunn died in 1923; Geml, in 1929.

[12] "Volksprogramm der Deutschen in Rumänien" (Hermannstadt: Krafft & Drotleff 1935), 3.

1920s and 1930s—a transformation that in many ways ultimately worked to their own disadvantage as they became sidelined from the community they helped to formulate.

A few recent studies approaching issues of identity in the interwar Banat Swabian community provide for points of departure while leaving space for new approaches. Hildrun Glass, for example, considers Jewish-German relations across Romania through the lens of the press, noting the pull of the German national idea after 1918, but also the multiplicity of ways for defining "being German," and emphasizes the growing tensions between Jewish and German communities before 1933 that gained expression after the political events of that year.[13] Stefan Olaf Schüller, examining the struggle for Banat Swabian youth waged by the Catholic Church, German nationalists, the Romanian state, and latter National Socialists, instructively demonstrates how Catholic leaders and German nationalists cooperated throughout the 1920s, and how the Church as an institution maintained its standing among youth through the mid-1930s without being sidelined by National Socialists.[14] Finally, Mariana Hausleitner presents a comprehensive political history of the Swabian communities in both the Romanian and Yugoslavian portions of the Banat, though her questions are directed more at divergent Swabian actions during the war, and their treatment afterwards.[15]

As the focus of my investigation, I thus move away from the institutional perspective as presented by Schüller and Hausleitner, while attempting to present a more focused narrative than Glass, whose impressively wide scope of vision sometimes clouds the conclusions that he draws. Drawing on public-facing sources published primarily in the Banat during the interwar period—

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[13] Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft*, 590–1.

[14] Stephan Olaf Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland? Die Kämpfe um die deutsche Jugend im rumänischen Banat (1918-1944)* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009), 72, 116–7.

[15] Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben 1868 – 1948: ihre Rolle im rumänischen und serbischen Banat* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 9–15

newspapers, local histories, and yearly *Volkskalender*—I seek, above all, insight into the competition to define Germanness in the Banat, and the processes by which some forms became favored over others.

In this thesis, I thus advance one main argument, followed by two smaller points. First, I argue that the popularization of an exclusivist, ethno-nationalist Germanness that prevailed on the discursive level by the mid-1930s was shaped by the interplay between political demands and the cultural imagery that attended it. The need to take strident political positions, conditioned by internal competition and external institutions, was accompanied through cultural language and imagery that justified such positions. In turn, however, such cultural production, which (though not exclusively) promoted tropes of cultural superiority, a civilizational mission, and an imperiled existence, paved the way for even-further reaching demands for political representation and social organization that the traditional leadership could not meet. Second, to qualify the first argument, I admit that such a discursive view does not tell us all we need to know about group consciousness. Such discursive *Volk*-based "category" of Germanness may have facilitated the reception of National Socialism in the 1930s, but at the same time, there were institutional parameters that served to limit its pervasiveness, especially in comparison with the role it came to assume in the Transylvanian Saxon community. Third, this interpretation, based as it is on a minority community, can be located within the general trends of Southeastern European politics, even on the level of the national majority. As nationalist movements offered radical notions of national belonging, conservative and national-liberal elites were forced to accommodate this radicalism, which in turn forced the mainstream political spectrum further to the right. Seen in this way, the shifting articulation of a Banat Swabian Germanness can be better integrated into the broader trans-regional context.

Accordingly, the first chapter examines the efforts to shape a discourse on Germanness in the period immediately following the First World War, as the unstable political situation and the shifting territorial status of the Banat called into question accepted forms of framing the community and gave impetus to alternative forms of collective affiliation. The second chapter then takes up how these novel forms of collective identity—namely, through self-representations—were "filled in" through a process of cultural minority-making, in which regional and *Heimat*-associated imagery centered around the historical Swabian settler took on new meaning. After considering how these new cultural representations may have helped to pave the way for the radical political challenges to the conservative leadership in the late 1920s, the last chapter turns to the entrance and reception of National Socialism into the Banat. Before proceeding directly to the interwar period, however, it would be appropriate to consider just what makes the Banat, and the Swabians who lived there, worthy of investigation.

Locating the Banat: Between Historical Reality and Contemporary Myth

The historical Banat, defined as the lands geographically bound by three rivers and a spine of mountains—the Mureș to the north, the Tisza to the west, and the Danube to the south, with the Carpathians to the east—may seem nothing more than a sleepy, provincial region of Southeastern Europe with a relatively unremarkable history. A certain dismissiveness to the Banat may stem from the fact that, as Irina Marin writes in her excellent historical introduction to the region, "one rarely wants to read about peaceful, politically unproblematic regions."[16] From the middle of the eighteenth century, when the wars on the borderlands of the Habsburg Monarch and Ottoman Empire touched the Banat for the last time, until the beginning of the

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[16] Irina Marin, *Contested Frontiers in the Balkans: Ottoman, Habsburg and Communist Rivalries in Eastern Europe* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 2.

twentieth century, when these lands became the site of military operations in the final days of the

First World War, the region developed as a agricultural and manufacturing center in the south of

the Kingdom of Hungary relatively undisturbed by violent disruptions. It did so despite the great

diversity, in terms of both ethnic and religious affiliation, of its inhabitants, as well as the

shifting political frameworks in which they lived.

Indeed, as the Romanian historian Victor Neumann has posited, the Banat can be placed

within the framing of the European continent as a "Europe of Regions," where locales such as

Silesia, Bohemia, and Transylvania are seen to have developed their own internal, locally

circumscribed dynamic and even identity, despite (or perhaps because of) the existence of great

plurality.[17] Although it may be wrong to view the Banat as a unique in its diversity,

demographically it was heterogeneous, in terms of both language and religious affiliation, into

the twentieth century: Romanian, Hungarian, German, Serbian, Bulgarian, Slovak, Yiddish and

Ladino were all spoken, and the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Greek Catholic, and various

forms of Judaism were all practiced, among others. Neumann points to a coexistence of these

various ethnic and confessional groups that, supported by the general multilingualism of the

Banat's inhabitants and strong cultural inferences, that found its apogee in the "melting pot"

(*Schmelztiegel*) of late nineteenth-century Temesvár society. Prevailing against state-directed

"Magyarization" efforts before the First World War, this sense of a tolerant, urban identity

embodied by the largely German and Jewish Timişoara middle class is seen by Neumann to

resist the trend to ethno-national definition in the interwar period as well.[18]

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[17] Victor Neumann, "Multiculturality and Interculturality: The Case of Timişoara." *Hungarian Studies* 21, no. 1–2 (2007): 3; See Celia Applegate, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999), 1157–82. According to Applegate, the phrase "Europe of regions" originates from Denis de Rougemont.

[18] Victor Neumann, *Die Interkulturalität des Banats* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2015), 32, 36, 45, 59. For examples of Swabian cultural inferences with other communities see Walter Engel, ed *Kulturruam Banat: Deutsche Kultur in einer europäischen Vielvölkerregion* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2007).

At the same time, this perspective of the region as an exemplary model of coexistence and window to the West has been criticized by for turning a complex regional past into a one-sided narrative oriented to the present. James Koranyi, for example, argues that seeing the Banat and Timișoara as Western and cosmopolitan represents a "demi-orientali[st]" internalization of "Balkanist" discourses that adopts a "Germanocentric" orientation to the past in order to push for present-day Romania's integration into the European Union and to attract more tourists to the city.[19] Anton Sterbling approaches the issue by noting how the production of history is in many ways that of myth-making. The Banat, in his view, is then home to many competing myths, including that of the region as an interethnic, multicultural space. All these narratives on the Banat have a rooting in the past, but reflect elements of myth that helped (and in some cases still help) to constitute forms community.[20]

The historical reality of the Banat and its Swabian population thus likely lies somewhere between these poles. On the one hand, as will be shown, it may be an exaggeration to define the interwar period primarily as a time of cultural renaissance. On the other hand, to understand the late pre-war and interwar period simply as "a period of division and hardening of national boundaries" without trying to understand the local dynamics of how previous forms of coexistence could be strained seems to replace a myth of tolerance with that of inevitable conflict.[21] While focusing on the Swabians of the Eastern Banat, this thesis takes up just this question: how did members of a community, who for nearly two centuries had lived relatively peaceful among, come to favor modes of identification based on separation and dissimilation?

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[19] James Koranyi, "Reinventing the Banat: Cosmopolitanism as a German Cultural Export," *German Politics and Society* 29, no. 3 (2011): 99–106.

[20] Anton Sterbling, "Mythos Banat?" *Spiegelungen: Zeitschrift für Deutsche Kultur und Geschichte Südosteuropas* 9, no. 63 (2014): 123–137

[21] Koranyi, "Reinventing the Banat: Cosmopolitanism as a German Cultural Export," 100.

And if this was the case for some members of the community, to what degree was it shared? Before continuing with the story of how things started to break down, however, it is necessary to consider how the heterogeneous mixture of language and religious groups that constituted Banat society came together in the first place.

The Swabian Migrations: A Habsburg Colonial Experiment

In the case of the Banat, it was the reoccurring wars and the contestation of the territory during of Early Modern period, as well as Habsburg imperial politics, that established the conditions for the influx of heterogeneous migrating populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A collection of counties in the early sixteenth-century Kingdom of Hungary, the region was ruled as an Ottoman *eyalet* centered on the fortress of Temesvár from 1552 until 1716, when the stronghold was taken by Habsburg troops under Prince Eugene of Savoy. After the turmoil of imperial conflict, as well as the frontier nature of the established Ottoman rule, the region—flat in the center and south, marshy to the west, and mountainous along the edge of the Carpathians to the east—became identified by Habsburg emperor Charles VI and his advisors as a sort of experimental field for the absolutist state.[22] Administered directly from Vienna as part of the *Neoacquistica*, the Banat was placed under the local direction of Graf Claudius Florimund de Mercy, who sought to develop the province along the lines of mercantilist theories, a major component of which was the implementation of policies designed to increase the population.[23] The state-supported colonization of the Banat, and the resulting migration of German-speaking

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[22] Márta Fata, "Einwanderung und Ansiedlung der Deutschen (1686-1790)," in *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Land an der Donau*, ed. Günter Schödl (Berlin: Sielder, 1995), 90.

[23] Sonja Jordan, *Die kaiserliche Wirtschaftspolitk im Banat im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1967), 7–10. On the intellectual origins and development of population politics in enlightened absolutist regimes, see Justus Nipperdey, *Die Erfindung der Bevölkerungspolitik. Staat, politische Theorie und Population in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

colonists to the region, thus began as part of an imperial program aimed, first and foremost, at anchoring subjects in an under-producing, sparsely populated region in order to pay off Habsburg debts accrued from constant military campaigns.[24]

At the same time, as many contemporary historians, such as Stefan Steiner have emphasized, the land was by no means empty, as there was already considerable populations of *Wallachen* and *Raizen*, as the Habsburg authorities referred to the Romanian- and Serbian-speakers.[25] Additionally, there is general consensus that across the periods of settlement initiated by Habsburg emperors through the issuing of privilege-granting patents to prospective settlers—Charles VI issued the first in 1722; Maria Theresa, the second in 1763; and Joseph II, the third in 1782—ethnic affiliation played little role.[26] Rather, in the initial stages of the colonization process that later became memorialized as the "Swabian migrations" (*Schwabenzüge*), Mercy sought to resettle Serbian and Romanian peasants that had fled during Habsburg-Ottoman clashes. The preference for German-speaking settlers from the Reich that especially defined the Theresian period of settlement was based instead on economic and political considerations. Settlers were sought from lands within the empire who might be attracted by rival imperial colonization programs (to the Americas, for example) and who had knowledge of the latest agricultural practices. Especially in the Theresian period, it was crucial that the colonists were Catholic. In turn, the settlers were offered advantageous conditions, which could include free

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[24] János Barta, "Pflüg mir den Boden, wackre Schwabenfaust. Die Deutsche Einwanderung nach Ungarn im 18. Jahrhundert und ihre Bedeutung für Staat und Gesellschaft," in *Migration im Gedächtnis*, ed Márta Fata (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013).

[25] Stephan Steiner, *Rückkehr Unerwünscht. Deportationen in der Habsburgermonarchie der Frühen Neuzeit und ihr europäischer Kontext* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 132–3.

[26] Even Josef Kallbrunner, for example, who advanced National Socialist-inflected *Volkgeschichte* methods during research at the University of Vienna, denied any "Germanizing" intentions. Josef Kallbrunner, *Das kaiserliche Banat* (Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerkes, 1958), 30.

land, relief from paying taxes, travel passes for the trek to the Banat, and assistance with provisions and constructing shelter on arrival.[27]

That is not to say that conditions for settlers were not difficult or dangerous. Renewed conflict with the Ottoman Empire from 1737 to 1739 wiped out most of the original settlements, and epidemics in the marshy territories to the west of Temesvár continued to take a toll on arriving settlers. In addition, imperial authorities seeking to shoulder as little financial responsibility as possible purposefully sought relatively well-off settlers who would be able to pay for most of their expenses themselves.[28] Still, the settlement of German-speaking settlers was a Habsburg colonial project projected to strengthen the monarchy financially (and, along the southern border, militarily), and therefore was carried out with imperial supervision and a level of imperial support. Through the eighteenth century, an estimated 100,000 to 120,000 settlers entered the Banat—and not just German-speakers from the Reich, but also Italian-, Spanish-, and French-speakers, many of whom were eventually assimilated into the German-speaking communities.[29] The designation of the German-speaking settlers in the Banat and other areas of Southern Hungary, such as the Batschka, as "Swabians" (*Schwaben*) developed both internally and externally. Hungarians came to use the term *Svábok* to refer to the group—in a half-derogatory fashion—without actually connoting origins in Swabia, while the "Swabians" themselves took on the term as a self-reference.[30]

Southern Hungarian Swabians between *Ungarndeutsch* and *Deutsch-ungarisch*

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[27] State support was generally better under Maria Theresa than Charles VI. Márta Fata, "Einwanderung und Ansiedlung der Deutschen," 149, 157–9.

[28] Ibid., 149.

[29] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 25.

[30] Gerhard Seewann, "Siebenbürger Sachsen, Ungarndeutsche, Donauschwabe?: Überlegungen zur Identitätsproblematik des Deutschtums in Südosteuropa," in *Minderheiten in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900–1990*, ed. Gerhard Seewann (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), 141.

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In 1778 the province, previously directly administered by Vienna, was incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary, an institutional shift that, like many to follow, eventually had deep-reaching consequences for the German-speaking Swabians of the Banat. Before the 1848 revolutionary period, the place of educated, urban Germans-speakers had been accommodated fairly comfortably within the Kingdom of Hungary. As Alexander Maxwell explains, a sense of a Hungaro-German (*ungarndeutsch*) dual nationality emerged that was rooted in the *Hungarus* concept of a multiethnic Hungarian nation, whereby German-speakers could claim political belonging as Hungarian citizens while easily maintaining use of the German language. This stance toward nationality became problematic, however, to German-speakers and other ethnic groups throughout Hungary as Hungarian nationalists began to reconceive of the traditional *nation hungarica* as an ethnicized Magyar nation (*Magyar nemzet*). In this dominant national conceptualization, which was based in the use of the Magyar language, the Magyars of the kingdom reserved the right to form a nation, while the other ethnic groups—German, Slovak, Romanian, Serb—represented mere nationalities (*nemzetiségek*).[31]

Following the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise, the last third of the nineteenth century, as well as the opening of the twentieth, was generally a time of expanding "Magyarization" in Southern Hungary in which state pressure to assimilate into Magyar-speaking society was applied to non-Magyars through the educational system. To a certain extent, however, this process also contained a distinctively modernizing impulse, which aimed at better integrating the diverse and far-flung kingdom in a time of economic transformation.[32] For the small, urban *Bürger* class of the German-speaking populace in Southern Hungary and in the

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[31] Alexander Maxwell, "Hungaro-German Dual Nationality: Germans, Slavs, and Magyars during the 1848 Revolution," *German Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (February 2016): 19–22.
[32] Schödl, "Am Rande des Reiches, am Rande der Nation," 366–7.

Banat, the attraction of assimilation lay in the opportunities it presented for social and professional advancement. German-speakers proved particularly willing to assimilate, as historians estimate that nearly 500,000 (not including German-speaking Jews) acculturated to define themselves as Hungarian between 1880 and 1910.[33]

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, a small German nationalist movement had begun to emerge in Southern Hungary, and by the end of 1906, a political party, the Hungarian German National Party (*Ungarländische Deutsche Volkspartei*), was founded. Led by the Vienna-based businessman and politician Edmund Steinacker (1838–1929), the movement promoted a *deutsch-ungarisch* (German-Hungarian) orientation that affirmed loyalty to the Hungarian state while putting a German cultural affiliation first. Modeled after Romanian and Serbian national movements, and in some respects representing a reaction to the pressures of Magyarization,[34] the party's leaders also established connections with German nationalist organizations, such as the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*).[35] Although the party, like Müller-Guttenbrunn, came up against considerable resistance from other Hungarian German-speakers who felt more attached to Hungary than to an idea of a German nation, its network provided the basis post-war nationalist activism.

Zusammenbruch: The Transition from Empire to Nation-State

The end of the First World War brought with it the end of the great contiguous land empires of Europe and Eurasia: the German, Russian, Ottoman, and, of course, Habsburg empires. The post-

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[33] Arnold Suppan, " 'Germans' in the Austrian Empire and in the Monarchy: Language, Imperial Ideology, National Identity and Assimilation," in *The Germans and the East*, ed. Charles Ingrao and Franz A. J. Szabo (Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), 171.

[34] Ingomar Senz, "Die 'deutschnationale' Bewegung in Südungarn vor 1914," *Südostdeutsches Archiv* 15/16 (1972/73): 135–6.

[35] Günter Schödl, "Ungarns 'Deutsche Bewegung' und mitteleuropäische Politik am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges," *Südostdeutsches Archiv* 17/18 (1974/75): 121

Habsburg space in particular was reshaped by a plurality of new (Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland), expanding (Greater Romania and the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia), and truncated (Hungary) states, all of which—perhaps with the exception of Yugoslavia—strove to present themselves as homogenous nation-states. As the legitimizing nation-state narratives went, in the post-imperial order, the nationalist political principle, holding that the "political and the national unit should be congruent" was achieved.[36] Matching political borders with national groups conceived largely along ethno-cultural lines in an Eastern-Central Europe in which such clear cut divisions between populations simply did not exist proved was, of course, chimerical. As a result, as Alfred Rieber explains, despite the homogenizing claims of these interwar polities, "the successor states were never truly nation-states but merely reproduced on a smaller scale the multicultural character of the empires of which they had been a part."[37]

The appeal to national realization with the simultaneous carryover of imperial structures and mechanisms for "managing difference" certainly characterized the state of Greater Romania in the interwar period. As one of the greatest winners of the Paris Peace Conferences, Romania nearly doubled in size and total population from 1914 to 1919 as it sought to incorporate the large regions of Transylvania (from Hungary), Bukovina (from the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy), and Bessarabia (from the Russian Empire) into the Old Kingdom, and nearly doubled its population from 7.8 to 14.7 million. If the new Greater Romania was in fact assembled from imperial appendages, it also inherited large populations of non-Romanians— those who did not identify as Romanian in terms of nationality—that significantly altered the

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[36] Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Phoenix, 1998), 1.

[37] Alfred J. Rieber, "Struggle Over the Borderlands," in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 1994), 65. Judson goes even further in proposing the redefinition of such "self-styled nation-states simply as little empires," and notes that "far from marking the end of the imperial Vielvölkerstaaten, 1918 could be said to have witnessed their proliferation" (Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 451).

demographic balance of the kingdom. If before the war, national minorities constituted only 8

percent of the Romanian population, at the time of the 1930 census, minorities made up nearly

30 percent.[38] At least initially, state authorities developed "Romanianization" policies towards

Romania's minorities that in their form echoed previous attempts at Magyarization.[39] The Banat,

which according to statistics recorded in 1930 had a population of 939,958 (of which 57.6

percent gave as their nationality Romanian; 23.7 percent, German; 10.4 percent, Hungarian; and

1.2 percent, Jewish) represented just such a region that, far from Bucharest and without an

overwhelming Romanian majority, was viewed as a target of such nationalizing aims.[40]

Additionally, with the collapse of the large imperial states, new or previously alternative

ways of framing the nation gained valence in the interwar period. Especially with regards to

imaginings of the German nation, which had largely been conceived of as congruent with the

German Empire, the post-war order proved decisive in shifting the prevailing national locus from

state to *Volk.* As David Blackbourn explains, "the lost colonies and the losses at Versailles

weakened the links between Germanness and actual territory, so that a deterritorialized, *völkisch*

notion of *Deutschtum* grew more radical."[41] At the same time, in German-speaking communities

that were detached from Hungary after the war, previously held hybrid or dual forms of

identification—most notably the *ungarndeutsch* framing—lost its basis. Thus, the political

frameworks and policies of the states in which minority communities found themselves, the

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[38] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 7–10.

[39] For a brief but thorough overview of Romanian nationalization policies and its intellectual undergirding, see Andrei Corbea-Hoişie, "Rumänien – vom National- zum Nationalitätenstaat," in *Minderheit und Nationalstaat. Siebenbürgen seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Harald Roth (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 42–58.

[40] These statistics for the Banat represent the counties of Timiş-Torontal, Caraş, and Serverin, but not the area around Arad. Hildrun Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft. Das deutsch-jüdische Verhältnis in Rumänien (1918-1938).* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), 28.

[41] David Blackbourn, "Germans Abroad and "Auslandsdeutsche": Places, Networks and Experiences from theSixteenth to the Twentieth Century," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 41, no. 2 (2015): 345.

influence of news ways of framing collective belonging, and the loss of more traditional forms of identification drove forward the reformulation of communal foundations. In this context, the notion of inclusion within a broad German national community—which promised to resolve internal social tensions, legitimate the autonomy of the community within its "host-state," and link it concretely to the resources and mission of the German motherland—proved attractive to the leaderships of many of these German-speaking communities.[42]

To be sure, the process through which this reception took place was regionally differentiated and community specific. Examinations of the shifts in affiliation and categories of identity among the ethnic German communities of interwar Romania typically focus on the changes that defined the Transylvanian Saxons, and hinge on exactly when National Socialism first appeared or became ideologically pervasive.[43] As a case through which to investigate how new categories of identity were formulated and promoted, however, that of the Swabians of the Romanian Banat, featuring all the elements noted—friction with the hosting nation-state, inclusion within new discourses on the nation, and the loss of old community supports—appears exemplary, and thus worthy of investigation.

Defining "Germanness"

At the center of this investigation, then, is an exploration of how certain, influential actors conceived of and sought to popularize a sense of Germanness in the Romanian Banat between the two world wars. But how should the concept of "Germanness" itself be understood? Does it denote the "cultural markers of ethnic German identity practiced by a community" in which

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[42] Gerhard Seewann, "Mehrheits- und Minderheitsstrategien und die Frage der Loyalität 1919–1939," in *Politische Strategien nationaler Minderheiten in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Mathias Beer and Stefan Dyroff, 15–25 (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 22.

[43] Tudor Georgescu, *The Eugenic Fortress: The Transylvanian Saxon Experiment in Interwar Romania.* (New York: Central European University Press, 2016), 23–7.

individuals within communities were often on a "continuum of Germanness," as proposed by the editors of *The Heimat Abroad*?[44] While this study follows the call to "decenter" German history from the nation-state, and to look beyond the circumscribed national-political borders of the German state as the prime shaper of the "German" historical experience, the exploration of Germanness here draws on two approaches to ethnicity, race, and nationhood as described by Rogers Brubaker. In the first place, it seeks a "dynamic and processual understanding" of how certain actors constitute the category of Germanness that takes into account "deliberate projects of group making" and stresses "the performative aspects of political entrepreneurship."[45] In this way, Germanness was often "self-proclaimed" and "prescribed" by different actors for whole communities,[46] even though, as Brubaker stresses, such proclamations and prescriptions about groups did not necessarily mean that such groups existed.[47]

Secondly, it draws on a cognitive perspective in which "ethnicity, race, and nationhood are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world."[48] In this sense, the focus is on actors' self-understandings of what it meant to be German in the Banat, and regards Germanness as a "category of practice; that is, as historical actors imagined and experienced it."[49] Although much of the recent innovative scholarship on the Habsburg Monarchy and its successor states has encouraged leaving the nation behind and looking to the other categories that were employed by individuals to give meaning to collectivities, this consideration of Germanness does not abandon

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[44] Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, introduction to *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 4.

[45] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 32.

[46] Alexander Maxwell and Sacha E. Davis, "Germanness Beyond Germany: Collective Identity in German Diaspora Communities," *German Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (2016): 1–3.

[47] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," in *Ethnicity Without Groups*, ed. Rogers Brubaker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 8.

[48] Rogers Brubaker: "Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 33

[49] Maxwell and Davis, "Germanness Beyond Germany," 3.

feelings or prescriptions of national belonging as a relevant category.[50] Rather, it proposes to examine "how the various possible forms of collective identification—national, regional, religious, ethnic, political—were combined in the minds of individuals," while considering how some elements—such as the national—gained valence.[51]

Combining both the "dynamic and processual" and "cognitive" approaches in investigating Germanness points to how "imagined communities" of different types, all somehow German, could be conceived of by different actors and injected into the public sphere as visions. Conversely, it indicates how certain conceptions of being German, once introduced into the open forum, could pave the way for new imaginings. Above all, it uncovers the perhaps obvious conclusion that ideas on being German, as with conceptions of national belonging, could at times be just as divisive as integrative. [52]

Interrogating Self-Representation, Seeking Identity

A certain issue for the historian "narrating the contest to give meaning to 'being German"—seeking to understand how and why different Germans conceived of and "practiced" their Germanness as they did—concerns the sources that allow access to such imaginings, and how much significance can actually be drawn from them. In this thesis I rely nearly exclusively on public-facing documents: newspapers, contemporary publications, yearly "calendars," popular histories, educational primers, propagandistic pamphlets, and after-the-fact recollections

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[50] Pieter M. Judson, "'Where our commonality is necessary…': Rethinking the End of the Habsburg Monarchy." *Austrian History Yearbook* 48 (2017): 1–21.

[51] David Blackbourn and James Retallack, introductino to *Localism, Landscape and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe, 1860-1930*, ed. David Blackbourn and James Retallack, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 4.

[52] Sven Oliver Müller, "Die umstrittene Gemeinschaft. Nationalismus als Konfliktphänomen," in *Politische Kollektive. Die Konstruktion nationaler, rassistischer und ethnischer Gemeinschaften*, ed. Ulrike Jureit (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, Münster 2001), 122–5.

produced by (or about) the Banat Swabian community. As traces of a historical past, these are

inherently limiting: the reader can never be sure of the author's true thoughts or intentions

behind the text. In addition, although the Swabian community was highly literate, certain

people—politicians, journalists, and educators—wrote more than others and dominated the

public sphere.

In this study, attention is granted to the role of self-representations and ascriptions in the

shifting discourse on Germanness in the Banat, in which discourses are understood as "systems

of meaning production that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable actors to make sense

of the world and to act within it."[53] Keeping in mind the public nature of the sources, it may be

impossible to separate more "performative" representations within the discourse from those that

conveying genuine "self-understanding." But as Kevin Dunn and Iver Neumann make clear,

there is a certain informative process between representations made through texts and social

practices: the former condition that latter by producing "a parameter of possible actions" for

practices, while discourse itself is a reflection of these existing practices.[54]

In this way, although the discourse on Germanness cannot be equated with a universally

shared sense of collective identity, Jan Assmann has suggested how collective representations—

in this case, delivered through a discourse on Germanness—can be constitutive of such forms of

collective identification: "Identity is a matter of consciousness, that is of becoming aware of an

otherwise unconscious image of the self. This applies both to individual and collective life. I am

only a person to the extent that I know myself to be one, and in exactly the same way, a group—

whether it be a tribe, race, or nation—can only be itself to the degree in which it understands,

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[53] Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 5.
[54] Ibid., 2, 7.

visualizes, and represents itself as such."[55] Through repeatedly representing what it meant to be

German in the Banat, German Swabian activists normalized discursive positions that prescribed

certain categories of framing the collective, the individual within it, and how the individual

should act. Of course, these prescriptions of Germanness in themselves did not totally determine

how community members thought or acted, and I have tried to stay attentive to signs of "self-

doubt and frustration" that appear in texts revealing a dissonance between the community that

political actors imagined, and that which they saw before them.[56] Even so, in offering their

idealized images of the German Banat Swabian as reflections of reality, these Swabian

politicians, writers, and educators contributed to define the possible parameters of a shared sense

of Banat Germanness.

Working in Tandem: Politics and Culture Shaping Germanness

What, then, were the dynamics that shaped how various actors promoted certain forms of

Germanness? How did some conceptions triumph in the discursive realm, while others lost their

relevance? In the case of the Banat Swabians, how did an exclusivist, ethnic- and then race-based

sense of Germanness take hold where previously hybridity and individual acknowledgement had

long been accepted?

Pieter Judson, in framing his points of departure for considering the "nationalist"

conflicts of the late Habsburg Monarchy, points to a process of interaction between political

demands and cultural justification that, I argue, can be useful for understanding nationalist

politics in its successor states as well. As he contends, nationalist conflict "was primarily a

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[55] Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 111.
[56] Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11.

political phenomenon clothed in the language of culture. Extreme conflicts over ethnic-cultural issues generally played themselves out within political institutions over specifically political questions."[57] Although Judson is referring primarily to conflicts between activists representing different national groups that hinged on the attainment of certain rights and liberties, the same sorts of struggles took place between activists who claimed to represent the interests of the same national group. In striving to define the political order and rally support for their cause, political actors portrayed their demands as representing the true interests of national culture. While it follows that it is inevitably impossible to disaggregate "politics" and "culture" from each other, it may be helpful to introduce some working definitions of the concepts to better illustrate their relationship in providing the space for discursive shifts.

Politics can be described, along the lines of Michael Freeden, as the quest for finality and decisiveness in the affairs of groups. In this way, "thinking politically" denotes attempting to assert primacy in decision-making, rank group values and aims, articulate designs for social organization, and project collective visions, among other things, and politics is aimed at determining the course of group action (or at least gaining the right to do so).[58] Culture, on the other hand, can be described as a field in which meaning is divested. Per Moritz Csáky, culture is "a repertoire of elements, signs, symbols, or codes" and "should thus be defined as a space of communication in which lifeworlds are constituted and power relations are reconfigured by the establishment and dislocation of signs."[59] Here, the two work in tandem: the right to determine

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[57] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 272.
[58] Michael Freeden, "Theorizing about Political Thinking," in *The Political Theory of Political Thinking: The Anatomy of a Practice*, edited by Michael Freeden. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.33–35.
[59] Moritz Csáky, "Culture as a Space of Communication," in *Understanding Multiculturalism: The Habsburg Central European Experience*, ed. Johannes Feichtinger and Gary B. Cohen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014): 195.

social action demanded the deployment of certain forms of communication conveyed through loaded language.

As I argue, the interplay between political positioning and the cultural imagery used to justify it helped to color the category of Germanness that was promoted discursively to the Swabian public. For Banat Swabians leaders, political necessity drove the promotion of an ethno-cultural Germanness in the dislocating period after the First World War. This vague, *Volk*-centered self-ascription was filled in by a turn to a mediating regional emphasis during the 1920s that nonetheless, by fitting into the contemporary "global discourse on Germanness" and reacting to Romanian state policies, helped to pave the way for radicalized, more strident political demands at the end of the decade. In turn, the need for the traditional leadership to once again deflect the challenge of its political authority resulted in the adoption of an even more exclusivist national conception—one that ultimately facilitated the reception of National Socialism in the mid-1930s.

In this way, I mean to look at the political and cultural imagery of the interwar period on its own terms—that is, to avoid drawing a distinct thread from the early German nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century, through the reformulation of communal foundations following the First World War, to the adoption of National Socialism in the late 1930s.[60] This does not preclude an awareness of so-called *völkisch* elements within prescriptions of Germanness that may have indeed existed over the longer period. Rather, it means being attentive to the semantics and weight of certain language within this discourse, as well as to how these elements shifted—gaining or losing significance—over the period. In this way, I hope to avoid presenting an

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[60] Günter Schödl, "Zwischen ungarischem Staat und deutschem Volk. Die Schwaben um 1900" in *Deutsches Kulturleben im Banat am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkriegs. Der Beitrag von kleineren Städten und Großgemeinden. Landesverband Baden-Württemberg, Kulturtagung 2012*, ed. Walter Engel and Walter Tonţa (Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Banater Schwaben, 2013), 30–31.

overdetermined, teleological story of a path to Nazism, which would both ignore historical

contingency and negate the possibility of historical alternatives, and furthermore represent the

acceptance of a narrative—that of the *Volksgruppe*-in-becoming—that itself originates from

Nazi-influenced scholarship.[61]

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[61] Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.

Chapter One: Shaken Foundations, New Possibilities: Delineating Germanness in a Banat Between Hungary, Serbia, and Romania, 1918–1921

On Christmas Day, 1918, with Temesvár and most of the Banat occupied by the Serbian army, the prominent Swabian Gymnasium teacher Franz Kräuter (1885–1969) published an essay in the *Temesvarer Zeitung* in which he sought to correct for the crude oversimplification in the local press of the dissent between two Budapest-based organizations that claimed to represent German national interests in the former Kingdom of Hungary. While uninformed commentators held one of these groups, led by Jakob Bleyer (1874–1933), to reflect the ideas of a clerical "Magyarone" (an acculturated Hungarian), and the other, headed by Rudolf Brandsch (1880–1953), to embody national liberal German ideals, the roots of their differences, Kräuter explained, had to do with the singular histories and traditions of the particular communities into which they were born. Brandsch, as a Transylvanian Saxon, came from a group that had for centuries occupied a privileged position within Hungary, and had developed a true "consciousness of its Germanness" (*Bewußtsein seines Deutschtums*) as a result of stronger historical ties to Germany. Bleyer, on the other hand, was a Swabian, and therefore originated from a community with an intimate relationship to the Hungarian state, partly realized by way of a "denationalization process" that led to a lack of an ethnic German consciousness. While admitting that the events of the war had produced an enthusiastic turn to the *Volkstum*—ethnicity—and popularized the position of Brandsch, who called for closer relations and stronger organization between all "German" communities of historical Hungary, Kräuter still found value in Bleyer's insistence on maintaining the close relation between Hungarians and Swabians. As he argued, this less radical path would help to span "past to future and thus save many a Swabian

from the choice between Fatherland [Hungary] and [German] nation [*Volk*]."[1] Thus, while not explicitly endorsing either jockeying national representative, Kräuter's article did seem to raise a provocative question in the heady days of transition from war to peace: could Swabians really consider themselves to be German in the same sense as the Transylvanian Saxons? Or were they still stuck somewhere between acting Hungarian and feeling German?

Although an irritated response from a group of more nationally assure "Southern Hungarian Swabians" affirming the Swabian position within a German nation followed soon in the new year, the uncertainty articulated by Kräuter must have been characteristic for the Swabians of the Banat, who like other minority communities found themselves adrift in an extremely fluid political situation at the end of the First World War. From the end of October 1918 until the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in June 1920, the territorial status of the Banat was essentially up in the air.[2] During this period, the region was occupied by Serbian and French, then by Romanian troops, all while to the east, Béla Kun proclaimed a Hungarian Soviet republic in a revolution that lasted from just March to August of 1919 but threw regional dynamics even further off kilter. To the potential leaders of the Swabians in the Banat, this was a time of uncertainty and disorientation, but also of great opportunity for instituting a new political and social vision. Often these two emotions, anxiety and hope for the future, were mixed together in the same expression.[3]

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[1] Franz Kräuter, "Hie Bleyer – hie Brandsch!" *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 291, 25 December 1918.

[2] The final revisions of the border dividing the Banat between Romania and Serbia following the First World War were in fact not completed until 1923. For a comprehensive overview of the arguments made by Serbian and Romanian delegations on the Banat's post-war status, see Andrea Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Die Grenzziehung in der Dobrudscha und im Banat und die Folgeprobleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 264–79.

[3] Characteristic of such a duality was the call for patience for those undergoing the transition from Hungarian "back" to German, as expressed by Kräuter: "One cannot expect, one cannot demand, from a man who was raised to be a Hungarian, who still considered himself Hungarian yesterday, that he relearn everything overnight. At the same time we may not give up the so-called 'Renegades' for lost,' as they belong to their *Volk* and they are the qualified leaders of their *Volk*" (Von einem Mann, der zum Ungar erzogen wurde, der sich gestern noch als Ungar

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The possession of the Banat was, to be sure, just one of the issues under consideration at the Paris Peace Conferences—and compared to others, such as the final peace terms for Germany, it was a small one at that. But the protracted discussions in Paris over the opposing claims of Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia effectively denied Swabian political leaders knowledge of the larger national-political framework that they would be operating in. Until at least late summer of 1919, Swabian leaders knew that they would belong to a minority—but in just which state remained unclear.

It was then in this liminal period that these leaders began to articulate their visions for the future of their community in the Banat—visions that were inextricably tied to how they viewed their present and past social circumstances of the group that they claimed to represent.[4] If some of their expectations as far as the autonomy they were to be granted were indeed novel, many of these ideas reflected the continuation of rival political programs that had emerged before the First World War, but which were re-formulated in the wake of Kingdom of Hungary's disintegration.[5] It is precisely these visions, or developing social and political discourses often expressed through national language, that this chapter means to examine. It was these discourses that set the baseline for the available "categories"—to invoke Brubaker's language—of Germanness that sought to evoke group loyalties and made claims to a collective identity.[6]

As was the case for both many of the titular nationalities and minority communities in expanding and emerging nation-states after the First World War, developing Swabian visions in the Banat failed to find consensus on many issues, from whom exactly was to be included in the

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bezeichnete, kann man nicht erwarten, darf man nicht fordern, daß er über Nacht alles umlernt. Andererseits aber dürfen wir auch die sogenannten "Renegaten" nicht verloren geben, denn sie gehören zu ihrem Volk und sind die berufenen Führer ihres Volkes). Kräuter, "Hie Bleyer – hie Brandsch!"
[4] See "Liminality and Communitas," in Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction Press, 2008), 94–130.
[5] Günther Schödl, "Zwischen Ungarischem Staat und deutschem Volk," 33–34.
[6] Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 12.

28

national group to how far its reach was to extend beyond regional boundaries. Indeed, as many of the voices in this dispute themselves claimed, elements of this disagreement revolved around what being Swabian in the Banat represented, and who was entitled to speak for the community as a collective body. The dissent between those who claimed to represent the same entity, and the negotiation of such views, lie at the heart of this study, and support Katherine Verdery's admonitions to think about "national rhetorics as plural, as elements in larger contests to define the meaning of national symbols and to define the nation-as-symbol itself."[7]

At the same time, it is necessary to note that despite the highly charged, polemical language that was often employed to disparage another side, there was often a large amount of overlap in the presented political goals, especially when it came to practical matters, such as the need for the German-language schools and cultural institutions. The common ground undergirding seemingly competing national minority narratives in fact indicates the extent to which cultural positions intertwined with "real" politics in the Banat. As the dissent between certain Swabians in the Banat reveals, it is not always clear if the espoused differences, naturally exaggerated through press polemics, are actually ideological, or rather of a programmatic and personal nature.[8] I argue in this chapter that both may have existed—that deeper cultural divides existed alongside the personal pursuit of leadership and the right to shape political goals—but that it was the latter that drove the post-war reformulation of Germanness in the Banat.

Historians who have previously taken up the political history of the Banat Swabians following the First World War have typically emphasized two main political orientations within the community, a national-liberal and a Catholic conservative, while in some cases also

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[7] Katherine Verdery, "Wither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?" *Daedelus* 122, no. 3 (summer 1993): 41.
[8] Admonitions to engage in constructive debate about the direction of the German community, but to leave the personal rivalries aside, were also a common theme in the contemporary press itself. See Josef Gabriel, "Die Richtungen in der schwabischen Bewegung. III," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 32, 17 May 1919.

29

foregrounding Social-Democratic and radical nationalist variants.[9] In their own words,

contemporary commentators themselves identified these two main currents (national-liberal and

Catholic conservative) as "radical" and "moderate," respectively. [10] In examining the developing

discourse on Germanness as it is expressed chiefly through three Temesvár-based newspapers,

the *Deutsche Wacht* (and its successor, the *Banater Tagblatt*), the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, and

the *Temesvarer Zeitung*, I do not mean to question fundamentally sides' political orientations as

described by previous historiography. Rather, I mean to explore the textures of these alleged

orientations during a period of shifting political circumstances, when the region's inhabitants

experienced first Serbian occupation, and then life under the newly instituted Romanian

administration.[11] As events swirled by around them, Swabian leaders—most of whom were

active in minority politics before the 1914—jockeyed to position themselves and their allies as

the true representatives of the Swabian community in the Banat. In doing so, they articulated

publically what being Swabian, or German, meant, thereby expressing what may have at first

been diverging, but quickly became converging views on their belonging to a wider German

cultural nation. After briefly outlining the major political and military events that shaped the

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[9] Compare Johann Böhm, *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und die Weimarer Republik: 1919 – 1933* (Ippesheim: Arbeitskreis für Geschichte und Kultur der Deutschen Siedlungsgebiete im Südosten Europas, 1993), 160; Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland* , 31; Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 94.

[10] For example, writing from the perspective of 1939, after the various German political organizations in the Romania had come under the control of the National Socialist "Volksgemeinschaft der Deutschen in Rumänien, the "radical" Michael Kausch wrote, "the difference of the two positions [on to remain loyal to Hungary or not] throw a clear light on the attitudes of both groups, from which the one obtained the name Hunagarian Swabians, or the moderates; the other, German Swabians, or the radical Germans." (Die Unterschiede der beiden Stellungnahmen werfen ein klares Licht auf die Einstellung beider Gruppen, von welchen die eine Richtung den Namen: Ungarische Schwaben, oder die Gemäßigten, die andere den Namen: Deutsche Schwaben, oder die Radikaldeutschen, erhielten.) Michael Kausch, *Schicksalswende im Leben des Banater deutschen Volkes. I. Wegebereitung und Aufbauarbeit* (Timişoara: Buchdruckerei H. Anwender & Sohn, 1939), 21.

[11] The newly expanded Romanian state was also effectively in a state of transition from December 1918 until April 1920, when the Directing Council (Consiliul Dirigent) in Transylvania was dissolved in favor of the central government in Bucharest. Even afterward, however, the administrative structure remained distinct. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater* Romania, 42–3.

parameters of this discussion between late 1918 and early 1919, the rest of the chapter will be

devoted to parsing these formative views on Banat Germanness.

Ceasefire: Temesvár between Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Paris

In the fall of 1918, the military situation for the Central Powers shifted from dire to untenable.

As the Imperial German defenses collapsed on the western front and Austro-Hungarian forces

faltered against a new Italian offensive, the relatively unprotected underbelly of the Kingdom of

Hungary came into the Entente's view. In October, an Entente force under the command of

French General Louis Franchet d'Espèrey drove through Bulgaria and across Serbia, entering

Belgrade on November 1, from where it moved to invade Southern Hungary.[12] With the Austro-

Hungarian Army on the verge of disintegration, the political situation in Budapest was also in

flux. On October 16 Emperor Charles proposed the federalization of the Habsburg Empire in a

bid to preserve its structure, but over the following weeks national leadership groups rejected this

proposal and declared their independence from the monarchy.[13] On October 25, a Hungarian

National Council under the leadership of Mihály Károly assumed control of the Hungarian

government, and on October 31 this body announced the dissolution of its union with Austria.[14]

The next day, November 1, both a Romanian National Council and a National Council of

Hungarian Germans—organizations that claimed to represent the interests of their national group

[12] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* ,190; Richard C. Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough: The Battle of Dobro Pole, 1918* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2010), 165–7.

[13] Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914–1918*, trans. Alex J. Kay and Anna Güttel-Bellert (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 987-998.

[14] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 64.

within the transforming Hungarian state—were founded in Budapest, the latter by the Hungary-loyal *Ungarndeutsche* Jakob Bleyer.[15]

Despite misguided calls to the contrary from local Hungarian officials, the political and military events that were unfolding in the Balkans and in Budapest soon quickly found resonance in Temesvár itself.[16] On October 31—the same day as Hungary withdrew from union with Austria—a Banat People's Council (*Banater Volksrat*) was formed, consisting of 190 members drawn from the city, workers', and soldiers' councils, which itself proclaimed an autonomous Banat Republic. As revolutionary as it sounds, the republic was constituted with the backing of Károlyi and led chiefly by two Hungarian Social Democrats loyal to the Hungarian state, Albert Bartha and Ottó Róth. Thus, the "republic" was never likely to strive too greatly for its own independence.[17] A plethora of national councils was created in Temesvár on its heels, including Romanian, Hungarian, Jewish, and Swabian organizations. The last of these, the Banat Swabian National Council (*Banater Schwäbischer Volksrat*) established on November 3, was led by Kaspar Muth (1876–1966), a lawyer sympathetic to the Hungarian nation-state conception who remained a (if not the) preeminent figure in Banat Swabian politics into the 1930s.[18]

The various councils had little time, however, to work towards a new organization of Temesvár and the surrounding counties as the Serbian Army advanced quickly from the south.

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[15] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, 243; Schödl, 446-47. The full name of Bleyer's council was the *Volksrat der ungarländischen Deutschen von diesseits des Königssteiges* (People's council of Hungarian Germans on the near side of the Carpathians)

[16] One particularly unprescient article echoed the claims of the Southern Hungarian *főispán* that all the necessary military and strategic preparations had been taken so that "the enemy will not cross the southern border of Hungary." (Der Feind wird die Südgrenze Ungarns nicht übertreten.) "Südungarn in sicherem Schutz," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, No. 242, October 28, 1918.

[17] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 66; Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* , 205-6.

[18] In one account, Muth was immediately elected as the council's president: "Konstituierung des schwäbischen Nationalrates," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, 5 November 1918. In a later version, Striegl was elected as the provisional president, but Muth acted as his acting replacement when Striegl was called away to Budapest for long durations: Dr. Franz Andres et al., "Situation des Banater schwäbischen Volksrates, *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 65, 21 March 1919.

By November 10, the day that Romania re-entered the war on the side of the Entente and advanced west into Transylvania, Serbian forces had occupied Versec (Vršac, Werschetz) in the southern Banat. Three days later, on November 13, the new Hungarian Prime Minister Károlyi worked out a ceasefire with the Entente forces that officially ended hostilities in Southern Hungary between both sides. As part of the deal, Austro-Hungarian and German forces retreated from the Banat and Transylvania. At least in the Banat, Hungarian administrators and police were to remain in control through the period of Serbian occupation until the final status of the territory was determined, but in the end, the Hungarian withdrawal effectively undercut any future Hungarian claims to these territories in the future peace negotiations.[19]

Following the uncontested entry of Serbian troops into Temesvár on November 16, the Banat People's Council carried on, but the city and region came under Serbian military administration. The recently formed local national councils, which had been in existence for less than two weeks, continued to function, but were curtailed by the Serbian army from shaping further developments. This applied as well to the Swabian National Council, a group that nevertheless was courted by all sides in the complicated maneuverings of national leadership groups and states to concretize their territorial claims. Benefiting from the unfolding Serbian occupation, the Serbian National Council in Temesvár, in connection with its executive committee in Novi Sad, had already declared large areas of what had been Southern Hungary, including the Banat, for Serbia on November 12. When the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was officially established on December 1, the Banat was included in its domains.[20] On the day of the South Slav coronation, however, Romanian delegates from the Banat joined Romanian representatives from across areas of heavily ethnic Romanian-populated areas of

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[19] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg,* 201-2.
[20] Ibid., 206.

historical Hungary in proclaiming the union of Transylvania with the Old Kingdom at Alba

Iulia.[21] Having made their claims, both the South Slav and Romanian national camps sought to

win the support of the Swabians for legitimization. The former leveraged its status as the on-site

authority by showing preferential treatment to the Swabian population over Hungarians and

Romanians, while the latter emphasized their claim to a territorially integral Banat (which would

avoid placing Swabians on both sides of a new state line) and the support granted to it by the

Transylvanian Saxon leadership from January 1919 onward. Concurrently, the new Hungarian

government made overtures to the Banat Swabian leaders by way of promises of autonomy

formulated by Oszkár Jászi in January and March of 1919.[22]

Besides the appeals for support coming from all national-political sides that, as will be

shown, catalyzed early divisions within the leaders of the Swabian People's Council in

Temesvár, another divisive issue proved to be the question of with which representational

national body in Budapest the Banat Swabian National Council would align. In addition to

Bleyer's National Council founded in the Hungarian capital on November 3, a week later the

Transylvanian Saxon politician Brandsch established a rival council, the German People's

Council for Hungary (*Deutsche Volksrat für Ungarn*), which claimed to represent a wider

community of Germans in historical Hungary that included the Saxons.[23] Over the winter months

and into the spring, the internal conversation among prominent Swabian over these external

considerations—which potential nation-state *and* which transregional "German" organization to

join with—sparked dissent that led to the delineation of differing political visions for the

Swabian community that hinged, from the start, on where one located the community on a

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[21] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater* Romania, 132.
[22] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* 253
[23] Günther Schödl, "Am Rande des Reiches, am Rande der Nation," 447.

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spectrum of Germanness . Thus, even before territorial sovereignty of the Banat, still nominally part of Hungary but mostly under Serbian occupation, came up for discussion at the Paris Peace Conferences in February 1919, particular Swabian voices sought to elaborate just what belonging to such a community entailed.

Early Swabian Reactions

The prescriptions for the future began before the war was officially over. In Temesvár and the Banat, the immediate reaction of Swabian leaders to the Central Powers' collapse was, like most of other national representatives, one of trepidation. This cautionary attitude is visible in the pages of the *Temesvarer Zeitung*, the city's most venerable and cosmopolitan paper, later to be reviled by German nationalists as "Jewish-Liberal." Although published in the German language, the paper reflected the varying concerns of the city and region's multiethnic population while also devoting just as much (if not more) sheet space to international rather than local affairs.[24] In late 1918, for example, its pages were filled with the latest military and diplomatic news from all fronts, as well as with the unfolding political developments in Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest. But while the concerns of Swabian community did not dominate the *Temesvarer Zeitung*, it was still used as a forum to make certain opinions heard within the broader community. In late October, for example, Josef Striegl (1874–1945), a prominent high school teach, called for Swabians to vocalize their support for a Hungarian state that maintained its territorial integrity in its original, non-federalized structure (for federalization would encourage separatism), but which was democratized and allowed for open expression of all national cultures. Furthermore, while

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[24] Alexander Krischan, *Die deutsche periodische Literatur des Banats: Zeitungen, Zeitschriften, Kalender; 1771 – 1971* (Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutsches Kulturwerkes, 1987), 13–14; Alexander Krischan. *Die "Temesvarer Zeitung" als Banater Geschichtsquelle* (Munich: Veröffentlichungen des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1969), 33.

admitting that there had been internal tensions, Striegl painted a generally positive picture of the historical relationship between the Swabian population and the Hungarian state, and expressed a hope that the tie would develop to Hungary's benefit in the future.

In advancing these views, Striegel reflected the cautious, Hungary-aligned position of many leading Swabians with regards to the future of the Banat, one that had been expressed in a meeting of the "Swabian intelligentsia" in Temesvár just a few days earlier. [25] But the inchoate Swabian leadership was by no means united in this view, and indeed even Striegl himself seems to have either harbored contrasting views or quickly changed his own tenor as the political circumstances shifted with the Serbian occupation. Just a month after publishing his original article, for example, in late November he lamented in the *Temesvarer Zeitung* how as a consequence of its historical "de-nationalization and alienation," the Swabian population had "become a plaything of the [Hungarian] gentry and the aristocracy." In losing their ideals—their consciousness as a unified people—Swabians had become too individualistic and centered on personal enrichment to the point that they had "no common goals."[26] In all, his article touched on three common criticisms that adherents of the "radical" direction brought up repeatedly when it came to Swabians' Germanness: the historical injustice suffered by Germans, their resultant passivity and disorientation in terms of national consciousness, and their subsequent turn to materialism.

This outlook contrasted with that expressed by the Catholic prelate and professor of theology Franz Blaskovics (1864–1937) just a few days earlier in the same paper. Besides his spiritual vocation, Blaskovics was known for being the driving force behind the South Hungarian Agricultural Farmer's Association (*Südungarischer Landwirtschaftlicher Bauernverein*), a

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[25] Josef Striegl, "Stimme und Stimmng der Deutschen Südungarns," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, No. 237, 22 October 1918.
[26] Josef Striegl, "Die Zukunft der Deutschen Südungarns," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 261, 20 November, 1918.

support network that sought to help German-speaking agriculturalists across Southern Hungary. Yet Blaskovics was not enamored by all: in the pre-war period, he was often accused of being "Magyarized" and of using the Farmer's Association to speed Swabian assimilation into Hungarian society.[27] In his *Temesvarer Zeitung* article, Blaskovics continued to display sympathy for the idea of singular Hungarian nation-state under monarchial rule, explaining that he believed most people would actually prefer the continuation of the old system if given the chance to choose. In the time of new public politics, however, he admitted that this was impossible. For the future, he looked to remaining within a Hungarian state, although one transformed into "a type of eastern Switzerland." He justified the constitution of pre-war Hungary on the grounds that "only the empowerment of a unified national state could ensure the future of Hungary and its citizens" against Austrian domination.[28] In a fully independent Hungary, a liberal attitude toward all nationalities was expected, and necessary. Thus, in a curious twist of historical interpretation, he legitimated his previous and current support for the Hungarian state as a Swabian.

The need to pick sides in the competition for national representation in Budapest, a development that initially was viewed with dismay from the Banat and led to calls for reconciliation from the Swabian National Council, only engendered more pronounced dissent from among Swabian commentators in Temesvár.[29] It was in this context that Kräuter published his Christmas Day article that presumed to weigh carefully the differences between Bleyer's and Brandsch's perspectives, but resulted in furthering antagonisms by calling into question the

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[27] Ingomar Senz, "Die 'deutschnationale' Bewegung in Südungarn vor 1914," *Südostdeutsches Archiv*, 19/20 (1976/7): 142–43; Glass 80.

[28] Franz Blaskovics, "Königstum oder Republik?" *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 258, 16 November 1918.

[29] Franz Andres and Josef Striegl, "Aufruf an die deutschen Gemeinden Südungarns," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, No. 259, 17 November 1918.

Swabians' own Germanness.[30] The aforementioned response to Kräuter from a group of "Segenthauer Swabians" disparaged the Hungary-friendly Bleyer and attacked the differentiation made in the earlier article between Swabians and Germans. The Swabians of Segenthau, a town north of Temesvár, claimed that not only the Saxons, but also the Swabians were indeed Germans, and—rooting a national nexus in ethnic inheritance—insisted that the two groups possessed a similar character that could be traced to the same origin.[31]

This basic difference over the national orientation of the Swabians eventually played out in a break among those of the fifteen-member Swabian National Council. Although this body (along with the other national councils in Temesvár and, indeed, the Banat Republic itself) was dissolved by order of the Serbian military administration on February 22, 1919, reports of deeper clashes over the Swabians' future autonomy and relationship to Hungary were aired by the *Lugoscher Zeitung* (and later reprinted in the *Temesvarer Zeitung*) in March.[32] Muth, joined by most of the other council members, quickly responded to charges of fragmentation by publicly denying the existence of "unbridgeable disagreements" and attributing any discord within the representative body to differences of opinion regarding tactics, not "principle questions."[33] In truth, despite the claims to the contrary made by respected figures such as Muth, there do seem to have been some deeper ideological differences over the nature of the Swabian community and its national character, differences that—rooted in the last centuries before the war—were dragged out into the open in the latter half of 1919, as political leaders sparred amongst each other for local influence. As Entente representatives conferred over the spring to weigh

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[30] Franz Kräuter, "Hie Bleyer – hie Brandsch!" *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 291, 25 December 1918.
[31] Einige Segenthauer Schwaben [Some Swabians of Segenthau], "Brandsch oder Bleyer – ganz oder Halb!" *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 4, 5 January 1919.
[32] "Situation der Banater schwäbischen Volksrates," *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 62, 18 March 1919.
[33] Dr. Franz Andres et al., "Situation des Banater schwäbischen Volksrates, *Temesvarer Zeitung*, no. 65, 21 March 1919

Romanian and Serbian claims to the Banat, in Temesvár and the region's smaller cities, Muth, Kräuter, Striegl and others—all more or less powerless to affect the outcome of the talks in Paris (though they did try)—engaged in a war of words over what it meant to Swabian, what the community's goals for the future were, and how to achieve them.

"Moderates" and "Radicals"

This was a discursive field that was increasingly shaped by two organized sides. By March of 1919 the two leadership groups that would lay claim to representing the Swabian community of the Banat had formed and began restrained political activities. At least politically, the two groups differed along the lines exposed in the *Temesvarer Zeitung* with regards to a future connection with the Hungarian state and Hungarian culture. The Catholic prelate Blaskovics, aided by Muth and Kräuter (among others), formed the Swabian Autonomy Party (*Schwäbische Autonomiepartei*) on the social foundations of the pre-war Farmer's Association, and stood by a December 8 "manifesto" issued by the now-dissolved Swabian People's Council that had disavowed both Romanian and Serbian claims to the region. In their program, the autonomists looked to the inclusion of the Banat in the canton-like system that Blaskovics had described earlier in the *Temesvarer Zeitung*.[34] In support of this vision, party supporters began to publish a weekly newspaper, the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, shortly after the party's founding.

In open competition with the Swabian Autonomy Party emerged a group that, as the "Segenthauer Swabians" had demanded before, sought a cleaner break with Hungary in establishing autonomy for the Swabians. Led by the agriculturalist Johann Röser (1870–1932), the writer Victor Orendi-Hommenau (1870–1954), and the engineer Reinhold Heegn (1875–

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[34] Josef Riess, ed., *Deutsches Volkswerden im Banat: Reden und Aufsätze*, (Timişoara, Graph Unternehmen "Ideal": 1935), 18.

1925), the German-Swabian National Party (*Deutsch-Schwäbische Volkspartei*; henceforth, *Volkspartei*) also benefited from a pre-war heritage, as its leading figures had all been active in the first active German-national party formed in the decade before the First World War. Partly in response to the Autonomy Party, the *Volkspartei* began to publish its own nearly daily newspaper in April 1919, provocatively titled *Deutsche Wacht.* More explicitly focused on national issues, it served as a forum in which party leaders, ideologues, and sympathetic community members expressed their views on the place of the Swabians within a wider German nation. Whether they were describing their reality as they perceived it to be, or rather as they *hoped* it to be is inconsequential—what is meaningful is that they worked to shape developing social relations and political orders by presenting it as such. By examining how these people spoke about the contours of the Swabian community, an image of the German Swabian emerges that colored self-representations over the coming decade.

The very first edition of the *Deutsche Wacht* served to set the parameters for the discourse that was to develop across the coming months. The paper sought to establish itself as the voice for all (presumably German) readers in this time of "national spring," whether they thought of themselves in a narrower sense as Swabians or were themselves "subordinated to the more general cultural concept 'German.'" While ruing the condition that Swabians had been forced to live under during Hungarian rule, the author (most likely the paper's editor, Andreas Dammang) expressed confidence that their "German being" remained untouched, and welcomed back those who had gone astray, presumably through a process of Magyarization. Finally, the article assured his "fellow inhabitants of other tongues"—those of other national and ethnic

groups—that the German Swabian people meant them no harm and had no designs to encroach upon them as the Hungarians had done before.[35]

From this point of departure, a constellation of aspects that defined the Swabian from the "radical" point of view can be tentatively outlined. First, by shared cultural connections, the Swabian was inherently German, to the point where Swabian and German were presented as nearly interchangeable terms. As Röser explained, the apparent difference between his "radical" discourse and Germanness and Blaskovics's "moderate" was "that we Swabians are also Germans…that we feel and know, that the German people's community [*Volksgemeinschaft*] extends beyond any country border. We as Germans, or when you would like it as such: Swabians, belong to the great German people."[36] In the context of his article, in which Röser used the image of the Transylvanian Saxons as a possible ideal model for the Swabians, the definitional difference between a regional German-speaking population and a wider German nation was dissolved, presumably due to the shared conscious of the people. A similar notion of a cultural connection to a broader German nation infused the argument of Karl von Möller (1876–1943), a prolific writer and former career officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army who— like Muth—colored Banat Swabian politics well into the 1930s. Writing to dispel notions of a pernicious Pan-German movement in the Banat. Möller presented those accused of supporting German supremacy as doing nothing other than defending the German language, schools, and churches, thus maintaining "German character types [*Arteigenschaften*]."[37]

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[35] "Deutsche Wacht!" *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 1, 8 April 1919.
[36] Johann Röser, "Die Richtungen in der schwäbischen Politik (II)," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 45, 3 June 1919. "daß wir Schwaben auch Deutsche sind…daß wir fühlen und wissen, daß die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft über die jewieligen Landesgrenzen hinausreicht. Wir als Deutsche, oder wenn Sie es so haben wollen: als Schwaben, gehören dem großen deutschen Volke an."
[37] Karl von Möller, "Das Gespenst," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 15, 25 April 1919.

If belonging in a wider German nation was primarily reflected through a shared culture, the Swabian German found its truest expression in the rural farmer. Before the turn to the *völkish* idea and the "national awakening" that had allegedly occurred during the war,[38] it was the "healthy and powerful farmers [*Bauernstand*] that had otherwise protected its *völkisch* character."[39] Echoing this claim to purity in the countryside, an author who described himself as a farmer and took the pseudonym "Eckart" explained that it was now evident why Swabian villages were the "most beautiful" and their fields "the most bountiful," even when the power of the Hungarian state had been set against it—they had inherited in their German souls the hundreds of years of "spiritual fortune" passed down by their ancestors. Despite it being in the village where most of the Hungarian "offenses" took place, "we however despite all and all have in the main remained healthily German." It was no wonder, then, that the "*völkisch* resurrection" would take hold better there than in the cities, "where perhaps there is more foreign stuff to dig out."[40]

The reverse side of the foregrounding of the peasant as the ideal German Swabian was therefore a leveling of criticism at urban Swabian elites, who were seen to have caved to Magyarization pressures in the past and who were still not nationally conscious enough in the present. In one article critiquing the behavior of ambitious assimilated, the author evoked the image of a frenzied mass of Swabians all clamoring to hop on to "Magyar" horses: "Every simpleton that swung himself up on the Hungarian horse rode just as quickly triumphantly away over his brothers, so that there were soon more riders than honest walkers and the Swabian

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[38] Michael Kausch, "National oder international?" *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 20, May 2, 1919.

[39] Josef Gabriel, "Nationale Arbeit," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 23, May 7, 1919. "gesunde und kräftige Bauernstand, der seine völkische Eigenart ansonsten bewahrt hatte"

[40] Eckart, "Völkische 'Auferstehung' in unseren Dörfern," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 11, April 20, 1919. "daß auf unseren Dörfern vielleicht am meisten gegen unser Volk gesünidgt wurde, wir aber trotz allem und allem im Marke gesund deutsch geblieben sind. Wir, bei denen die völksiche Auferstehug wohl gerade deshalb gründlicher einsetzt, alss in den Städten, wo vielleicht mehr fremder Kram abzuschütteln ist."

people…was nearly ridden to death."[41] What was worse, intoned another commentator, was that those who had fashioned themselves as the "*Herrischen*"—the lordly that sought to rise above the rest of the Swabians by integrating into Hungarian society—now positioned themselves as the leaders of the Swabian community, as true Swabians. If yesterday he had been "German-Hungarian (but more Hungarian than German)," today he would be a Swabian, but only so that he could retain his political influence. Readers were cautioned to stay away from such "political adventurers" without real principles, by which Muth, Blaskovics, and the rest of the Autonomy Party supporters were clearly meant.[42]

With the urban, acculturated (if not totally assimilated) "intelligentsia" constituting one point of suspicion within the Swabian community in the prescription of the *Deutsche Wacht*, the Catholic clergy was another elite group that was not to be trusted. One contributor who identified his place of residence as Großkikinda (Kikinda in the future Yugoslav state), Karl Erling, described the danger of the "spiritual rift" that developed between a priest and his congregation when the former did not attend to "national feeling" as well as "faith". Going further, Erling's article reflected the often advanced concern of "radical" Swabians that the Banat's Catholic clergy, which at least in urban areas such as Temesvár served both Hungarian- and German-speaking congregations,[43] did not have proper mastery of the German language, and therefore could not legitimately tend to the needs of their Swabian flock: "a priest who does not speak the language of his believers…automatically looks down upon his Swabian-speaking [*schwäbelnde*] flock with a certain disdain. On the other hand, the believers cannot view such a priest, who does

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[41] Wolfram von Eschenbach, "Nationale Charakterlosigkeit," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 14, April 25, 1919. "Jeder Einfaltspinsel, der sich auf das ungarisch Roß aufschwang, ritt alsbald triumpheriend über seine Brüder hinweg, so daß es bald mehrer Reiter als ehrliche Fußgänger gab und dem schäbischen Volk…beinahe zu Tod geritten wurde."
[42] Michael von der Weide, "Politische Abenteuerer," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 18, April 30, 1919. "Deutschungar (aber mehr Ungar als Deutscher)"
[43] According to the 1930 census, Swabians comprised 77 percent of Banat Catholics. Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 99.

not speak their language, as one of their very own, and will not be as willingly and easily receptive to his teachings."[44] Erling's sentiments, concerned as they were with the proper transmission of the Catholic creed, thus reflected another common cultural position put forth in the *Deutsche Wacht*: the ideal Banat Swabian was to be Catholic, but not *too* Catholic.[45] Affiliation with the Catholic Church still served as undergirding element of Swabian Germanness, but it was not to override national feeling.

Finally, the promoters of this "radical" Germanness subscribed to a definitively negative, or even tragic, view of their history. The focus of most authors was on the Swabians' recent past, when—echoing the charge made against the *Herrischen*—Swabians had willingly allowed themselves to be "Magyarized." The frictionless abandonment of Germanness came off even worse, according to Möller, when compared with "how toughly on the other hand the Romanian held on to his *Volkstum.*"[46] With their assimilation into Hungarian society, these Swabians had doomed any potential German political representation in Hungary. As Röser, one of the National Party leaders, sought to explain, "in the past time we Germans of Hungary had no kind of representation in the Hungarian parliament. We self-conscious Swabians did not want to witness how our people [*Volk*] were Magyarized."[47] Of course, following the narrative of the "national spring," the trajectory of this history was on the upswing. What had once been German, from the

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[44] Karl Erling, "Wo bleibt unsere katholische Geistlichkeit?" *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 3, April 11, 1919. "Ein Priester der nicht die Sprache seiner Gläbigen spricht … blickt unwillkürlich mit einer gewissen Verachtung auf seine schwäbelnde Herde herab. Die Gläubigen hingegen können so einen Priester, der nicht ihre Sprache spricht, nicht für ihren ureignenen betrachten und werden seinen Lehren nciht so willig und so leicht zugänglich sein."

[45] For example, the authors of a letter that was ostensibly mailed into the *Deutsche Watcht* criticizing the local press focused largely on the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* and Hungarian-language papers, but also attacked another German-language paper for its "clerical" orientation. 5 initials "und viele andere im Namen der Segenthauer selbstbewußten Bauern [and many others in the name of the self-conscious farmers of Segenthau], "Eingesendet," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 34, May 20, 1919.

[46] Karl von Möller, "Der Schwabe und die anderen," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 12, April 23, 1919. "wie zäh anderseits der Rumäne an seinem Volkstume festhielt."

[47] Johann Röser, "Die Richtungen in der schwäbischen Bewegung (I)," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 38, May 24, 1919. "In der damaligen Zeit hatten wir Deutschen Ungarns keinerlei Vertretung im ungarischen Parlament. Wir selbstbewußten Schwaben wollten es aber nicht mehr mit ansehen, wie unser Volk magyarisiert wurde."

perspective of those behind the *Deutsche Wacht*, would be made German again. Möller looked

first to the "metropolis" of Temesvár: "It is enough at first to emphasize with all decisiveness the

necessity to again conquer for Banat Germandom its old capital."[48]

Contributors of the *Deutsche Wacht* thus espoused a Swabian Germanness in the liminal

spring of 1919 that was grounded primarily in a broad, culturally defined German nation; a rural,

agricultural existence; the repudiation of urban traits; the incorporation of a chastened Catholic

faith, and the recognizance of a painful past. At the same time, there were cases in which a sense

of German belonging was also affirmed on grounds that potentially spoke to racial or biological

grounds. Even in the paper's introductory article, the author invoked promise represented in the

Swabian youth by way of blood, which presumably encapsulated the breadth of the German

people: "There in your blood, so to say, have all the magnificent German tribes from north and

south, from east and west coalesced to a new, promising future."[49] While this depiction of the

combination of blood from different "German tribes" is rather ambiguous, another piece

concerning the relationship of Germans to mere German-speakers clarified the racial basis of

national inclusion. Its anonymous author inveighed against those who defined themselves as

merely German-speaking, in the process identifying Jews as the worst of the culprits. Despite

attempting to join the true German population through "assimilation or melding [*Anpassung oder*

Verschmelzung]," racial belonging was something that could only be passed down by one's

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[48] Karl von Möller, "Deutsche Bildungsstätten und Bildungsmittel," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 38, May 24, 1919. "Es genügt vorläufig, mit aller Entschiedenheit die Notwendigkeit zu betonen, dem Banater Deutschtum seine alte Hauptstadt wieder zu erobern."

[49] "Deutsche Wacht!" *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 1, April 8, 1919. "Sind doch in Deinem Blute sozusagen all' die prächtigen deutschen Volkstämme aus Nord und Süd, aus Ost und West zu neuere, zukunftsreicher Einheit verschmolzen."

45

parents—so the argument went—and this constituted the basis for belonging to the German *Volk*.[50]

Just as the racially defined national community served to draw strict exclusionary boundaries of belonging, this conception was also oriented toward redeeming those who had strayed from the flock. The sense of blood-based connection invoked by some of those generating the "radical" discourse was also something that could never be fully abandoned. As the first issue of the *Deutsche Wacht* had promised, "no 'lost son' will find the paternal house [*Vaterhaus*] shut when he again returns wholeheartedly."[51] This appeal was of course directed at those who were believed to have assimilated into Magyar culture, or who at the very least felt a strong political allegiance to the Hungarian state. The paternal house or the "German house" as an organic site of origin (and thus return) was a recurring symbol employed to represent a space of familial, collective belonging. To Michael Kausch (1877–1942), leader of the *Volkspartei*, all who were conscious of their German blood had a right to enter into the "German house," and even those who were still unsound in their consciousness would be welcomed.[52]

On the one hand, this representation of Germanness, concerned as it was blood and inheritance, reflected a sort of *völkisch* ideological orientation, a vague concept defined by Kurt Sontheimer to denote an attachment to the originally Germanic, and to have as its guiding principle ethnic purity. From this perspective, the world is divided strongly into what is one's

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[50] "Die 'Deutschsprachigen'," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 51, June 11, 1919. The use of Jews (as well as Hungarians) is of course a classic case of defining the self through the other. Within the Kingdom of Hungary, the sense of inerasable difference—as well as an equally inescapable feeling of similarity—existed between those who identified as Germans, Jews, and Hungarians. See Péter Hanák, "The Image of the Germans and the Jews in the Hungarian Mirror of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest*, ed. Péter Hanák (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998), 44–62.
[51] "Deutsche Wacht!" *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 1, 8 April 1919."kein 'verlorener Sohn' wird das Vaterhaus verschlossen finden, wenn er wieder aufrichtigen Herzens zurückkehrt"
[52] Michael Kausch, "das deutsche Haus," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 55, June 15, 1919.

own, and what is foreign—focus is directed within, distrust to the outside, etc.[53] On the other hand, such pronouncements probably were just as much shaped by the prevailing recourse to the Wilsonian language of self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*), which political actors—in the Banat as well as across Europe—directed into strong national pronouncements.[54] The two

In Paris, meanwhile, the Entente arbitrators had already come to a general decision on the future border of the Banat in mid-March after hearing from Romanian and South Slav delegations at the end of February. Their decision, which granted Romania around two-thirds of the regions territory and the city of Temesvár, while leaving to Yugoslavia the southwestern third (Hungary received a tiny corner in the west), was communicated to these affected governments in its final form on July 3, and it appears that such news did not reach the Swabian public until the middle of the month.[55] Following orders from Paris, South Slav troops withdrew from the region at the end of the month, initially handing control of the administrative control over to a French force before Romanian troops moved in to assume control. On August 3, ceremoniously outfitted Romanian army triumphantly entered a Timişoara draped in Romanian flags to be greeted by local dignitaries—including Möller—on what would be renamed the *Piaţa Unirii* (Square of Unification) before the Catholic Cathedral in the city center.[56]

Aware that the political borders in which they were operating were permanently shifting, leaders of the *Volkspartei* took advantage of moment to secure their temporary place at the head of the German minority. On August 10, as thousands of Romanian peasants made their way into

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[53] Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik: Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 130–3.
[54] n-r., "Unsere Ziele II," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 21, May 4, 1919.
[55] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, 311. The decision-making process for drawing the new borders in different areas was of course a long and drawn out process, in which both the Romanian and South Slav governments filed multiple complaints, leading to numerous territorial re-drawings from March through July (311–14).
[56] "Einzug der rumänischen Truppen," *Deutsche Wacht*,

Timișoara to celebrate officially the annexation of the city,[57] Möller, Röser, and Kausch—joined by the prominent Transylvanian Saxon politicians Rudolf Brandsch and Hans Otto Roth (1890–1953)—organized a rally at which they declared the allegiance of the Swabian *Volk* for Romania and insisted upon the indivisibility of the Banat. They justified their swearing allegiance through the promises of minority rights and protections that Romanian delegates had ostensibly made at the Alba Iulia assembly of December 1, 1918.[58] *Volkspartei* leaders utilized the loyalty rally, which was officially sanctioned by the new Romanian administration, not only to position themselves presumptively at the head of the minority, but also to signal a symbolic break with the legacy of Hungarian rule. As the Autonomy Party leaders Muth and Blaskovics, who still saw their political future within the Hungarian state framework, stayed silent, Röser spoke of integrating all Banat "Germans" into the *Volkspartei*, which he envisioned not as a political party, but as a difference-dissolving "national organization" (*Volksorganisation*). Brandsch, one of the leading "greens" in Saxon politics who even before the war strove for stronger relations and cooperation between ethnic German communities in Hungary, invoked the unity of "Germans" in Greater Romania, emphasizing that with their resolution the Swabians had joined the Germans of Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia as "one *Volk*." [59]

The *Volkspartei* was granted another opportunity to demonstrate its high standing when in early September leaders of the newly established Association of Germans in Romania (*Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien;* VDR), an umbrella organization designed to coordinate action among regional German political organizations, met in Timișoara.[60] Characteristic of the

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[57] Schmidt-Rösler, *Rumänien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, 325.

[58] "Die erlösende Tat," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 101, August 12, 1919.

[59] "Rede Johann Rösers (Auszug) Gehalten in der Volksversammlung vom 10. August," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 105, August 17, 1919; "Rede des Herrn Abgeordneten Rudolf Brandsch (Auszug) Gehalten in der Volksversammlung vom 10. August," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 106, August 19, 1919.

[60] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 95. On the Association of Germans in Romania, see Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen, 1919-1933* (Cologne**:** Böhlau Verlag, 1994).

German-national rhetoric was the striving of Möller to place the apparent Swabian national reorientation into the framework of fairytale. Speaking to the assembled dignitaries, he described how

> Evil powers succeed in cocooning the princess in a thick hedge. The princess was our German soul, the prince, who came to free her, is our beloved Germandom. If it [Germandom] is not yet fully awoken, it is already yawning, it is already rubbing its eyes, it beholds the prince, the prince faces the fairytale princess, they rush to each other, embrace and press each other against the breast: We both will remain eternally faithful to one another.[61]

Like Sleeping Beauty, Banat Swabians had, with the help of the *Volkspartei*, awoken to proclaim their Germanness—or so Möller and the *Volkspartei* would have it.

Practical Politics: Shifting Allegiances Within the Romanian Banat

If the German-Swabian People's Party's declaration of Swabian loyalty to the Romanian state in August and their hosting of other Romanian German leaders in Timişoara in September had heightened their visibility as leaders within the community, they saw their victory in the November 1919 parliamentary elections—the first to be held in the expanded Romanian state—as the confirmation of such from the people themselves. In the months preceding the elections, *Deutsche Wacht* hastened to stress the alliance between members of the German-Swabian People's Party and other nationally oriented German parties of Great Romania, such as those of the Transylvanian Saxons, from which a "powerful block" to defend German interests was to emerge. At the same time, the *Volkspartei* presented itself as a practitioner of *Realpolitik* that had already made an agreement with the dominant Romanian National Liberal Party to assure that *Volkspartei* candidates in Swabian majority districts would win their contests.[62] While Möller

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[61] "Die Tagung der Großrumänischen Deutschen," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 124, September 10, 1919. "Es gelang bösen Mächten, die Prinzessin in eine dichte Hecke einzuspinnen. Die Prinzessin war unsere deutsche Seele, der Prinz, der gekommen ist, sie zu befreien, ist unser geliebtes Deutschtum. Wenn es noch nicht völlig erwacht ist, so gähnt es schon, es reibt sich schon die Augen, es erblickt den Prinzen, der Prinz steht die Märchenprinzessin vor sich, sie eilen einander entgegen, umfangen sich und drücken sich an die Brust: Wir beide bleiben einander auf ewig treu."
[62] K[arl von] M[ölle]r, "Die Wahlen," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 163, October 18, 1919.

admitted that the excitement before the elections on the part of the Swabian population had been rather subdued, he also pronounced a belief that "the Swabian people in the country was uniting itself from day to day more on the basis of firm will to tenacious Germandom."[63] The elections, in which favorable results were expected, were expected only to assist the process of unification and collective eye-opening to the Germanness portrayed through the *Deutsche Wacht*.

In the end, the *Volkspartei* ended up winning eight seats in the first elections for Temes and Torontal counties, although in contests in which they were unchallenged. Their alliance with the Romanian National Party meant that they faced no true opposition (or obstruction) in districts with many Swabian voters. Furthermore, the Autonomy party supporters—still not fully letting go of their allegiance to the Hungarian state—boycotted the elections, and their leaders, Muth and Blasckovics, were arrested by Romanian police shortly before voting and held for a short period in Transylvanian Făgăraş.[64] Nevertheless, *Volkspartei* representatives hastened to point to the election results as proof of the Swabian community's confirmation of the party leadership and *völkisch* direction. Josef Gabriel, pronounced in the *Deutsche Wacht* that "never before have elections had such a great significance for the future of our people as these now." This was the case not just because of the new state context in which the Swabians found themselves, but because they "appear for the first time as a politically organized people with a previously established program. These basic principles determine the policies of our future activity."[65] Validation for the *Volkspartei* thus came with a strong endorsement on their clear recognition of Germanness, and a repudiation of the Autonomy Party's ambivalence.

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[63] K[arl von] M[ölle]r, "Wahlstimmung," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 167, November 1, 1919. "schwäbischen Volkes auf dem Lande vereinheitlicht sich von Tag zu Tag mehr auf dem Boden des festen Willens zum zähen Deutschtum"
[64] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 95.
[65] Josef Gabriel, "Der Weg zum Ziel," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 173, November 9, 1919. "Noch nie haben Wahlen für das Schicksal unseres Volkes eine so große Bedeutung gehabt, wie die jetzigen…. das erstemal als politisch organisiertes Volk mit vorher festgesetztem Programm auftreten. Diese Geschichtspunkte bestimmen die Richtlinien unsere zukünftigen Tätigkeit."

However, even around the time of the German-Swabian National Party's declaration of loyalty to Romania, the tenor within the more conservative Swabian Autonomy Party had already shifted towards a more assertive German national tone. Although the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* did not display the constant focus on the German nation and *Volkstum* evident in the *Deutsche Wacht* during the run-up to the elections, instead choosing to focus on Romanian and international politics, the few articles directly engaging with these topics displayed a remarkably undifferentiated perspective. Even more, certain authors readily professed a will to atone for prior shortcomings in national matters. For example, one September contribution to the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* predictably asserted that supporting German schools was "not only our right, but our holiest duty." The author, a Johann Ruß, admitted that in the past, despite the best efforts of teachers, such support had not always been granted. For such past negligence one could not be faulted; "but it is our fault when we do not understand the call of the future." The author concluded with a dire warning tying national consciousness to communal preservation: "This time is perhaps the last that the future asks of us—of our people—if we want to remain Swabians, and when we do not muster the necessary national consciousness in this hour, or when we eschew the needed sacrifices, then…then the Swabian people [*Schwabenvolk*]—as such—will go inexorably to its ruin."[66] This sort of pronouncement could easily have been found within the pages of the *Deutsche Wacht.*

Further articles published in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* before 1920 made the Autonomist adaptation of German national and *Volkstum*-oriented language even more clear. For instance, one anonymous piece published in October devoted to the issue of national rights

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[66] Johann Ruß, "An die schwabischen Lehrer!" *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 27, September 21, 1919. "Es ist diesmal vielleicht die lezte Anfrage des Schicksals an uns—an unser Volk—ob wir Schwaben bleiben wollen und wenn wir in dieser Stunde das nötige Nationalbewußtsein nicht aufbringen, oder die notwendigen Opfer scheuen, dann... dann geht das Schwabenvolk—als solches—unaufhaltsam seinem Ruin entgegen."

51

sketched out a broad German national community, and explained that while it was impossible "to get all Germans to Germany," the opportunity to live as such should be given to those whose fate had brought them far from their original homeland. The author was not talking about just any Germans, of course, but of the Swabians.[67] Another contribution published the following month integrated the Swabian community into the more *völkisch* conceptualization of the body of the people. As the author described, "We Swabians are a people of only a couple hundred thousand souls. But we belong to a tribe [*Stamme*] that counts millions and millions, which live spread around the whole world." The article closed with the same image of the Swabians embodied in Sleeping Beauty that Möller had invoked during the meeting of the Greater Romanian Germans that previous September: after a long natinal sleep, they had once again awoken.[68]

Thus, when elections were once again called for early June, 1920—less than half a year after the first parliamentary elections—Muth, Blaskovics, and the rest of the Swabian Autonomy Party enthusiastically announced their entry into the electoral competition. But they made little effort to differentiate themselves on an ideological or even programmatic basis from their Swabian rivals. Their party and election program, published in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* in early May, bore remarkable resemblances to that of the *Volkspartei*'s from before.[69] When the elections arrived, it was the Autonomy Party candidates that triumphed, as all previous *Volkspartei* representatives lost their mandates.[70] Showing that the boundaries between the two parties were not so rigid, however, just before the elections both Möller and Gabriel—sensing which way the political winds were blowing—had shifted to the Autonomy Party, and Möller

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[67] "Jede Nation," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 191, October 15, 1919.
[68] "Das Volk," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 221, November 20, 1919. "Wir Schwaben sind ein Volk von nur ein paar hundertausend Seelen. Aber wir gehören einem Stamme an, der Millionen und Millionen zählt, die auf der ganzen Welt zertstreut leben."
[69] "Programm der Schwäbischen Autonomiepartei," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, No. 71, May 13, 1920.
[70] "Zum Ergebnis der Kammerwahlen," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 88, June 6, 1920.

had won a seat through his move.[71] Although Hausleitner notes that the Swabian population's low turnout to the elections prevents clear conclusions about popular support, the fact that all *Volkspartei* candidates failed indicates that the Catholic conservatives, who before the war had occupied the more prominent positions, did have political staying power.[72]

Conclusions: A United Volksgemeinschaft?

Although the June 1920 parliamentary elections had struck a blow to the political ambitions of the Swabian-German People's Party and deflated their pretensions toward being accepted among the people as their true representatives, it of course did not lead to their total collapse as a political faction. Röser and Kausch—the self-described "radicals" of the German national movement—still harbored hopes for the political futures of themselves and their movement. Furthermore, members of both the German-Swabian People's Party and the Swabian Autonomy Party realized that for either side to have a chance of effecting the plans that they put forth to their prospective constituents (both of which were, of course, based upon winning the recognition of collective rights regarding German-language education, legal and administrative processes, and cultural institutions), some kind of communal unity needed to be realized. In electoral matters, the proportion of mandates that Swabians could conceivably win paled in comparison to those won by Romanian representatives, many of whom would support a government pursuing a nationalizing program of its own. By cooperating with other German parliamentary representatives, or even as a minority block with Hungarian and Jewish parties, as was attempted in 1927, Swabian representatives wielded negligible influence on the national

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[71] "Die Wahlbewegung," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 73, May 12, 1920.
[72] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 97.

53

scale of Romanian politics.[73] The prospect of losing political representation among a population that did not even top three-hundred thousand because of internal squabbling was bemoaned by both sides.[74] As this chapter has demonstrated, however, such of unity of political leadership—even if only outward directed—would not come easily.

When an agreement was reached between both political parties, it came only though suppressing otherwise latent tensions and personal rivalries, and after protracted negotiations between both sides. In fact, the establishment of such a shared body for political representation—a national council (*Volksrat*) that was supposed to stand above party politics—was apparently almost scuttled after overzealous *Volkspartei* members established just such a council in Lugoj, a town to the east of Timișoara, at the end of 1920—without inviting any of their political opponents.[75] The combined national organization that was supposed to unite the two factions, the German-Swabian *Volksgemeinschaft* (*Deutsch-Schwäbische Volksgemeinsschaft*; henceforth *Volksgemeinschaft)* was established in Timișoara after protracted negotiations on March 13, 1921. From a preliminary draft of its charter, it took as its task to represent the German-Swabian community outwardly, specifically "to encourage the *völkisch* culture, to protect it from disturbances and losses, to align it with dignified German culture, and to assure it full freedom of development."[76] The founding of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and the temporary setting aside of open dissent among the Swabian political elite that it entailed was ultimately a victory for the Autonomy Party, as Muth was elected as its chairman (*Obmann*), and its national council, which served as the highest representative body in communal political, economic, and social issues,

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[73] Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft*, 222–33.

[74] For one example of these sentiments, see Der Vorbereitungsausschuss [The Preparation Committee], "Der Große Volkstag," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, No. 47, March 1, 1921.

[75] "Zur Lugoscher Tagung," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, No. 234, December 7, 1920.

[76] "Satzungs-Entwurf der Deutsch-schwäbischen Volksgemeinschaft," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 49, March 3, 1921. "die völkische Kultur zu fördern, selbst vor Störungen und Verlusten zu bewahren, sie der großen deutschen Kultur würdig anzugleichen und ihr die volle Entwicklungsfreiheit zu sichern"

was dominated by old Autonomy Party members. Although by no means perfect gauges of the opinions of the Swabian public, the political success of the Catholic conservatives, many of whom had always thought of themselves as Swabians, or Hungarians, but who had only recently committed themselves to a "German nation," shows the limits of the "radical" prescription of Germanness. When it came time to vote for their representatives, it seems that most Swabians, who had never been very politically active within Hungary, were more inclined to fall back on tradition and trust in their Catholic leaders—who were proportionally better represented in the Autonomy Party—than to be attracted by the Germanness offered by the "radicals."

At the same time, however, it was the "radical" conception of Germanness that won out in the discursive space. With their ties to the Hungarian nations-state irrevocably lost, the Catholic conservative "moderates"—those who had traditionally been resistant to any sort of cross-border German nationalism—felt compelled by political necessity to recast themselves as even "truer" Germans than those who had first declared the primacy of German national belonging. In doing so, they adopted language that was being popularized both within Germany proper and beyond its borders that, while vague and amorphous, situated itself on notions of exclusivist ethnic inheritance.[77]

This convergence on a *Volkstum*-oriented sense of Germanness did not, of course, result in the resolution of all cultural conflicts within the minority's elite related to what it meant to be German in the Banat. One of the issues that evidently divided the founders of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, as Hildrun Glass has noted, was just how to define who was to belong within the organization. An early draft of its charter, for instance, focused entirely on one's own individual acknowledgement of one's Germanness for entrance into the community: the German-

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[77] Penny and Rinke, "Germans Abroad," 183.

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Swabian *Volksgemeinschaft* was to represent the "*völkisch* organized totality of all those in the Arad and Sathmar counties who, without consideration of their possible [political] party membership, acknowledge themselves as Germans."[78] The charter that was actually passed, however, defined the *Volksgemeinschaft* as the "politically-*völkisch* organized totality of all those…in the Romanian Banat as well as the Arad and Sathmar counties who are able to profess their ancestry [*Abstammung*] as Germans."[79] From one version to the next, the insistence on an objective characteristic—inheritance—was inserted. Such a dissonance leads to the conclusion that despite the momentarily unity in both the cultural sphere and the realm of political action, considerable disagreement in the discursive space remained. Additionally, in marshalling a sense of Germanness in the Banat, Swabian elites still had to figure out how to attract those who were supposed to embody their visions—the German Swabian *Volk*—to participate in the project of "national awakening." The next chapter will be devoted to just such efforts to mediate such a sense of self, and the challenges they faced in doing so.

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[78] "Satzungs-Entwurf der Deutsch-schwäbischen Volksgemeinschaft," *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 49, March 3, 1921. "völkisch organisierte Gesamtheit all jener, die sich im rumänischen Banate, sowie im Arader und Szatmarer Komitate ohne Rücksicht auf ihre etwaige Parteizugehörigkeit als Deutsche bekennen."

[79] "Satzungen der Deutsch-Schwäbischen Volksgemeinschaft," quoted in Hildrun Glass, "Wer ist ein Deutscher? Anmerkungen zum Selbstverständnis der Deutschen in Rumänien (1919-1944)," *Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik* 2 (1997): 18. "politisch-völkisch organisierten Gesamtheit all jener…die sich vermöge ihrer Abstammung im rumänischen Banate sowie im Arader und Sathmarer Komitate als Deutsche bekennen."

Chapter Two: From Finding the Heimat to "New ways and New Methods": Minority-Making and Political Dissatisfaction, 1923–1930

As the "liminal" period in the Banat came to a close, the national borders around expanded Greater Romania hardened, and Swabian political leaders coalesced, temporarily, around the German-Swabian *Volksgemeinschaft* as the legitimate representative organization of all German Swabians in the East Banat, the Swabian intelligentsia saw itself faced with a new task. While both former "radicals"—Röser, Kausch, and Möller—and "moderates"—Muth, Blaskovics, and Kräuter, among others—discursively promoted an ethno-cultural sense of Germanness rooted in the *Volkstum*, the affiliations of average Swabians, who traditionally had not actively participated in political life, were still very much uncertain. Thus, the Swabian leadership, like that of other minority communities across Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, confronted an undertaking that was more challenging than that of merely articulating their form of Germanness. Having generated a vision for situating oneself in the world, they had to convince the others seen to exist within their "imagined community" to participate in this vision. In effect, they had to practice "minority making."[1]

In invoking such feelings of belonging, Swabian leaders turned to the realm of culture. Through their writings, speeches, and orchestrated performances, these individuals strove to fill in the image of the ideal Banat German Swabian whose contours they had already begun to draw in the earlier period. In doing so, and seeking to shape a community united for the future, these "intellectuals" turned to the past. The common history of the Banat Swabians increasingly figured into the cultural discourse on Germanness, as authors, editors, and politicians worked to repair the "ruptured continuity"—in Maurice Halbwach's words—between "historical" and

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[1] Swanson, *Tangible Belonging*, 131–132.

"collective memory."[2] Within the continuing process of formulating a Banat Swabian Germanness and framing a coherent group historical narrative, conflicts inevitably arose between actors, despite their stress on German unity, as varying political strategies and the weight of certain elements within conceptions of Germanness clashed.

To be sure, Swabian memory politics and the foregrounding of a colonial past in contemporary Swabian self-representations are topics that have already been. Josef Wolf, for example, has written widely on the "festival culture" (*Festkultur*) predominant among Banat Swabian communities in the 1920s, as events commemorating the consecration of churches, church bells, and war monuments; the founding of cities, towns, and villages; and regional historical and cultural figures abounded. As Wolf argues, these concrete events and the accompanying discourse on Germanness allowed the local elite to show off their "newly acquired national consciousness," while also serving as a stage to their political and ideological antagonisms.[3] Likewise, Márta Fata, among others, has demonstrated how the image of the eighteenth-century Swabian settler assumed a privileged place in German Swabian national imaginings, as elements that were traditionally associated with the colonial experience—work ethic, overcoming exoticism, and bearing culture and civilization—were transformed into specifically German characteristics.[4]

Building off this argumentation, in the first half of this chapter, I mean to ask how the sense of Germanness that, out of institutional framing and political necessity, emerged from the

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[2] Maurice Halbswachs, "Historical and Collective Memory," in *The Collective Memory*, ed. Maurice Halbwachs (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 79.

[3] Josef Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung der Banater Schwaben 1918 – 1925," in *Kulturtagung 2013 Sindelfingen: Die Banater Schwaben und der Erste Weltkrieg: Kriegsgeschehen und Auswirkungen auf das Banat*, ed. Walter Engel and Walter Tonţa (Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Banater Schwaben, 2014), 82.

[4] Márta Fata, "Migration im Gedächtnis," in *Migration im Gedächtnis. Auswanderung und Ansiedlung im 18. Jahrhundert in der Identitätsbildung der Donauschwaben*, ed. Márta Fata (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 7–22.

58

"liminal period," was further shaped and deepened by the cultural efforts of "minority makers" through the early 1920s. At a period when the category was still rather amorphous, I consider various types of cultural sources, focusing on newspaper representations of the two-hundred-year settlement jubilee in Timișoara and forms of *Heimat* literature (*Heimatliteratur*), to investigate what sort of "elements, signs, symbols, or codes" were advanced and utilized. I ultimately mean to show how those at the high discursive level—and both those who originally identified as "radicals" and the more conservative "moderates"—contributed to promote a self-image that, based on notions of cultural and economic German superiority and a constantly imperiled existence, conceived of an image of the ideal Banat Swabian with volatile political potential. In the second half of this chapter, I return to the more explicitly political realm to explore how those at the edges of the political elite in the late 1920s and early 1930s began to exploit this potential against those—the Catholic conservative "moderates"—who had helped to promote it at the beginning of the decade.

At the same time, I mean to argue that even by way of reading of such discursive sources it is possible to see how the expectations, or at least public pronouncements, of such Swabian politicians and intellectuals were continually frustrated, or at the very least, not met. The apparent lack of enthusiasm that the common Swabian farmer showed for "rediscovering" his or her Germanness in a national sense suggests that concepts such as "national indifference" or at least "political absenteeism," as Günter Schödl has suggested, can be applied to the Banat Swabians as well.[5] Furthermore, the continued success of Social Democratic politicians, at least in the urban and industrial centers of Timișoara, Arad, and the eastern Banat mountain lands, demonstrate how notions of class and socio-economic status continued to hold weight for many

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[5] See Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119; and Schödl, "Zwischen ungarischem Staat und deutschem Volk," 27.

Swabians.[6] In the process of minority-building, different actors visions' for communal organization—rooted in national, regional, religious, or class belonging—competed and often intermixed. In the end, the adopted categories of Germanness, the worldviews that they proposed for others to look through, may not have accorded with their original intentions.

The Politics of Culture in Romania

Just as Wilsonian language and Romanian policies regarding minorities shaped the initial reorientation of Swabian leaders to promote an ethno-cultural Germanness, the process of filling in these still vague imaginings also was framed by Swabian leaders' relationship to the Romanian state and Romanian nationalizing measures. Early "Romanianization" efforts were aimed primarily at limiting Hungarian influence, and thus actually helped to create space for a German national movement to develop.[7] The perceived threat of Hungarian irredentism in the far western areas of the Transylvanian territories absorbed by Romania after the war, as well as the generally preeminent status of ethnic Hungarians and Hungarian culture in these lands, put Hungarian elites and their institutions (if not those of Hungarian-speaking Jews) under the most pressure immediately after the war.[8]

Accordingly, Romanian authorities thinking in national terms were perfectly happy to have urban German-speaking Swabians who had assimilated into Hungarian society "rediscover" their Germanness. Additionally, while the langue of national self-determination and minority rights factored into Swabian leaders' strong adoption of national pretenses, legal guarantees regarding the protection of language and religious freedoms were, in fact, made by the Romanian

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[6] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 80–5.
[7] Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland*, 29.
[8] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 142, 151, 153.

60

government in Bucharest. Although the promises regarding collective rights that Swabian and

Saxons politicians insisted had been made at Albia Iulia were not immediately instituted,

Romanian representatives signed a Minority Protection Treaty as part of the Trianon agreement

in June 1920 that guaranteed "minorities of language, of race and of religion" equal political

rights, use of their language in public and private spaces, religious and associational freedoms,

and the right to establish their own establishments, schools, and educational institutions .[9] On the

one hand, then, Swabian efforts to promote German-language schools, associations, and

churches were presented with considerably more opportunities than in the pre-war period.

On the other hand, the Banat, like the rest of Transylvania and the other outlying

provinces annexed to Greater Romania, were drawn into Bucharest's centralizing and

nationalizing vision for the expanded state. In an effort to stave off social unrest and to

strengthen the position of Romanian peasants, Romanian authorities approved of a land reform

action beginning in March 1921 that targeted large estates.[10] Although the Swabian population

was not heavily impacted, Swabian landholders tended to lose more than average, and the

holdings of the German- and Magyar-speaking Catholic Church lost the most. Ultimately, such

reforms strained the relationship between minority leaders, who thought they were being unfairly

treated, and Romanian state authorities.[11]

Even more abrasive were Romanian cultural policies affecting Swabian educational

institutions. The direction of educational policies, however, was not just a matter of contention

between leaders of the nationalizing state and minorities, but rather an issue that reflected

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[9] Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland*, 47; Wolfgang Kessler, "Die gescheiterte Integration. Die Minderheitenfrage in Ostmitteleuropa 1919–1939," *in Ostmitteleuropa zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen (1918-1939) : Stärke und Schwäche der neuen Staaten, nationale Minderheiten*, ed. Hans Lemberg (Marburg: Verlag Herder Institut, 1997), 173–4.
[10] Hitchins, *Rumania*, 409.
[11] Kessler, "Die gescheiterte Integration," 176.

competing interests of the outreaching center in Bucharest and its new periphery, in this case centered in Transylvanian Sibiu, and then Cluj. As noted earlier, the Transylvanian Romanian nationalists, who played a key role in the region joining Romania after the war, sought and achieved a degree of autonomy through the establishment of regional administrative and educational institutions that were supposed to ease the transition to a standardized national system of oversight. These "transitional" bodies, such as the Directing Council and its educational departments, worked to implement policies that would be successful on the local level and reflect regional particularities. In April 1920, however, the Directing Council was already dissolved, and in 1922 the government of Ion Bratianu's National Liberal party, which had come to power the same year, abolished the successor General Directorates of Education in favor of school districts that were more closely coordinated from Bucharest. [12]

With National Liberal political dominance and the extension of central control into the local education policies of the newly absorbed provinces came a rash of measures affecting schools that instructed in national minority languages. The Romanian parliament passed three educational reform bills in 1924, 1925, and 1928, pertaining to primary, private, and secondary schools, respectively. From one perspective, this legislation confirmed the place of minority language schools in areas with a high minority-language-speaking population. Yet it also undercut such an arrangement by mandating that certain subjects had to be taught in Romanian, allowed for greater ministerial oversight of private confessional schools while reducing state financial support, and confirmed the need for all students to pass a Romanian-language baccalaureate exam in order to enter Romanian universities—a test that posed considerable difficulties to many German-speaking students.[13]

[12] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 42–3.
[13] Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland*, 54–66.

62

Also in line with the National Liberal party's nationalizing and centralizing agenda was the adoption of a new Romanian constitution in March that, insisting on the national integrity of the Romanian nation-state, recognized all Romanian citizens as equal individuals, but failed to grant collective rights to minorities.[14] If the need to "minority make" was driven on the one hand by the internal political needs of the minority leadership, it was also a response to the perceived external challenges presented by the state.

Minority-Making: The 200-Year Jubilee in Timișoara

The two-hundred-year jubilee in Timișoara celebrating the colonization of the Banat by settlers from German lands was not the first such event to commemorate the region's settlement, or the founding of a certain town or village, and nor was it the last. Wolf, who has already presented a reconstruction of the event and an interpretation of its political significance, notes that smaller-scale celebrations in other Banat locales in 1922 and 1923 provided the model for the larger event in the center of the Romanian Banat.[15] But in attracting around 70,000 Swabians into Timișoara, it was certainly the largest of these events, and as such it came to occupy a privileged place in the pantheon of recent Swabian history, memorialized through press reports, the annual *Volkskalender*, and in publications published in Germany and Austria.[16]

Although the impetus for the event originated in an academic youth association, Möller, who had become editor of the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, was delegated by the *Volksgemeinschaft*

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[14] Hitchins, *Rumania*, 410; Corbea-Hoișie, "Rumänien – vom National- zum Nationalitätenstaat," 45–6.

[15] Earlier jubilees that took place in 1922 and 1923 in Periam (Perjamosch), Tomnatic (Triebswetter), and Aradul Nou (Neuarad) in particular served as a trial run for the events in Timișoara. Josef Wolf, "Die Zweihundertjahrfeier der Ansiedlung 1923 im Spannungsfeld zwischen Politik und Erinnerungskultur (I)," *Banatica* 12 (1995): 24.

[16] All of the major German-language newspapers, as well as Hungarian- and Romanian-language papers, such as the *Temesvári Hirlap,* covered the events.

to act as the driving force behind the event's organization.[17] The jubilee in Timişoara, which began on Friday, September 7, and closed with a mass procession and gathering on Sunday, September 9, was initially conceived to coincide with a simultaneous celebration in Vršac (Werschetz) in the Yugoslavian portion of the Banat. Because of concerns regarding different harvest times and the reactions of Romanian and Yugoslavian officials to a joint event, the Vršac gathering was held at the end of August.[18] Although representatives from the Yugoslav Banat were on hand at the event in Timişoara, the symbolism of the gathering was thus more restricted to the eastern, Romanian portion of the Banat than to the region as a whole.

The prospective form of the jubilee came into being in the pages of Möller's *Schwäbische Volkspresse* in the months and days leading up to the event. A foreseen highpoint of the celebration was a procession (*Festzug*) through the city that was to involve the participation of the thousands of Swabians, as well as distinguished visitors of other Germany minority communities.[19] In an article published in late August announcing the consent of local authorities to the holding of the jubilee, Möller stressed the need for participation on a mass scale and urged the councils of the local affiliates of the *Volksgemeinschaft* to organize their own contingents, complete with traditional costume.[20] Reflecting a theme that was to be ubiquitous over the jubilee weekend and, as Wolf argues, was one of its primary functions, loyalty and the will to cooperate with the Romanian state was emphasized, in particular by extending an invitation to Romanian King Ferdinand to serve as the jubilee's "protector."[21] For their part, Romanian authorities reciprocated—to facilitate the flow of jubilee-goers into Timişoara, the railroad

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[17] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 106.
[18] Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 94.
[19] Wolf, "Die Zweihunderjahrfeier der Ansiedlung 1923," 9.
[20] Karl von Möller, "Bewilligung der Zweijahrhudertfeier," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 185, August 22, 1923.
[21] Scheduling circumstances, however, prevented the king from making an appearance. "Der König bei der Zweijahrhundertfeier," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 194, September 1, 1923.

64

ministry set additional trains into service and offered special reduced rates to and from the city

for travelers with passes authorized by the *Volksgemeinschaft.*[22]

The special edition of the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* for Saturday, September 8, featured

essays from all of the leading Swabian politicians (as well as prominent Transylvanian Saxons)

that foreshadowed, but in ways also contrasted, the speeches such figures made over the

weekend. In all cases, the historical settler figured prominently in the authors' pre-celebration

writings. In this context, it was the border-defying, national sense of Germanness that came more

to the fore. While the Swabian people (*Schwabenvolk*) was still present, the articles put more

emphasis on presenting the Swabians as "German" farmers. Muth, for example, who was to be

elected the as chairman (*Obmann*) of the *Volksgemeinschaft* on the Saturday of the celebration,

wrote of how "the entire people [*Volk*] down to the smallest cabin must be infused with the

thought that divine providence has planted us here as the sliver of a hundred-million-strong

nation in order to represent and spread the light of the German intellectual world and the virtues

of the German being to the benefit of our own people, but also to the benefit of the entire

[Romanian] fatherland."[23] As is clear, the urge to strengthen a German national nexus via shared

Volkstum and a continued civilizational mission was tempered by careful statements of good

intentions to the national state.

The course of the weekend's events, as well as the actual speeches delivered by Swabian

leaders and their guests, were reported after the weekend in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*. The

jubilee got under way with a welcome evening on September 7, in which Swabian notables

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[22] Farhpreisermässigung für Besucher der Zweijahrhundertfeier," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 198, September 6, 1923.

[23] Kaspar Muth, "Das Dritte Jahrhundert," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 200, September 8, 1923. "Das ganze Volk bis in die kleinste Hütte muß von dem Gedanken durchdrungen sein, daß uns die göttliche Vorsehung als Splitter des deutschen Hundertmillionenvolkes hierher verpflanzt hat, um das Licht der Deutschen Geisteswelt und die Tugenden des deutschen Wesens zu vertreten und zu verbreiten, zum Wohle unseres Volkes, aber auch zum Wohle des ganzen Vaterlandes."

greeted representatives of the Transylvanian Saxon (including Brandsch, German parliamentary fraction chairman Hans Otto Roth, and the influential *Kronstädter Zeitung* editor Emil Neugeboren), Bukovinan, Bessarabian, and Yugoslavian ethnic Germans, as well as the German and Austrian consuls. If the unity of Germans beyond Germany's borders was put on show that Friday evening, the next morning showed signs of a split within the leadership of the Swabian community itself. As the body of the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s National Council convened in one part of Timişoara to elect the council leadership (Muth and the two other incumbents were re-elected), in another location the Cultural Association (*Kulturverband*), consisting mostly of old members of the *Volkspartei*, met to listen to their former party leader Michael Kausch.[24] The divided meetings pointed to the rifts in the *Volksgemeinschaft* that had not been resolved with the founding of the organization in 1921, and harkened back to conflicts over the direction of German-language private schools in the Banat.[25]

The festivities then moved to the city's summer theater, where a series of speeches were held proclaiming the significance of the beginning of colonization, the Swabians' commitment to their Germanness, and their place in the Romanian state. Muth, who spoke first, again reminded the assembled audience how over the last two hundred years, the ancestors of the migration of the Germans who settled in a "devastated Banat" had become a "united tribe" (*geschlossene Volksstamme*), and offered his thanks first to God, and then—with a diplomatic touch—to the current Romanian government. Kräuter, who spoke after Blaskovics repeated the Swabians' loyalty to Romanian authorities, likewise emphasized the dramatic nature of development in the

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[24] Ibid., 2.
[25] In 1919 and 1920, Kausch had favored a German-language school system that was independent of the Catholic Church. With the Catholic conservative political victories of 1920, however, a German-language confessional school system had taken shape led by Franz Kräuter. Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland*, 51–3.

Banat brought about by the Swabians in the last two centuries, achieved through the inherited qualities of the original settlers and their perseverance over the "misery and squalor" (*Not und Elend*) they were exposed to upon their arrival: "First when this bleak picture is set against that of today will one be able to appreciate how much reason we have today to remember these martyrs with gratitude. And first when one considers, that not only was greatness created in the world of physical industriousness, but that we also have completed much in spiritual areas…then we will become fully conscious of what power and capability, of what spiritual gifts our ancestors possessed."[26]

The image of the Swabian settler that came across on the discursive level thus reflected a consciousness of roots in the German homeland, the ability to overcome horrific circumstances, and the attainment of a privileged level of material and even cultural development as a Christianizing, civilizing force. If this was the generally communicated message, however, there were still evident differences between the language used by different leaders and content of their visions. Some of these contrasts served in complementary and mediating ways. Muth's stress on the Germanness of Banat Swabians in a national sense was tempered, for example, by Blaskovics's appeal to the state loyalty of the Swabian people (*Schwabenvolk*). In other cases, such as in the speech delivered by Hans Otto Roth, grounds for potential trans-regional conflict came to light. Roth praised the newfound "solidarity of all Germans of this land" and the "cultural work" that had been completed over a much shorter time than that enjoyed by the Transylvanian Saxons.[27] This seemed to raise an uncomfortable question, however: if the

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[26] "Die Schwäbische Zweijahrhunderfeier," 2–3. "Erst wenn man dieses trostlose Bild dem heutigen gegenüberstellt, wird man ermessen können, wie viel Grund wir heute haben, dieser Märtyrer in Dankbarkeit zu gedenken. Und erst wenn man bedenkt, dass nicht nur in der Welt des körperlichen Fleißes Grosses geschaffen wurde, dass wir auch geistigen Gebiete viel vollbracht haben…dann wird uns vollkommen bewusst werden, welche Kraft und Tüchtigkeit, welche Geistesgaben unsere Ahnen besaßen."
[27] Ibid., 3.

Germans of Romanian were united along national lines, who would take the leading position in representing the national community? Surely it would be the Saxons, whose history was not as clouded by the legacy of Magyarization as that of the Swabians.[28]

Similarly, the highly visible role of the popular apostolic administrator Augustin Pacha (1870–1954) in the jubilee presented another site of potential mediation or discord. Pacha, who would become bishop of Timișoara in 1930, presided over an outdoor mass set on Timișoara's Cathedral Square (*Piaţa Unirii*) following the procession on Sunday, September 9. As with other speakers' speeches, his sermon evoked the challenges faced by early settlers on their arrival and their achievements in overcoming them. When they came to the Banat, "as far as the eye saw there stood primeval forest, there was water and swamp and morass. And the Swabians went to work with German intelligibility, with the very own diligence and tenacity of the German, and could not cease nor rest until their fields were cleared."[29] Pacha, however, went even further, and construed the entry of settlers into the Banat as a type of holy mission: "Two hundred years ago away in the original homeland your ancestors heard this call of God. They followed the call, and it set in motion the great Swabian migration, a migration of peoples from West to East…. Here they have worked for 200 years; here they have served and sacrificed for humanity, Christian culture, and the state; here they have honestly and truly preserved their Christian-Catholic faith, their mother language, [and] the mores and customs of their fathers and mothers."[30] As Wolf

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[28] Böhm, *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und die Weimarer Republik*, 162–3.

[29] "Die Schwäbische Zweijahrhunderfeier," 5. "So weit das Auge sah, da standen Urwälder, da waren Wasser und Sumpf und Morast. Und die Schwaben machten sich an die Arbeit mit deutscher Verständlichkeit, mit des Deutschen ureigenem Fleiß und Zähigkeit, und konnten nicht ruhen und nicht rasten, bis ihre Felder urbar gemacht wurden."

[30] Ibid. "Vor 200 Jahren, draußen in der Urheimat, haben auch Eure Ahnen diesen Ruf Gottes vernommen. Sie folgten dem Rufe, und es bewegte sich der große Schwabenzug, eine Völkerwanderung von Westen nach Osten. … Hier haben sie seit 200 Jahren gearbeitet, hier haben sie der Menschheit, der christlichen Kultur, dem Staate gedient und geopfert, hier haben sie ihren Christ-katholischen Glauben, ihrer Muttersprache, die Sitten und Gebräuche ihrer Väter und Mütter ehrlich und treu bewahrt." Also cited in Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 119.

argues, Pacha's prominence in the jubilee represented a key point in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the nationally minded minority leadership. Catholic clergy did not hasten to support the ethnic mobilization of the Swabian community after 1918—especially as they had to tend to congregations that included both German and Hungarian native-speakers. Wolf takes their participation in the jubilee as evidence that they had accepted the shift in the direction of a "national church" (*Volkskirche*) as "god-willed" (*gottgewollt*), though noting at the same time how they recognized it as a potential danger to the unity of the universal church.[31]

Indeed, besides the highly symbolic act of Pacha's participation in the jubilee and the opening words of his speech, the remainder of his sermon was more devoted to invoking the Swabians' Catholic inheritance than linking their faith with ethnicity or nation. Thus while the settler also formed the focal point of Pacha's performative act, the actual content of his sermon was conservative in nature and directed more to preserving ostensibly traditional categories of identification than affirming new ones: "Preserve in us the Christian-Catholic faith, the evangelical spirit, as we have inherited the same from our brave ancestors. Preserve in us the pious mores and customs, as we learned these from them and as we were raised in them."[32] The message repeated over and over again was therefore to "honor father and mother!" and to follow their example as honest, hard workers who had always revered the church. In Pacha's sermon, his Swabian flock may have still have been "German people" (*deutsche Leute*), but their Germanness was defined first and foremost by their commitment to the universal Roman-Catholic Church.

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[31] Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 119–21.
[32] "Die Schwäbische Zweijahrhunderfeier," 5. "Erhalte in uns den Christ-katholischen Glauben, den Geist des Evangeliums, wie wir denselben von unseren braven Vorfahren ererbt haben. Erhalte in uns die frommen Sitten und Gebräuche, wie wir diese von ihnen erlernt und wie wir in diesen groß gezogen worden sind."

Finally, the celebratory procession itself constituted a performative act with high symbolic resonance that expanded on other categories of how Germanness could be rooted in the Banat. The fact that the procession, which the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* estimated to include around 40,000 marchers on the last day of the jubilee (Sunday, September 9), was participatory in nature provided an added element that differentiated it from the other representations of Germanness, in which the common Swabian merely formed part of an addressed audience. After the participants, many of whom arrived in Timișoara on the special trains provided by the Romanian authorities, had already been gathering for hours—all the church bells in the city were rung for fifteen minutes at 6 o'clock in the morning to ready the populace—the procession itself got under way at half past ten. Snaking its way from a market square on the city's southwest *Josefstadt* to the *Piața Unirii*, the stream of marchers was accompanied by a crowd nearly equal in number that lined the streets, bringing the total number to around 70,000—the largest ever mobilization of the Swabian community.[33] While certainly festive in atmosphere, the procession was clearly designed to embody certain communicative functions.

The first function was yet again concerned with the presentation of the Swabian minority to Romanian state authorities as a loyal, united entity. Thus, in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*'s account, the orderliness and inherent organization of the Swabian community was highlighted. For example, whereas at the beginning of the procession, the crush of the assembled crowds may have caused other peoples to fall into disorder, "thanks to the discipline and sense of order of our Swabian people the formation of columns went smoothly from the start."[34] This display of an orderly physical presence of course carried with it a political rationale, as it was supposed to

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[33] Hausleinter, *Die Donauschwaben*, 103.
[34] "Die Schwäbische Zweijahrhunderfeier," 4. "Dank der Diszipliniertheit und dem Ordnungssinn unseres Schwabenvolkes ist diese Kolonnenbildung auch glatt von starten gegangen."

convey that such a community was entitled to political rights as a collective entity, in direct opposition to the arrangements mandated by the Romanian constitution that had been passed just a few months before.[35]

A further function of the procession worked more explicitly to portray representations of Germanness to the Swabian public, both of which were reflected in whom exactly took part in the performance, and in how they were presented. Among the different contingents incorporated into the stream of people—local professional groups, singing associations, and the "Rapid" sport club, among others—was a group dressed and equipped to appear as the eighteenth-century settlers that the jubilee commemorated, complete with ox-drawn wagons. Following closely behind was a "black forest" group dressed in colorful costume, on the heels of which came an even more fanciful "Biedermeier" group. As the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* described retrospectively, "If the immigrant group, whose purposeful gloominess brought so rightly to expression the hardship and stressful times of our people in the first decades, underwent through the following black forest group a lift in spiritedness and a change of color, such could be claimed even more by the Biedermeier group that the Temesvar women put together."[36] While the aim of the jubilee in general may not have been to convey historical accuracy, it did present—with living figures—an interpretation of Banat Swabian history based on a rise to prosperity from destitution. Perhaps more important than the pseudo-historical imagery deployed in the procession was the presence of delegations representing the varied towns and villages of the Romanian Banat. As Wolf notes, the seeming trans-local unity belied the fact that some

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[35] Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 101.
[36] "Die Schwäbische Zweijahrhundertfeier," 4. "Erfuhr die Einwanderungsgruppe deren beabsichtigte Düsterheit die Not und Drangzeit unseres Volkes in den ersten Jahrzehnten so recht zum Ausdruck brachte, durch die folgende Schwarzwäldergruppe eine Steigerung an Lebhaftigkeit und Farbenwechsel, so konnte dies von der folgenden Biedermeiergruppe die die Temesvarer Damen zusammengestellt hatten, noch mehr behauptet werden."

71

locales were more represented more than others, which had to do with the alienation of the

Cultural Association from the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[37] Even so, the presentation of the different

villages and town of the Banat, identifiable through different dress, would have added to the

picture of regional German unity.

The two-hundred-year jubilee in Timișoara was naturally presented as an unmitigated

success in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* and other German-langue press sources in the Banat,

whose authors wrote of how it had exceeded the highest of expectations, and how even those

who had previously doubted the existence of a "Swabian movement" were now convinced.[38] The

drawing of over 70,000 people into the unofficial capital of the Banat did present a triumphant

and unprecedented moment for the Swabian leaders—Möller, Muth, Blaskovics, and others—in

their minority-making efforts. However, while united around the jubilee's historical meaning and

an acknowledgement of the Swabians being German, the prescribed categories of Germanness

on display appealed to different sorts of loyalties and senses of belonging. The seeming

intonation of a German national connection presented in the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* did not

necessarily comport with the speeches and performative aspects of the two-hundred-year jubilee

in Timișoara. In these latter cases, although recourse was made to the fact that the Banat

Swabians were German, greater emphasis was put on an ethnic Swabian ancestry, the

maintenance of Catholic traditions, or a rooting in the regional Banat context made up of many

individual homelands. Of course, as Celia Applegate and Abigail Green have shown, such

individual levels of belonging did not necessarily clash, as an imagined local community could

act as a link to a nation of many smaller localities.[39] If commonality within the different

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[37] Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 114–5.

[38] "Nachklänge zur Schwabenfeier," *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, no. 202, September 12, 1923.

[39] Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 11–15. On the role of public festivities and monuments in groups articulating and negotiating their roles

positions on the discourse on Germanness in the Banat could be found, it lay in the promoted image of the settler.

Writing the (German) Banat Swabian *Heimat*

The *Festkultur* emobodied in the Timișoara jubilee was of course not the only medium through which notions of Germanness were transmitted by Swabian elites and intellectuals. While the works of certain native German-language literary authors, such as Nikolaus Lenau, and monographs devoted to local history had been popular in the Banat since the second half of the nineteenth century, such texts gained new meaning in the interwar period.[40] In the context of minority-making, the "*Heimat* book" (*Heimatbuch*) represented in both "local history" (*Heimatgeschichte*) and the more-encompassing "local studies" (*Heimatkunde*) served as useful frameworks through which to communicate categories of identity and notions of collective belonging. Advancing representations of Germanness, they thus both helped to constitute and were reflective of external practices. They also played a key role in the relationship between the fields of the imagined homeland—in this case, Reich Germany—and the national minority, as *Heimatbücher* often served to introduce German communities in different contexts, thus contributing to the "global discourse on Germanness."[41]

The 1923 settlement jubilee in particular served to spur forward works, published not only in Timișoara but also in Germany and Austria, devoted to recording the history and character of the region. Once again, Möller played a leading role in the proliferation of such texts, chiefly through his editing and publishing of what he described as a "historical mosaic, a

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within the nation (or nation-state), see Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 313–15.

[40] Josef Wolf, "Donauschwäbische Heimatbücher. Entwicklungsphasen und Ausprägungen," in *Das Heimatbuch: Geschichte, Methodik, Wirkung*, ed. Matthias Beer (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010), 130.

[41] Penny and Rinke, "Germans Abroad," 185.

Swabian people's history" (*Volksgeschichte*), *Wie die schwäbsichen Gemeinden entstanden sind* (How the Swabian communities originated).[42] As the organizing force behind the two-hundred-year jubilee and the editor of the *Schwäbische Volkspresse*, Möller had called for and received contributions on the foundation and development of German-speaking towns and villages throughout the Banat, mostly by local priests and educators. He had serialized such stories in newspaper in the weeks leading up to the celebration, but sought to compile them in one work. Looking forward, he promised that if he received even more material, he would publish a second volume, "so that the colorful image of becoming and growing, of the life and death of our little people [*unseres Völkchens*] would be even brighter, even more powerful and emerge even more impressively from the clouds of the past: inspiring flashes of light on the struggling being of a robust part of Germandom in the European Southeast."[43] Its purpose, as described by Möller, was inspirational and pedagogical: it was to excite the "nationally zealous and blood-conscious men in the villages to the deepening of Swabian knowledge about the development of the communities."[44]

The individual village histories that followed were shaped by a thematic focus on the conditions at the time of settlement, the response of the German settlers to such conditions, and the further development of the community. Although the common pattern in Möller's depictions was one of suffering on arrival, overcome by hard work and discipline, the local details varied from context to context, and often reflected the chronological period in which settlement took place. In certain cases, Möller stressed the separation and isolation of German communities from

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[42] Karl von Möller, *Wie die schwabischen Gemeinden entstanden sind*, vol. 1 (Timișoara: Druck und Verlag der "Schwäbischen Verlagsaktiengesellschaft," 1923), 3.

[43] Ibid. "und das bunte Bild vom Werden und Wachsen, vom Leben und Sterben unseres Völkchens würde noch leuchtender, noch gewaltiger und noch eindrucksvoller vor uns aus den Nebeln der Vergangenheit auftauchen: reizvolle Blitzlichter auf das kämpferische Dasein eines kernigen Stückes Deutschtums im europäischen Südosten."

[44] Ibid. "volksbegeisterte und blutsbewusste Männer in den Dörfern zur Vertiefung des schwäbischen Wissens von der Entwicklung der Gemeinden." 5.

other ethno-national groups. In describing the attitude of Austrian imperial authorities at the beginning of the period of settlement towards Jews for example, he maintained that "Jews were not to be tolerated in the German market towns and communities…. Even today the Jewish salesman in Swabian villages a rare appearance."[45] Furthermore, in a statement with more provocative potential, Möller portrayed the unhappy relations of the mixed German-Romanian village of Morawitza, whose German population allegedly suffered deprivations ranging from theft to murder until imperial authorities intervened to effect the resettlement of the Romanians in another village.[46]

Möller did end up gathering enough material for a second volume, which he published shortly after the first volume the following year, in 1924. In the foreword, Möller once again invoked the instructive purpose of his volumes. In this second volume, however, he foresaw a greater aim and wider audience for his work: not only should Banat Swabians know about the "cultural pioneer achievements of [the Banat Swabian] German people, who are singular in their tenacity and their success," but further German communities, as well as members of other nationalities were to learn as well.[47] Along these lines, he strove to produce a "history book for the people" and not just a dusty tome. The ultimate result, he hoped, would be to merge together the varied "images of the life, suffering, death, and triumph of a brave German wayfarer [*Wandervogelgruppe*]"—the German Banat Swabians.[48] The two volumes of Möller's "historical mosaic" therefore, like the settlement celebration before, sought to integrate different levels of German belonging—the local and regional *Heimat*—while providing a national nexus. At the

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[45] Möller, *Wie die schwabischen Gemeinden entstanden sind*, vol. 1, 8. "Juden sollten in den deutschen Marktflecken und Gemeinden nicht geduldet werden. … Auch heute noch ist in den schwäbischen Dörfern der Jude als Kaufmann eine seltene Erscheinung."

[46] Ibid., 36–37.

[47] Karl von Möller, *Wie die schwabischen Gemeinden entstanden sind*, vol. 2 (Timișoara: Druck und Verlag der "Schwäbischen Verlagsaktiengesellschaft," 1923), 3–4.

[48] Ibid., 184.

same time, Möller emphasized singularity and dissimilation to a greater degree than the other authors, though this aspect probably reflected his own personal ideological orientation rather than any societal disposition.

Shortly before Möller's work appeared, the former teacher (and ally of Blaskovics) Karl Kraushaar (1858–1938) also produced a monograph, a *Concise History of the Banat und of the German Settlers* (*Kurzgefaßte Geschichte des Banates und der deutschen Ansiedler*) on the region that functioned rather as a historical overview than a "mosaic" of individual village histories. Although the work was published in Vienna, it was still oriented to readers in the Banat.[49] Assuming a more coherent narrative structure than Möller's works, it also carried with it the same call to national awareness, although in less shrill tones. In the introduction, Kraushaar reminded his readers of the "German's" right to stake out his contribution to the Banat: "The German has rendered to the development of the Banat great, yes, very great services; these should and will as well be entered into the local history with unfading letters. The German can proudly beat his chest and say: Honored be everyone, without distinction of nationality, who applies property and blood for the greatness and wellbeing of his *Heimat*; in this the German stands behind no one and no one exceeds him in loyalty to the earth [*Scholle*]."[50] As with the performative assertion of place in the two-hundred-year jubilee, such a claim to belonging—with a national reference—undergirded Kraushaar's statement.

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[49] For example, the work received a favorable review in the Banat literary magazine, *Von der Heide*, in October 1923.

[50] Karl Kraushaar, "Kurzgefaßte Geschichte des Banates und der deutschen Ansiedler (Vienna: 1923), 5. "Der Deutsche hat sich um die Entwicklung des Banates große, ja sehr große Verdienste erworben; diese sollen und werden auch in der lokalen Geschichte mit unvergänglichen Buchstaben eingetragen sein. Stolz kann also der Banater Deutsche sich in die Brust schlagen und sagen: Ehre sei jedem ohne Unterschied der Nationalität, der Gut und Blut für die Größe und Wohlfahrt seiner Heimat einsetzte; darin steht der Deutsche hinter niemandem zurück und niemand übertrifft ihn an Anhänglichkeit an die Scholle."

Following the common theme, Kraushaar depicted the state of ruin that the Banat was left

in after Ottoman rule, and the role of the German settler in bringing it back to life. After over one

hundred and fifty years outside of Christian hands, the land was "depopulated and uninhabited,

undeveloped and uncultivated." Most of the places where there had, in fact, been a populace had

been "leveled to the ground, or they lay in ash and ruins."[51] And yet, as Kraushaar remarked, it

was in this land "of wilderness, desert and fever that culture should again be attained." Whereas

Möller's "people's history" focused nearly entirely on the settlers themselves, Kraushaar also

stressed the role of Mercy, as the Habsburg governor, in administering the province. Still, he too

ended with a national urging to his readers: "Forget not, that a nation that wishes to develop and

bring itself forward must also bring sacrifices for its culture. Just as you order your field in the

German way, direct your household and keep it free from foreign substances, so care as well for

your own: your German culture."[52]

Finally, another foreign-published work that the two-hundred-year jubilee helped to spur

on was a special edition of *Deutsche Kultur in der Welt* (German culture in the world), a

magazine produced by the Institute for Foreign Studies and Germandom Abroad (*Insitut für

Auslandskunde und Deutschtum im Ausland*) but commissioned by the *Volksgemeinschaft* in the

Banat. Rather than taking a strictly historical approach the special edition, "Das Banat: Ein Bild

deutschen Volkstums und deutschen Schaffens im Südosten Europas" ("The Banat: an image of

German folkdom and German creativity in Europe's southeast), took a wider-ranging perspective

that was supposed to capture the Banat in its totality. Thus, it featured contributions from Muth

on "the new German soul," from Möller on the settlement patterns and original German origins

of the Banat Swabians, and from Josef Nischbach (1889–1970), the director of the German-

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[51] Ibid., 96, 99.
[52] Ibid., 276.

language teaching institute in Timișoara, on the "National Psyche of the Swabian People (*Volkspysche des schwaebischen Volkes*).[53]

As with those displayed in the two-hundred-year settlement jubilee in Timișoara itself, which had given occasion to some of the works considered, the representations of Banat Swabian Germanness offered by the amateur historians and *Heimatkundler* were again varied in their moorings. Still, they were all structured around the image of the German settler who, through ethnic inheritance, had passed down the will to work and the ability to overcome to his Swabian descendants. Additionally, in presenting a regional framework, they all attempted to integrate the local, individual *Heimat*s on a coherent, trans-local level—which itself could be conceived of within a broader German *Volk* as representing the "Swabian tribe" (*schwäbische Volksstamm*). As Mathias Beer has noted of the interwar presentations of *Heimat* beyond the German borders, this was a sort of "homeland" that was not just to be grasped or understood as an environment; but rather it was presented as emotionally loaded "idyll" that had to be protected.[54] The discursive representation of the settler functioned to mediate this sense of threat by recalling the hardships and dangers of life in the settlement period.

To be sure, the reality of everyday life and the attitudes and behavior common Banat Swabians may not have aligned with these prescriptions. In addition, other cultural representations of Banat Germanness may tell a slightly different story. In his analysis of Banat Swabian war memorials from after the First World War, Bernhard Böttcher concludes that such

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[53] *Deutsche Kultur in der Welt: unabhängige Zeitschrift für geistige, politische und wirtschaftl. Ziele deutscher Arbeit im In- und Ausland*, Sonderheft 14: "Das Banat: Ein Bild deutschen Volkstums und deutschen Schaffens im Südosten Europas. Eine Gedenkschrift zur Zweijahrhundertfeier deutscher Siedlung im Banat zu Temesvar vom 9. bis 12. September 1923 (Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Deutsch-Schwäbischen Volksgemeinschaft Temesvar). 1923/24 (Leipzig: Insitut für Auslandskunde und Deutschtum im Ausland, 1924).

[54] Matthias Beer, "Das Heimatbuch als Schriftenklasse. Forschungsstand, historischer Kontext, Merkmale und Funktionen," in *Das Heimatbuch: Geschichte, Methodik, Wirkung*, ed. Matthias Beer, 9–40 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010), 30.

78

monuments display a definite lack of German nationalist imagery or language while containing

heavy references to local *Heimat* and region, carried along by way of a strong personal

Catholicism.[55] From the texts produced within the context of the two-hundred-year jubilee, a

discourse in which region and *Heimat* play prominent roles are strongly discernable. Yet the

political opportunities represented by national imagery certainly also held an attraction to

Swabian leaders, which they were quick to utilize.

Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Radicalization

If minority-making was about constituting a community united in purpose, the minority leaders

who worked to conceive of a Banat Swabian Germanness in the 1920s must have been aware at

the end of the decade that their efforts were failing. As Wolf argues, the 1924 expulsion of

Miachel Kausch from the German parliamentary block alienated those who had previously

supported him as *Volkspartei* members from the *Volksgemeinschaft.* Additionally, without

Kausch, there was no legitimate political representative in the Swabian community to offer a

platform of social change, and to address perceived inequalities in Swabian society that, through

global economic crisis, only worsened.[56] By the end of the 1920s, however, new, radicalizing

political groups among the Banat Swabians—the Young Swabians (*Jungschwaben*) most

importantly—had emerged to offer an alternative and challenge the place of the entrenched

Volksgemeinschaft leadership.

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[55] Bernhard Böttcher, "Kriegsdenkmäler des Ersten Weltkriegs bei Banater Schwaben und Siebenbürger Sachsen. Erinnerungskultur einer Minderheit in der ostmitteleuropäischen Erinnerungslandschaft, in *Rumäniendeutsche Erinnerungskulturen. Formen und Funktionen des Vergangenheitsbezuges in der rumäniendeutschen Historiografie und Literatur*, ed. Jürgen Lehmann and Gerald Volkmer (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2016), 130–1.
[56] Wolf, "Selbstrepräsentation und kulturpolitische Neuorientierung," 132.

The processes of radicalization—evaluated in terms of Craig Calhoun's stress on the "depth of the challenge to the dominant power structure and otherwise predictable course of social change"— that occurred within the Swabian community, however, paralleled developments that took place among the Transylvanian Saxons, in the Romanian nationalist political arena, and, of course, in Germany.[57] In many ways, movements in all of these contexts were framed by the larger political and economic events of the late 1920s. The parliamentary victory in 1928 of the National Peasants' Party, led by Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu (1873–1953), engendered great hopes on the part of Romania's national minorities for reform, but the global economic crisis of 1929 prevented a strong progressive program and led to significant disillusionment.[58] The severe economic downturn also benefited political movements in Romania oriented against the status quo, including Alexandru C. Cuza's (1857–1947) anti-Semitic League of National Christian Defense (LANC), and his more radical follower Corneliu Codreanu's (1899–1938) Legion of the Archangel Michael, which split from LANC in 1927.[59] Finally, the depression also catalyzed the expansion of the Nazi-sympathizing Self-Help movement (*Selbsthilfe*), led by Fritz Fabritius (1883–1957) in Transylvania.[60]

In formulating their own program of dissatisfaction with the *Volksgemeinschaft* leadership and the Romanian government, Banat Swabian dissenters, who were on the outside looking in at the traditional *Volksgemeinschaft* leadership, thus had many strings upon which they could draw. As political actors who, to once again invoke Calhoun, chose "to pursue not merely a reform in the system of power but a basic change in the way power is organized and

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[57] Craig Calhoun, The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere, and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 41.
[58] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 24.
[59] Michael Mann, "The Romanian Family of Authoritarians," in *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 265–6.
[60] Georgescu, *The Eugenic Fortress,* 179.

how it relates to the rest of social organization," they represent a movement in a process of radicalization that in many ways pre-figured the further-reaching changes to come.[61] Examining the political currents at the end of the 1920s through the lens of a periodical outside of Timișoara, the *Lugoscher Zeitung*, allows insight into what features such a movement carried.

A Critique from the Margins: The *Lugoscher Zeitung*

Unlike the *Banater Deutsche Zeitung* (the successor to the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* in 1925), which expressed the viewpoints of the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s National Council leadership, the *Lugoscher Zeitung* was an independently owned, regional paper that consequently took a more critical view toward the minority's political establishment. Published in the small city of Lugoj (Lugos, Lugosch), lying to the east of Timișoara, the paper was owned from 1919 to 1934 by Heinrich Anwender, an early *Volkspartei* supporter.[62]

Despite its relatively low circulation, the *Lugoscher Zeitung* nevertheless styled itself as a German-national fixture of the Banat press landscape that was also open to the outside world. [63] Accordingly, it published accounts of European political, diplomatic, and economic occurrences, with a focus on Germany and Austria; local occurrences in the city; vignettes of other German communities outside of the *Reich*; and analyses of Romanian politics. Although the paper also took up the standard minority issues and commented extensively on the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the Catholic Church, it also engaged with the local Hungarian, Jewish, and Romanian communities, publishing depictions of non-German political events and theater performances.

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[61] Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism*, 41.
[62] Heinrich Lay, *Hundertvierzig Jahre Lugoscher Presse (1853–1993): Die deutschsprachigen periodischen Veröffentlichungen in der Stadt an der Temesch* (Rosenthal, 1993), 26–8.
[63] Ibid., 28.

By the mid-1920s, the *Lugoscher Zeitung* began to advance sharp criticisms against an urban Swabian political leadership that—despite its German national pronouncement—was seen to be dominated by the Catholic clergy and out-of-touch elites. An anonymous editorial published in fall 1925, for example, described how an overworked valet in a Banat Swabian bank literally starved to death while surrounded by easy-going men of wealth. Drawing a line from this perhaps apocryphal tale, the author served up an indictment of the current social dynamics: "One gets the sense of the most burning hatred against a world order, against any so-called order, in which the one consumes its energy through hedonistic idleness and orgiastic excesses, while the other hopelessly goes under for want of nutrition, for want of covering their most primitive human and corporeal needs."[64]

From the perspective of the *Lugoscher Zeitung*, alternative forms of political and social organization were desperately needed. The call for "democratization" was ubiquitous, as a democratic spirit was sought that would work both as force countering traditional Catholic dominance and allow for suppressed voices to be heard. From this viewpoint, the mid-1920s had given the *Volksgemeinschaft* "ever more the veneer of a Catholic people's community, ultimately of a *völkisch*-varnished religious community." One author, however, saw hope in the recent formation of a "left wing" in the leadership that "would surely be more justified to feel itself as the embodiment of the whole Swabian *Volk*" than the current National Council, who could only be seen to represent "the religious-moral worldview revering part of the *Volk*."[65] If on the one

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[64] "Arbeiten und nicht verzweifeln?" *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 117, October 28, 1925. "Es beschleicht einen ein Gefühl des brennendsten Hasses gegen eine Weltordnung, gegen eine sogenannte Ordnung überhaupt, bei der die einen aus hedonistischem Nichtstun und aus orgiastischem Ueberflusse ihre Kräfte verzehren, während die anderen aus Mangel an Nahrung, aus Mangel an Mitteln zur Deckung ihrer primitivsten menschlichen und physischen Bedürfnisse rettungslos zu Grunde gehen."

[65] "Eine erfreuliche Bewegung. Zu den Neuwahlen der Volksgemeinschaft im Herbst," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 90, September 8, 1926. "wäre sicherlich mehr berechtigt, sich als Verkörperung des ganzen schwäbischen Volkes zu fühlen, als der Volkrat von hetue, der in seine sichere Gefolgschaft schließlich doch nur den einer religiös-moralischen Weltanschauung huldigenden Teil des Volkes zu rechnen vermochte."

hand democratization meant shaking up the entrenched political elite and doing away with the redundancy of "the same faces, the same gestures, and the same speeches," it had on the other hand a particular populist ethos in demanding that only one system of thought—situated around the promotion of German *Volkstum*—could legitimately represent the whole Swabian community.[66]

"New Methods and New Ways"

One antidote to the political stagnancy and national failure perceived by *Lugoscher Zeitung* lay in the formation of a robust youth movement. An article reprinted from the *Temesvarer Tagblatt* reflected on recently organized youth activities among the Saxons, and asked whether a true youth movement actually existed in the Banat. To the author it was a critical issue, as it was the community's young people who would find the "new ways and methods…in order to once again provide a strong foundation" for the community's way of life. The author insisted that such a movement did indeed exist in the Banat, but that it lacked "the inner feeling of belonging, a common goal, a common denominator" around which all could agree. In bringing together a youth movement and structured youth organizations with a unified direction, it was recommended that the Swabians look to the example of the Saxons.[67]

In addition, the *Lugoscher Zeitung* reported excitedly on a number of German youth groups who visited Lugoj and the Banat in the summer of 1929.[68] One author seemed

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[66] Johann Hiebler, "Eine Volksratsrede, die nicht gehalten wurde," *Lugoscher Zeitung* (Reprinted from the *Arader Zeitung*) no. 16, February 23, 1928.

[67] Herr Kämpfer, "Zur Frage unserer Jugendbewegung," *Lugoscher Zeitung* (originally printed in the *Banater Tagblatt*), no. 71, July 4, 1926. "sondern es müssen neue Wege und Mittel gefunden werden, um sich wider einen gesunden Unterbau zu geben"; "das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl, ein gemeinsames Ziel, ein Generalnenner."

[68] "Deutsche Wandervogel," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 56, July 15, 1929; "Jugendgruppe 'Greif' aus Karlsruhe in Lugosch," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 66, August 18, 1929; "Fahrende Schüler im Banat," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 78, September 29,

83

particularly taken by a youth group named "New Germany," whose members took on an ascetic

lifestyle, refusing smoking, drinking, and visiting the cinema, imagining a "restoration of the

original German power only through the elimination of such burdensome habits."[69] The paper's

interest in German youth from Reich Germany is consistent with its general valorization of

youth, and served to provide another example of how Swabians could become authentically

German. Critically, however, the national nexus was once again seen to run both ways: the Reich

German youth had traveled to the Banat not necessarily to instruct, but "to see their brothers

living here [in Lugoj] and to learn their way of life."[70] The fascination was clearly mutual, but

more importantly, the presence of young *Reich* Germans in the Banat helped to concretize

Swabian notions of a place in the German nation, and to bolster the *Lugoscher Zeitung*'s support

of the politics of youth.

Finally, despite awareness of dissent within the Transylvanian Saxon community, an

approving look was given to Saxon unity and the community's perceived true commitment to

German culture.[71] Disregarding reported political divisions in Transylvania, a *Lugoscher Zeitung*

editorial from the spring of 1928 extoled the high level of German culture embodied by the

Saxons, while criticizing Swabian interest for new fads, such as jazz music and dancing the

"Charleston." According to its author, the Banat Swabians merely paid noisy lip service to their

Germanness without actually *feeling* German. To correct for this deficit, the reproduction of the

Saxon model was once again encouraged: "Before all else national culture must be rendered, the

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[69] "Neudeutschlands-Jungen in Lugosch," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 67, August 22, 1929. "Wiederherstellung der deutsche Urkraft nur in der Beseitigung der lasterhaften Gewohnheiten"

[70] "Neudeutschlands-Jungen in Lugosch." "ihre hier lebenden Brüder zu sehen und ihr Leben hier kennen zu lernen"

[71] D.A., "Klingsor," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 52, June 28, 1928; "Die Deutsche Bewegung," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 25, March 24, 1929;

people initiated into the German nation and raised for the people [*Volkstum*] when we want to have a national community along the lines of the Transylvanian Saxons."[72]

Such social critiques of the religious and political leadership, as well as concurrent impulses foregrounding youth and organic unity prefigured the organization of dissatisfied, radical elements within the Swabian community. The Young Swabians, which had appeared as a loose group around the politician and publicist Hans Beller around 1926 and drew on a number of social circles, including on Banat *Wandervogel* youth, gained representation in the *Lugoscher Zeitung* by 1928.[73] In January 1930, the group published its "manifesto" within the paper's pages (as well as in other Banat papers), which called, somewhat vaguely, for "a new foundation and new ways and goals." Most importantly, the "axe" was to be taken to the "roots" of the current system, which was seen to be "caught in the old Hungarian methods." The manifesto called for maintaining the *Volksgemeinschaft* as an organization, but demanded that it be filled with "a new spirit" embodied in the youth, which was politically free of conflict and nationally pure. Within its program were statements that verged on contradiction: it demanded the "adoption of community- promoting values such as discipline, will to sacrifice, and solidarity," while at the same time mandating that "healthy opposing forces must be tolerated." [74]

While not necessarily a dominant element in the vision of the organized Young Swabian Club (*Jungschwäbischer Klub*), the group did have a current that looked to the refining of the national group, in which those who did not truly belong were to be removed from the *Volksgemeinschaft*:

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[72] "Volksgemeinschaft—Kulturgemeinschaft," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 24, March 22, 1928. "Bei uns muß vor allem Volkskultur gemacht, das Volk in den Kulturkreis der deutschen Nation eingeführt und für das Volkstum erzogen werden, wenn wir eine Volksgemeinschaft nach dem Muster der Siebenbürger Sachsen haben wollen."
[73] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 110.
[74] Richtlinien des "Jungschwäbischen Klubs," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 7, January 21, 1930. "neue Grundlegung und neuen Wegen und Zielen."; "Aneignung der gemeinschaftsfördernden Tugenden, wie Disziplin, Opfermut, Solidarität,"; "gesunde Gegenkräfte müssen geduldet werden."

Today we still unfortunately have many among us who are German only by way of their father's names, but who inwardly bring forth no sparks of love for their nation (*Volk*). It is always better when in particular our *völkisch* organization is cleared of such elements. Already ten years have elapsed since our national rebirth. He who in this time could not orient himself and has not returned to his fatherly home (*Vaterhaus*) has lost all relations to our nation. He belongs not to us, even when he pretends to and bustles about among us. He who stands by his nation never leaves it. He who leaves it has never belonged to it. We lose through them only in number, but none of our own.[75]

The political program of the Young Swabians, however, was much more concrete: it called, chiefly, for all "Germans" to be able to vote in the *Volksgemeinschaft* elections, without technically belonging to the organization; for direct elections;

To be sure, the greatest moment of optimism for the Banat Swabians—as well as for other minorities and many ethnic Romanians—came with the election of a parliament dominated by Maniu's National Peasants' Party in December 1928.[76] The editorials of the *Lugoscher Zeitung* were effusive in their praise, such as one defining the appointment of Maniu and his cabinet as a "turning point in the development of Romaniandom (*Rumänientum*) and of the Romanian state," and as "a historical moment" for the minority itself.[77] A contribution from the prominent Transylvanian Saxon politician Rudolf Brandsch, who worked for coordination among Romanian Germans, looked forward to the new government upholding free elections, combating corruption, and enforcing the law. Most importantly, Brandsch foresaw settling the "minority question" with the new administration.[78] However, even after relatively unobstructed elections were carried out, the *Lugoscher Zeitung*'s confidence in the government had begun to

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[75] "Vor der Entscheidung. Zur Stellungnahme bei den Wahlen für den Stadtrat," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 10, February 6, 1930. "Wir haben heute leider noch viele unter uns, die nur nach dem Namen ihres Vaters Deutsche sind, im Herzen aber keinen Funken Liebe für ihr Volk aufbringen können. Es ist immer besser, wenn namentlich unsere völkische Organisation von solchen Elementen gelichtet wird. Es sind schon zehn Jahre seit unserer nationalen Wiedergeburt verstrichen. Wer sich in dieser Zeit nicht orientieren konnte und in sein Vaterhaus nicht zurückgekehrt ist, der hat alle Beziehungen zu unserem Volk verloren. Er gehört nicht zu uns, auch wenn er so tut und sich unter uns geschäftig macht. Wer zu seinem Volke steht, verläßt es nicht. Wer es verläßt, hat nie zu ihm gehört. Wir verlieren durch sie nur an Zahl, aber keinen von den Unsrigen."

[76] Hitchins, *Rumania*, 414–15.

[77] "Das Wahlvorgehen der Deutschen Partei" *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 93, November 18, 1928.

[78] Rudolf Brandsch, "Zur politischen Lage," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 93, November 18, 1928.

wane by summer 1929, as a difference between government rhetoric and action was detected.[79]

What had begun with promise then collapsed with the economic crisis later that year.

At the same time, the *Lugoscher Zeitung*'s writers took a distinctively disinterested line

with regard to Romanian far-right movements. Coverage of Cuza and LANC, for example,

consisted of dry recapitulations of his statements or summaries of political meetings.[80] In the

face of nationalist violence, however, the paper shifted to a tone of disdain. After right-wing

students carried out pogroms in Oradea (Nagyvárad, Großwardein) in December 1927, the

commentator in the *Lugoscher Zeitung* wrote of an "orgy of excesses."[81] Curiously, although two

articles covered the events over the span of three editions, the fact that it was primarily Jews

whom were targeted—and the imposition of *numerus clausus* rules in universities that acted as

the rally point—was omitted.[82] Likewise, an article published in late 1930 titled "On Anti-

Semitism" and specially addressing Codreanu and Cuza did not necessarily refute the assertion

that one's nation and race needed to be defended. Rather, arguing against the anti-Semites' harsh

tactics, it urged Romanians (and presumably Germans) to "struggle for your issue, but in a

proper, European, chivalrous way, and when you see that the opponent knows more than you, do

not take up the club, but learn from him, until you can do just as much, or more."[83] In general,

however, its editorial line of a disavowal of violence, as well as its lack of identification with any

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[79] "Das Janusbild," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 57, July 18, 1929.

[80] "Organisation der Hakenkreuzler," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 126, November 18, 1925; "Es droht die Not," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 120, December 23, 1926.

[81] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 142.

[82] "Studentenkrawall in Großwardein," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 99, December 8, 1927; "Die Greueltaten von Grosswardein. Studentenexzesse in Großwardein und Klausenburg," *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 101, December 15, 1927.

[83] W. Simonis, "Über Antisemitismus. Offener Brief an die Herren, Cuza, Codreanu und Genossen!" *Lugoscher Zeitung*, no. 87, November 1, 1930. "Kämpfen Sie für Ihre Sache, aber in anständiger, europäischer und ritterlicher Art, und wenn Sie sehen, daß der Gegner mehr weiß als Sie, dann nehmen Sie nicht den Totschläger zur Hand, sondern lernen Sie von ihm, bis Sie auch so viel können, oder mehr."

anti-Semitic goals, comports with Glass's evaluation of the *Arader Zeitung*, which before 1933 viewed attacks on any minority community as a possible threat to the German minority.[84]

Through an evaluation of the *Lugoscher* Zeitung, a critical, independent voice in the landscape of the Banat Swabian press, a constellation of currents can be seen to contribute to new, often radical forms of politics that affirmed the popular will of the people over unrepresentative elites, the primacy of youth, a sense of duty in a broad German nation, and decision-making guided by spirit rather than pragmatics. The extent to which those voices in Anwender's *Lugoscher Zeitung* were truly "radical" in seeking "a basic change in the way power is organized and how it relates to the rest of social organization" rather than merely new leaders and a new political elite is debatable. On the one hand, the Young Swabians themselves stated that they meant to preserve the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a mechanism of national organization. On the other hand, it was to be an organization that was both structurally and spiritually transformed by way of processes of democratization and the shifting of the communal basis from the Catholic Church to the German *Volkstum*. Leaving the world of politics behind, it was to be an organization that, as originally intended, stood for the whole German Swabian community. This time, however, it was to be led by a new generation unsullied by the Swabian's checkered past of participation within the Hungarian nation-state.

Conclusions: A Defunct *Volksgemeinschaft*?

Two very different images thus would have greeted observers of the Swabian community at either end of the 1920s. Möller, for example, painted a picture of organic unity after the two-

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[84] Hildrun Glass, "Minderheiten im rumänischen Banat: Das minderheitenpolitische Konzept der "Arader Zeitung" und ihr Verhähltnis zu Ungarn und Juden (1921–1941)," *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* 18 (1990): 108–9, 122–3.

hundred-year jubilee, in which the Swabians formed a social entity worth studying: "The image of how a whole little people so-to-say privately unites as a self-conscious kinship community is surely from different sides appealing and also instructive: folk psychologists, politicians, history writers, racial biologists and others come to account by the study of our unification."[85] Feelings were very different less than ten years later in 1932, as the Young Swabians let their discontent be known. One author complained in the *Lugoscher Zeitung* that the *Volksgemeinschaft* had stopped representing the community it claimed to know. In the author's view, the organization "had drawn its borders closer and through thereby stopped being the united organization of the Banater Swabian people."[86] The promised unity of the 1923 jubilee had thus turned to open dissent.

From the performances and images displayed during the period, a Germanness that could be seen to be based on many levels emerged out of the 1920s. Primarily rooted in the *Volkstum*—in ethnic belonging—it also a strong regional basis reflected in the Swabian *Volkstamm* that allowed for a national connection: the settler, a Banat Swabian symbol and equally connected to the German motherland, the Banat as a region, the Swabian *Volkstum*, or the local *Heimat*, helped to bridge these levels. But the claims to status and cultural superiority could be divisive when those outside of the leadership perceived that those at the tope were not fulfilling their duties. The challenge from the Young Swabians, in fact, represented just the start of the turmoil, once again centered around Germanness, that would emerge in the early 1930s.

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[85] Karl von Möller, "Die Deutsch-schwäbische Volksgemeinschaft," in *Deutsche Kultur in der Welt*, 72. "Das Bild, wie sich ein ganzes Völkchen sozusagen privat als eine selbstbewusste Blutsgemeinschaft in fester Form vereinigt, ist sicherlich nach verschiedenen Seiten hin reizvoll und auch lehrreich: Völkerpyschologe, Politiker, Geschichtsschreiber, Rassenbiologe und andere kommen beim Studium unserer Vereinigung auf ihre Rechnung."
[86] "Die Volksgemeinschaft in Trümmern," LZ, no. 10, February 4, 1932.

89

Chapter Three: German Renewal

In late January 1934, with the functioning of the *Volksgemeinschaft* as an activie organization ground to a halt by the lack of a political consensus over its future orientation, Muth, the chairman of the organization's national council, struck out at those he saw responsible for stirring up such dissent at the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s Temesvar disctrict committee (*Kreiseausschuss*) meeting. It was the tactics of a relatively new force in the Banat, the National Renewal Movement of Germans in Romania (*Nationalale Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien*; NEDR), and one of its leaders, Dr. Waldemar Gust (1891–1952), that Muth held as particularly responsible for the increasing divisions he saw within Banat Swabian society. Most aggregious, in Muth's view, were the crude and aggressive tactics employed by the NEDR in campaigning for supporters, and the brashness with which its leaders had refused to support the candidates selected by the regional national councils to represent the German parliamentary block in the previous elections. What had started as promising movement for renewal had become a disaster for the German Swabian community: "Instead of an increased unity we see a disintegration as never before… Instead of peace and unity, a hatred stoked with suspicions and with all the baseness of demagoguery, [and the] whipping up of artificial antagonisms between old and young."[1] All of these actions, of course, were carried out by Gust and his "party big shots" (*Parteibonzen*), as Muth explained to his receptive audience, in the name of "the 'new system,' which I rightly call pseudo-National Socialism." The true National Socialism and the true work of renewal, the *Volksgemeinschaft* leader intoned, had already been practiced by himself and his compatriots for the past fifteen years, by which "we always worked and

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[1] "Volksgemeinschaft oder Partei? Rede, gehalten vor dem Kreisauschschuß anläßlich einer Vertrauenskundgebung am 21. Jänner 1934, in Rieß, *Deutsches Volkswerden im Banat,* 290. "Statt einer gesteigerten Einheit sehen wir eine Zersetzung wie noch nie…. Statt Friede un Einigkeit eine mit allen Niedrigkeiten der Demagogie und der Verdaechtigungen geschuerte Gehaessigkeit, Aufpetischen kuenstlicher Gegensaetze zwischen alt und jung."

struggled for our nation [*Volk*] in the sense of putting the common good before the personal

good."[2] Under Muth's system, as opposed to the one proposed by the upstart "renewers"

(*Erneuerer*), there were no "concentration camps for deserters, runaways, stool pigeons, and

denigrators." Twisting this last point, he expressed his wished, however, that they did, as "if

Adolf Hitler were to decide it—we would not be the ones to be stuck in this concentration

camp."[3]

   Muth's professed concern was then not so much with the political ideology of National

Socialism itself, as he understood it, but rather with how it was interpreted and presented by the

NEDR. On the one hand, the acceptance, rather as a manner of course, of National Socialism as

the guiding ideology of the German *Volk* represented both its normalization within Swabian

society and its amorphous, ungraspable nature. On the heels of NSDAP electoral successes in

Germany and Hitler's rise to the Chancellorship in January 1933, Nazism as a brand of politics

was surveyed both with mixed caution and enthusiasm by commentators in the Banat,[4] just as

traditional nationalists within Germany itself became attracted to its promises of national unity

and restoring international prestige.[5] That both members of the NEDR and Muth could make

claims to embody National Socialist principles reflects as well on how flexible and malleable

Nazism was as an ideology. As Broszat has noted, the very fact that it lacked internal coherence

and featured strong internal contradictions actually served as an advantage. In meaning many

things to many different people, it could appeal to different ideological flavors that found space

within its environs, uniting a broad array of actors representing different militant interests—

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[2] Ibid., 292–3. "wir stets im Sinne von Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz für unser Volk gearbeitet und gekämpft haben."
[3] Ibid., 293. "Wenn Adolf Hitler darüber zu bestimmen hätte—nicht wir in dieses Konzentrationslager gesteckt würden."
[4] Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft*, 431–3.
[5] Pieter M. Judson, "Nationalism in the Era of the Nation-State, 1870–1945," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 514–15.

including political revisionism, racism, and anti-Semitism, but also (at least before the late 1930s) calls for egalitarian social reorganization and —along a common path of action.[6]

On the other hand, Muth's easy acknowledgement of an affinity with National Socialism seems to reflect to what extent the sense of Germanness that had been espoused over the last few years aligned and found commonalities with that type of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* that was communicated from both Germany and Transylvania.[7] The key questions then are, to what extent did the prevailing notion of Germanness shift with the entrance of National Socialist thought into the Banat? Did it appear to offer something radically different from the developed notions of what it meant to be German in the Banat or, as Schüller has argued and Muth seemed to indicate in his oration, did National Socialism—with its emphasis on organic social unity, German cultural superiority, and its basis in a conception of a broad German nation embodied in the *Volk*—represent a vision that was already quite familiar to Banat Swabians?[8] Was there a process of accommodation on the discursive cultural level, as there was on the political, or did National Socialist imaginings merely carry on and extend the discourse on Germanness that had already been established?

In this chapter, which examines the political conflicts and interlocked shift in cultural imagery that developed from the early to mid-1930s and beyond, I argue that the sorts of images and rhetoric—once again, the "elements, signs, symbols, or codes"—that had been developed in the minority-making processes of cultural production during the 1920s could, indeed, be accommodated rather without considerable friction into Nazi visions of and expectations for Banat Germanness. At the same time, this reorientation of the category of Germanness was

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[6] Martin Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie und der Nationalsozialismus": 53–7.
[7] The content of these two sources was, of course, not identical, and there is a historiographical debate as to how much the Transylvanian Saxon fascism can indeed be considered "indigenous."
[8] Schüller, *Für Glaube, Führer, Volk, Vater- oder Muttlerland*, 138.

facilitated once more by the tacit participation of more conservative elites who, seeking to maintain their positions and the prevailing social order, themselves helped to propagate an ever more exclusivist, objective, ethnic sense of Germanness. Although Muth and others may have at first resisted the renewers on the level of explicit politics, they helped to shift the discourse on Germanness by again employing the cultural images of their political opponents. Thus, if National Socialist activists, building off of the dissatisfied political currents that were seen to emerge in the previous chapter, challenged—but did not overcome—the long-established Swabian leadership in 1933, a few years later these new radicals assumed political preeminence.

National Socialism in Romania: Self-Help and the Renewal Movement

If the impulses for such radical changes were rooted in the late 1920s, efforts to effect such a radicalization in politics accelerated after 1930, a development that is perhaps even more explicit among the Transylvanian Saxons.[9] The transformation of Fabritius's Self-Help organization—from a Transylvanian Saxon "worker's book club" in 1922, to a savings and loan association in 1925, and finally to an increasingly active political organization that explicitly aligned itself with German National Socialism in 1931 and 1932—had repercussions for the entire spectrum of German communities in Romania.[10] Self-Help was the dominant actor in a wider movement among radicalizing Romanian Germans that came to be known as the Renewal Movement (*Erneuerungsbewegung*), which came to focus on a drive for group solidarity and racial purity.[11]

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[9] Paul Milata, *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu. Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), 30.

[10] Georgescu, *The Eugenic Fortress*, 165, 176–7; Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen*, 177.

[11] Cornelius R. Zach, "Totilitäre Bewegungen in der Zwischenkriegszeit: Rumänen und Deutsche in Rumänien. Voraussetzungen, Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede im rechten Spektrum," in *Rumänien im Brennpunkt. Sprache und Politik, Identität und Ideologie im Wandel,* ed. Krista Zach (Munich: Verlag Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1998), 143–7.

Explicit calls to "renewal" do not seem to have appeared in the Young Swabian-aligned *Lugoscher Zeitung* before early 1932, for example, by which time the first Self-Help branch had been founded in the Banat in Jimbolia (Hatzfeld, Zsombolya) under Karl von Möller. However, the Young Swabians' program aligned with those of other renewers focused on the overhaul of outmoded social and political structures, such as the intellectual circle around the Transylvanian *Klingsor* journal.[12]

That is not to say that National Socialism, via the Transylvanian Saxon Self-Help movement, made easy inroads into the Banat on a political level. When Fabritius first came to advertize for his movement in the summer of 1931, he was greeted only lukewarmly in Timișoara and Jimbolia, and a second visit led to an even more disappointing showing in the former, but to more enthusiasm in the latter, where Möller helped to drum up excitement. For the whole year of 1931, Möller had been editor of the local *Hatzfelder Zeitung*, where he had introduced the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* in the form of racial theory and Pan-Germanic visions. In December of that year, however, the paper's ownership had enough, and returned the editorship to Peter Jung, who had previously edited the paper through 1928. In his first editorial once again leading the paper, Jung chastised Möller for the way with which he had lead the paper and declared that National Socialism had nothing good to offer the Banat.[13]

Early 1932 marked a high point of convergence between Self-Help and the groups, as both Young Swabians and *Klingsor* supporters migrated into Self-Help's fold (and had been doing since 1930). Ultimately, it was Self-Help and its parallel political organization formed in May 1932, the National Socialist Self-Help Movement of Germans in Romania, (*Nationalsozialistische Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien*), that moved to

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[12] Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen*, 152–3, 159.
[13] Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft*, 337–8.

consolidate control over all German political organizations in Romania.[14] Just as its entrance into the Banat was not a given, and relied on the support it drew off of Young Swabian members as well as members of youth groups such as the *Wandervogel*, the hegemony of Self-Help also took time to develop.

The moment of Hitler's rise to the German chancellorship in January 1933 may not have represented *the* moment of political caesura for the Banat Swabian community, but it certainly served to build tensions ahead of the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s National Council elections that to be held that April. In the first place, the success of Nazism in Germany emboldened Self-Help activists in the Banat to call for the boycott of Jewish-owned stores through the *Stürmer* newspaper organ, a demand that originally went unheeded but served for greater agitation once reports of a Jewish counter-boycott of German-made products emerged—rumors partly spread by the *Banater Deutsche Zeitung*.[15]

The National Council vote did not—in contrast to the one that took place among the Transylvanian Saxons in October of that year—result in victory for Self-Help. Rather, the traditional leadership, the old *Volksgemeinschaft*, came out of the election with just under the majority needed to enforce their decisions: they took 74 of the 150 seats, while the Young Swabians took 47 and Self-Help 29.[16] The lack of any dominant party, however, eroded the functioning of the *Volksgemeinschaft.* Thus, even with pressure placed on the renewal movement by Romanian authorities—in December 1933 Fabritius changed the name of the group to the National Renewal Movement in Romania (*Nationale Erneuerungsbewegung in Rumänien*; leaving out the National Socialist element) after the Iron Guard was banned.[17] Muth, as the

[14] Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen*, 180.
[15] Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft*, 435–6.
[16] Ibid., 505.
[17] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben,* 143.

leading Swabian politician in the Banat, eventually became the renewers' next political target.
When Fabritius took over Muth's position as head of the Association of Germans in Romania in
June 1935, the task was accomplished, and the German-Swabian *Volksgemeinschaft* was soon
after incorporated into the new, National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* of Germans in Romania.

Finally, the development of the German fascist movement in Romania took place against
the backdrop of increasing nationalization pressure from Romanian state organs that worked,
somewhat contradictorily, to integrate all Romanian citizens into the Romanian nation, and at the
same time, to discriminate against non-ethnic Romanians. That is, cultural policies of
Romanianization continued through the educational system and youth groups, for example, to
inculcate national loyalty, while simultaneously "numerus wallachus" laws were proposed in
1934 (but due to international outcry, never passed) that would have mandated a certain
proportion of ethnic Romanians to be employed in Romanian businesses.[18] Therefore, the
external political framework also played a role in helping Self-Help forward.

The *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*: Delivering Germanness to the Banat

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, as groups such as the Young Swabians were leveling criticism
at the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s leadership and the Self-Help movement was growing in Transylvania,
the national council continued to espouse representations of a Banat Swabian Germannness that
mixed a recourse to traditional values—the Catholic Church, family, and home—with national
paroles. A key medium through which conservatives were able to disseminate their views to the
Banat Swabian public was the *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*. Like the *Banater Deutsche Zeitung*
(which had succeeded the *Schwäbische Volkspresse* in 1924), it was produced by the Swabian

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[18] Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben*, 126.

Publishing-Corporation (*Schwäbische Verlags-Aktiengesellschaft*), which operated under the

Volksgemeinschaft. As a yearly publication, it had a print run of around 25,000—a very high

circulation for German-language press in the Banat[19]. Like other such "calendars" or almanacs

that appeared in the Banat, and were common among German-speaking communities in general,

the publication was envisioned as a centerpiece of every Swabian household. At the front of the

text, every issue had a calendar portion which reminded readers of coming holidays, gave

general weather predictions, provided an actual calendar in which to make notes, and featured a

portrait of the Romanian king or royal couple, along with pictures of prominent ethnic German

politicians in Romania.

In Wolf's view, such materials played a key role in the interwar shift to the propagation

of national imaginings, as before the war the genre was confined more to issues of the domestic

sphere.[20] The *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*, in fact, reflected both spheres, as national and

regional imaginings pervaded the private. The calendars themselves were divided thematically

and reflected different facets of Swabian life. The 1929 *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*, for

example, included sections devoted to "the German family," "On Conversation and Instruction,"

"From the History of the Germans," "Home and People" (Heimat und Volkstum), "School and

Church," "The Will to Life of our People" (*Der Lebenswille unseres Volkes*), "The German

Craftwork," "The German Farmer," and "Hygiene," as well as a "Children's Corner."[21] The

included themes were not identical from year to year, however, and were often placed in a

different order. Tellingly, the 1930 *Schwäbischer Volkskalender* (which covered the year 1929)

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[19] Ibid., 106.
[20] Wolf, "Donauschwäbische Heimatbücher," 139.
[21] "Inhaltsverzeichnis," *Schwäbischer Volkskalender: Jahrbuch des deutschen Volkes im Banat, Arader und Sathmarer Gau. Herausgegeben von der Banater Deutsche Zeitung* (Timişoara: Schwäbische Verlags A-G, 1929). Henceforth, *Schwäbischer Volkskalender.*

was the last year to contain a specific section devoted to "Church and School." The editions for the succeeding years of 1932 and 1933 included sections for "Culture" (*Kulturelles*), in which religious events were touched upon, but the institutions of the Catholic church and the school system that was greatly influenced by Catholic officials did not receive its own place in the publication that was supposed to guide the interests of the German Swabian people.

A reading of the *Schwäbischer Volkspresse* thus helps to illustrate the continuities and breaks in the representations of Germanness identified with the politically dominant Catholic Conservatives through their encounter with National Socialist activists. Indeed, before the 1934 issue (which covered the developments of the 1933), the stress on German belonging in a locally integrated region with the typical overlay of national language was common, as was the emphasis on the Catholic faith. Such a balance between these three points—region, nation, and religion—came to the fore in the 1929 calendar for 1928. One article, *"Glaube und Volkstum"* (Belief and ethnicity), stressed how these elements were to be the pillars of the community, in that order. Without faith, people's morals would go into inevitable decline. But losing the *Volkstum*—"all the peculiarities and cultural goods that connect a number of individuals to a *Volk* (nation)—would signify a nearly equal loss.[22] At the same time, on just the next page Fritz Klinger, a local *Heimat* researcher, seemed to suggest that just what such a *Volkstum* represented was unclear. Proposing communal assistance in establishing a local *Heimat* museum, he declared, "To the recognition of one's own *Volkstum*, that is, the essential features of one's own people [*des eigenen Volk*es] certain folkloristic [*volkskundlich*] research is indispensable. No kind of national-cultural regeneration can succeed without knowledge of the people—through a scholarly ethnology [*Volkskunde*]… He who thinks of a German future and will achieve

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[22] "Glaube und Volkstum," *Schwäbischer Volkskalender* (1929), 82.

98

regeneration cannot refuse his participation on this cultural regeneration work."[23] Thus, the images that were transmitted by the conservative leadership at the end of the 1920s very much accorded with those developed earlier in the decade.

Cultural Acquiescence

The 1934 *Schwäbischer Volkskalender* therefore marked a drastic break with the editions of previous years, while at the same time it exhibited certain lines of continuity in how Germanness was presented. The majority of its content remained belletristic in nature, featuring a large amount of regionally flavored literary sketches and poems. Most obviously, however, Nazism as a guiding political ideology was featured prominently for the first time, as a long section (albeit at the back of the section "On Conversation and Instruction") by a Dr. Hans Mayer from Timișoara sketched Hitler's political rise, described his personal traits, and set forth the guiding principles of his National Socialist program, drawing heavily on *Mein Kampf.* Mayer's portrayal spoke to the concerns and interests that Banat Swabians would have: Hitler was described, for example, as a leader more at home among the farmers in the Austrian countryside than in the urban environment of Vienna, and as someone who felt personally the pain of being separated from the German fatherland, and knew the effort needed to preserve the German mother tongue. In a common story that was no doubt being popularized around the globe, Meyer recounted how Hitler's time in Vienna, as well as his despair at the German front soldier's betrayal by internal enemies, led him to identify the future enemies of the German National Socialist movement:

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[23] Fritz Klinger, "Das 'Großjetschaer Heimatmuseum für Volkskunde' als Grundstein eines 'Banater deutschen Heimatmuseums,'" *Schwäbischer Volkskalender* (1929), 85. "Zur Erkenntnis des eigenen Volkstums, d. h. der 'Wesensmerkmale' des eignen Volkes sind besondere volkskundliche Forschungen unerläßlich. Es kann keine volkskulturelle Aufbauarbeit erfolgen ohne gründlich Kenntnis des Volkes--durch eine wissenschaftliche Volkskunde. ... Wer ernstlich an eine deutsche Zukunft denkt und Aufbauarbeit leisten will, kann seine Mitarbeit an dieser kulturellen Regenerationsarbeit nicht verweigern."

"Jews and Social Democrats." [24] In his personal character, Hitler was portrayed to embody

characteristics that neared those of the traditional Swabian: besides his asceticism, he "avoids

noisy company and feels comfortable only in the circle of his comrades and their families"; he

"loves nature, flowers, and animals"; and "his character is firm, straight, upright, and

determined."[25]

In adapting Hitler's personality and political program to the predilections of Swabian

readers, Mayer thus tapped into notions on Germanness that would already have been familiar to

Swabian readers, while at the same time delineating a clear-cut, objectively based conception of

German belonging that may have been more directly presented and binary in nature than most

Swabians would have been accustomed to. Writing, once again, of Hitler's aversion to "Marxist

socialism," Mayer stressed that the German chancellor "sensed that this teaching went again

nature. A solution of social questions [according to Hitler] can only succeed within the context of

the totality of the nation [*Volksganzen*]. And this solution of social questions appeared to him at

the same time necessary in the interest of the totality of the nation… To this end the unification

of all Germans was necessary." [26] Such appeals to broad German national unity and the potential

of transcending social differences that such unity entailed had been a common trope in the

Swabian discourse on Germanness for the last fifteen years. This aspect was not unique to the

Banat Swabian context, but it did speak to specific Swabian concerns regarding the need to

maintain the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a non-political organization of all Banat Germans (which, of

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[24] Hans Mayer, "Adolf Hitler und die Nationalsozialistische Bewegung," *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*, 97–103.
[25] Ibid., 112.
[26] Ibid., 102. "Hitler empfand, dass diese Lehre wider die Natur is. Eine Lösung der sozialen Fragen kann nur im Rahmen des Volksganzen erfolgen. Und diese Lösung der sozialen Fragen erschien ihm in Interesse des Volksganzen zugleich auch notwendig…. Dazu bedurfte es aber der Vereinigung aller Deutschen."

course, it was not) and to address the social cleavages that were still perceived between rural Swabians and the *Herrische*—formerly Magyarized urban upper crust.

By 1934, a general awareness of the Nazi program would likely been expected of the average Banat Swabian. *Der Stürmer* had been printed since July 1932, and all German-language press sources, while not endorsing its creed, generally seem to have displayed interest in both the Reich German NSDAP and in the renewal movement. The reproduction of the twenty-five-point 1920 political program of the NSDAP under the sub-title of "Hitler's Teaching" within the pages of the *Schwäbischer Volkskalender*, however, did represent a type of validation on the part of the *Volkgsgemeinschaft* leadership of these principles themselves. It spoke to the normalization of a Pan-German national conception that the conservative leaders themselves had contributed to promoting during the process of minority-making, but which now was expressed in starker terms.

Additional entries conveyed the message of changing times in which old systems were falling apart while new ones were rising to replace them: "We live in a turn of eras; century-old ideas, that until now formed the whole spiritual and political world and were able to transfix them are collapsing. From the ashes and ruins of the shattered constructs grows powerfully those ideas, that displaces the old and expresses the new form of the spiritual world."[27] Transported to the context of the work camp (*Arbeitslager*), where the new youth and unite the representatives of all status groups and professions (*Stände und Berufe*), the image and example of the Swabian colonist took on a new resonance."The old colonist's spirit of our fathers is again alive in the

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[27] Hans Wendel jung[erer], "Arbeitsdienst der Banater Jugend in der Wojteker Ackerbauschule," *Schwäbischer Volkskalender* (1934), 124. "Wir leben in einer Zeitenwende, jahrhunderte alter Ideen, die bisher die gesamte geistige und politische Welt formten und in ihrem Banne zu halten vermochten, stürzen zusammen. Aus Schutt und Trümmer des geborstenen Gedankengebäudes wächst gewaltig jene Ideen, die die alte ablöst und der geistigen Welt ihre neuen Formen ausdrückt."

101

new young generation. In passionate love and deep emotion has acknowledged itself to the great mission of the German nation: we want to be pioneers of the German nation, that with firm stride and without faltering brings the German spirt and German will to life forward."[28]

Conclusions: A True *Volksgemeinschaft*?

As for the rest of the ethnic German communities in Romania, closer coordination of Banat Swabian institutions with National Socialist structures did not occur until after 1938. Competition between Fabritius's VDR and the German National Party in Romania (*Deutsche Volkspartei in Rumänien*), a rival party of his two erstwhile allies, Gust and the former *Wandervogel* leader Alfred Bonert, prevented further consolidation from 1935 to 1938, when the way for the development of a unified National Socialist organization of Romanian ethnic Germans appeared clear.[29] Additionally, Nazi German foreign policy aims with regards to maintaining the cooperation of Romania prevented the further direction and agitation, on the side of *VoMi*, of a Nazi political organization until the late 1930s. Full synchronization arrived fully only in 1940, when the recently risen dictator Ion Antonescu recognized the German Minority Group in Romania (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien*) as the official representative organization of the ethnic Germans in Romania, and the Transylvanian Saxon Andreas Schmidt was handpicked by Berlin to serve as its leader.[30]

The shift in the imagery deployed by the organs of the conservative leadership demonstrates, however, that it was not just the radicals who contributed to a shift in senses of

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[28] Ibid. "Der alte Kolonistengeist unserer Väter ist im neuen Banater Jugendgeschlecht wieder lebendig geworden. In leidenschaftlicher Liebe und tiefer Ergriffenheit hat es sich zur großen Sendung des deutschen Volkes bekannt: Pioniere wollen wir sein des deutschen Volkes, die mit festem Schritt und ohne Wanken den deutschen Geist und den deutschen Lebenswillen vorwärtstragen."
[29] Milata, *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu*, 34.
[30] Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Germanness. Seeking to maintain their political preeminence, the Catholic conservatives also appropriated language and symbols that promoted a militant national connection. Once again, the image of the settler emerged as a multivalent symbol capable of mediating meaning across various levels. This time, however, members of traditional leadership found that the political positions for which they strove were still unattainable, even after adapting to the cultural shift. Having paved the way for the renewers, the old guard found itself shut out.

Conclusion: A growing *Volk*, a narrowing Germanness

In the conclusion to his *Das deutsche Banat: Seine geschichtlich-politische Entwicklung und Aufgabe* (The German Banat: Its historical-political development and task), a slim volume published in 1940 with the stated task of uncovering the guiding lines of German political development in the Banat and judging them according to "their worth or worthlessness for the unfolding of German life,"[1] Nikolaus Hans Hockl (1908–1946) intoned the intrinsic belonging of Banat Germans to the vast German *Volk*. "The development and political formation of the Germandom in the Banat," he wrote, "appears often as if divorced from the totality of German life, and yet it was always and at all times a part of the whole: In the time of the collapse of German life from within and of the crumbling of the Reich from its borders and its power, but also in the times of the unfolding of German power two hundred years ago as also today."[2]

In the language of Hockl, who as a former Banat *Wandervogel* member had risen in Self-Help as youth leader, all Banat Swabians represented one thing: they were Germans, part of one *Volk*.[3] Though they might also represent a "*Südostdeutschtum*" or a "*Donaudeutschtum*," it was the "*Deutschtum*"—Germandom in a national sense—that was supposed to underly their identity. Rather than finding their Germanness rooted in the local *Heimat*, their Catholic faith, the belonging in the Banat, or even as members of a Swabian ethnic group, the Germans of the Banat were to find their belonging in the *Volk,* an affiliation that at once provided utopian visions

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[1] Hans Nikolaus Hockl, *Das deutsche Banat: Seine geschichtlich-politische Entwicklung und Aufgabe* (Timisoara: Buchdrückerei H. Anwender & Sohn), 4.

[2] Ibid., 67. "Die Entwicklung und politische Formung des Deutschtums im Banat erscheint oft als von der Gesamtheit des deutschen Lebens losgelöst, und doch war es immer und jederzeit ein Teil des Ganzen: In der Zeit des Zerfalls des deutschen Lebens von innen her und des Abbröckelns des Reiches an seinen Grenzen und an seiner Macht, aber auch in den Zeiten der deutschen Kraftenfaltung vor zweihundert Jahren wie auch heute."

[3] Gerhard Albrich, Hans Christ, and Hans Wolfram Hockl, *Deutsche Jugendbewegung im Südosten* (Bielefeld: Verlag Ernst und Werner Giesking, 1969), 102.

of an exclusive German existence,[4] while demanding that other forms of identity, or "perspectives *on* the world," were abandoned. The end result must not have been, of course, that every Banat Swabian would have viewed the world as Hockl prescribed. But in injecting these prescriptions into the public space and restricting the promotion of other sorts of Germanness, Hockl and other Swabian leaders effectively worked to set the parameters of how others visualized the world, and thus also shaped social practice.

This thesis has examined how the process by which the possible categories of Germanness were narrowed for the Swabians of the Romanian Banat. Engaging with the interplay of political demands and accompanying cultural imagery, I have shown how activities in one realm delineated space and created opportunities in the other. As I have argued, after the First World War, Catholic conservatives who had typically identified with the Hungarian state came to promote an ethno-cultural sense of Germanness out of political necessity. Their efforts to mobilize the community, however, through a sense of Germanness that, difficult to pin down on any level of belonging, contained symbols and messages that dissatisfied (and often younger) rivals, such as the Young Swabians and then the renewers, were able to later utilize as they made their own challenges against the established leadership. To be sure, this political-cultural interplay should not be seen to account, on its own, for a narrowing sense of Germanness in the Banat. Rather, it must be seen within the context of relations within the "triadic nexus," first of all, and in relation to larger world events, such as the economic crisis of 1929.

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[4] For a similar notion of utopian imaginings being exchanged between ethnic Germans in Southeastern Europe and Reich Germans, see Caroline Mezger, "Entangled Utopias: The Nazi Mobilization of Ethnic German Youths in the Batschka, 1930s–44," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9, no. 1 (2016): 87–117.

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113

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