

# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CASE OF TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS 1933-1944**

By

Cristian Cercel

Submitted to  
Central European University  
Nationalism Studies Program

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Advisor: Prof. András Kovacs

External Research Advisor: Dr. Stefan Sienerth (Institut für deutsche Kultur und  
Geschichte Südosteuropas, Munich)

Budapest, Hungary

2007

## **Acknowledgements**

I am deeply indebted to the IKGS (Institut für deutsche Kultur und Geschichte Südosteuropas) in Munich whose financial assistance enabled me to do the necessary research for this thesis. Georg Aescht, Marius Babias and Matthias Volkenandt deserve all my gratitude for their help in assuring me a fruitful and relaxed stay in Munich. I am also grateful to Peter Motzan for his encouragement and insightful suggestions regarding the history of the Transylvanian Saxons. The critical contribution of Dr. Stefan Sienerth has definitely improved this thesis. Its imperfections, hopefully not many, belong only to me. I am also thankful to Isabella Manassarian for finding the time to read and make useful and constructive observations on the text.

## Preface

This thesis analyzes the radicalization undergone by the Transylvanian Saxon community between 1933 and 1940 from an identity studies perspective. My hypothesis is that the Nazification of the Saxon minority in Romania was accompanied by a relegation of the Lutheran religious affiliation from the status of a criterion of identity to that of an indicium. In order to prove the validity of the argument, I resorted to the analysis of a various number of sources, such as articles from the official periodical of the Lutheran Church, diaries and contemporary documents. Consequently, the thesis documents the submissive integration of the Saxon identity into the broader German ‘imagined community’ that took place against the background of Hitler’s rise to power in Germany and of the Second World War.

**Keywords:** Transylvania; Romania; Romania – minorities; Romania – Lutheran Church; Romania – German minority – radicalization; Romania – German minority – religious identity; Romania – German minority – national identity

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>I.1. Developing the Research Question</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>I.2. Existing Literature</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>II. The Social and Political Context</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>II.1. Saxon Identity in Transylvanian Multiethnic and Religiously Diverse Society</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>II.2. Saxon Identity under Dualism: Crisis</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>II.3. Saxons as a Minority in the Romanian State: The Background</i>	<i>16</i>
<b>III. Transylvanian Saxon Identity after 1933</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>III.1. Theoretical Framework</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>III.2. Sources</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>III.3. The Openness of Ecclesiastical Representatives towards National Socialism As Reflected in Kirchliche Blätter</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>III.4. Attempts of the Lutheran Church to Maintain the Monopoly on Identity Production and Reproduction</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>III.5. Inclusion and Exclusion</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>III.6. Reactions to the Heim ins Reich Program</i>	<i>41</i>
<b>IV. Second World War and its Impact on Saxon Identity</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>IV.1. Romania, Transylvanian Saxons and WWII</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>IV.2. Replacing Saxonness with Germanness</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>IV.3. Looking at the Past: Between the Myth of the Colonists and the Myth of Diaspora-Restoration</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>IV.4. Germans from the Reich in Transylvania and Saxons from Transylvania Fighting for Germany</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>IV.5. The Issue of the Religious Confirmation</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>IV.5. Between Identities</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>IV.6. Comparative Observations</i>	<i>65</i>
<b>V. Conclusions</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>76</b>

# I. Introduction

## I.1. Developing the Research Question

Interwar Transylvania has been the subject of a significant number of studies, focusing on various aspects of the Transylvanian multiethnic and religiously diverse society and history. From the vast number of topics that have been analyzed, the history of Romanians and Hungarians and of their interethnic relationships is usually in the foreground of the scholarly interest. Transylvanian Saxons, when remembered by either Hungarian or Romanian studies, tend to be situated somewhere in the background.

When it comes to the specificities of the interwar period, the analysis of the German minority in Transylvania usually focuses on its relationships with the German and Romanian states and emphasizes the consequences of these relationships on Romanian policies towards Germany and German policies towards Romania. As expected, we find the same type of narrative in the studies focusing on Transylvanian history during the years of the war.<sup>1</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup> For the period 1919-1933 see Johann Böhm, *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und die Weimarer Republik 1919-1933* (The Germans in Romania and the Weimar Republic 1919-1933) (Ippesheim: AGK Verlag, 1993) and Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Political structures and streams at the Transylvanian Saxons) (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994). For the post-1933 period see Wolfgang Miede, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933-38. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik* (The Third Reich and the German ethnic group in Romania 1933-38. A contribution to national-socialist ethnic politics) (Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Herbert & Peter Lang, 1972). Also Johann Böhm, *Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1936-1944. Das Verhältnis der Deutschen Volksgruppe zum Dritten Reich und zum rumänischen Staat sowie der interne Widerstreit zwischen den politischen Gruppen* (National Socialist Germany and the German Ethnic Group in Romania 1936-1944. The relationship of the German Ethnic Group with the Third Reich and with the Romanian state as well as the internal conflict between the political groups) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 1985). For an apologetic view of the relationship of the Transylvanian Saxons with National Socialism see Karl M. Reinert and Fritz Cloos, *Zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Rumänien 1935-1945* (On the history of the Germans in Romania 1935-1945) (Bad Tölz: Im Verlag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für südostdeutsche Volks- und Heimatforschung, 1988). A more recent contribution to the 1918-1944 period is the work of Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuții la cunoașterea istoriei sașilor*

seemingly narrow research on the Saxons as a group per se is mostly the task of different German academics originating from Romania and, notwithstanding its merits, does not cover the full range of the subject.

In the history of the Transylvanian Saxon community, the period between 1933 and 1944 is definitely a period of radicalization. Shifting the focus of analysis from politics to identity studies can provide a broader overview of the situation, enriching the actual level of knowledge on the social history of the Saxon community. Consequently, taking into account the crucial role that the Lutheran Church traditionally held in the production and reproduction of Transylvanian Saxon identity, as well as the commonly accepted overlapping of two apparently different categories, namely ‘Lutheran’ and ‘Saxon’, an interesting question arises: why did the Saxon ethnic and cultural system fail to reproduce itself? In plain language: what happened with the Church as an institution and what happened with the allegiance of the Saxons to the ethnic and cultural model promoted by various channels, the most important of them being the Church with its various mechanisms and instruments?

Some valid answers to this question can be found in the already existing studies on the history of the Transylvanian Saxons between 1918 and 1944. Lack of financial resources, competing elites, the attempt to resist the assimilationist pressures of the Romanian authorities – all these are indeed partially answering my question. However, another approach to the issue can add a new explanatory dimension to the ones mentioned above. What happened between 1933 and 1944 with the Saxon community can be analyzed from an identity studies perspective. Thus, the reference to the identity change model developed by

Donald Horowitz<sup>2</sup> can be of real use in the analysis of the ethnic identity of the Transylvanian Saxons between 1933 and 1944.

In his theoretical observations on identity, Horowitz makes a distinction between criteria and indicia of identity: whereas the former are used for defining someone's membership into a group, the latter are evidence and markers of it. They can function as "surrogates" in identity definition and are "probabilistic and subject to contradiction"<sup>3</sup>. Using elements from Horowitz's theoretical framework, I argue that the social history of the Transylvanian Saxon community between 1933 and 1944 can be better understood against the background of the relegation of the Lutheran religious affiliation from a criterion of identity to a mere indicium of it. In the above-mentioned article, Horowitz gives the example of how an indicium of identity can turn into a criterion of identity, his reference being the emergence of the Muslim group in Bosnia.

My argument is that such a transformation took place in the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, only that it was the other way round. The ethnic-religious model promoted by the Lutheran Church, in which the religious affiliation had the value of a criterion of identity, was replaced by a radical National Socialist model in which religious affiliation was only an indicium of identity. Thus, the integration of the Transylvanian Saxons into the German 'imagined community' was facilitated and the center of gravity for the identity of the Saxons moved towards ethnicity or, in the German vocabulary of the time, towards *das Völkische*.

In order to prove this argument, a number of other sub-questions have to be addressed. How did the Church react to the identity pressures coming from outside (namely, from Nazi Germany)? What was the role of the clerics in disseminating/rejecting/attenuating the pressure of National-Socialist ideology? How did Saxon individuals cope with their conflicting

---

<sup>2</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, "Ethnic Identity," in *Ethnicity. Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer, Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), 111-141

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 120

identities? How did the religious identity interact with the identity constraints coming from outside, taking into consideration the equivalence of the categories of Lutheran and Saxon in the Transylvanian Saxon self-consciousness? This thesis intends to answer these questions.

After a concise overview of the existing literature pertaining to the topic, the second chapter will look into the historical background of the Transylvanian Saxons. In the third and fourth chapters, my analysis will focus on the period 1933-1944, divided into two sub-periods: the years between 1933 and 1940 will be documented in the third chapter and the period of the war will be analyzed in the fourth chapter. The division is not arbitrary, as 1940 marks a crucial moment for the Transylvanian Saxons: in 1940 the Romanian state granted corporate rights to the Germans of Romania. At the same time, during the Second World War the identification of the Saxons with Germany reached its peak. I will also touch upon the possibility of comparison to other German-speaking groups in Central and Eastern Europe. In the last chapter I will make some conclusive remarks about the consequences of the events for the Transylvanian Saxon history during communism.

## ***1.2. Existing Literature***

A condensed overview on the existing literature concerning Transylvanian Saxon history between 1933 and 1944 reveals that the main point of interest has been the political life of the community and by the relationships of the Saxons with the Romanian and German states. The three most significant books covering fully or partially the period under research in this thesis put emphasis on the above mentioned aspects.

In 1972, Wolfgang Miede published the study *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933-38*.<sup>4</sup> His research used mostly the materials found in the archives in Germany. To an extent, the same can be said about the PhD dissertation of Johann

---

<sup>4</sup> Miede 1972

Böhm, published in 1985, *Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1936-1944*.<sup>5</sup> Though extremely important for the purely historical study of the topic, such contributions do not pay sufficient attention to the social processes accompanying the political developments. The internal motivations leading to the success of National-Socialism within the Saxon community are analyzed only from a political perspective.

An attempt to offer new insights into Transylvanian Saxon history at the time of the German Third Reich is the apologetic work written by Karl M. Reinerth and Fritz Cloos, *Zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Rumänien*.<sup>6</sup> The book is definitely not to be considered as a relevant secondary source, as its lack of objectivity is visible. It rather says more on the self-perception of a certain category of the Saxons, who after the Second World War tried to make use of a very inconvenient past.

In a study written by Cornelius R. Zach, *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen zwischen Tradition und neuen politischen Optionen 1930-1944*,<sup>7</sup> the author differentiates between three specific transformation processes that the Saxons underwent during the years 1930 and 1944: in the political field, in the mentalities and as regards the interethnic group relations. Unlike the other three authors previously mentioned, Zach tries to broaden the perspective of analysis. By acknowledging and shortly documenting the allegiance of part of the Saxon Lutheran clergy for the national-socialist ideas, Zach also hints at the transformation of the Saxon religious identity itself in order to accommodate the new status quo. However, he does not try to develop this specific aspect of the Transylvanian Saxon history.

---

<sup>5</sup> Böhm 1985

<sup>6</sup> Reinerth and Cloos 1988

<sup>7</sup> Cornelius R. Zach, "Die Siebenbürger Sachsen zwischen Tradition und neuen politischen Optionen 1930-1944," (The Transylvanian Saxons between tradition and new political options 1930-1944) in *Minderheit und Nationalstaat: Siebenbürgen seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Minority and nation-state: Transylvania since the First World War), ed. Harald Roth (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 115-132

It would not be exaggerated to say that the mainstream trend in the study of Saxon interwar history is given by the kind of studies as those described above. History as a sequence of events is preferred in the detriment of social history and consequently the political elites and their behavior are always occupying the foreground of the scholarly discourse. Studies on Saxon identity and on the interaction between the Lutheran religious identity and the transitory national identity are yet to be written.

At the same time, some works and studies can be cited inasmuch they are more socio-anthropologically oriented, thus providing some useful information about the topic of this thesis. For example, Katherine Verdery described three centuries of inter-ethnically mixed life in a Transylvanian village called Benzenz (Binținți).<sup>8</sup> Verdery drew attention to the economic marginalization Saxons had to cope with, as a consequence of the policies of the Romanian state, aimed at the diminution of the economic influence of the minorities. The agricultural reform in the early '20s represented a severe blow to the "Saxon communal strength", whose consequence was that henceforth the community had to be financially supported by its individual members. Practically speaking, the argument Verdery proposes is that the undermining of the Saxon "corporational infrastructure" had important effects for the identity of the Transylvanian Saxons.

An excellent anthropological study of the Transylvanian Saxon identity is Marilyn McArthur's, *The Politics of Identity: Transylvanian Saxons in Socialist Romania*.<sup>9</sup> Its focus is much wider, as McArthur offers a comprehensive description of the historical transformations

---

<sup>8</sup> Katherine Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983). The contemporary name of the village is Aurel Vlaicu.

<sup>9</sup> Marilyn McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, edited and with a foreword by Georg Weber, with a sociological contribution by Armin Nassehi and Georg Weber, transl. into German by Ursula Maurer (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990). The original English version of the book is Marilyn McArthur, "The Politics of Identity: Transylvanian Saxons in Socialist Romania" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1981)

of the self-consciousness of the Transylvanian Saxons. However, as the title of the original version suggests, her focus consists mainly in the analysis of the politics of identity of the Transylvanian Saxons during the communist regime. The first half of the work is relevant for my study. The time preceding the almost complete dismantling of Saxon culture and identity that would eventually take place during the years of the Ceaușescu regime receives significant attention but McArthur's analysis does not necessarily try to solve the identity puzzle of the Saxons between 1933 and 1944. McArthur's book is partially helpful, but she does not dwell profoundly on the modalities through which the ethnic model promoted by Nazi Germany gained roots within the Saxon community, displacing the traditional ethnic-religious model.

All in all, the question of the relationship between religious and national identity in the period between 1933 and 1944 has yet not been thoroughly researched. Various questions relating to it can be extracted from a number of books and articles, but a comprehensive study on this specific topic still fails to exist. Thus, Ludwig Binder's short overview of the Saxon Lutheran Church, published in 1982 in Erlangen, *Die Kirche der Siebenbürger Sachsen*,<sup>10</sup> emphasizes the determinant role the Church played during the years of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, when it acted as a preserver of identity, strengthening national consciousness and perpetuating cultural values. When commenting on the post-1918 situation, Binder chronologically distinguishes two periods in the history of the Saxon Lutheran Church: "perpetuation and attempt to reorientation" (1920-1932) and "readiness to compromise, wrong ways and avowal" (1933-1945).<sup>11</sup> Binder also touches on the generation gap within the institution of the Church. His work is important for laying the background of the various responses the Lutheran Church offered to the identity crisis the Saxons were experiencing.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Binder, *Die Kirche der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (The church of the Transylvanian Saxons) (Erlangen: Martin Luther Verlag, 1982)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 66; unless otherwise specified, all the translations in the text belong to me.

A more recent work offering valuable insights into the history of the Church before the installation of the communist regime in Romania is Ulrich Andreas Wien's *Kirchenleitung über dem Abgrund*.<sup>12</sup> Wien attempts to come up with a monograph on the life of one of the leaders of the Lutheran Church both before and after 1944, Friedrich Müller. His endeavor is to be understood rather as a biographical one; however, in Müller's biography one can find relevant pieces of information pertaining to the focus of my topic. Similar sources are the diaries of Viktor Glondys, the Transylvanian Lutheran Bishop between 1932 and 1941<sup>13</sup> and of Hellmut Klima, village priest in the region of Hermannstadt (Sibiu).<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, there are studies on Saxon self-consciousness and identity. In Marilyn McArthur's case, the focus is on another time frame than mine. Other examples, such as Harald Roth's *Autostereotype als Identifikationsmuster*<sup>15</sup> or Paul Philippi's *Nation und Nationalgefühl bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen*<sup>16</sup> offer a much wider elaboration on Transylvanian Saxon self-consciousness and identity than I shall do, as the two scholars look at the evolution of Saxon identity over centuries.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ulrich Andreas Wien, *Kirchenleitung über dem Abgrund: Bischof Friedrich Müller vor den Herausforderungen durch Minderheitenexistenz, Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus* (Church leadership above the abyss: Bishop Friedrich Müller facing the provocations of minority life, National socialism and Communism) (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1998)

<sup>13</sup> Viktor Glondys, *Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen von 1933 bis 1949* (Diary. Notes from 1933 to 1949), ed. by Johann Böhm and Dieter Braeg (Dinklage: AGK Verlag, 1997)

<sup>14</sup> Pfarrer Hellmut Klima, *Aus den Tagebüchern eines siebenbürgischen Studenten aus den Jahren 1930-1945* (From the diaries of a Transylvanian student from the years 1930-1945), revised and published by Samuel Liebhart (Saarbrücken-Dudweiler: Pirrot Verlag & Druck, 1999)

<sup>15</sup> Harald Roth, "Autostereotype als Identifikationsmuster. Zum Selbstbild der Siebenbürger Sachsen" (Self-stereotypes as identification patterns: the self-image of Transylvanian Saxons) in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen. Stereotype in einer multiethnischen Region* (The image of the other in Transylvania. Stereotypes in a multicultural region), eds. Konrad Gündisch, Wolfgang Höpken and Michael Markel (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 178-191

<sup>16</sup> Paul Philippi, "Nation und Nationalgefühl der Siebenbürger Sachsen," (Nation and national feeling at the Transylvanian Saxons) in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Geschichte und Gegenwart* (The Transylvanian Saxons in history and in the present), ed. Hans Rothe (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 69-86

To sum up, it can be easily argued that the main trend in the study of Saxon interwar history is represented by the paradigmatic understanding of history as a sequence of events. It is definitely a legitimate approach; however, it is not the only possible one. There are other studies as well, which definitely enrich the level of knowledge on the topic, as they shift the focus from the behavior of the Saxon political leadership and from the political and ideological motives behind this behavior to the identity crisis experienced by the ordinary Saxons. But in order to understand the way this identity crisis developed, together with its effects, it is important to put under spotlight the question of the relationship between the apparently so important religious identity and the transient national identity.

## **II. The Social and Political Context**

### ***II.1. Saxon Identity in Transylvanian Multiethnic and Religiously Diverse Society***

In order to better grasp the meaning of the radicalized identity orientations taking place between roughly 1933 and 1944, it is important to address the situation of the Saxons both before and after Transylvania's incorporation into Greater Romania, which took place in 1918. The internal connotation of the ideological and social radicalization of the Transylvanian Saxons can be better understood in the context of their history as an autonomous group in the Transylvanian society and of the loss of this autonomy in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From its settlement in Transylvania during the Middle Ages to the modern era the Saxon community represented a rather cohesive ethnic group, with apparently strictly defined boundaries. While the same can be partially argued about other ethnic groups in Transylvania, there are distinct reasons supporting the affirmation that the boundaries differentiating the Saxons from both Romanians and Hungarians (to name only the other two most important groups in the region) were more strict and rigid, as well as more internalized.

One of these reasons is that from the very beginning of their history on Transylvanian soil, the Saxons enjoyed a specific status of administrative, judicial and religious autonomy in the territory called the *Königsboden* (Crown Land). As a consequence, the rights and privileges they enjoyed as a group helped form and then preserve a very distinct identity, both as a result of internal and external definitions. Konrad Gündisch, author of an excellent monograph about the Transylvanian Saxons, affirms that in their case a distinct group identity

was developed starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of the cultural elite and mainly on the basis of the autonomous judicial system.<sup>17</sup>

However, the Saxon self-consciousness that Gündisch refers to was probably a self-identification of the elite, that only later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was appropriated by the Saxon community as a whole. In an essay on the Saxon self-identification patterns, Harald Roth argues that “the ‘Transylvanian Saxons’ emerged in their own perception mostly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”. The emergence of the Transylvanian Saxon self-consciousness was correlated, according to Roth, with three factors: “the advent of a notion for the entire ethnic group”, the adaptation of the designation for their own language, and the submissive integration in the concept of a comprehensive and superordinate German cultural nation. Roth continues his argumentation: “An ethnic consciousness going beyond the political and the confessional one could first be established in this period.” In the shaping of this Transylvanian Saxon ethnic consciousness, a crucial factor was that starting with the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this self-consciousness was assumed not only by the Saxon elites, but also by the “wide mass of the Saxons”.<sup>18</sup>

The outstanding success of the Protestant Reformation among the Transylvanian Saxons led to an almost perfect overlapping of the categories of ‘Lutheran’ and ‘Saxon’. Saxons were not the only group to respond to the appeal of Reformation; however, the Hungarians who opted out of the Catholic community chose mainly the Calvinist denomination. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Protestant Lutheran Church in Transylvania was not only nominally, but also essentially a *Volkskirche*<sup>19</sup> (the term itself was

---

<sup>17</sup> Konrad Gündisch, *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Transylvania and the Transylvanian Saxons), with the collaboration of Matthias Beer (Bonn: Langen Müller, 1998), 89-91.

<sup>18</sup> Roth 1998, 184

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed explanation of the meaning of the term *Volkskirche* (national church), see Krista Zach, “Religiose Toleranz und Stereotypenbildung in einer multikulturellen Region. Volkskirchen in Siebenbürgen,” (Religious tolerance and stereotype formation in a

used by Saxon intellectuals at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when looking back at the history of their ethnic group). Commenting on the specificities of the relationship between the Lutheran Church and the Saxon community, Werner Conze wrote:

From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Saxon nation and Lutheran Church have been melted one into the other. All the Saxon communities belonged to the Lutheran Church that as such was a Saxon-Lutheran church. [...] The Saxon national self-consciousness was Protestant-Lutheran based and the Church had a decisive national and political significance, even when its priests did not make national and political argumentations in their sermons and learnings.<sup>20</sup>

Historian Krista Zach provided accounts of the closed character of the Saxon group. She draws attention to post-medieval sources mentioning the “Saxon faith” with reference to Lutheranism and also to the fact that neither other German-speaking migrants to Transylvania nor other Lutheran believers were accepted into the community:

Starting with the early 1700, there were some Catholics belonging to the German group in Transylvania, and also some (few) Bulgarians, Romanians, Roma belonging to the Lutheran Church. In any case, the Church of the Transylvanian Saxons was seen by many of its pastors and members in very limited way as something ‘national’.<sup>21</sup>

Following the same line of argumentation, the fact that the German villages and towns that remained Catholic or opted for Calvinism or Unitarianism became over the years Hungarian localities<sup>22</sup> can be brought into discussion. With this introductory chapter, my intention is not to ascribe distinct national feelings to the Transylvanian Saxons in the

---

multicultural region. Volkskirchen in Transylvania) in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 109-153. Zach notes some of the most important characteristics of a *Volkskirche*: membership based on the belonging to a specific ethnicity, need for homogeneity, solidarity constraints, avoidance of mixed marriages respectively expected conversion from the partner of another religion, taboo character of the cases of out-group conversion etc. Zach 1998, 111-113.

<sup>20</sup> Werner Conze, “Luthertum und Nationalismus – Deutsch-Protestantismus,” (Lutheranism and Nationalism – German Protestantism) in *Luther und Siebenbürgen: Ausstrahlungen von Reformation und Humanismus nach Südosteuropa* (Luther and Transylvania: influences of Reformation and Humanism on South-Eastern Europe), edited by Georg Weber and Renate Weber. (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1985), 141

<sup>21</sup> Zach 1998, 139

<sup>22</sup> McArthur 1990, 48-49

Reformation years, but to emphasize the existence of a very solid basis upon which their national consciousness and identity were later built. The autonomous status of the Saxons, together with their *in toto* embracing of Lutheranism shaped the main elements of their identity and delineated their group boundaries.

## ***II.2. Saxon Identity under Dualism: Crisis***

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that brought about the beginning of the loss of Transylvanian Saxon autonomy within the Habsburg Empire is considered by Paul Philippi as the beginning of present times for Saxons. In his own words: “The present for Transylvanian Saxons starts in 1791. Then, Transylvanian Saxons lived the jerk and the shock through which a body of legislation perceived by them as very solid was unhinged and replaced by new regulations of the political game.”<sup>23</sup> The enlightened monarch Joseph II (1780-1790) partially revoked the Transylvanian Saxon autonomy, allowing the members of other groups to settle on Saxon lands with “equality in all rights”.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, it might be far-fetched to ascribe to the events in late 18<sup>th</sup> century such a decisive meaning for the production and reproduction of Transylvanian Saxon identity.

The Josephinian reforms, together with the imposition of the Austro-Hungarian dualism in 1867 and the subsequent assimilationist legislation, led to the reinforcement of the fundamental role of the Lutheran Church in the production and reproduction of identity. Following the annulment of the autonomous status and the disbanding of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Philippi 1994, 69

<sup>24</sup> Zsolt Trócsányi and Ambrus Miskolczy, “The Long Eighteenth Century (1711-1830),” in *History of Transylvania*, ed. Béla Köpeczi, transl. by Adrienne Chambers-Makkai et al., translation revised by Alice Choyke et al. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), 419

*Nationsuniversität*,<sup>25</sup> the Lutheran Church visibly took the role of identity-reproducer for the Saxons:

The Church took over many tasks, ascribed to it by the newly created situation. The autonomy that the nation had within the state was vested in it. That was salient first of all in the fields in which it was about the maintaining of the specificity of the Saxon people. Since it was the carrier of the German schooling system and it had to defend it against the Magyarisation efforts, its job was to preserve German language and culture.<sup>26</sup>

The same line of reasoning is followed by a number of other authors, who all emphasize the fundamental role taken over by the Church following the political events in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Carl Göllner writes that “Saxon cultural assets, habits, customs and conventions, language and school, sorority and neighborliness schemes were symbolically defended from the fortified churches against the Magyarization attempts.”<sup>27</sup> In the pages of the same volume, Friedrich Gottas makes similar observations, stating that the Church became the leading institution for the Saxons after 1876 and that this was possible due to the already important position held by the Church within the community.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, the most important social and religious figure for the Saxons became the

---

<sup>25</sup> The *Nationsuniversität* was the political, administrative and judicial institution of the Transylvanian Saxons

<sup>26</sup> Ludwig Binder, “Die Evangelische Kirche, 1849-1914,” (The Lutheran Church, 1849-1914) in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1849-1918* (Transylvanian Saxons between 1849-1918), ed. Carl Göllner (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1988), 238

<sup>27</sup> Carl Göllner, “Die Auflösung der Sächsischen Nationsuniversität (1876): Vorgeschichte und Folgen,” (The dissolution of the Saxon Nationsuniversität: prehistory and consequences) in *Gruppenautonomie in Siebenbürgen: 500 Jahre siebenbürgisch-sächsische Nationsuniversität* (Group autonomy in Transylvania: 500 years of Transylvanian Saxon Nationsuniversität), ed. Wolfgang Kessler (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 355

<sup>28</sup> As Philippi notes, before the legislative reforms that took place in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Saxons who were not living in the Crown Land had been “connected to the Saxon nation through the act of belonging to the same *Church*” – in Philippi 1994, 70

Bishop, partially replacing the *Sachsenkomes*, the former leader of the Saxon *Nationsuniversität*<sup>29</sup>.

However, it was in this very period that the first relevant debates appeared concerning the Saxon political behavior in particular and Saxon identity and self-consciousness in general. Andreas Möckel counts three important conflictual debates within the Saxon community, between 1867 and the First World War.<sup>30</sup> Even if the catalysts for the outbreak of the debates were more or less contextual and politicized, the main question underlying them had to do with the self-definition and self-consciousness of the Saxons. Following the creation of the Bismarckian German state and the sense of betrayal felt with regard to the attitude of Habsburg Austria with respect to their fate, the Saxon identity grew more and more attached to the German motherland. The cultural relationships between Transylvanian Saxons and the German space had constantly been a reality and in the context of the loss of resources and the assimilationist pressures coming from the Hungarian authorities, the more and more visible resort to Germanness does not come as a surprise, as it was not something completely new. References to “Germanissimi Germanorum” (the most German of all Germans) can be found already in 16<sup>th</sup> century sources.<sup>31</sup>

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is essential for understanding the situation in the interwar period, when Transylvania was part of the Romanian state, largely increased in size and population. The imposition of the Austro-Hungarian dualism, the dissolution of the former autonomous status and the Magyarization pressures, the creation of the Bismarckian

---

<sup>29</sup> See Friedrich Gottas, “Das Ende der Nationsuniversität und deren Ablösung durch die Evangelische Kirche im Spiegel der Berichterstattung des Siebenbürgisch-Deutschen Tageblattes,” (The end of the Nationsuniversität and its replacement by the Lutheran Church reflected by the coverage of the Transylvanian-German Journal), in Kessler 1990, 375-376

<sup>30</sup> See Andreas Möckel, “Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch? Zum Selbstverständnis der Siebenbürger Sachsen von 1867 bis 1933,” (Small Saxon or Pan-German? On the Self-understanding of the Transylvanian Saxons from 1867 to 1933), in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen* (Transylvania between the two world wars), ed. Walter König (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 129-141

<sup>31</sup> Verdery 1983, 144

German state, the emergence of the Lutheran Church as a bulwark against outside pressures and the appeal of Pangermanism shaped in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a group identity that would be shattered in the interwar period.

### ***II.3. Saxons as a Minority in the Romanian State: The Background***

From one point of view, the post-1918 struggle of the Saxon community to preserve its identity can be read as a continuation of the mechanisms and strategies underlying the history of the German-speaking minority in Transylvania under Hungarian Rule. In other words: a new state, the same minority, the same tactics. Partly, this is true, as the problems encountered by the Saxons were paradigmatically the same under both authorities: pressure towards assimilation, diminished access to resources and lack of funds for supporting the educational system. Sorrels analyzed a specific kind of response to assimilationist pressure, namely the eugenics movement revolving around the doctor originating from Mediasch (Medias), Heinrich Siegmund.<sup>32</sup> The dates she uses in order to show the continuity of the eugenics movement, namely 1880 as the beginning and 1925 as the end of her research, show that some of the strategies used for coping with Magyarization would eventually be nurtured in order to resist the assimilationist pressures originating from the Romanian authorities as well.

At the same time, the incorporation of Transylvania into Greater Romania, done with the official consent of the representatives of the Saxons,<sup>33</sup> brought forth new problems stemming from the policies of the Romanian state towards its minorities. At first glance, it

---

<sup>32</sup> See Katherine Sorrels, "Eugenics and the Transylvanian Saxon Nationalist Response to Assimilationist Pressure 1880-1925" (MA Thesis, CEU, Budapest, 2000)

<sup>33</sup> For the text of the 1919 declaration of Mediasch, issued by the representatives of the Transylvanian Saxons agreeing to Transylvania's incorporation into Romania, see "Mediascher Anschlußerklärung des erweiterten sächsischen Zentralausschusses," (The declaration of Mediasch, of the enlarged Saxon Central Committee) in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1191-1975*, compiled and edited by Ernst Wagner, second revised and augmented edition (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1981), 266-268

would seem that the strikingly liberal-multicultural provisions of the Declaration of Alba Iulia and of the Peace Treaties signed in Paris, stipulating religious and educational autonomy for the Saxon and Szekler communities in Transylvania, were aimed at nullifying the possibility of ethnic-based demands coming from the Saxons or the Hungarians in Szeklerland. However, despite the minority-friendly provisions from 1918, the Romanian Constitution from 1923 clearly eliminated any possibility for granting collective rights to the minorities on its territory.

With respect to the Declaration of Alba-Iulia, Oswald Teutsch notes:

The date of the Romanian National Gathering from Alba Iulia, December 1, 1918, is commonly brought forth in relation with the incorporation of Transylvania into Romania. In fact this process took place in a longer time span and was connected with multiple changes in almost all domains of life. The persistent consequences of the events not only offer an explanation for further developments, but also ease the glance into the political happenings of the following period.<sup>34</sup>

Though on January 8, 1919 the representatives of the Transylvanian Saxons agreed to Transylvania's annexation by Romania, the Saxon community soon encountered the first hardships caused by the new political situation. The measures that the new Romanian authorities took in the fiscal and agricultural fields severely hit the Saxon community: the conversion rate of two crowns for one leu, together with the nationalist-oriented agricultural reform impoverished both Saxon individuals from urban and rural milieus and Saxon institutions, such as the Lutheran Church, whose means to sustain the schooling system were clearly cut back.

However, it must be emphasized that in the first years of the interwar period, namely from 1918 to 1924, there was practically a void of legislation in the educational field, which led to the complete authority of the Church in the educational affairs:

---

<sup>34</sup> Oswald Teutsch, "Der Anschluss 1919 an Rumänien," (The 1919 annexation to Romania), in *Epoche der Entscheidungen: Die Siebenbürger Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Age of decisions: the Transylvanian Saxons in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), ed. Oskar Schuster, second improved edition (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1984), 35

Instruction in Hungarian language was cancelled and at the beginning (from November 1918 to September 1924) it was not replaced by instruction in Romanian language. The entire curriculum was in the mother tongue, according to the educational plan of the ecclesiastical authorities and all acts and prints were in German language.<sup>35</sup>

From 1924 onwards, as new legislative provisions took effect, the situation of the educational system of the Saxon community changed and the position of its leaders shifted. Between 1924 and 1928, the main self-imposed task was that of securing the highest possible degree of autonomy. After 1928, what followed were “the conflicts for the improvement of the laws and for their practical fulfillment.”<sup>36</sup> The short period of educational autonomy enjoyed by the Transylvanian Saxons presumably increased the subsequent disappointment caused by the enactment of nationalizing policies by the Romanian state. The partial loss of educational autonomy contributed at the frustration resented by the Saxon community.

Many of the scholars of Saxon history pointed out the disappointment felt by the German-speaking community in Transylvania in the face of the minority-unfriendly politics of the Romanian state. In their comprehensive monograph about the village of Zendersch (Senereuş), Weber and Weber emphasized the fact that the pastors were seen as “accountable for the formulation of the union declaration.” Two of the most important personalities advocating the approval of Transylvania’s union with Romania were the Hermannstadt (Sibiu) town priest Adolf Schullerus and the Bishop Friedrich Teutsch. According to Weber and Weber, the commitment expressed by the Romanian authorities to guarantee the “full national liberty for all coinhabiting peoples” was the only reason for the unanimous consent of the Transylvanian Saxons to the union. The two scholars further averred that “[t]he engagement

---

<sup>35</sup> Walter König “Das Schulwesen der Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Zwischenkriegszeit” (The educational system of the Transylvanian Saxons in the interwar period) in König 1994, 268-269

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 274

of the theologians in this context would eventually lead to misunderstandings as soon as the expectations from the Romanian state would not be met.”<sup>37</sup>

The observations of the one of the most important historians of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania, Ludwig Binder, go in the same direction. He stated that the disappointments caused by the policies of the Romanian state were practically projected upon the local priests. In many parishes, the activity of the priest “was identified with that of the community leaders who in Mediasch, in 1919, expressed themselves for the union of Transylvania with Romania.”<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, there were even voices speaking out for the transfer of the educational system under the state patronage. The response that they received was that the essence of the *Volkskirche* is to encompass all life expressions of the community.<sup>39</sup> Binder’s observations concern mainly the period before 1933, when some of the seeds that would later radically germinate can already be noticed. The voices opposing the mainstream Saxon elites, both political and ecclesiastical, were continually increasing even before 1933. However, it was only after 1933 that the cleavage within the community became salient.

At the same time, some words must be said about the relationship of Weimar Germany with the Saxons. Though Stresemann’s Germany clearly showed interest in the development of the relations with the German minorities outside its borders, the Weimar Republic per se was not a model for the Saxons. Social-democracy was extremely poorly represented within the community. Furthermore, declared socialist leaders such as Ludwig Knopp also affirmed their allegiance to *das Völkische*.<sup>40</sup> According to a report of the German

---

<sup>37</sup> Georg Weber and Renate Weber, *Zendersch. Eine siebenbürgische Gemeinde im Wandel* (Zendersch. A Transylvanian congregation under transformation) (München: Delp Verlag, 1985), 255

<sup>38</sup> Ludwig Binder, “Die evangelische Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien 1920-1944,” (The Lutheran Church C. A. in Romania 1920-1944), in König 1994, 241.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Roth 1994, 97

consul in Timișoara, the German leaders in Banat were not as “unfriendly” towards German democracy as the leaders of the Saxons.<sup>41</sup>

Of great interest for my focus is the fact that as early as 1922 a right-wing oriented organization, *Selbsthilfe*, emerged within the Saxon community. The organization would soon become the carrier of national-socialist ideas on Transylvanian soil. Founded by Fritz Fabritius, it saliently opposed social-democracy, communism, bolshevism and class hate and showed allegiance to germinating Nazi ideas. It offered the Saxon lower classes the option of “popular socialism”, opposed both to the conservatives within the community and to the internationalist ideas coming from abroad. Consequently, copies of the *Völkischer Beobachter* were ordered for the like-minded members of the organization and a distinct overture towards the Romanian anti-Semitic party of Alexandru C. Cuza was nurtured. The presence of religious figures within the organization of Fabritius, such as the pastor Alfred Csallner, can be seen as an indicator of the various positions within the Saxon-Lutheran Church.

In a convincing article, Nadia Badrus documented the opinion building process of the Saxon community towards the Jews in the interwar period using as a material the official periodical of the Lutheran Church in Romania, *Kirchliche Blätter*.<sup>42</sup> Her findings point out a propensity on behalf of some of the Lutheran clerics towards the appropriation of ideas (racial theories and the idea of superiority of the Aryan race being the most prominent) that would turn out to be the core elements of Nazi ideology. In her words:

Parts of the Lutheran Church in Romania and of its dignitaries were open to the national-socialist thought. [...] The ambivalent position that the Church held as regards the National-Socialist racial theory and especially as regards its representatives within the ‘German Ethnic Group in

---

<sup>41</sup> Hildrun Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft: Das deutsch-jüdische Verhältnis in Rumänien 1918-1938* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996) (Shattered neighborship: the German-Jewish relationship in Romania 1918-1938), 312

<sup>42</sup> Nadia Badrus, “Das Bild der Siebenbürger Sachsen über die Juden. Einige Anhaltspunkte,” (The Transylvanian Saxon Image of the Jews. Some Features) in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 85-106

Romania' mirrors in a certain measure the position of its believers.<sup>43</sup>

With most of its resources cut off, the main institution dealing with the production and reproduction of Saxon identity, the Lutheran Church was put in a very delicate position. Until 1940, it would still preserve the administration of the schooling system. Nonetheless, the entire educational system was regulated by the Romanian state, whose policies and actions were clearly directed towards a nation-building process. Thus, the state inspections taking place in the confessional schools, the cut-back of the state-funding for minority schools, the regulations regarding the baccalaureate exam made the educational school system of the Saxons very frail.<sup>44</sup>

One of the main instruments the Church had for the preservation of its power was raising schooling taxes, but this had obvious adverse effects. Böhm quotes that in the year 1932, in ten localities, 1417 children were not allowed to enroll in the confessional schools due to their outstanding debts.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, a novelty for Saxon society were the teacher strikes for financial reasons and the withdrawals from the Lutheran Church.<sup>46</sup> Another result of the economic difficulties undergone by the Saxons was the growing dependency of the German state and on Germany-based institutions such as Gustav-Adolf-Verein for supporting German-language education and German culture in Transylvania.

As I have already mentioned, the first breaches within the stereotypically homogenous Saxon community are to be found in the period prior to 1933. Fritz Fabritius' movement was founded in 1922. In 1926, the *Unzufriedenenbewegung* (movement of the dissatisfied)

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 97

<sup>44</sup> For a concise outlook on the matter, see Böhm 1993, 223-236

<sup>45</sup> Idem, 236

<sup>46</sup> "Church withdrawals augment, in Braller about half of the Saxon population becomes Catholic, in Mühlbach the enrollments in the cheaper state schools grow in number" – in Gündisch 1998, 184.

presented a petition against the Lutheran Church in front of the Romanian Parliament.<sup>47</sup> The intellectual circle around the newly founded cultural journal *Klingsor* was also an expression of the cultural and social changes taking place within the Saxon community. Its transition from an apparently liberal periodical trying to promote the idea of a Transylvanian identity towards a journal closer to the “blood and soil” ideology gives proof of the paradoxes and dilemmas occupying the foreground of the Saxon self-consciousness at that time.<sup>48</sup>

An attempt to provide a broad perspective on the situation of the Transylvanian Saxons prior to 1933 leads therefore to the conclusion that the seeds of the new identity orientations were already underlying the structure of the community, both on an individual and social level. In the face of the hardships resulting from the minority-unfriendly Romanian policies and against the background of a generational conflict opposing the conservative Saxon elite and the newcomers wishing to have access to power and prestige resources, the Transylvanian Saxons were more and more open to becoming Transylvanian Germans and, even more, simply Germans.

The Church as an institution was traditionally directly involved in the production and reproduction of Saxon identity. It held a key role in the life of the community and was officially closer to the old conservative elite. In fact, religious and political elites were overlapping in the eyes of many Saxons. Witnessing the continuous loss of its authority and thus, of its capacities to produce identity, the Lutheran Church had to come up with a response to both inside and outside pressures, be it an oppositional response or a defeatist one. Of course, due to the presence of different voices within the institution itself, the answer was not at all unitary. In other words, there was a difference, especially after 1933, between the

---

<sup>47</sup> Roth 1994, 111

<sup>48</sup> The only study on the place of *Klingsor* in Saxon interwar history is Walter Myss, *Fazit nach achthundert Jahren. Geistesleben der Siebenbürger Sachsen im Spiegel der Zeitschrift ‘Klingsor’* (Exit after 800 years. Spiritual life of the Transylvanian Saxons, mirrored in the journal ‘Klingsor’) (München: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1968). Though quite subjectively written, it can be a useful starting point for an insightful research of the topic.

official position of the Church and the effective ideological position of its dignitaries. These often conflicting attitudes are intrinsically connected with the identity orientations of the Saxons both before and after 1933 and also with the individual responses in the face of the pressures resulting from the appeal of the *völkisch* ideology, the economic crisis, the Romanian and European political situation.

### III. Transylvanian Saxon Identity after 1933

#### III.1. Theoretical Framework

Using the identity change model developed by Donald Horowitz<sup>49</sup> can be of help in the analysis of the ethnic identity of the Transylvanian Saxons between 1933 and 1944. Departing from the seemingly easily acknowledgeable truth that membership in a group is defined according to a series of criteria Horowitz explains that alongside these criteria of identity, an important role is played by the indicia of identity. The latter do not define someone's membership in a group, but are evidence or markers of it. Consequently, they do not provide the same degree of certainty when it comes to identity definition. However, working with the categories of criteria and indicia of identity as pure types is of little use outside the theoretical context, since the line dividing them is not always easy to trace. Criteria and indicia might overlap. They might be used interchangeably or might have sharply distinct developments within one and the same societal context. Horowitz notes for example that "the distinction between the two arises in part because long usage of an indicium may result in its being treated increasingly as criterial."<sup>50</sup> The example he was using consisted of the emergence, in the mid '70s, of the Muslim group in Bosnia, based on the transformation of an indicium into a criterion of identity.

However, the transformation can work in the opposite direction as well: namely, criteria of identity can lose their inherently substantial meaning. Their strong character can fade away in the context of identity change and, consequently, they can be relegated to the less powerful status of indicia of identity. Furthermore, criteria and indicia can be very contextual as well: self-definition and outsider-definition play an important role in their affirmation. In other words, in-group criteria of identity may differ according to the

---

<sup>49</sup> Horowitz 1975

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 120

perspective of the observer: whether he/she is or not a member of the group is extremely relevant when it comes to ascribing identities. For a Romanian from the Old Kingdom, unaware of the existing differences between the various German-speaking groups in Greater Romania, the usage of any German dialect was probably a criterion according to which he/she defined someone as being German. At the same time, for the members of the German-speaking groups the mother-tongue represented a (local) criterion of identity, its usage being the indicium: the most common example in the Transylvanian case is that of the existence of two different groups, the Saxons and the Landler, in three villages from the Hermannstadt (Sibiu) region: Neppendorf (Turnișor), Großau (Cristian), Großpold (Apoldu de Sus). Settled down in the respective localities at different moments of history but being both Lutherans, the mother-tongue (dialect) was, for an insider, a very powerful criterion of identity.<sup>51</sup>

My hypothesis is that essentially what happened in the case of the Lutheran religious affiliation of the Saxons between 1933 and 1944 is its transformation from a criterion of identity into a much weaker indicium of identity. Certainly, it would be far-fetched to try and find a clear date as the starting point of this development. As I have asserted in the introductory part of the thesis, the first questions and dilemmas pertaining to Saxon self-consciousness date at least from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But my argument is that the abasement of Lutheranism from a criterion of identity to a mere indicium is mostly visible from 1933 onwards. Accordingly, the center of gravity for Transylvanian Saxon group identity was relocated, from confessional to ethnic.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> A very interesting article on the permanence of Saxon/Landler self-identification, despite an increasing number of mixed marriages and of ethnic blending between the two groups: Martin Bottesch, "Fremd- und Selbstbilder in einer siebenbürgischen Gemeinde. Siebenbürger Sachsen, Landler, Rumänen und Roma in Großpold," (Image of themselves and others in a Transylvanian Congregation: Transylvanian Saxons, Landler, Romanians and Roma in Grosspold), in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 193-216

<sup>52</sup> See also Zach 1998, 140

Reading the social history of the Transylvanian Saxons between 1933 and 1944 in this theoretical framework provides a partial explanation for the Nazification process undergone by the community that would enrich the actual level of research. My endeavor is not to be read as an attempt meant to disregard the pure political and historical events accompanying the radicalization of the Saxons from Transylvania, but rather to come up with a slightly different perspective on the events, to be read in conjunction with those already pinpointed by other scholars.

### **III.2. Sources**

Taking into account the research possibilities at my disposal, the validity of the hypothesis can be tested by resorting to four different types of sources. First, the debates and opinion exchanges that found their place in the pages of the official periodical of the Lutheran Church, *Kirchliche Blätter*, are extremely relevant for my study. They obviously bear proof of the predicaments that had become rather endemic to the question of Saxon self-consciousness in the interwar period and mainly after Hitler's coming to power. In a text written in 1980, Josef Scheerer bluntly and righteously affirmed that "compared to the situation in Germany between 1933 and 1945, the struggle between Church and State (*Kirchenkampf*) did not exist in Transylvania, among the Saxons".<sup>53</sup> However, as almost all scholars tend to agree, the history of the Church of the Transylvanian Saxons was "interlocked" and "amalgamated" with the history of the Saxons as a people; consequently, in Scheerer's wording, "the conflicts of the time were played back within the *Volk*, that at the same time was the Church".<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Josef Scheerer, "Der sogenannte 'Kirchenkampf' in Siebenbürgen bis zum Jahr 1945," (The so-called 'Kirchenkampf' in Transylvania until the year 1945) in *Kirche zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand. Referate einer Tagung des Hilfskomitees der Siebenbürger Sachsen im Frühjahr 1980* (Church between accommodation and resistance. Papers presented in a session of the assistance committee of the Transylvanian Saxons in the spring 1980), ed. Gerhard Möckel (München: Selbstverlag des Hilfskomitees der Siebenbürger Sachsen, 1980), 21

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

Therefore, the presumption that the articles published in *Kirchliche Blätter* mirror, on a certain level, the state of facts within the entire Saxon community is not artificially deduced, but very plausible. In the pages of the journal a plurality of voices can be found, thus pointing out the developing heterogeneity within the ideally homogenous institution of the Church. Most surely, the plurality of voices reflected the multiplicity of opinions and positions, as well as the dilemmas and confusions purported within the entire Saxon community by the social and political tensions of the time. And these tensions had consequences on Saxon self-understanding and identity.

Another source consists of the various legal documents issued by the leadership of the Church. Such documents (mostly circulars and ordinances) bear proof not only of the legal developments taking place within the relationship of the Church with the *Selbsthilfe* movement and its offspring, but are also indicative as efforts of the Church to maintain its (monopolistic) role as producer and reproducer of identity and self-consciousness of the Transylvanian Saxons.

The third type of source is represented by various diaries and other accounts (official, semi-official and personal letters, memoirs) of people who were direct witnesses of the events of the time. They can offer a concrete example of how the relevant tensions and conflicts were resented on an individual level and they can also offer some insider glances in the social and political life of the Saxon community during that time. The most important materials of the kind are represented by two diaries of ecclesiastical dignitaries. One is that of Viktor Glondys,<sup>55</sup> Lutheran Bishop between 1932 and 1941. The other one was written by the Neppendorf (Turnișor) priest Hellmut Klima.<sup>56</sup> Other contemporary accounts can be found strewn through various books and compilations.

---

<sup>55</sup> Glondys 1997

<sup>56</sup> Klima 1999

Finally, a possible fourth source, paradigmatically connected with the previous one, is represented by semi-fictional, semi-biographical literature such as Eginald Schlattner's *Der geköpfte Hahn*.<sup>57</sup> The action of the novel is exemplary for understanding the relationship between religious and ethnic identity of the Transylvanian Saxons, as it takes place both before and during the Second World War. The attitudes, behaviors and dilemmas of the characters are relevant for understanding the social phenomena taking place within the time period under research in this thesis. However, I will dwell on this literary piece and its relation with the topic of my thesis mostly in the next chapter.<sup>58</sup>

### ***III.3. The Openness of Ecclesiastical Representatives towards National Socialism As Reflected in Kirchliche Blätter***

Before proceeding with the analysis of the articles from the *Kirchliche Blätter*, it must be said that the history of the Lutheran Church as an institution between 1932 and 1941 was internally shaped by the personality of the newly elected Bishop, Viktor Glondys and by the constant conflicts with the Nazi-oriented political movements of the younger generation. However, despite the strong personality of its leader, in reality within the Church itself a unitary response to the events in Germany and to their reverberations in Transylvania was

---

<sup>57</sup> Eginald Schlattner, *Der geköpfte Hahn* (The beheaded rooster) (Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1998)

<sup>58</sup> By writing a "historiographic metafiction" Schlattner is not less of a story-teller of an existing past. The autobiographical character of his works is openly affirmed by the author himself and recognized by literary critics. As such, it can be used as a source for history writing, being aware of its inherent limitations in factual representation. For the concept of "historiographic metafiction" see Linda Hutcheon, "Historiography Metafiction: 'The Pastime of Past Time'," in *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 105-123. For the use of memories as historical sources and the dilemmas derived from this, see Susan Robin Suleiman, "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs: Wilkomirski/Wiesel," *Poetics Today. International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication* 21 (2000): 543-559. For the way Schlattner's work is perceived both by him and by the critics, see Eginald Schlattner, "Literatura ca izbăvire?," (Literature as redemption?) interview by Rodica Binder, *România literară* 25, 27 iunie – 3 iulie 2001

absent.<sup>59</sup> Cornelius R. Zach sharply observed that *Kirchliche Blätter*, the official Church organ, was open to polemical attacks written in the style of the disciples of the *Erneuererbewegung* (movement of the renovators), the new name of the former *Selbsthilfe* movement. Zach quotes an article dated July 20, 1933, written by the cleric Karl Reinerth, a future extreme right supporter, in which the priest bluntly affirms: “We have lost the belief in the truthfulness of the ‘Christian ethos’. Our fathers may have found a foothold in this ‘Christian ethos’. Our age does not find it anymore.” Zach comments:

One could not doubt the sincerity of the predication if Reinerth had quit his job as a priest, as a consequence of his loss of belief. But he did not do this. He did not withdraw and he was not penalized for his observation. Such a predication of a priest was not meant to strengthen the Church in its fight against the new doctrine.<sup>60</sup>

Taking this into consideration and knowing the existence of permanent conflicts between the leadership of the Church and the extreme right movement of the Germans in Romania, the content of the controversies arising within the Saxon community after 1933 can be integrated into the theoretical framework succinctly brought forth at the beginning of the chapter. Skimming through the issues of the *Kirchliche Blätter* from 1933,<sup>61</sup> one cannot ignore the constant presence of articles debating the relationship between Lutheranism (or more broadly, Christianity) and National Socialism. The ambivalent stance towards National-

---

<sup>59</sup> For an account of how the German *Kirchenkampf* was mirrored in the pages of *Kirchliche Blätter*, see Hans Holzträger, “Der Kirchenkampf in Deutschland und Siebenbürgen 1933-1944 in der Berichterstattung der ‘Kirchlichen Blätter’,” (The ‘Kirchenkampf’ in Germany and Transylvania 1933-1944 in the coverage of the ‘Kirchliche Blätter’), in Möckel 1980, 36-52

<sup>60</sup> Cornelius R. Zach, “Die Evangelische Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien zwischen Sendungsbewusstsein und Zeitgeist (1933-1940),” (The Lutheran Church in Romania between missionary consciousness and zeitgeist) in *50 Jahre Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter 1951-2001* (München: Verlag Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 2001), 109

<sup>61</sup> 1933 can be considered as a turning point because of two reasons: Hitler’s coming to power in Germany and the strong development of the *Nationale Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien*, very visible on a political level.

Socialist affiliation of a number of priests bears proof of the transformation undergone by the Church and of the social phenomena underlying this structural transformation.

The main consequence of the new political positioning of an important part of the Saxon community and of the readiness of some of the clerics to accept this new Nazi-oriented radical positioning consisted mainly in the displacement of the role of the Church as producer and reproducer of identity. The Saxon Bishop of the time, Viktor Glondys, might have been an opponent of the process through which National-Socialism gained roots within his community; however, the voices that are to be found in *Kirchliche Blätter* give evidence of the openness of many clerics towards the new movement. From 1933 onwards, one can read a number of articles questioning the allegiance of the clerics to National Socialism. There is a plurality of voices, opinions and views. Still, the very presence within the pages of the periodical organ of the Lutheran Church of texts in which National Socialism is seen as a response to the crisis lived by the Saxons is relevant for the explanation of the radicalization of the Saxon community.

Weber and Weber provide an acute description of the role of the Saxon priest for the community, emphasizing the fact that his role was a *total* role, pervading all aspects of life. Locally, the priest acted as a mediator in hopeless conflictual situations. At the same time, “he had to administer defense functions and ethnic positions in front of the Magyarization and Romanization attempts”<sup>62</sup> This is not meant to imply that the Saxons were a profoundly religious ethnic group, but that socially speaking the Church had traditionally the highest authority within the life of the various congregations, through the local voices of its representatives. The all-encompassing role of the Saxon priest in the affairs of the community and his status cannot be obliterated even if secularization had, in a number of aspects, touched upon the Germans in Transylvania as well. The fact that, especially in the countryside, the

---

<sup>62</sup> Weber and Weber 1985, 604-605

Lutheran pastor had an important role to play in what Georg and Renate Weber call the “political field of relevance”<sup>63</sup> means that the position of the priest as concerns the pressures coming from the outside was extremely significant.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the openness to be found in some of the articles from *Kirchliche Blätter* was most probably transferred towards the members of the community.

An opponent of the radical orientations touching upon the fate of the Saxons, the Braşov (Kronstadt) priest Konrad Möckel, wrote on April 16, 1933:

Ethnic feeling is for many persons a not-to-be doubted and extremely concrete given greatness. What about belief? Is that for most people – as long as they can connect something to it – more than yearning? Yearning for something, surely very important, maybe even urgently needed, but something that is not being used and that as a consequence cannot be grasped in its whole reality.<sup>65</sup>

In the language he was most accustomed to, Möckel highlighted the dichotomy that was arising, between the prestigious character of the ethnic identity and the abstraction of the model promoted by the Lutheran Church. Facing new challenges, the Church was unable to adapt its messages in a way that would preserve its role in the life of the community. The response proposed by one of the priests who wrote in *Kirchliche Blätter*, Josef Scheiner,

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 605

<sup>64</sup> An observer from the Third Reich wrote in 1937, referring to the internal politics of the Saxons and to the internal conflicts within the Ethnic Group, between the circle of Fritz Fabritius and that of the more radical Alfred Bonfert: “He heard with his own ears how Fabricius (sic!) priests read from the pulpit small articles from ‘Schwarzer Korps’ and then made them ludicrous in a derogatory or slobbering way.” “Abschrift des Schreibens des Stabsleiters der 58. SS-Standarte, Dr. Heinrich Rübel, SS-Hschf., in dem SS-Oberführer Hofmann, Führer im Rasse und Siedlungswesen im SS-Oberabschnitt West, Polizeipräsidium West, über die Faktionskämpfe in der NS-Bewegung in Rumänien unterrichtet wird,” in Klaus Popa, ed., *Akten um die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1937-1945. Eine Auswahl* (Documents on the German Ethnic Group in Romania 1937-1945. A selection) (Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 48

<sup>65</sup> Konrad Möckel, “Sollen wir ‘völkisch’ sein?,” (Should we be ‘völkisch’?) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Nummer 16, Hermannstadt, 20 April 1933

namely to “evangelize the unavoidable”<sup>66</sup>, proved in the end to have a boomerang effect on the Church. Scheiner’s view, that “National Socialism becomes what one makes out of it”<sup>67</sup> is evidence of the rather unsubstantial response of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania in front of the radicalization of its flock.

When commenting on the situation within the Lutheran Church after 1932 (the year when Glondys was elected as a Bishop), Wien affirms that the traditional component parts of the ethnic-churchly thought lived in a “tensioned symbiosis” with National Socialism.<sup>68</sup> The paradox comprised in this expression is evident of the intricate situation under focus. Being traditionally the institution managing the identity of the Saxons, the Church more or less unconsciously allowed that the ethnic model promoted by National-Socialism gains primacy over its ethnic model.

As Donald Horowitz notes, “[m]ore or less permanent shifts in the ‘center of gravity’ of ethnic identity seem related to the persistence of certain external stimuli.”<sup>69</sup> The shift in the ‘center of gravity’ of ethnic identity of the Saxons can be seen as a transition from a socially religious-ethnic identity nucleus, establishing patterns of behavior and molding self-consciousness, towards an ethnic-based nucleus, overtaking the role held before by the Church. The “certain external stimuli” consisted mainly of the appeal of National Socialism on the background of the difficulties in coping with the assimilation pressures of the Romanian state and of the financial hardships of the Saxons. Mere Saxonness was not anymore able to grant the needed security, while the National Socialism imported from Germany seemed to be capable of doing it. With many representatives of the Church rather

---

<sup>66</sup> Josef Scheiner, “Das Unvermeidliche evangelisieren!,” (Evangelise the unavoidable!) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Hermannstadt, 20 April 1933

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Wien 1998, 61

<sup>69</sup> Horowitz 1975, 118-119

sharing the same view, as the articles in *Kirchliche Blätter* show, the transition does not appear nowadays as surprising.

An extremely interesting fact is that, alongside with the various contributions published in *Kirchliche Blätter* and supporting National-Socialism and the possibility of coexistence of identities (Saxon-Lutheran identity alongside German identity, with Nazi anchors) on May 25, 1933, the position of the editorial board is published. The text appears after a series of issues in which the relationship of Lutheranism (and, consequently, of the Transylvanian Saxons) with National-Socialism was debated. In it we read:

We want to add to the remarks of priest Hans Roth that as concerns the Church alienation of this youth the situation does not seem as bad as he thinks it is. While the prewar youth had almost no connection whatsoever with the Church, a serious, religious aspiration can be noticed within this youth. Of course, in its enterprises it must make use of the free days, namely the Sundays, but when the camp leaders gathered in Schäßburg (Sighișoara) unanimously took part in the Easter service, when, as it is constantly reported to us, even work in the camps is interrupted so that the religious service be attended – these are signs of a true demand of God's word. When this youth attends the Church, this is not a preservation of the external appearance, but a profession of faith, about which we must be pleased.<sup>70</sup>

At this point it is worth making some observations about the significance of the formal and informal education of the youth within the Transylvanian Saxon community. Traditionally, the young Saxons, boys and girls, participated in the brotherhoods and sororities administered by the Church. However, the interwar period witnessed a raising competition in this aspect, coming especially from the right-wing oriented movements, which sought to incorporate more and more youngsters as their adherents. Especially the decade between 1930 and 1940 was marked by conflicts regarding particularly the organization of youth camps and, more generally, the existence of competing authorities for the regulation of

---

<sup>70</sup> *Kirchliche Blätter*, “Nachwort der Schriftleitung,” (Epilogue of the Editorial Board), 25 May 1933, Hermannstadt

the informal education of the youth. The above-quoted passage stands as extremely significant for understanding the conflictual situation of the time, as well as the openness of churchly dignitaries towards the youth work camps organized outside the Lutheran Church.

Over the years, the ethnic model promoted by the Church would constantly lose its authority in front of the younger generation. However, this happened with the help of ecclesiastical figures, who tacitly or overtly consented to the new tendencies. The above-quoted text, written as an ‘epilogue of the editorial board’, together with other contributions that appeared in that period, stands for this specific openness towards the National Socialist body of thought.<sup>71</sup>

#### ***III.4. Attempts of the Lutheran Church to Maintain the Monopoly on Identity Production and Reproduction***

When bringing into discussion the discourse of the clerics touching upon the topic of the place of the Church in the life of the Saxon community, references have to be made to the ideal understanding of the unity between Church and *Volk*. Affirmed by one of the most important intellectual and religious figures of Saxon history, Bishop Friedrich Teutsch, the equivalence between *evangelisch* (Lutheran) and *sächsisch* (Saxon) was seen as the quintessential specificity of Saxon identity,<sup>72</sup> working both inclusively and exclusively. At the same time, numerous external observers pinpointed the same aspect of the internal life of the Saxon community, especially in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ludwig Binder notes:

Such judgments, that can be arbitrarily increased, spring from the observation of church Saxon life at the turn of the century. They reflect the disposition of those circles with which German scholars stood in connection, but at the same time

---

<sup>71</sup> See also Dietmar Plajer, “Pfarrer Wilhelm Staedel und die Jugendarbeit,” (Priest Wilhelm Staedel and the youth work) *Zeitschrift für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 25 (2002): 6-29

<sup>72</sup> For the equivalence between Lutheran and Saxon see Binder 1994, 237-239

indicate the ethnic consciousness of the Transylvanian Saxons, especially as it was expressed at festivities.<sup>73</sup>

What Binder calls a *Lebensform* (form of life) was clearly perceived as the ideal state of facts by many of the moderate clerics and ecclesiastical dignitaries in the period under research in this thesis. At the same time, the existence of this ideal is relevant for understanding the integrative claims expressed by the Lutheran Church in Romania with regard to its Transylvanian Saxon flock. Thus, reading many of Glondys' texts the permanent reference to the unity of Church and people is striking. For instance, he points out that "the Transylvanian Saxons know that the Church decisively contributed to their aggregation as a people and that in the end, the unity was given neither by a solely *völkisch*, nor by a solely ecclesiastical, but by a *völkisch*-ecclesiastical community."<sup>74</sup> The main defensive response in front of the developing social and ideological constraints brought forth by the appeal of the Nazi-oriented German identity was represented by this type of effort, to revive the not so forlorn status of the Church as preserver of identity and bulwark against outside pressures.

Going beyond the discursive level, the matter-of-fact endeavors of the Church to keep its role are to be found in a number of distinct actions and events. The incorporation of the *Bruderschaften* (brotherhoods), *Schwesterschaften* (sororities) and *Nachbarschaften* (neighborliness schemes) under the authority of the Church<sup>75</sup> or the creation of its own text-books for schools and the side effects of the interdiction of using text-books published in Germany<sup>76</sup> are relevant for understanding the attempts not to lose the capacity to pull the

---

<sup>73</sup> Ludwig Binder, "Volkskirche als Lebensform" (Volkskirche as a form of life) in Schuster 1984, 89

<sup>74</sup> Viktor Glondys, "Ein Wort zu den nationalen und kirchlichen Fragen der Gegenwart," (A word on the national and churchly questions of the present) *Kirchliche Blätter*, 4 January 1934, Hermannstadt

<sup>75</sup> Binder 1984, 95

<sup>76</sup> König 1994, 293. König writes: "The interdiction of the introduction of text-books from Germany had a positive secondary effect: own text-books were integrally compiled for the *Volksschule* and for secondary schools as well, with the exception of Physics, Latin, Greek and French. Even own geographical and historical atlases were published. The quality must

strings of the Saxon self-consciousness. When it comes to the process of ethnic production and reproduction, the main target audience is most surely represented by the younger generation. This simple fact offers a sharply outlined explanation for the efforts undertaken by both the Lutheran Church and the Nazi-oriented German Ethnic Group in Romania to hold the monopoly on the formal and informal education of the younger generation. As Wien writes, “the originally structured churchly youth work was the point of departure for the invasion in traditionally churchly work fields.”<sup>77</sup> Building parallel structures and attracting the youth in them, the *völkisch* movement(s) managed to lay the ground stone for the appropriation of institutions and mechanisms leading to identity production and reproduction.

At the same time, a short glance at the official circulars issued by the Lutheran Church during that period pinpoints the attempts of regulating, top-down, the consciousness of the Saxons. Of course, internal characteristics of the relationship of any Church with its members are not to be left out of the explanation for such manifestations. Still, reading them as attempts to pervade all spheres of life and integrating them into the broader context of the Saxon social and political history from 1933 onwards, they can be easily perceived as tentative efforts to affirm and reaffirm the monopoly on regulating and adjusting the identity of the community.

One can read circulars supporting physical exercise or counseling the priests and teachers to take proper care of the fruit orchards in their parishes.<sup>78</sup> It is not at all a

---

have been good: some of the text-books were also used in Germany; others were translated in Romanian and used in the state schools.

The National Socialist body of thought and the national-socialist terminology have gained influence on the Transylvanian Saxon schooling system in the ‘30s through other ways: certainly not through curricula, text-books and school administration. Until 1940/1941 the text-books remained traditionally enshrined; comparatively speaking, the school remained a traditional element.”

<sup>77</sup> Wien 1998, 68

<sup>78</sup> See for example “Rundschreiben an alle Bezirkskonsistorien, Presbyterien (Kirchenräte) und das Diasporapfarramt betr. die Belebung der Leibesübungen auf dem Lande“ and „Rundschreiben an alle Bezirkskonsistorien, Presbyterien (Kirchenräte) und das Diasporapfarramt betr. die Pfarrer- und Lehrergärten,“ *Kirchliche Blätter*, 11 January 1934, Hermannstadt

coincidence that similar activities were distinctly promoted by the Transylvanian Saxon National Socialist movement and presumably with more success. For the members of a minority ethnic group, accustomed to look upwards in order to take the appropriate decisions regarding their behavior, the fight for the regulation of the internal life of the community had a decisive role in creating a new identity definition and, consequently, in the more or less superficial shaping of new identity boundaries. For the disappointed and disoriented young Saxons who in the end opted more and more saliently for Nazism (in its German-Romanian version, somehow mimicking the Nazism of the Third Reich) the aim of the conflict was initially not the complete elimination of the role of the Church, but its subordination in front of the ethnic imperatives. The official declaration following the meeting of the National Socialists in Mediasch, from as early as 1932 contained the wording:

We acknowledge that in the fight for the future, our *Volkskirchen* and our German schools are the most powerful force sources of *völkisch* accumulation. That's why we are ready to make any possible sacrifice for their sustainment; but we ask from them responsible guidance in the internal regeneration of the German individual.<sup>79</sup>

As time went by and the relationship with the Church did not improve, but on the contrary, deteriorated, the approach of the representatives of the German Ethnic Group became harsher and more radical, with open accusations. In a brochure published in 1937 as a “photographic report” of the Day of the German Youth that took place in Heldsdorf (Halchiu), one can read that the younger generation displayed more inner religiosity than the mere act of showing up at the Church on Sundays would imply. The claims of the Church to regulate both the formal and informal education of the younger generation were subtly attacked: “To bring

---

<sup>79</sup> “Entschließung der NSDR in Mediasch, 6. 11. 1932” (Decision of the NSDR in Mediasch, 6 November 1932) in Miega 1972, 287

the youngsters to such an excitement it takes something more than an ecclesiastical ‘youth leadership’ that forbids them to participate in the Youth Day.”<sup>80</sup>

Fundamentally speaking, for both the Lutheran Church in Transylvania and the German Ethnic Group the issue was one of authority, the main question being: who has authority over the Saxon community? The appearance of other centers of influence, represented by the more and more radicalized younger generation, grouped around the *Nationale Selbsthilfebewegung in Rumänien*, later *Nationale Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien*, later *Deutsche Volkspartei in Rumänien*, led to a conflictual situation that was an almost tangible reality for the members of the Saxon community.

One of the main reasons was, of course, financial. In fact, the authority of the Church was more and more depending on the financial support of those upon whom the mere authority had to be exercised. In his diary, Viktor Glondys notes how in various rural localities Saxon peasants rejected the double taxation (to the Romanian state and to the Lutheran Church) and how in some cases Saxons preferred to send their children to Romanian schools, for financial reasons.<sup>81</sup> Social, political and financial pressures were highly important and they are to be taken into consideration when judging and analyzing the responses of the clerics.

### ***III.5. Inclusion and Exclusion***

Saxons were more than prone to respond to the appeal of Germanness as it was promoted by Nazi Germany and, more important, as it was perceived to be promoted by Nazi Germany. Simply said: for the Germans of Transylvania (but also for those of Banat and of the other regions of Romania, however different the internal social context might have been)

---

<sup>80</sup> See “Broschüre: ‘Bildbericht vom Tag der Deutschen Jugend 1937 Heldsdorf’ (Broschüre: photographic report from the Day of the German Youth 1937 Heldsdorf) in Popa 2005, 52-53

<sup>81</sup> Glondys 1997, 32, 40, 119

everything related to Germany was highly appraised and uncritically accepted and mimicked. Taking into account the international political context, as well as the Romanian social and political context, one can easily say that Germanness was becoming more and more of a (perceived) rewarded value than Saxonness. Horowitz affirms that in many cases “more prestigious groups will act as magnets for incorporation”<sup>82</sup>. At the same time, the resort to a German identity was not at all something new for the Saxon community. What was new was the radicalization of this identity and the almost subordination of the Saxon self-consciousness into a broader German one.

On the other hand, Horowitz again notes that “cultural change may follow or accompany, rather than precede, identity change”<sup>83</sup>. Applying this to the case of the Saxons, we can say that their allegiance to the broader German identity was not necessarily prefaced by a change in identity. On a practical level, Saxons still did not accept the integration of other neighboring German-speaking groups. Old behavioral patterns and exclusion of such groups were still a reality, as the case of the Landler shows.

The Landler, German-speaking Lutherans forcefully sent in Transylvania by Maria Theresa, due to their Protestant religious affiliation. In his diary, Bishop Viktor Glondys wrote that in Großau the Landler requested the internal recognition of their minority rights, because they were oppressed by the Saxon majority in the village.<sup>84</sup> The Saxon dialect was used as exclusion mechanism: the Landler were not allowed to make use of their dialect and the official language in the village became practically the Saxon dialect and not the High German that could have been used as a common means of communication. At the same time,

---

<sup>82</sup> Horowitz 1975, 123

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 124

<sup>84</sup> Glondys 1997, 213

their Landler self-identification excluded them from the churchly *Körperschaft* (corporate body).<sup>85</sup>

In the foreword to the diary of Hellmut Klima, his wife and his brother-in-law wrote: “He was the only priest of Neppendorf who mastered both the Saxon dialect and the Landler dialect, so that he could develop a close trusting contact with the Saxon members of his congregation, as well as with its Landler members.”<sup>86</sup> Another example is given by the verbal skirmishes and tensions taking place between Saxon and Swabian students at the University of Klausenburg (Cluj).<sup>87</sup> The actual cultural change that would enable us to speak about the fading away of Saxon and Swabian identities in front of a Romanian-German identity, later to be transformed into a German identity once the members of these communities emigrated to Germany, would eventually be much more visible during communism.<sup>88</sup>

With respect to the situation between 1933 and 1945, another observation made by Horowitz is useful: “the existence of internalized reference scales often means that an emerging group in a new context may still be psychologically tied to the old, narrower context.”<sup>89</sup> This is very easily applicable to the Saxon case. In it, we can talk about a multiplication of contexts. The Saxon level of identity did not disappear over night and in some cases neither did the use of Lutheranism as a criterion of identity. Situations such as that

---

<sup>85</sup> Of course, in this very case attention could be paid to the internal relationships within the village, to the common history a.s.o. However, my point is to show the intricacies and paradoxes brought forth by the new appealing German identification.

<sup>86</sup> Maria Klima and Samuel Liebhart, *Foreword* to Klima 1999, 7

<sup>87</sup> Klima 1999, 116

<sup>88</sup> For the emergence of a Romanian German self-consciousness after 1918, see Michael Kroner, “Die Beziehungen zwischen den Siebenbürger Sachsen und den anderen deutschen Volksgruppen Rumäniens in den Jahren 1918-1944. Betrachtungen zur Bildung eines rumäniendeutschen Gesamtbewußtseins,” (The relationships between the Transylvanian Saxons and the other German ethnic groups in Romania in the years 1918-1944. Considerations on the building of a common Romanian German consciousness) *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter* 34 (1985): 33-39

<sup>89</sup> Horowitz 1975, 131

in Großau bear proof of the confused situation. Inertial inclusive and exclusive mechanisms still existed.

### ***III.6. Reactions to the Heim ins Reich Program***

On another level, an interesting fact is represented by the reactions of two ideologically different representatives of the Saxons in the issue of the *heim ins Reich* program<sup>90</sup> and the way it might have touched upon the fate of the Saxon community in Transylvania. Heinrich Zillich and Hans Otto Roth, both of them very important figures in Transylvanian Saxon political life and at the same time standing for rather conflicting approaches to the issues of the community, had a very similar attitude towards Hitler's plan of relocating ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe into the Reich. In the end, the implementation of the plan touched upon the fate of other of Romania's Germans, such as the ones in Dobrudja or those in Bukovina and Bessarabia (at that time, already part of the Soviet Union following the 1940 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact).

Both Zillich<sup>91</sup> and Roth<sup>92</sup> opposed the mere idea of relocating the Transylvanian Saxons into the Third Reich and their arguments converged: such an action would conduct to diminishing the German influence in the region. Perceiving the Transylvanian Saxon minority as a disseminator of German culture in South-Eastern Europe, the two leading figures of the Saxons subtly ascertained the distinctiveness of the Saxon ethnic group (and of the Banat Swabians as well) as compared to other German-speaking groups.

---

<sup>90</sup> Literally: home in the Reich. Nazi initiative, destined to resettle ethnic Germans from Central- and South-Eastern Europe in the Third Reich.

<sup>91</sup> See "Der Schriftsteller Heinrich Zillich nimmt in einem Brief an Dr. Csaki vom DAI Stellung zu Hitlers Rede, die die Aussiedlung der 'Volksdeutschen' aus Osteuropa thematisiert" (Writer Heinrich Zillich takes position in a letter to Dr. Csaki from DAI, concerning Hitler's speech on the issue of the resettlement of the 'Volksdeutsche' from Eastern Europe), in Popa 2005, 70-72

<sup>92</sup> See Hans Otto Roth, "Zur Frage der Umsiedlung der Siebenbürger Sachsen und der Banater Schwaben" (On the question of the resettlement of the Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians), in Popa 2005, 73-80

In order to strengthen German culture in the region, their proposals (and it is interesting to see how an exponent of the blood and soil ideology, such as Zillich and a conservative of the old Saxon elite, such as Roth expressed similar views on the topic) went as far as to include the possibility of augmenting the number of Germans in Transylvania and Banat. Thus, they agreed with the fact that the displacement of the Germans in the Soviet Union or the ones in Dobrudja would be a salutary solution. However, in their view the place of relocation shouldn't necessarily be Germany, but Transylvania and Banat. Their proposals can be seen as attempts to reinforce a shattered identity. The fear of the Saxons that they would eventually lose their identity is very visible in various texts written in the period, from press articles to literary works or official declarations of Saxon politicians. The possibility, envisaged by both Zillich and Roth, of colonizing once again Transylvania and Banat with other German-speaking groups is relevant for the comprehension of the identity dilemmas of the time.

It is probably not incidental that Zillich's proposal does not aim at specific groups in specific regions. It just suggested that the Germans in "Bessarabia, Dobrudja, possibly South Slavonia and Bukovina" would be better relocated in Transylvania and Banat than in the German Reich. At the same time, Roth, departing from the same premise of the Saxons as "outpost of the German nation",<sup>93</sup> provided much more concrete proposals. According to him, the 35,000 Sathmar Swabians should be relocated to Banat, next to their ethnic kin. The Germans of Bukovina could be brought in the region between Bistrița and Reghin, while the Germans of Dobrudja and Bessarabia would find their proper place between Hermannstadt (Sibiu) and Kronstadt (Brașov).<sup>94</sup> The attention Roth gave to the confessional cleavages is relevant, as he envisaged the strengthening of the German presence in Transylvania on the

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 75

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 79

basis of both German ethnicity and Lutheran religious affiliation, whereas in Banat Catholicism was important.

From the two texts we can discern how ethnic identity was still seen in correlation with religious identity by the conservative elites, whereas the younger Zillich did not seem to take these cleavages too much into consideration. We can also see how Saxon identity was perceived to be in crisis and how a growth in numbers, through incorporation of other German-speaking groups, from other parts of Romania and Eastern Europe was seen as a way of coping with the issues brought forth by the crisis situation. However, the mere idea of incorporating such large numbers of people sharing the same language and being part of the same 'imagined community' reveals that Saxon identity per se was starting to fade away in the favor of a broader and more prestigious German identity, that could have been reinforced by bringing other ethnic Germans into the region. Compelled to be a minority and noticing the lack of a proper growth rate in that period, Zillich and Roth unconsciously accepted that Saxon identity became a weaker identity, placing the revered German identity on a superior level. Furthermore, they also gave evidence of the confused situation of the Saxon minority: unwilling to be relocated in the Reich but willing to accept other Germans as neighbors. Or, with other words: unwilling to fully give in to the pressures of German identity and coming up with a proposal that in fact bears proof of this very transformation, that made Saxon identity unable to respond to the psychic and social desiderata of the community, unlike the broader German identity.

Reading the articles in *Kirchliche Blätter* and the other documents and applying Horowitz's theoretical framework unto them provides a broader understanding of the situation of the Saxons after 1933. To sum up, we can say that the Lutheran Church ended up losing its homogenous character that was a precondition for the smooth management of the Saxon self-consciousness. It would be far-fetched to talk about this newly installed heterogeneity either

as a cause or as a consequence of the Nazification process within the Saxon community. The events held under scrutiny here were definitely interconnected, but it would be difficult and probably logically erroneous to establish a cause-effect type of relationship in this context. What can be said is that the Church reached the point where it was unable to respond to the desiderata of its congregation. The radical movements copying the model existent in the Third Reich offered new identification possibilities that strengthened (but at the same time subtly changed) the self-image of the Saxons. We cannot answer the question of what would have happened with Saxon self-consciousness had the Lutheran Church had a different approach to the situation. But it can be argued that the stance of the Church contributed to the radicalization of the Saxon community and to the subtle change in identity accompanying it.

## IV. Second World War and its Impact on Saxon Identity

### IV.1. Romania, Transylvanian Saxons and WWII

Legally speaking, Romania entered WWII only in June 1941, when Romanian troops crossed the river Pruth to reoccupy the territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina that had been lost one year before following the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. However, effects of the turmoil unleashed by the outbreak of the Second World War were witnessed by the Romanian citizens much before the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, 1941, the date of the beginning of the German-Romanian offensive against the USSR.

In 1939, following Hitler's attack against Poland, an important number of Polish citizens were allowed to pass on Romanian territory, being granted refuge. In 1940, the community of the Transylvanian Saxons was directly hit by the political events accompanying the war. The Second Vienna Arbitration<sup>95</sup>, signed on August 30, 1940, cut Transylvania into two, territorially dividing the Saxon community as well. Northern Transylvania became part of Hungary and the fate of the German-speaking groups in the region (Saxons and Sathmar Swabians) is strictly connected with the history of the Hungarian state between 1940 and 1944. Though it might seem appropriate to integrate an analysis of the Saxon communities in Northern Transylvania into this paper, such an undertaking would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another relevant aspect for the internal history of the Saxon community before Romania officially entered the war is the "1000-Mann-Aktion" that took place on Romanian territory between October 1939 and June 1940. It was the first mass recruitment of the SS beyond the borders of the German Reich. In a very recent publication about the history of the

---

<sup>95</sup> On this point, as on many others, Romanian and Hungarian historiography have not yet found a common denominator: Romanian historians refer to the 1940 document as to a Diktat, whereas Hungarians call it a Treaty.

German minority in Romania during the war, historian Paul Milata offers a detailed account of the implementation of the program<sup>96</sup> that would constitute a model for later operations of this kind outside the German Reich. At the same time, retrospectively speaking it can be said that for the Saxons (and also for the Banat Swabians) the program announced the future recruitment of almost 63.000 ethnic Germans from Transylvania and Banat in the SS in year 1943.

Another important, yet under-evaluated factor is the presence of almost 500,000 Nazi troops on Romanian territory, beginning with October 1940. Many of the soldiers and officers were staying with families of ethnic Germans from Transylvania. The daily presence of Germans from the Reich, for a significant period of time<sup>97</sup> presumably had a social impact on the Saxons and on their identity. However, as I have already mentioned, the social and socio-psychological consequences of the interactions between Germans and Saxons (or, to use the terminology of the time, between *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche*) were not given sufficient attention (if at all) by the historians and researchers of the German minority in Romania.

Citizens of a country that was an ally of the almost mythologized German state, about 63000 Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians ended up enrolled in the Waffen-SS, without losing their Romanian citizenship. Therefore, in May 1945, after Romania changed sides, there would still be Romanian Germans enrolled in the German army or in the SS,

---

<sup>96</sup> See Paul Milata, *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu: Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS* (Between Hitler, Stalin and Antonescu: Romanian Germans in the Waffen-SS) (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2007)

<sup>97</sup> Of course, most of the German soldiers and officers stayed in Romania only for a short period of time, being subsequently sent on the Eastern Front. However, this was not always the case. See for example Schlattner's novel in which some of the secondary characters portrayed are German soldiers, who were still in the town of Făgăraș on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944, the day when Romania quit the alliance with the Axis and joined the Allied Powers, by declaring war on the former ally Germany. Schlattner 1998

defending the ruins of Berlin from the advancement of the Allied troops.<sup>98</sup> The ‘Wehrmacht-SS’ recruitment was another key moment in the social (and political) history of the Saxons during WWII, providing evidence of the radicalization undergone by the community from 1933 onwards. Placing it in another time frame, it signals the forthcoming dissolution of the Saxon identity into the broader German one that was eventually completed on the background of the huge waves of migration during the Cold War and at the very beginning of the 1990s.

At the same time, an extremely interesting continuity point can be emphasized. During the First World War, Transylvanian Germans had fought on Transylvanian territory against the Romanian army, alongside with the soldiers of the Wilhelmian Reich armies. In 2006, Bernhard Böttcher wrote a significant article<sup>99</sup> about the politics of memory following the First World War in the Transylvanian Saxon communities. Analyzing three different expressions of the cult of heroes in localities inhabited by Germans (Rosenau-Râșnov, Heltau-Cisnădie, Schäßburg-Sighișoara), Böttcher noticed how the monuments in rather ethnically homogenous places, such as the former two, were much more German-oriented, emphasizing the bond between Saxons and the German soldiers, while in places with a higher percentage of Romanian (and Hungarian) population, such as Schäßburg, their message was much more neutral. The way the identity of the Transylvanian Saxons was shaped during WWII can be seen as a continuation of the 1916-1918 spirit of brotherhood when Germans from the Reich and Germans from Transylvania fought side by side. During the First World War, Kaiser Wilhelm was the first German monarch to visit Transylvania and the identification of the

---

<sup>98</sup> Milata 2007, 295

<sup>99</sup> Bernhard Böttcher, “Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden? Kriegerdenkmäler und Heldenkult bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen nach 1918” (Continuity of the first world war during peace? War monuments and the cult of heroes at the Transylvanian Saxons), in *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (The influence of fascism and national socialism on minorities in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe), eds. Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth (München: IKGS Verlag, 2006), 53-72

Saxons with the Germans was predominant.<sup>100</sup> A similar identification would be in force during the Second World War, although on a different background and with more radical consequences.

The social and political history of the Saxons during the Second World War was very much determined by the actions of the German Ethnic Group that managed to overtake the prerogatives traditionally held by the Lutheran Church. On August 30, 1940, Romania signed an agreement with the German Reich.<sup>101</sup> One of its consequences was that the German minority in Romania was finally granted the corporate rights stipulated in the Declaration of Alba Iulia from 1918 and in the Peace Treaty from Versailles.<sup>102</sup> It is however worth saying that the latter stipulated the granting of corporate rights to the Transylvanian Saxons, whereas the Romanian jurisdiction from 1940 granted corporate rights to all Germans in Romania.

Starting from November 20, 1940, the legal entity recognized by the Romanian state as the corporate body representing the Germans was the all-encompassing Ethnic Group.<sup>103</sup> In-between these two dates, on September 27, Andreas Schmidt, a rather obscure, young and radical Transylvanian Nazi, married to the daughter of Gottlob Berger, SS Gruppenführer, had been nominated by the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle<sup>104</sup> as leader of the German Ethnic Group in

---

<sup>100</sup> Philippi 1994, 80

<sup>101</sup> “Deutsch-rumänisches Protokoll vom 30. August 1940,” (German-Romanian protocol from 30 August 1940) in Wagner 1981, 298

<sup>102</sup> “Das rumänische Volksgruppen-Gesetz vom 20. November 1940,” (Romanian law on ethnic groups from 20 November 1940) in Wagner 1981, 300

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Institution established on 27 January 1937, subordinated to the German foreign ministry. Its task was to coordinate the “relations of the different organizations and institutions within the Reich with the *Volksdeutsche* organizations abroad, in order to secure the loyalty of the ethnic Germans to the Nazi party. See Anthony Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York, London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 10-11

Romania.<sup>105</sup> The last elements of autonomy of Romania's Germans had disappeared as soon as their leader was nominated from Berlin.

The granting of corporate rights to the Germans in Romania, a long yearned for wish of the Saxons, was fulfilled with the help of Nazi Germany and was subsequently followed by a deep involvement of Third Reich institutions in the internal affairs of the Lutheran Church. Bishop Glondys was forced to resign and on February 16, 1941, Wilhelm Staedel<sup>106</sup>, a Nazi-oriented cleric who in 1936 had been prohibited from occupying churchly dignities due to its National-Socialist affiliation took his place. It is worth adding that Staedel had been the leader of the *Deutscher Jugendbund in Rumänien* (German Youth Association in Romania), the main competitor (in the late '30s) of the Lutheran Church over the field of the informal education of the youth.<sup>107</sup>

On May 5, 1941 an agreement was signed between the leader of the Ethnic Group and the Bishop, disbanding the youth associations priorly administered by the Lutheran Church. The same happened with the churchly women's unions and with the neighborliness schemes.<sup>108</sup> In theory, as well as in practice, starting with the period 1940-1941 the monopoly on identity production and reproduction belonged to the German Ethnic Group in Romania.

Obviously, one can see the prefiguration of these developments within the political history of the community in the situation between 1933 and 1940. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, the transformation of Lutheranism from a criterion into a mere indicium of identity took place on the background of a distinct openness of members of the Church towards National-Socialist ideas. This very openness is one of the reasons that made the

---

<sup>105</sup> Michael Kroner, "Zur politischen Rolle der 'Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien' in den Jahren 1940-1944", in Roth 1995, 150

<sup>106</sup> For a concise and critical depiction of Staedel's life and activities, see Johann Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945* (Hitler's vassals of the German ethnic group in Romania before and after 1945) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2006), 109-128

<sup>107</sup> See Plajer 2003

<sup>108</sup> Binder 1994, 259

Lutheran Church incapable of providing a coherent and well-structured answer to the tensions and pressures coming from outside. When speaking about the years of the war, the question that arises is how did the (new) self-perceived ethnic identity interact with the religious identity? How did the Saxon population react to the events that had a profound impact on their existence?

#### ***IV.2. Replacing Saxonness with Germanness***

One of the main documents of relevance for understanding the new unautonomous positioning of the Church is Wilhelm Staedel's speech, held shortly after his nomination as Bishop of the Lutheran Church in the context of a meeting with the leader of the Ethnic Group, Andreas Schmidt. The text, recently published by Klaus Popa, signals the official abandonment of the old self-imposed task of the Church, namely managing the identity of the Saxons. Though Staedel admits that Church and *Volk* have been two sides of the same coin since the times of Luther, he feels compelled to admit the existence of a new, radically changed situation: "the German people of our fatherland aspire to a new unity under the powerful impact of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist movement". However, with respect to their religious affiliation they were "divided in at least two groups". Therefore, "Germanness and religious belief are not identical anymore". Staedel's discourse can also be considered against the background of the arbitrary division of the Saxon community. Under the new circumstances, the proportional division of Saxons and Swabians in Romania was clearly in favor of the latter, who were Catholics. At the same time, the leadership of the Ethnic Group consisted mainly of Saxons: saliently trying to erase the old identities (Saxon, Swabian) was probably not only a means to accommodate the ideological pressures coming from Berlin, but

also a means to maintain the hierarchical status quo within the German Ethnic Group in Romania.<sup>109</sup>

The pressure to get rid of the traditional Saxon and Swabian identities, in favor of the broader and more prestigious German one is also visible in other aspects. On April 10, 1941 the ethnologist Misch Orend wrote to the Reichsgeschäftsführer of the SS-Ahnenerbe, Dr. Sievers, about the publication of one of his works. He announced to Dr. Sievers that the title of the book was changed: instead of “Legends of the Transylvanian Saxons”, it would be “German Legends from Transylvania”.<sup>110</sup> Historian Paul Philippi synthesized this process, pointing out that once Andreas Schmidt became the leader of the Ethnic Group, the language use started to be regulated. The accepted usage was not anymore “Transylvanian Saxons”, but “Transylvanian Germans”. Moreover, “the use of the Transylvanian Saxon vernacular was prohibited in all administrative offices (while High German was only a language used at celebrations from the rural Saxon population)”. The Germans in Romania had to perceive themselves as a part of Greater Germany.<sup>111</sup>

At the same time, they wanted to synchronize with Nazi Germany, as the paradigmatic example of the writer Adolf Meschendörfer shows. He operated stylistic and linguistic changes in the 1937 version of his novel, *Die Stadt im Osten* (*The Town in East*), replacing “foreign” words with “original German” vocables.<sup>112</sup> Language purification and orthodoxy of

---

<sup>109</sup> “Einordnung der evang. Landeskirche in die Gemeinschaftsordnung der deutschen Volksgruppe. Amtl. Besuch des neuen ev. Bischofs Wilhelm Staedel beim Volksgruppenführer Andreas Schmidt,” (Incorporation of the Lutheran Church in the corporate order of the German Ethnic Group. Official visit of the new Lutheran Bishop Wilhelm Staedel to the Volksgruppenführer Andreas Schmidt) in Popa 2005, 214-216

<sup>110</sup> “Der Volkskundler Misch Orend wendet sich mit Schreiben 527/41 O/B des Amts für Kultur und Wissenschaft der DVIR in Sachen wissenschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit an den Reichsgeschäftsführer der SS-“Ahnenerbe”, Dr. Sievers”, in Popa 2005, 226

<sup>111</sup> Philippi 1994, 83

<sup>112</sup> Stefan Sienert, “Adolf Meschendörfer und Heinrich Zillich im Literaturbetrieb des ‘Dritten Reiches’,” (Adolf Meschendörfer and Heinrich Zillich in the literary field of the ‘Third Reich’) in *Deutsche Literatur in Rumänien und das “Dritte Reich”: Vereinnahmung – Verstrickung – Ausgrenzung* (German literature in Romania and the ‘Third Reich’: reception

practices are often accompanying ethnic change, as Horowitz showed, using as examples the Basque case in Spain and the Sikh movement in India.<sup>113</sup> The pattern of ethnic change in the case of the Transylvanian Saxons was different, but some of its mechanisms were similar. Another significant change in the use of identity indicia is represented by the 1941 ordinance issued by the Lutheran Church Consistory obliging the churches to fly the swastika flag instead of the traditional blue-red one.<sup>114</sup>

### ***IV.3. Looking at the Past: Between the Myth of the Colonists and the Myth of Diaspora-Restoration***

The (Pan)German integrative measures also had an echo in the churchly organ *Kirchliche Blätter*. While looking at the issues from 1940 and the first half of 1941, we can recurrently observe the persistence of at least three themes, conjoining towards the same aim: the complete identification of the Transylvanian Saxons with Germany. Firstly, both before and after Romania's official declaration of joining the war on Germany's side, we can read a number of articles connected to the Second World War: letters of German soldiers fighting for the fatherland or a series of articles emphasizing the German character of Strasbourg and Alsace right after Germany's invasion of France.

Secondly, an important place was occupied by the articles about the First World War, reviving the period when the Germans from the Reich were fighting for Transylvania. In the issue from January 7, 1941 we can read an article written by a certain Otto Folberth, referring to the Germans as the "Saving Army". The text recalled the days from September 1916, when the Romanian army was threatening to attack Transylvania and it was "clear what destiny was awaiting the German inhabitants of Transylvania". Puzzlingly, taking into consideration the

---

– entanglement – marginalization), eds. Michael Markel and Peter Motzan (München: IKGS Verlag, 2003), 116

<sup>113</sup> Donald Horowitz, "Cultural Movements and Ethnic Change," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 433 (September 1977): 12

<sup>114</sup> Blue and red were the Saxon colors.

political and military situation of the time, the Romanians were consistently referred to as the “enemy”. No reference was made to the Hungarian population of Transylvania.

The text is written in accordance to the kitschy obsolete-romanticist literary conventions of the time: the author starts by describing the discouraging situation of the Transylvanian Saxons once the Romanians declared war to Germany and the Habsburg Empire. People are running away from the advancement of the Romanian armies, the lack of hope is ubiquitous within the Saxon community. The author describes a religious service in Mediasch (Mediaș), offering a desperate account of the situation: people praying on their knees for a miracle to come. Of course, the miracle comes: three Prussian officers suddenly appear, prefiguring the arrival of the German troops. The end of the article has something of an apotheosis: “The miracle had happened: from that moment on, German soldiers were defending the native soil of the oldest German colonists.”<sup>115</sup>

At this point, we can introduce some of the observations of Anthony D. Smith regarding the patterns of ethnic survival leading to the persistence, over time, of ethnic groups.<sup>116</sup> Smith detected the existence of four patterns of ethnic survival: imperial-dynastic, communal-demotic, emigrant-colonist and diaspora-restoration. Looking at the history of the Transylvanian Saxons from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it can be argued that their survival, as a distinct group, was due not only to their recognition as such by the Hungarian crown, with all the administrative, jurisdictional and cultural consequences following from this recognition, but also to an embedded “emigrant-colonist” self-consciousness.

The self-stereotypes of the Transylvanian Saxons included a somewhat softer version of the “emigrant-colonist” pattern. Anthony D. Smith writes about the nations for the survival of which the emigrant-colonist myth is of relevance: “They carry with them their values,

---

<sup>115</sup> Otto Folberth, “Das rettende Heer,” (The saving army) *Kirchliche Blätter*, 7 January 1941

<sup>116</sup> Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 135-138

memories and traditions, regarding themselves as chosen by God for a providential destiny that will abolish the old order and inaugurate a new society”<sup>117</sup>. It might be that the Saxons rarely envisaged such revolutionary ideals, as inaugurating a new society: however, they saw themselves as being the representatives and defenders of the higher Christian culture, “wall and shield” of Christianity.<sup>118</sup> The self-perception of the Transylvanian Saxons included rather a civilizational ideal. McArthur observed that, since the Saxons never managed to attain the degree of autonomy and independence that other colonists in history have (the most obvious example is that of the American colonies) they never ceased to emphasize their status of colonists. Saxon historiography would remain attached to the self-identification as colonists, pointing out their migration to an inhabited and wild land that they civilized.<sup>119</sup> Though unwilling to be part of the *heim ins Reich* program, the events taking place in the years of the war show that this myth was starting to be slowly replaced by a rather inconsistent version of the diaspora-restoration myth.

Referring to Adamantios Korais, Smith argued that “the restoration of a diaspora to its ancestral home involved not merely the physical return of a people, but also its spiritual regeneration through education and political mobilization.”<sup>120</sup> Subjects of intense war propaganda meant to make out of them a sort of a fifth column in a country that was anyway an ally of Hitler’s Germany, Transylvanian Saxons became more and more part of the German ‘imagined community’. The education and political mobilization in the name of German nationalism was a clear success and in the end most of the Saxon men went and fought for Germany. It might simply be that the emigrant-colonist pattern described by Smith cannot function properly for a minority group.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 137

<sup>118</sup> Roth 1998, 179-190.

<sup>119</sup> For some remarks on the Transylvanian Saxon self-identification as colonists, see McArthur 1990, 40-41

<sup>120</sup> Smith 2003, 138

In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, though expressions of the myth never ceased to exist and though such expressions can still be encountered nowadays, it did not manage to help the preservation of the Saxon identity as such. A functional continuity of the myth can be observed, especially as it was used in order to back up the strong bond of the Saxons with the Transylvanian territory. However, during the Second World War, the Saxons were much more Transylvanian Germans than Transylvanian Saxons. They fully adhered to the ideals and myths of Nazi Germany and this could not have happened without a more or less subtle process of ethnic change and radicalization. The colonizing myth was still there, only that it was losing more and more of its significant role in the Saxon self-identification. In other words, though it was still used, it became softer and softer, not hindering the integration in the German ‘imagined community’ and the total adherence to the Germanness represented by Nazi Germany.

#### ***IV.4. Germans from the Reich in Transylvania and Saxons from Transylvania Fighting for Germany***

The third recurrent theme in the pages of the *Kirchliche Blätter* had to do with the presence of an important number of members of the German army on Romanian territory. They were enthusiastically received by the Saxon population. A contemporary account of a German soldier provides the information that in Tartlau (Prejmer) “it is the greatest wish of the Saxon peasants to offer accommodation to the German soldiers, at least for a couple of days”.<sup>121</sup> In his monograph about the locality of BIRTHÄLM (Biertan), the historian Thomas NÄGLER stated:

The soldiers were accommodated separately or in pairs with Saxon families. Permanently and everywhere, the best was offered to them, they were guests and they were celebrated

---

<sup>121</sup> Kurt Neher, “Siebenbürgische Gastfreundschaft. Deutsche Soldaten besuchen die Sachsenbauern in Rumänien,” (Transylvanian hospitality. German soldiers visit the Saxon peasants in Romania) in Popa 2005, 180

enthusiastically. [...] The relationships with the Saxons were not clouded by any incidents. A Staff Sergeant who had been deadly injured during an exercise was buried with high participation of the population and with military honors in BIRTHÄLM.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the rigid and succinct writing style from his diary, the pastor Hellmut Klima also makes some observations about the positive way in which the German soldiers were welcomed in Neppendorf.<sup>123</sup>

Accounts of the way in which German soldiers perceived the Transylvanian Saxon population can be found in the *Kirchliche Blätter* as well. On January 21, 1941 we find two such accounts, one revealing the “deep unity of Germanness and belief in Christ”<sup>124</sup>, so typical for the Saxons and the other one showing happy bewilderment in front of the enthusiasm of the Saxon population welcoming the German soldiers.<sup>125</sup> Approximately one month before, on the front page of the issue from December 17, 1940 we find one of the first photographs reproduced in the journal. Its title was eloquent: “Soldiers of the German Army attending a religious service”. The use of a photograph showing German soldiers piously attending a religious service can be read as a limited attempt to integrate the sources through which the new ethnic model was introduced in the Transylvanian Saxon flock. However, the effect was altogether the opposite one: the Church was integrated on an inferior hierarchical level in the new National Socialist ethnic model. The soldiers attending the religious service were the agents of this model.

---

<sup>122</sup> Thomas Nögler, *Marktort und Bischofssitz BIRTHÄLM in Siebenbürgen* (Market town and Bishop's See BIRTHÄLM in Transylvania) (München: Verlag der Siebenbürgisch-Sächsischen Stiftung, 2004), 152

<sup>123</sup> Klima 1999, 258, 259, 269

<sup>124</sup> Soldat H. A., “Unsere Heimatkirche – von einem deutschen Soldaten gesehen,” (Our home church – seen by a German soldier) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, 21 January 1941

<sup>125</sup> Soldat Rudolf Fuchte, “Wir rollen nach Rumänien. Erlebnisse eines deutschen Soldaten” (We are rolling towards Romania. Life experiences of a German soldier) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, 21 January 1941

The constant presence of the war in the pages of *Kirchliche Blätter* and the self-understood representation of the German army as an army leading a just war, the paradoxical references to Hitler's profession of faith,<sup>126</sup> the revival of the First World War memories – all these are signs of an uncritical allegiance to the German model of the time and of the attempts for profound integration into the German nationhood. Having lost the central place within the Saxon community and, thus, the (at least theoretical) power to manage the Saxon identity, the position of the Church mirrored in the *Kirchliche Blätter* was fundamentally identical to the position of the Ethnic Group. Without any true alternative pole of identity-management, the Saxons were uncritically accepting their new German identity.

This is most visible in the 1943 enrollment in the Waffen-SS. At a moment when it was rather obvious that the war would eventually be lost, the success of the action bears proof of the mental dissolution of Saxon identity in front of the German identity. Milata recently published an excellent monograph on the recruitment of the Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians into Wehrmacht and SS divisions. In his analysis of the motivations that led to the success of the action amongst the German-speaking population of Romania, Milata detected a number of reasons that made Saxons (and Swabians) enroll in the German army. These were pragmatism – strongly connected with the poor prestige of the Romanian army among the Saxons and with the widespread perception of an army where Germans are treated as second-class soldiers –, anti-Bolshevism, the existence of a strong Germany myth, the obvious consent of the Romanian authorities to the recruitment, the assimilationist pressures of the

---

<sup>126</sup> Adolf Hitler, "Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär...", (If the world were full of devils...) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, 19 March 1940; Adolf Hitler, "Von Dogma der Kirche," (About the dogma of the church) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, 28 May 1940. At this point, it is worth mentioning that an interesting reference to Hitler's religiosity could be read as early as 1933: "Hitler used to live in Munich at a Lutheran housewife. Often, on stormy days, he would borrow Luther's Bible from her, as we are told from reliable sources. Then he would lock himself in his room and indulge for hours in the study of the Holy Writing. When he went out, he would tend to say: 'now it goes on'." See "Hitler und die Bibel," (Hitler and the Bible) *Kirchliche Blätter*, Hermannstadt, 20 April 1933

Romanian state in the interwar period and the inter-community pressure.<sup>127</sup> They can all be subsumed into a broader psycho-sociological motivation: the incapacity of the Transylvanian Saxon identity and of the main institution producing and reproducing it, the Lutheran Church, to resist the pressures coming from Germany.

#### ***IV.5. The Issue of the Religious Confirmation***

Finally, another important indicium pinpointing the loss of grip of the Lutheran Church in front of the new model promoted by the German Ethnic Group is represented by the importance granted to the confirmation ritual. It is true, no research has yet been done as to confirm or reject the allegation that the Lutheran confirmation had saliently started to lose its central meaning for the Saxon community in the years of the Second World War.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, a number of sources make us believe that this was a growing reality. The confirmation was one of the few markers of affiliation to Lutheranism that the Church could still try to use for the (albeit limited) preservation of its role in the management of Saxon identity. At the same time, the speculative perception that confirmation had lost its central role in the affirmation of one's personal identity can be used as an argument for proving the abasement of Lutheran religious affiliation from a criterion to an indicium of identity, discussed in the previous chapter.

---

<sup>127</sup> Even though most of them were enrolled in SS divisions, I am using the words Wehrmacht/German army and SS almost interchangeably due to a number of reasons. The most important lies in the very wording of the agreement between Romanian and German authorities: according to it, the Germans of Romania would be enrolled in the "Wehrmacht-SS". Milata says that the mistake was probably deliberate, as to enable the future possible enrollment of the youngsters in either of the two. At the same time, it is rather obvious that Transylvanian Saxons made no difference between the Wehrmacht and the Schutzstaffel. For the motivations leading to the massive success of the program see Milata 2007, 174-214

<sup>128</sup> The documents of the comprehensive archives of the Lutheran Church, both the central ones in Sibiu as well as the local ones in all Saxon-inhabited localities could reveal whether the numbers of the children attending the confirmation ceremony actually decreased and probably also some other important aspects related to the issue.

Following the transfer of authority, from the Lutheran Church to the German Ethnic Group, both the formal and informal education of the young Transylvanian Saxons pertained to the latter. The *Deutsche Jugend* (German Youth) was founded on the March 1, 1939 and, from October 15, 1940 the “official duty” of membership in the DJ was introduced for the boys between 10 and 18 years old and for the girls between 10 and 21 years old. Consequently, in 1943 the organization counted 73.719 members.<sup>129</sup> Percentage-wise, this figure represents more than 90% of the potential members.

The Lutheran confirmation is supposed to take place when the individual is 14 years of age and it stands for his/her passing into adulthood. Writing about his confirmation and about the attitude of the people at the beginning of the ‘40s towards it, Hermann Schmidt notes:

In the time of the political upheaval I reached the confirmation age. [...] Currents of the new spirit encroach the religious life. Some people ask themselves whether it still is appropriate to confirm the children. Even my parents have their doubts: one time they are pro, the other time they are against it.<sup>130</sup>

In the end, the young boy, together with his sister are confirmed. However, this happens only in the context of the tacit agreement of the local priest, who ignores the absence of the children from the preparatory classes.

Another source on the topic is Klima’s diary. Though he never makes remarks regarding the absence of children from the confirmation, some of his observations tend to underpin the diminishing role of the rite in the life of the community. After the confirmation from June 1942, Klima notes: “Despite the celebration, the church attendance was poor. Even

---

<sup>129</sup> Milata 2007, 93; For a more detailed depiction of the German Youth in Romania see Harald Roth, “Die ‘Deutsche Jugend’ (DJ) in Siebenbürgen 1939-1944,” (The German Youth in Transylvania), *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 10 (81) (1987): 60-69

<sup>130</sup> Hermann Schmidt, *Vom Alt zur Alb: unterwegs in meiner Zeit* (From the Olt to the Alb: a life in transit) (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2006), 64

some parents have missed it. Some mothers have missed the Confirmation Supper.”<sup>131</sup> One year later, no such remark is found. Nonetheless, a girl comes to the Confirmation Supper without attending the proper Confirmation ceremony.<sup>132</sup> Klima makes more comments after the 1944 confirmation: “Some fathers failed to appear, even though they are at home, because they do not lay any value anymore on going with their children to the Confirmation Supper. A sign of alarming secularization.”<sup>133</sup>

A literary source regarding the importance of the Confirmation and the identity tensions it raised is Eginald Schlattner’s (autobiographical) novel, *Der geköpfte Hahn*. The main character of the novel is a young Saxon caught in-between the demands of the old ethnic model of the Saxons, including the criterion of the religious affiliation and the new ethnic model, promoted by Nazi Germany and its local adherents. It is probably the best literary reflection of the social history of the Transylvanian Saxons in the interwar and war period, depicting the beginning of the end for the Saxon community in Romania.

The main character of the novel is an adolescent who experiences severe psychological conflicts. One of the main reasons for inner tensions is his refusal to “swear allegiance to two masters”<sup>134</sup>. He is caught between what Andreas Möckel called in an essay on the inner conflicts within the Saxon community between 1867 and 1933, “the imperative of the religious commitment” and “the imperative of nation and language”<sup>135</sup>. In the historical context in which the action of the novel takes place, the two imperatives were clearly conflicting. The main character of the novel is an exception among his peers: the boys and the girls of his age go to the preparatory classes and do not refuse confirmation. Nonetheless, when they say good-bye to the Lutheran pastor they answer by saying “Siegheil!” hitting their

---

<sup>131</sup> Klima 1999, 300

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 319

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 340

<sup>134</sup> Schlattner 1999, 115

<sup>135</sup> Möckel 1994, 139

heels together the way they learned in the German Youth.<sup>136</sup> Though they were not refusing confirmation, their usage of typical Nazi identity markers in communication situations when it would seem more appropriate to use either neutral greetings or greetings showing their religious affiliation is eloquent.

The usage of greetings by the characters of the novel is evidence of the existence of conflicting identities. When the adolescent wants to show his dissatisfaction regarding the behavior of a known Nazi, he manifests his opposition by greeting him with the religious-traditional “Grüß Gott” instead of “Heil Hitler!”<sup>137</sup> The importance of the greeting used by the characters of the novel is extremely high for defining social relationships, political affiliation (or, in some cases, the respective lack of interest) and personal self-identification; it is an indicator for the identity crisis of the community: there are characters using almost only “Heil Hitler!”, characters who shift from “Heil Hitler” to “Grüß Gott” according to the social context they are taking part in or to the claim they want to make and characters who stick to the old way of being polite, thus showing their inherent refusal of the novelties brought in by Nazification.

The relationship between the grandfather, ex-officer in the Habsburg Army and the young niece who has just learnt how to talk is depicted in a rather ludicrous manner, but is exemplary: he does not succeed in making her stop using the Nazi greeting, but he makes her say “Heil Kaiser Franz!” instead of “Heil Hitler!”. And, as the author points out: “Sometimes

---

<sup>136</sup> Schlattner 1999, 117

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 19. See also what Sabine Liebig says about the journey to Hitler’s Germany of one of the women she interviewed: “In 1936 Mrs. B traveled without any fear to Germany, by herself – because for her it was the safest place on earth, inhabited by the most honest people – so she had learned in Transylvania and that’s why she rapidly engaged in discussions with all possible people, whom she approached very openly. In the train – as a German from abroad she received a 60% discount on German railways – she met officers, whom she greeted with her habitual ‘Grüß Gott!’, whereon one of them retorted: ‘At us, this is called Heil Hitler!’” – in Sabine Liebig, “Siebenbürger Sächsinen zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus” (Transylvanian Saxon women in the time of national socialism) *Zeitschrift für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 21 (1998): 69

she used to say ‘Heil Kaiser Hitler!’”. The grandfather is the exponent of the self-identification of the older Saxon generation. He is not a sympathizer of the Nazi regime and of the changes brought by the Nazification of the Saxon community, but he is extremely proud of being a Transylvanian Saxon, “800 hundred years old!”, of pure German descent, going back twenty-five generations: “Since due to the name Goldschmidt he was often considered to be a Jew, he held the *Ahnenpaß* (genealogical document) ostentatiously in the breast pocket of his marine uniform, so that everyone could recognize the brown flax binding and the swastika.”<sup>138</sup> The attitude of the old Saxon grand-father is indicative for the disorientation of some parts of the community: he is proud of his German descent, internalized in a very Nazi-oriented manner, but paradoxically refuses most of the Nazi identification markers.

The conflicts between the Church and the Ethnic Group are very well depicted by Schlattner, especially when it comes to the Confirmation ritual. While children are preparing to receive the confirmation in the Church, in front of the building the sport contest of the German Ethnic Group is organized. The noise, the “Siegheil!” exclamations cause confusion and disorder, so that an interpersonal confrontation between the two leaders (the priest and the local leader of the Ethnic Group) takes place. On a personal level, the pastor wins. But the ritual was disturbed and subsequently it does not follow the appropriate path anymore. The order of the confirmands is not the pre-established one anymore and the children confuse the answers they were supposed to give. Strictly speaking, the Confirmation turns to a failure.<sup>139</sup>

The confirmation issue shows that in some places there was a latent or overt conflict between the old authority, represented by the figure of the priest and the new one, represented by the Ethnic Group and its leaders. An extremely interesting article by Swen Steinberg offers an insight into the life of an ordinary Saxon congregation, Haschagen (Haşag), in the year

---

<sup>138</sup> Schlattner 1999, 13

<sup>139</sup> Schlattner 1999, 133-137

1940.<sup>140</sup> The conflictual issues can be seen as epitomes of the broader conflict, between two contradictory identity models. In Haschagen, the younger generation did not attend the evening religious services because they were attending the physical exercises organized by the German Youth.<sup>141</sup> Losing the strings traditionally belonging to the Church, the local priest Simon Zank enters into conflict with the Ethnic Group. Both officially and unofficially, the conflict was won by the latter. The complete separation of plans, one being the religious one, and the other being the ethnic one obviously contradicted the traditional position of the Church.

The conflict in Haschagen shows that the Church had almost completely lost its autonomy and despite the local attempts of some of its representatives to make use of a *de facto* prestige, it could not revive its ethnic and social model. The education of the children belonged only to the Ethnic Group, the Church was only meant to address the religious issues. The Church was not totally displaced, but religious affiliation was relegated to an indicial status. In the end, the priest Zank was sent, on disciplinary grounds, to another parish – as Steinberg notes, the Church was more and more regarded and treated as an “alien body”<sup>142</sup> and its attempts to regulate Transylvanian Saxon identity were seen as intrusions into the field of the German Ethnic Group.

#### **IV.5. Between Identities**

Periods of identity crisis are periods when the validity of group beliefs is questioned. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, this is what happened in the interwar period, most saliently after 1933. The prestige associated to Saxonness and the belief that the model

---

<sup>140</sup> Swen Steinberg, “Verteidigung oder Widerstand? Der Konflikt des Pfarrers Simon Zank aus Haschagen mit der Landesjugendführung 1940,” (Defense or resistance? The conflict of the priest Simon Zank from Haschagen with the local youth leadership 1940) *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 27(2004): 59-79

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 67

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 74

traditionally promoted by the Lutheran Church is able to ensure their survival as a distinct group were being interrogated. The answer to this interrogation was radical. Subsequently, the central place of the Church for the Saxon community practically disappeared.

In the years of the war, the affirmation of identity bears the signs of the radicalized ethnic change whose roots are to be found in the preceding period. The model of identity promoted by the Lutheran Church was in its greatest part replaced by the new model. It is true, the prior overlapping of the two identities (Lutheran and Saxon) could not vanish all of a sudden and thus both identities, taken out separately, tried to borrow relevant elements from one another and then use them according to their purposes. I use again a quote from Schlattner, an affirmation made by the friend-fiend of the main character, an unabashed young man, imbued with Nazi ideology. And he says: “One has to beware of Catholics, so says my aunt Anna, because the Catholics can be Hungarians, or Romanians, or Frenchmen, yes, and, pitifully, even Jews. Whereas Lutherans are Germans. Only the *Führer* is a Catholic!”<sup>143</sup>

The identity crisis of the Transylvanian Saxons can be very well synthesized by Anthony D. Smith’s observations on the meaning of national identity for an individual:

...a sense of national identity provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture. It is through a shared, unique culture that we are enabled to know ‘who we are’ in the contemporary world. By rediscovering that culture we ‘rediscover’ ourselves, the ‘authentic self’, or so it has appeared to many divided and disoriented individuals who have had to contend with the vast changes and uncertainties of the modern world.<sup>144</sup>

Many of the “divided and disoriented” Saxon individuals found shelter and refuge in the prestige and security provided by the identification with Nazi Germany. The identity model promoted by the Church was no longer capable of ensuring cohesion and a sense of orientation following severe economic hardships. However, markers of the traditional Saxon

---

<sup>143</sup> Schlattner 1998, 166-167

<sup>144</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*. (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 17.

identity were still visible; but they did not constitute essential affiliation criteria anymore. Being afraid of losing their “self”, Saxons found it in Hitler’s Germany. The characters in Schlattner’s novel make references to both Transylvanian Saxon and German literature. Most of the Saxon children probably still attended the Confirmation. However, things Saxon had lost its central place in Saxon self-identification, being mostly replaced by things German and, even more, by things Nazi. As such, the ethnic model promoted by the Church could not have the same value as before.

At the same time, the recourse to an essentially German identity envisaged the later developments that took place in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, the political context in which most of the Germans from Romania decided to emigrate cannot be overlooked: the authoritarian regime in Romania had an important role in their personal decisions. But the huge waves of migration, from Romania to the Federal Republic of Germany might be better understood against the background of the events from the first half of the last century, especially between 1933 and 1945.<sup>145</sup>

#### ***IV.6. Comparative Observations***

The social history of the Saxons following Hitler’s rise to power in Germany is also evidence of their specificity as an ethnic group within the broader category of German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe. In reality, the category consists of many different ethnic groups that in the end got integrated into the wider German nation. The German scholar Gerhard Seewann wrote in a recent article dedicated to the historiography of ethnically defined groups: “The historiography of the Germans in Eastern Europe followed for a long period of time a holistic cultural concept, according to which culture was seen as a

---

<sup>145</sup> For a comprehensive sociological analysis of the emigration of Transylvanian Saxons, see Georg Weber et al., *Emigration der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Studien zu Ost-West Wanderungen* (Emigration of the Transylvanian Saxons: Studies on East-West migrations) (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003)

closed ensemble of specific and distinct forms of life.”<sup>146</sup> But the reality is that the German-speaking groups living beyond the borders of the German state were different in a number of aspects: social, cultural, historical, and dialectal. The paradigm Seewann is rather contesting was used as an “ideological construct for the process of emancipation of ethnic minorities”<sup>147</sup> and, as such, it was “indispensable”. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons it managed to “emancipate” an already emancipated (but on subtly different terms) ethnic group.

If, in the case of such ethnic groups as the Volga Germans, the Dobrudja Germans, the Bessarabia Germans or the Sathmar Swabians we can definitely talk about “emancipation”, the history of the Transylvanian Saxons enables us to speak rather about “ethnic change”. The former were ethnic groups with a rather weak self-identification. Structurally much more heterogenous, they were an easy object of Nazification, inasmuch the German model promoted by Nazism was not necessarily replacing an older and much internalized model.

This was not the case with the Transylvanian Saxons, who were already an ethnic group with a strong self-identification. In their case, the Nazification process and its identity-related transformations had to displace a deeply embedded ethnic model, as was the one promoted by the Lutheran Church. In some ways, the process of ‘ethnic change’ started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but reached a peak in the ‘30s and’ 40s. The fate of the Saxons was not substantially different of the fate of other German groups who responded to the appeal of National-Socialism. The main difference is that the premises were definitely not the same.

For the ethnic Germans living abroad, one of the most important social consequences, after the direct effects such as forced migration was the deletion of old differences. These groups submissively integrated into the broader German nation. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, the important factor to cope with was, theoretically, the overlapping of

---

<sup>146</sup> Gerhard Seewann, “Zur historiographie ethnisch definierter Gruppen,” (On the history of ethnically defined groups) in *Danubiana Carpathica. Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kultur in den deutschen Siedlungsgebieten Südosteuropas* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 7

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

identities: religious and ethnic. However, the openness of churchly dignitaries towards the National-Socialist body of thought made the situation easier. Since the ethnic model promoted by the Church was not anymore seen as viable from within the institution, the subsequent events do not appear as a surprise.

An attempt to compare the identity crisis of the Transylvanian Saxons to the identity crisis undergone by other German-speaking groups would provide the ground for some interesting observations. At a first view, the most suitable comparison would be with the Zipser from Slovakia. Settled on the actual territory of Slovakia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Zipser had, in part, a similar history with the one of the Transylvanian Saxons. However, the fact that the Reformation did not have the same influence as in the case of the Saxons makes the comparison a little bit more difficult. The Zipser had a totally different relationship with Hungary, envisaging assimilation and strongly opposing the Versailles Peace Treaties that made them subjects of the new Czechoslovak state.<sup>148</sup>

The Banat Swabians of Romania might also offer a ground for comparison, especially as they shared a similar fate with that of the Saxons. One of the pillars of their self-identification was the “colonial pride”<sup>149</sup>; however, their predominantly Catholic affiliation sets out from the very beginning an important marker of differentiation from the Transylvanian Saxons. The social structure of the Banat Swabians is also a fundamental differentiation factor. The absence of substantial political cooperation with the Transylvanian Saxons in Romanian politics stands for the existence of different premises.

---

<sup>148</sup> Balasz Szelenyi, “The Social Roots of Ethnic Conflict in East Central Europe: A Comparative Study of the German Diaspora in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, East European Studies Meeting Report 244, 7 November 2001, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc\\_id=8280&group\\_id=7427](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc_id=8280&group_id=7427) (31 May 2007)

<sup>149</sup> Ingomar Senz, *Die Donauschwaben* (Bonn: Langen Müller, 1994), 29

The most important observation to be extracted from these comparative remarks is that National Socialist ideology managed to offer an attractive message to different groups, united through their allegiance to German culture, but at the same time displaying a significant number of structural differences. If in the case of the Transylvanian Saxons the process of ethnic change brought by Nazification was accompanied by the relegation of the Lutheran religious affiliation from the status of a criterion of identity to the one of an indicium, this did not happen with the other groups of the German ‘diaspora’. Due to the various internal characteristics, the message brought by Nazism fell on different grounds. Consequently, the relevant identity transformations are to be understood differently.

The Sudeten Germans also were a significant German-speaking group in Central Europe. Though they had been developing their identity in the Cisleithanian part of the Habsburg Monarchy, the centrifugal evolutions from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century affected them as well and made them question their own identification, in a way similar to that of the Transylvanian Saxons. Making reference to one of Pieter Judson’s works, Karl F. Bahm notes:

...German liberalism in Austria was characterized after 1870 by a growing tension between the *Alten*, the old-guard defenders of supranationalist Austrian patriotism as the best guarantee of German rights and privilege, and the *Jungen*, who sought to inject a greater concern for the self-interest of the German nationality, as a nationality, into traditional liberal politics.<sup>150</sup>

Both the elites of the Bohemian Germans and of the Transylvanian Saxons were caught in this process of rethinking their allegiance, first to the Austrian state, then to the Czechoslovak/Romanian state on the one hand and to Germanness on the other hand, and in both cases the old vs. young dichotomy was present. Consequently, the radicalization process

---

<sup>150</sup> Karl F. Bahm, “The Inconveniences of Nationality: German Bohemians, the Disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Attempt to Create a ‘Sudeten German’ Identity”, *Nationalities Papers* 27(1999), 378

touched on both ethnic groups in the '30s. But the possibility to integrate both cases into one and the same historical narration should not make us forget about the relevant differences that make the narration a very complex one.

Among the German-speaking groups in Eastern Europe, the Saxons were the only group for whom the Church had such a key role in the preservation and reproduction of identity. The different patterns leading the various German groups outside Germany to their ethnic radicalization, followed by the integration into the German nation are relevant. In the case of the Sudeten Germans, for example, not only was there no such overlap of identities (religious and ethnic), but there were other important constitutive elements as well, such as the significant role played by the social-democrat party. Though quite similar in effects, the radicalization of the two groups took place against different backgrounds. In one case, there was an elite who had already envisaged, in some moments of the recent history (the end of the First World War), the integration in a German state. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, the physical distance from the German state impeded such hopes and dreams. At the same time, it hindered the possibility of having a critical look at the events from Germany. The Transylvanian Saxons did not produce any relevant opposition to Hitlerism, another significant difference from the Germans in the Czech lands. At the same time, the numerical differences were extremely significant: more than 3 million Germans were living in Bohemia, whereas the Saxons were only a quarter of a million.

In this context, the most interesting aspect is that despite these differences both ethnic groups, Transylvanian Saxons and Sudeten Germans, had undergone a rather similar radicalization. In the first case, we can read the radicalization process in Fredrik Barth's terms:

The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change – yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to

specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content.<sup>151</sup>

The cultural form and content changed, namely the religious affiliation turned into a mere indicium of identity, being replaced by an emphasis on ethnicity. With the Sudeten Germans, the main tensions were between their regional identity (to be shared with the Czech inhabitants of the province) and their German identity, emphasizing their allegiance to the neighboring German state. It is true that the regional identity had its not-to-be-discarded importance in the self-identification of the Transylvanian Saxons, but it was taken as a given fact and did not actually produce any sort of tensions. The attempts to emphasize a Transylvanian identity, to be found in the journal of the young intellectuals, *Klingsor*, faded away from the beginning of the '30s.

The reality is that National Socialism managed to exercise an appeal to all German-speaking groups outside the German Reich, even if the differences between these groups were, in some cases, striking. The mechanisms and instruments that radicalized most of the members of these groups were different for each and every one of them: the *heim ins Reich* program was not destined to resettle the Transylvanian Saxons or the Banat Swabians, but rather poorer groups, without a very strong regional self-identification, such as the Germans in Dobrudja or in Bessarabia or groups for whom the self-identification as nobles or descendants from nobles was more important such as the Baltic Germans.

---

<sup>151</sup> Fredrik Barth, "Introduction", in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Bergen-Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), 14

## V. Conclusions

In 1945, after the end of the Second World War, with the occasion of the election of the new Lutheran Bishop Friedrich Müller, Michael Klein wrote in a letter addressed to his son, deported to USSR:

Away with the false attitude, as if the Church would be only the external form, the visible container of our *völkisch* existence – no, the Church is the main thing, the carrier of our life, of our being. It is not us who carry the Church, but it is the Church that carries us; if it disappears, then we disappear.<sup>152</sup>

The above-quoted text not only signals the new hopes kindled by the end of the Second World War and the inauguration of a new Bishop as the head of the Lutheran Church in Romania, but it also notably summarizes the conflicts and debates underlying the social history of the Transylvanian Saxons prior to 1944, that constituted the research topic of this thesis.

Klein's hopes would soon prove unsubstantial. Following the Second World War, the Lutheran Church would never recover and would never attain the ideal state of a *Volkskirche*. The reasons, of course, are multiple. Religious reasons pertaining to the dogma of the Lutheran Church can be brought forth. In a study about the fate of the Lutheran Church in the former German Democratic Republic, the theological specialist Michael Beintker tried to answer the question whether a minority church can be a *Volkskirche*.<sup>153</sup> Without getting too

---

<sup>152</sup> Michael Klein, "Schreiben vom 25. Juni 1945" (Letter from 25 June 1945) in *"Bitte um baldige Nachricht": Alltag, Politik und Kultur im Spiegel südostdeutscher Korrespondenz* ('Please, respond quickly': daily life, politics and culture reflected by German correspondence in South-Eastern Europe), ed. Joachim Wittstock and Stefan Sienerth (München: IKGS Verlag, 2003), 21

<sup>153</sup> Michael Beintker, "Kann eine Minderheitskirche Volkskirche sein? Reflexionen zu ostdeutschen Erfahrungen und Perspektiven" (Can a minority Church be a Volkskirche? Reflections on East-German experiences and perspectives) in *Reformation und Neuzeit: 300 Jahre Theologie in Halle* (Reformation and Contemporaneity: 300 theology years in Halle), in *Reformation und Neuzeit: 300 Jahre Theologie in Halle*, ed. Udo Schnelle (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1994), 303-322

deep in his arguments, since they all depart from theological premises, we can make use of its conclusion:

Even in an insecure minority situation, characteristics typical of a *Volkskirche* can continue to exist. [...] In other words: a minority church can show essential features of the *Volkskirche* type. So, a minority church can appear as a *Volkskirche*.<sup>154</sup>

Laying the emphasis on words such as ‘show’ or ‘appear’ is important. After 1933, the Lutheran Church in Transylvania continued to ‘appear’, in some aspects, as a *Volkskirche*. Nonetheless, as I have previously pointed out, the Nazification process undergone by the Transylvanian Saxon community was accompanied by a relegation of the social status of the Church. Using the theoretical framework of Horowitz, I have showed that from a criterion of identity, Lutheran religious affiliation became a mere indicium, having a much weaker basis than before. The efforts to maintain the traditional ethnic model, based on the overlapping of the religious (Lutheran) and ethnic (Saxon) categories failed, for a number of reasons. Many of them were related to the political context and they were analyzed by a number of scholars in volumes on the Saxon (political) history between the two world wars and in the years of the war. In this thesis, I have introduced a new perspective of analysis in the study of the social history of the Transylvanian Saxons between 1933 and 1944, thus enriching the actual level of knowledge on the topic, tributary mainly to political and economic interpretations.

Beyond the financial hardships leading to the incapacity to properly maintain the schooling system and to the overburdening of the Saxons with taxes and beyond the deeply embedded cultural and political Germany myth, I have shown that the Lutheran Church distinctly showed a certain openness towards the National-Socialist body of thought, even before the complete dependence on Germany. Taking into account the role of the priest for the local Saxon communities, this openness was most probably transferred to the members of

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 321

the Church. The consequence was that Nazism was accepted, essentially because it was considered an integrative part of the appealing German identity. In order for National Socialism to be accepted, a relegation of the Lutheran religious affiliation from the status of a criterion of identity to that of an indicium of identity had to take place.

Through its lack of a coherent response to the ideological and societal pressures embodied by National Socialism, the Church to an extent paved the way for the radicalization of the Saxon community. Even if, especially between 1933 and 1939, there were attempts to counter the growing importance of National-Socialism, they did not have any substantial effect. Though the leadership of the Church was, until 1941, trying to promote the old ethnic model, the articles in *Kirchliche Blätter*, together with other documents and sources show that both the ordinary members of the clergy and other Saxon important political and intellectual figures were implicitly or explicitly pinpointing the break with the old ethnic model sustained almost solely by the Church in favor of a new one, in which German ethnicity would have a much greater weight. The Church rather contributed to its own demise.

Elements of the new model would be perpetuated even after the fall of Nazism in Germany and the installation of the communist regime in Romania. Of course, there would be no radical affirmation as before. The first important generation of Transylvanian Saxon migrants to Germany consisted of the soldiers who had remained in Germany following the defeat by the Allies or some of the important figures who had promoted Nazism, such as Heinrich Zillich or Wilhelm Staedel. It might be that locally the role of the Transylvanian Saxon priest was important for some of the new German citizens; but the fact that the main institutions representing the Transylvanian Saxons are to be found in Catholic Bavaria and that the sponsorship for them was taken over by the predominantly Catholic Nordrhein-Westfalen has its symbolic meaning.

The new generations of Transylvanian Saxons refused the radicalization of their parents. However, refusing it did not mean going back to the previous ethnic model, but rather creating a new one. Sharing the recent past and with the religious cleavage having lost its previous internal relevance, Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians ended up sharing a common identity: that of Romanian Germans. In an interview for a Romanian cultural journal, the writer Richard Wagner, originating from Banat and now settled in Berlin, made the following affirmations about the relationship of its generation with the one of his parents: “We were in permanent conflict with a part of the local rural German population whom we, the young students, reproached the collaboration with the Nazis in the ‘30s and during the war”.<sup>155</sup> The same was true for the young Transylvanian Saxon students from the late ‘60s and ‘70s as well. At the same time, for the older members of the Saxon generation, who had lived the times of National Socialism, Nazi German markers of identity would still be visible in some instances. Philippi notes how Nazi songs would still be sometimes sung, without any ideological connotation, in Saxon villages.<sup>156</sup>

The equivalence of Lutheran and Saxon was definitely not an issue anymore. In her anthropological study on a mixed Transylvanian village in the communist era, Verdery wrote about the “declining salience of identity”, hinting at the loss of prestige of the Lutheran Church as well (marriages without church ceremonies).<sup>157</sup> However, the preservation of a German identity, whose main marker had become the language, was important due to the envisaged possibility of migration to West Germany. Germany’s policies towards the integration of ethnic Germans living abroad into its society and Romania’s policies of “minority selling” affecting Jews and Germans made ethnicity and language the two most

---

<sup>155</sup> Richard Wagner, “Cărțile ‘pline’ și cerul ‘gol’,” (Books that are ‘filled’ and a sky that is ‘empty’) interview by Rodica Binder, *Observator cultural* 317-318, 20 April – 3 May 2006.

<sup>156</sup> Philippi 1994, 84

<sup>157</sup> Katherine Verdery, “The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity: Transylvania’s Germans,” *American Ethnologist* 12 (February 1985): 62-83

important criteria for identification. The Lutheran/Catholic differentiation between Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians, very relevant in the years of the Habsburg Empire and partially also after 1918 was not important anymore, as it only stood for a weaker and weaker indicium of identification.

## Bibliography

- Badrus, Nadia. "Das Bild der Siebenbürger Sachsen über die Juden. Einige Anhaltspunkte." (The Transylvanian Saxon Image of the Jews. Some Features) in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 85-106
- Bahm, Karl F. "The Inconveniences of Nationality: German Bohemians, the Disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Attempt to Create a 'Sudeten German' Identity." *Nationalities Papers* 27(1999): 375-405
- Barth, Fredrik. "Introduction". In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, edited by Fredrik Barth, 9-38. Bergen-Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969
- Beintker, Michael. "Kann eine Minderheitskirche Volkskirche sein? Reflexionen zu ostdeutschen Erfahrungen und Perspektiven" (Can a minority Church be a Volkskirche? Reflections on East-German experiences and perspectives) in *Reformation und Neuzeit: 300 Jahre Theologie in Halle* (Reformation and Contemporaneity: 300 theology years in Halle), edited by Udo Schnelle, 303-322. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1994
- Binder, Ludwig. *Die Kirche der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (The church of the Transylvanian Saxons). Erlangen: Martin Luther Verlag, 1982
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Die Evangelische Kirche, 1849-1914." (The Lutheran Church, 1849-1914). In *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1849-1918* (The Transylvanian Saxons from 1849 to 1918), edited by Carl Göllner, 227-242. Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Die evangelische Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien 1920-1944." (The Lutheran Church in Romania 1920-1944). In König 1994, 237-263.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Volkskirche als Lebensform." (Volkskirche as a form of life) in Schuster 1984
- Böhm, Johann. *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und die Weimarer Republik 1919-1933* (The Germans in Romania and the Weimar Republic 1919-1933). Ippesheim: AGK Verlag, 1993
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1936-1944. Das Verhältnis der Deutschen Volksgruppe zum Dritten Reich und zum rumänischen Staat sowie der interne Widerstreit zwischen den politischen Gruppen* (National-socialist Germany and the German ethnic group in Romania 1936-1944. The relationship of the German ethnic group with the Third Reich and with the Romanian state as well as the

internal conflict between the political groups). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 1985

---

\_\_\_\_\_. *Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945* (Hitler's vassals of the German ethnic group in Romania before and after 1945) Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2006

Böttcher, Bernhard. "Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden? Kriegerdenkmäler und Heldenkult bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen nach 1918" (Continuity of the first world war during peace? War monuments and the cult of heroes at the Transylvanian Saxons). In *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (The influence of fascism and national socialism on minorities in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe), edited by Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth, 53-72. München: IKGS Verlag, 2006

Bottesch, Martin. "Fremd- und Selbstbilder in einer siebenbürgischen Gemeinde. Siebenbürger Sachsen, Landler, Rumänen und Roma in Großpold" (Image of themselves and others in a Transylvanian Congregation: Transylvanian Saxons, Landler, Romanians and Roma in Grosspold), in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 193-216

Ciobanu, Vasile. *Contribuții la cunoașterea istoriei sașilor transilvăneni 1918-1944* (Contributions to the knowledge of the history of Transylvanian Saxons 1918-1944). Sibiu: ed. hora, 2001

Conze, Werner. "Luthertum und Nationalismus – Deutsch-Protestantismus." (Lutheranism and Nationalism – German Protestantism). In *Luther und Siebenbürgen: Ausstrahlungen von Reformation und Humanismus nach Südosteuropa* (Luther and Transylvania: influences of Reformation and Humanism on South-Eastern Europe), edited by Georg Weber and Renate Weber, 137-155. Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1985

Glass, Hildrun. *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft: Das deutsch-jüdische Verhältnis in Rumänien 1918-1938* (Shattered neighborship: the German-Jewish relationship in Romania 1918-1938). München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996

Glondys, Viktor. *Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen von 1933 bis 1949* (Diary. Notes from 1933 to 1949), edited by Johann Böhm and Dieter Braeg. Dinklage: AGK Verlag, 1997

Gottas, Friedrich. "Das Ende der Nationsuniversität und deren Ablösung durch die Evangelische Kirche im Spiegel der Berichterstattung des Siebenbürgisch-Deutschen Tageblattes." (The end of the Nationsuniversität and its

replacement by the Lutheran Church reflected in the coverage of the Transylvanian-German Journal). In Kessler 1990, 367-388

Göllner, Carl. "Die Auflösung der Sächsischen Nationsuniversität (1876): Vorgeschichte und Folgen." (The dissolution of the Saxon Nationsuniversität: prehistory and consequences). In Kessler 1990, 355-366

Gündisch, Konrad, Wolfgang Höpken and Michael Markel, ed. *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen. Stereotype in einer multiethnischen Region* (The image of the other in Transylvania. Stereotypes in a multicultural region). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1998

Gündisch, Konrad. *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Transylvania and the Transylvanian Saxons). With the collaboration of Matthias Beer. Bonn: Langen Müller, 1998

Holzträger, Hans. "Der Kirchenkampf in Deutschland und Siebenbürgen 1933-1944 in der Berichterstattung der 'Kirchlichen Blätter'." (The 'Kirchenkampf' in Germany and Transylvania 1933-1944 in the coverage of the 'Kirchliche Blätter'). In Möckel 1980, 36-52

Horowitz, Donald. "Cultural Movements and Ethnic Change." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 433 (September 1977): 6-18

\_\_\_\_\_. "Ethnic Identity." In *Ethnicity. Theory and Experience*, edited by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, 111-141. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975

Hutcheon, Linda. "Historiography Metafiction: 'The Pastime of Past Time'." In *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995

Kessler, Wolfgang, ed. *Gruppenautonomie in Siebenbürgen: 500 Jahre siebenbürgisch-sächsische Nationsuniversität* (Group autonomy in Transylvania: 500 years of Transylvanian Saxon Nationsuniversität). Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990

Klein, Michael. "Schreiben vom 25. Juni 1945," (Letter from 25 June 1945) in "*Bitte um baldige Nachricht*": *Alltag, Politik und Kultur im Spiegel südostdeutscher Korrespondenz* ('Please, respond quickly': daily life, politics and culture reflected by German correspondence in South-Eastern Europe), edited by Joachim Wittstock and Stefan Sienerth, 21 München: IKGS Verlag, 2003

Klima, Pfarrer Hellmut. *Aus den Tagebüchern eines siebenbürgischen Studenten aus den Jahren 1930-1945* (From the diaries of a Transylvanian student from the years 1930-1945), revised and published by Samuel Liebhart. Saarbrücken-Dudweiler: Pirrot Verlag & Druck, 1999

- Komjathy, Anthony and Rebecca Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York, London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980)
- König, Walter. "Das Schulwesen der Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Zwischenkriegszeit," (The educational system of the Transylvanian Saxons) in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen* (Transylvania between the two world wars), edited by Walter König, 265-299. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994
- König, Walter, ed. *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen* (Transylvania between the two world wars). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994
- Kroner, Michael. "Die Beziehungen zwischen den Siebenbürger Sachsen und den anderen deutschen Volksgruppen Rumäniens in den Jahren 1918-1944. Betrachtungen zur Bildung eines rumäniendeutschen Gesamtbewußtseins." (The relationships between the Transylvanian Saxons and the other German ethnic groups in Romania in the years 1918-1944. Considerations on the building of a common Romanian German consciousness) *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter* 34 (1985): 33-39
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Zur politischen Rolle der 'Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien' in den Jahren 1940-1944." (On the political role of the 'German Ethnic Group in Romania' in the years 1940-1944). In Roth 1995, 133-162
- Liebig, Sabine. "Siebenbürger Sächsinen zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus" (Transylvanian Saxon women during National Socialism), *Zeitschrift für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 21 (1998): 57-76
- McArthur, Marilyn. *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (The Politics of Identity: Transylvanian Saxons in Socialist Romania), edited and with a foreword by Georg Weber, with a sociological contribution by Armin Nassehi and Georg Weber, transl. into German by Ursula Maurer. Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990.
- Miege, Wolfgang. *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933-38. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik* (The Third Reich and the German ethnic group in Romania 1933-38. A contribution to national-socialist ethnic politics) Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Herbert & Peter Lang, 1972)
- Milata, Paul. *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu: Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS* (Between Hitler, Stalin and Antonescu: Romanian Germans in the Waffen-SS). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2007

- Möckel, Andreas. "Kleinsächsisch oder Allddeutsch? Zum Selbstverständnis der Siebenbürger Sachsen von 1867 bis 1933," (Small Saxon or Pan-German? On the Self-understanding of the Transylvanian Saxons from 1867 to 1933). In König 1994, 129-141.
- Möckel, Gerhard, ed. *Kirche zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand. Referate einer Tagung des Hilfskomitees der Siebenbürger Sachsen im Frühjahr 1980* (Church between accommodation and resistance. Papers presented in a session of the assistance committee of the Transylvanian Saxons in the spring 1980). München: Selbstverlag des Hilfskomitees der Siebenbürger Sachsen, 1980
- Myss, Walter. *Fazit nach achthundert Jahren. Geistesleben der Siebenbürger Sachsen im Spiegel der Zeitschrift 'Klingsor'* (Exit after 800 years. Spiritual life of the Transylvanian Saxons, mirrored in the journal 'Klingsor'). München: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1968
- Nägler, Thomas. *Marktort und Bischofssitz BIRTHÄLM in Siebenbürgen* (Market town and Bishop's See BIRTHÄLM in Transylvania). München: Verlag der Siebenbürgisch-Sächsischen Stiftung, 2004
- Philippi, Paul. "Nation und Nationalgefühl der Siebenbürger Sachsen." (Nation and national feeling at the Transylvanian Saxons). In *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Geschichte und Gegenwart* (The Transylvanian Saxons in history and in the present) edited by Hans Rothe, 69-86. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994
- Plajer, Dietmar. "Pfarrer Wilhelm Staedel und die Jugendarbeit." (Priest Wilhelm Staedel and the youth work). *Zeitschrift für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 25 (2002): 6-29
- Popa, Klaus, ed. *Akten um die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1937-1945. Eine Auswahl* (Documents on the German Ethnic Group in Romania 1937-1945. A selection). Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, 2005
- Reinerth, Karl M. and Fritz Cloos. *Zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Rumänien 1935-1945* (On the history of the Germans in Romania 1935-1945). Bad Tölz: Im Verlag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für südostdeutsche Volks- und Heimatforschung, 1988
- Roth, Harald. "Autostereotype als Identifikationsmuster. Zum Selbstbild der Siebenbürger Sachsen" (Self-stereotypes as identification patterns: the self-image of Transylvanian Saxons) in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 178-191

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Die 'Deutsche Jugend' (DJ) in Siebenbürgen 1939-1944," (The German Youth in Transylvania), *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 10 (81) (1987): 60-69
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Minderheit und Nationalstaat: Siebenbürgen seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Minority and nation-state: Transylvania since the First World War). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Political structures and streams at the Transylvanian Saxons). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994
- Scheerer, Josef. "Der sogenannte 'Kirchenkampf' in Siebenbürgen bis zum Jahr 1945." (The so-called 'Kirchenkampf' in Transylvania until the year 1945). In Möckel 1980, 21-35.
- Schlattner, Eginald. *Der geköpfte Hahn* (The beheaded rooster). Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1998
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Literatura ca izbăvire?." (Literature as redemption?) interview by Rodica Binder, *România literară* 25, 27 June – 3 July 2001
- Schmidt, Hermann. *Vom Alt zur Alb: unterwegs in meiner Zeit* (From the Olt to the Alb: a life in transit). (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2006)
- Schuster, Oskar, ed. *Epoche der Entscheidungen: Die Siebenbürger Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Age of decisions: Transylvanian Saxons in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), second revised edition, (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1984)
- Seewann, Gerhard. "Zur historiographie ethnisch definierter Gruppen." (On the history of ethnically defined groups). In *Danubiana Carpathica. Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kultur in den deutschen Siedlungsgebieten Südosteuropas*, 3-13. München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007
- Senz, Ingomar. *Die Donauschwaben* (The Danube Swabians) Bonn: Langen Müller, 1994
- Siennerth, Stefan. "Adolf Meschendörfer und Heinrich Zillich im Literaturbetrieb des 'Dritten Reiches'," (Adolf Meschendörfer and Heinrich Zillich in the literary field of the 'Third Reich') in *Deutsche Literatur in Rumänien und das "Dritte Reich": Vereinnahmung – Verstrickung – Ausgrenzung* (German literature in Romania and the 'Third Reich': reception – entanglement – marginalization), edited by Michael Markel and Peter Motzan. München: IKGS Verlag, 2003
- Smith, Anthony. *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

- \_\_\_\_\_. *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books, 1991
- Sorrels, Katherine. "Eugenics and the Transylvanian Saxon Nationalist Response to Assimilationist Pressure 1880-1925." MA Thesis, CEU, Budapest, 2000
- Steinberg, Swen. "Verteidigung oder Widerstand? Der Konflikt des Pfarrers Simon Zank aus Haschagen mit der Landesjugendführung 1940," (Defense or resistance? The conflict of the priest Simon Zank from Haschagen with the local youth leadership 1940) *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 27(2004): 59-79
- Suleiman, Susan Robin. "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs: Wilkomirski/Wiesel." *Poetics Today. International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication* 21 (2000): 543-559
- Szelenyi, Balasz. "The Social Roots of Ethnic Conflict in East Central Europe: A Comparative Study of the German Diaspora in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, East European Studies Meeting Report 244, 7 November 2001, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc\\_id=8280&group\\_id=7427](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc_id=8280&group_id=7427) (31 May 2007)
- Teutsch, Oswald, "Der Anschluss 1919 an Rumänien." (The 1919 annexation to Romania). In Schuster 1984, 35-44
- Trócsányi, Zsolt and Ambrus Miskolczy, "The Long Eighteenth Century (1711-1830)." in *History of Transylvania*, ed. Béla Köpeczi, transl. by Adrienne Chambers-Makkai et al., translation revised by Alice Choyke et al., 415-458 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), 419
- Verdery, Katherine. *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity: Transylvania's Germans." *American Ethnologist* 12 (February 1985): 62-83
- Wagner, Ernst, ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1191-1975* (Sources on the history of the Transylvanian Saxons), second revised and augmented edition. Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1981
- Wagner, Richard. "Cărțile 'pline' și cerul 'gol'." (Books that are 'filled' and a sky that is 'empty') interview by Rodica Binder, *Observator cultural* 317-318, 20 April – 3 May 2006.

- Weber, Georg et al., *Emigration der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Studien zu Ost-West Wanderungen* (Emigration of the Transylvanian Saxons. Studies on East-West migrations) (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003)
- Weber, Georg and Renate Weber, *Zendersch. Eine siebenbürgische Gemeinde im Wandel* (Zendersch. A Transylvanian congregation under transformation). München: Delp Verlag, 1985
- Wien, Ulrich Andreas. *Kirchenleitung über dem Abgrund: Bischof Friedrich Müller vor den Herausforderungen durch Minderheitenexistenz, Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus* (Church leadership above the abyss: Bishop Friedrich Müller facing the provocations of minority life, National Socialism and Communism). Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1998
- Zach, Cornelius R. "Die Evangelische Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien zwischen Sendungsbewusstsein und Zeitgeist (1933-1940)." (The Lutheran Church C.A. in Romania between missionary consciousness and Zeitgeist). In *50 Jahre Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter 1951-2001*, 107-112 (München: Verlag Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 2001)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Die Siebenbürger Sachsen zwischen Tradition und neuen politischen Optionen 1930-1944." (The Transylvanian Saxons between tradition and new political options 1930-1944) in Roth 1995, 115-132.
- Zach, Krista. "Religiose Toleranz und Stereotypenbildung in einer multikulturellen Region. Volkskirchen in Siebenbürgen" in Gündisch, Höpken and Markel 1998, 109-154