Looking to Themselves: The Tension between Self-Reliance, Regionalism, and Support of Greater Romania within the Saxon Community in Transylvania 1918-1935

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Abstract

This thesis traces the changes in self-preservation policies of the Transylvanian Saxons from 1918 to 1935 as they transitioned from being a semi-autonomous group to an ethnic minority in the newly established Romanian state following the First World War. It examines the domestic and international alliances of both conservative Saxon elites and social dissidents on the basis of interwar cultural journals and press material. Particular emphasis is placed on the tension between rising National Socialist rhetoric from the German *Reich* and Transylvanian regionalism in these publications. Unlike many existing studies on this topic, the work offers a balanced approach between internal and external Saxon relations, and distinguishes between Saxon elite narratives and average outlooks. The various movements traced lead to the question of whether historians can even speak of a cohesive Saxon identity during the interwar period, or merely of fragmentation among community members. In order to give perspective to the Transylvanian Saxon experience, the thesis analyzes the differences between the rise of Pan-German sentiments in the Saxon community of Transylvania and the Sudeten German community of Czechoslovakia.

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Abbreviations and Translations of Key Terms

Auslanddeutsche: Germans living outside of Germany's borders

DPH: *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien* (*German Political Papers from Greater Romania*)

Einheit: Unity

Erneuerungsbewegungen: Renewal or reform movements

Königsboden: "Crownlands," or the territory traditionally inhabited by the Saxons in Transylvania

KZ: *Kronstädter Zeitung* (*Kronstadt Newspaper*)

NPP: National Peasant Party (Romania)

NSDR: *Nationalsozialistische Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien* (National Socialist Self-Help Movement of the Germans in Romania)

Sachsentag: Saxon national assembly

Sächsische Volkspartei: Saxon National Party

SdP: *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (Sudeten German Party)

SDT: *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt* (*Transylvanian German Daily*)

Selbsthilfebewegung: Self-Help movement

Sudetendeutsche: Sudeten Germans, German minority populations living in Czechoslovakia

VDR: *Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien* (Association of Germans in Romania)

Volksrat: Saxon National Council

Unzufriedenenbewegungen: Dissatisfied movements

Introduction

> *So much can be said about the question of whether the solution to the nationality problem should be taken in an international direction or should remain the domestic affair of each particular country that, thanks to the dual nature of the question (domestic and inter-state affair), there must also be a two-sided solution*.[1] – Alfred Schlosser, 1932

Schlosser, a member of the Transylvanian Saxon community, refers to the millions Germans in minority populations throughout Central Europe who, twelve years after the end of the First World War, had still not been satisfactorily incorporated into their respective nation-states. In insinuating that a two-sided solution to the problem must exist, Schlosser hoped that solutions could be tailor-made for each of the differing German national groups scattered throughout Central Europe through a combination of domestic legislation and international regulation. What this thesis presents is rather a different outcome: the Transylvanian Saxons' abandonment of their domestic state—Romania—for their adopted international and cultural fatherland—the German *Reich*.

Such transitions do not occur overnight. In the case of the Saxons this shift took at least a decade, and only officially transpired a full twenty years after the war's end. By attempting to preserve their right to the self-administration of the Lutheran Church, its confessional schools, and the teaching of the German language, as well as by retaining their regionalist loyalty to the *Königsboden* as their historical homeland, the Saxons initially sought to maintain their minority existence within the Romanian state in the years following the First World War. This decision was first and foremost concerned with self-preservation, and was a natural reaction for a community which felt itself threatened by the difficult economic conditions, extensive land and school reforms, and centralizing administrative efforts from the new Bucharest government—all efforts meant to modernize the new nation-

[1] Alfred Schlosser, "Über die Lösungsmöglichkeiten des Nationalitätproblems," *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 1, January 1932, p. 28-29. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this thesis are my own.

state, but not perceived as such by the Saxons' conservative leaders. Similar tendencies of self-preservation have been observed in countless minority groups. Despite their centuries-long tradition of autonomy, the Saxons were willing to cooperate within the political framework of Romania as long as they were granted the means to protect their social, religious, linguistic, and political status. Eventually, however, Romania's failure to facilitate these demands, largely due to their inability to effectively incorporate the widely varying administrative systems of their new territories, led to Saxon disillusionment with and rejection of the new nation-state in favor of German support. In turning to Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s, first Saxon social dissidents, and then finally the leaders of the traditional Saxon *Volksrat*, or National Council, hoped that the common language and religion and the greater financial stability of the *Reich* would provide economic and cultural aid, and that the swelling National Socialist movement with its emphasis on preservation of the German *Volk* would breath life into the weakened Saxon nation.

These changes were reflected in a concurrent shift in Saxon interwar daily press and journals, as conservative leaders' definitions of self-preservation and Saxon nationalism morphed with the unexpected political situation. Thus this thesis takes a specific, subjective approach to the notion of self-preservation in the Saxon community, tracing how the concept changed over time among conservative *Volksrat* leaders and social dissidents alike as the social, economic, and political situation both in Romania and in the community destabilized. The importance of Saxon literary production—preexisting press outlets and the burgeoning journal culture in the community—should not be underestimated, as these publications had a profound effect on public opinion. Stefan Zweig stated well the potency possessed by the written word during this period:

> For this is what charitably distinguished the First World War from the Second: in those times, the word still possessed authority. It had not yet been trampled to death by the engineered lies, the "propaganda"; people still heeded the written word, they awaited it.[2]

Such was also the case in the interwar Saxon community, where literary productivity was booming despite the unstable financial situation. By 1930, approximately sixty different papers (including newspapers, journals, and trade journals) were being published simultaneously,[3] mostly in Sibiu,[4] the heart of the community. The most prominent of these papers, and the ones that will be used in this thesis, were the conservative dailies the *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt* (*Transylvanian German Daily*, Sibiu, 1874-1944) and the *Kronstädter Zeitung* (*Kronstadt Newspaper*, Braşov,[5] 1849-1944). Although the latter was an older newspaper, its distribution rates were only half that of the *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt*,[6] which had about 6,000 subscriptions in 1930. Thus the *SDT* will be used more in depth here, especially as it represented the semi-official voice of the mainstream conservative Saxon *Volksrat*. In addition to all of the locally published papers, German and Austrian newspapers were also widely read in Transylvania during the period discussed.

Perhaps even more significant than the press in the interwar period were the up and coming political and literary journals. Journals in the interwar period were numerous and of varied content. Some journals, such as the *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien*

[2] Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (1942), quoted in Bianca Bican, "Die Zeitschrift *Frühling* (1920) im regionalen und lokalen publizistischen Kontext," in Zalaznik, Motzan, and Sienerth, eds., *Benachrichtigen und vermitteln: Deutschsprachige Presse und Literatur in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Volume 110 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2007), p. 179.

[3] Hans Meschendörfer, "Presse und Publizistik," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon: Geschichte, Kultur, Zivilisation, Wissenschaften, Wirtschaft, Lebensraum Siebenbürgen (Transsilvanien)*, published by Walter Myß, eds. Inge Prader and Günther Schick (Kraft Verlag, 1993), p. 391-395.

[4] German: Hermannstadt; Hungarian: Nagyszeben. The Romanian place names will be used throughout the thesis, unless otherwise noted, as the areas in Transylvania discussed fell (and remain) within the political boundaries of Romania following the First World War. Upon the first use of a place name, the German and Hungarian equivalents will also be given in a footnote.

[5] German: Kronstadt; Hungarian: Brassó.

[6] Hereafter referred to as the *SDT*.

(*German Political Papers from Greater Romania*, Sibiu, 1921-1927), contained almost exclusively political articles supplemented at times by historical pieces. Others, like *Ostland* (*Eastern Land*, Sibiu, 1919-1921, 1926-1931) and *Klingsor*[7] (Braşov, 1924-1939) were considered literary journals (in the *belle-lettres* sense) but in addition to works of poetry, fiction, and art, also contained polemical articles and political essays. This thesis will analyze the political content of these journals. In particular, emphasis will be placed on *Klingsor* and *Ostland*; the *Deutsche Politische Hefte* will be used only cursorily. In short, the reading culture of the Saxons—in terms of both production and consumption—was extraordinarily high, especially when one considers that there were only around 235,000 Saxons in the entire region. Hence these interwar publications offer a useful gauge of public perception of the social, economic, and political situation in interwar Romania.

While it is sometimes more difficult to trace the authorship of newspaper articles, authors of journal articles were always identified. Several key figures contributed regularly to Saxon journals and to the press throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, making it possible to follow their changing attitudes towards the concepts of Saxon nationalism, national self-preservation, and institutional preservation. In this analysis, particular attention will be paid to the aforementioned issues which came to dominate the Saxon press during the interwar period; namely, the thesis will concentrate on how the Lutheran Church, Saxon schools, and the use of the German language came to be representative of "Saxonness" in publications, especially in the *SDT*. Although the historical tradition of Saxon autonomy, exercised through their self-administrative privileges, had been lost already under

[7] The name *Klingsor* was supposedly the name of a Hungarian minstrel who participated in the medieval *Sängerkrieg*, or minstrel contest (sometimes referred to as the *Wartburgkontest*) in Thuringia the early thirteenth century. Michaela Nowotnick claims that the journal's title echoes "rediscovery of medieval themes and motifs in Germany between 1880 and 1920," and thus points to *Klingsor*'s markedly German influence. "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*. Siebenbürgen und seine Beziehungen zum literarischen Leben in Deutschland (1907-1939)," (MA Thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2007), p. 74-75.

Hungarian rule with the *Ausgleich* (compromise) of 1867, concern for maintaining the Saxon territory remained prominent in interwar publications. Writers particularly expressed their attachment to Transylvania and to the *Königsboden*, the historical homeland of the Saxon nation. Finally, resistance to administrative disorganization and political corruption stemming from Bucharest also drew significant attention. Thus these issues, in many ways interrelated, will mark how the concept of self-preservation transformed throughout the period under discussion.

These themes were selected by writers in the interwar period to represent the historical, social, and cultural continuity of the Saxon nation, and this selection had a basis in their genuine importance to the community throughout its 800-year history in Transylvania. Thus, following a theoretical section (Chapter One) that opens the thesis and contrasts prevailing notions of identity, Chapter Two will give background on the historical importance of these issues, characterized in this work as the "pillars" of the Saxon community. This chapter will outline the basic social and political structure of Saxon society and profile the publications to be analyzed.

Following this historical background, the body of the thesis will treat the Saxons' diverse strategies of national preservation geographically, first examining the commitment of the Saxons to the Romanian nation-state in Chapter Three. This chapter will emphasize the differing notions of modernization and nationalism among the Saxons and the Romanians, as these differences played an important role in Saxon perception of their new homeland. The rise of Transylvanian regionalism and ethnic cooperation will also figure into this discussion, as it became clear to conservative Saxon leaders that a more collaborative political tactic—as opposed to the isolationist policy propagated in the early interwar years—needed to be taken to ensure the national interests of the community.

Chapter Four takes a closer look at these "national interests," as it must be noted that they were widely interpreted by different members of the Saxon community, and that interwar publications, while focusing on similar issues, did not represent a uniform voice. Aggravated by the rigid social and political structure forced on the community by conservative *Volksrat* leaders, and disappointed with the abysmal financial situation and continual disorganization in the Romanian state, counter-movements aimed at democratization of the Saxon community began to emerge already in the early 1920s. In addition to these so-called *Unzufriedenenbewegungen* (dissatisfied movements) or *Erneuerungsbewegungen* (renewal or reform movements), other divisions split the community and contributed to the rise of National Socialism, such as the debate over whether or not the Saxon nation should cooperate with their fellow German neighbors in Transylvania. Despite such divisions, certain commonalities prevailed between the desires of dissidents and *Volksrat* leaders to preserve Saxon institutions.

The begrudging willingness of these leaders to turn to Germany's National Socialist agenda demonstrated a final shift in their policy of self-preservation in an attempt to maintain unity. Literary collaborations in particular facilitated the infiltration of National Socialist rhetoric into the community. Chapter Five turns its gaze from the internal Saxon realm to the external European realm as the rising Third Reich gradually became an object of attention. The tension between the Pan-German policies of the *Reich* and the commitment to the Transylvanian homeland will be the focus of this chapter.

The final chapter will contextualize these Saxon strategic shifts in the interwar European political environment. In order to examine how, why, and when National Socialist and Pan-German propaganda infiltrated the Saxon political community, it is useful to take a comparative approach. Although Balázs Szelényi to some extent correctly asserts that "the

German ethnic groups living in East Central Europe show evidence of remarkably distinct types of evolution," several comparisons between the interwar Saxons and the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia during the same period.[8] Such comparisons, in addition to showing unique local aspects of Pan-Germanism, contribute to the holistic study of the spread of National Socialist propaganda throughout Europe. Largely on the basis of secondary literature, Chapter Six will follow the rise of Pan-Germanism among the Sudeten Germans and then suggest reasons why the same ideology was absorbed through different means in the Saxon community. Although an asymmetrical comparison of this sort is in some ways less than ideal, it lays the groundwork for further comparative research.

The present study toes a thin line between the numerous existing works on Saxon identity and the multiple works that trace the rise of National Socialism among the Saxons. The vast majority of literature on the Transylvanian Saxons is written by Saxons, for Saxons, and in the German language. This piece is written by a non-Saxon, for non-Saxons, and in the English language—all characteristics that immediately distinguish it from the preexisting literature. However, it is not completely unique, as it utilizes many of the same sources—primary and secondary—that other enlightening studies have used. Harald Roth's comprehensive and diligently-researched work on the "Political Structures and Currents" of the Saxons from 1918-1933[9] is perhaps the book whose aims lie closest to the present study, but Roth's intent is to focus on the "inner Saxon" developments and thus he tends to neglect what are here termed the "external affairs" of the community: namely, the relationship of the Saxon community to the Romanian state, to their fellow non-Saxon Transylvanians, and to the German *Reich*. Of course Roth does not ignore these issues altogether, but he places

[8] Balázs A. Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch: The Social Roots of Ethnic Conflict in the German Diaspora of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia," *Past and Present* 196 (2007): 217.
[9] Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen 1919*-1933, Volume 22 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994).

greater emphasis on the inner workings of the Saxons. The opposite problem can be found in other works that deal with the region as a whole. In Irina Livezeanu's reflective English-language study *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*,[10] much attention is paid to the relationship between the Bucharest government and its newly incorporated territories of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and the Bucovina, but the Saxon question is forgotten almost entirely.

The issue of Saxon identity sparks much debate and must be dealt with. While a great deal of Saxon historiography emphasizes a cohesive and continuous national identity based around social and religious institutions, Harald Roth stresses the dissension that plagued the community in the interwar period. Both perspectives have their merits. Although Roth's study is exceedingly valuable, even it understates the complexity of the Saxon situation by largely neglecting the international European environment—the political back-and-forth, the changes in preservation strategies, and the prevailing regionalism, among other issues. The tension between loyalty to their own social institutions, to the Romanian state, to the Transylvanian region, and finally to Germany greatly impacted the strategies implemented by both the conservative *Volksrat* leaders and social dissidents to preserve Saxon unity—something for which both groups strove. In light of this common aim, the question arises whether or not a common identity existed, or whether the interwar dissensions undermined all remnants of social and cultural unity.

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

Chapter One
Theoretical Framework

I. Watertight Theory?

The descriptions of societal organization and questions of identity that this thesis explores can be grounded in multiple modern theories dealing with identity-building, group behavior, minority studies, and nation-building. Often these theories seek to give reasons for a nation's historical development, or, in some cases, to predict future developments, despite the risks involved in the latter practice. Such theories necessarily simplify history, for if historians were to deal with all of the particularities, they would never come to any satisfactory conclusions. Thus, the Transylvanian Saxon case is a popular one for theorists of minority identity in Central Europe, because at first glance, the Saxons seem to present a clear case of a community with a cohesive national identity based on social, religious, and later ethnic ties. This type of "stable" identity is appealing to theorists because it allows generalizations from which theories can be drawn to be made more easily.

For example, in an article discussing Saxon identity in Transylvania, historian Krista Zach outlines five main phases of identity construction. While she explores this issue more in depth in other publications, the summarizing narrative she provides in this particular article presents a useful case study. In Zach's first phase of Saxon identity construction, beginning with their settlement in the Carpathian Basin and lasting until the Reformation, she describes Saxon identity as forming around "social reference points," meaning that it was "estate and privilege based, bound by territory, without any ethnic connotation of note." Following this period, Zach defines the second phase as lasting several more centuries (from the Reformation until the *Ausgleich* of 1867) and further encompassing "ethnic reference points such as language, … Lutheranism, … and cultural orientation." In the third

phase, which covers the decades from 1867 until the end of the interwar period, Zach asserts that Saxon identity included references to "a German ethnic minority" and began to focus on the German *Reich*. The brief, fourth phase, lasting from 1940-1944, comprised an identity based on "excessive National Socialism to the exclusion of the traditional Transylvanian historical context." Zach's fifth and final phase extends to the present (the article was written in 1992) and is accompanied by a "disappearance of group references, and eventually of regional reference points."[1]

Because she encompasses 800 years of Saxon history in five short periods, Zach's explanations necessarily oversimplify the situation. She, like many other authors, emphasizes a continuity of identity largely based on social and religious factors leading up to and during the interwar period. This narrative is not uncommon in Saxon historiography. It enables her, in the latter part of her essay, to come to the following conclusions:

> Challenges and the feeling of being threatened strengthened and deepened the need for group identity to a certain degree; group values were reconsidered and reformulated. Hence "times of endangerment" to the group are usually the periods of the clearest articulation of group values and group identity. Among the Transylvanian Saxons during the interwar period, this was particularly expressed in their literature. By contrast, the excess of a certain amount of challenges, of "danger," … serves to destabilize. Then, when traditional group values or identity patterns cannot or may not be formulated any longer, other ideological objectives such as the "unified, socialist nation" … must take their place … Then identity references will also be sought and found outside of the region.[2]

Zach's formulation aptly provides an explanation for the turn of the Transylvanian Saxons to National Socialism, and it is broad enough to be applicable to other German minorities in the region as well. By consolidating the historical development of Saxon identity into five phases, she is able also to concretely assert why and how the German shift occurred: she implies that in the interwar period, threats to the community became so great that they no

[1] Krista Zach, "'*Wir wohnten auf dem Königsboden…*' Identitätsbildung bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen im historischen Wandel," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991), (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 134-135.
[2] Ibid., p. 136-137.

longer served to unify, but rather to fragment; traditional notions of identity were exchanged for external solutions in the German *Reich*. Once such an explanatory theory has been established, it can be fit onto other ethnic minority groups and tested for relevancy. Comparative history necessitates such working hypotheses. However, these hypotheses also have their downsides, namely their tendency to oversimplify history and subtle nuances of identity.

II. Deconstructing Identity

a. "Beyond 'Identity'

Thus, in reaction to these oversimplifications, identity studies have undergone a revolution in recent years. A new wave of scholars emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, criticizing the over-simplification of ethnic or religious identity and minority existence, among other things. At the head of this new generation was Rogers Brubaker, and his works—particularly those dealing with the question of "identity" and individual versus group behavior—still dominate the field today. By and large, Brubaker can be viewed as a deconstructor of his predecessor's theories. In this regard, Brubaker is specifically critical of two phenomena that he has observed in recent academic scholarship. First and foremost, he decries the use of the term "identity" in the humanities and social sciences. "'Identity,'" he argues, "tends to mean too much … too little … or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)."[3] Brubaker explains that "identity" is overused in a multitude of disciplines, and serves as a flimsy substitute to describe what scholars see as the ungraspable yet definitive qualities of individuals or groups. Brubaker's dissatisfaction with the term is that "identity" has taken on too many definitions and thus lost its descriptive potency.

[3] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 28.

Hence, Brubaker writes that the term contradictorily "denotes a fundamental and consequential '*sameness*' among members of a group or category" in some cases, and a "core aspect of … selfhood" in others.[4] Brubaker further illustrates the contradiction between "weak" and "strong" conceptions of "identity." A "strong" conception asserts that "identity is something all people [or groups] have, or ought to have, or are searching for," while a "weak" conception implies that "identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated."[5] Thus the same term—"identity"—is used to refer to opposing concepts. By unveiling how scholars use these multiple definitions of "identity," Brubaker makes the point that it is an overused and abused, and thus invalid, category of analysis.

To continue with the example from Krista Zach's essay above, Brubaker would fault her for the changing definitions of Saxon "identity" throughout the centuries. On the one hand, they are too general: phrases such as "social reference points," "ethnic reference points," or references to "a German ethnic minority" fail to provide the reader with an idea of what it actually meant to be Saxon. On the other hand, they attribute a continuity or "sameness" to all members of the Saxon community, and fail to differentiate between various social strata. Furthermore, Zach exclusively focuses on what Brubaker refers to as a "strong" conception of identity, because she implies that all Saxons possessed a characteristic identity, when in fact several dissident groups existed. Because Zach only vaguely defines "identity" and narrowly interprets it to encompass all Saxons despite obvious variances in the community, Brubaker would assert that the term has become meaningless in this context.

[4] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 34.
[5] Ibid., p. 37-38.

b. "Beyond Groupism"

Another practice in recent scholarship that Brubaker harshly criticizes is the inappropriate reference to "groups" to characterize the actions of organizations, events, individual actors, or other categories of actors. He seeks to curb "the tendency to take groups for granted in the study of ethnicity, race, and nationhood"; by "groupism" Brubaker "mean[s] the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis."[6] Brubaker's dissatisfaction with the notion of groups has long been one of his theoretical preoccupations. Already in "Myths and Misconceptions" (1998), he decries the practice of seeking to "[understand] … *ethnic groups* and *nations* as real entities":

> In our everyday talk and writing, we casually reify ethnic and national groups, speaking of "the Serbs," "the Croats," "the Estonians," "the Russians," "the Hungarians," "the Romanians" as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes.[7]

To speak of the Saxons as a "group" possessing a particular identity—social, religious, ethnic, or otherwise—is to grossly oversimplify Saxon social diversity. While it may be true that the Saxons showed more group cohesion throughout their history than other German minorities in the region, the following chapters of this thesis will reveal that widely varying social, economic, and political agendas characterized their development not only during the interwar period but also in the nineteenth century.

In his study *Ethnicity without Groups*, Brubaker implements new ways of thinking about individuals who seem to share common features (such as religion or ethnicity) without referring to them as a "groups." He advocates several solutions, but all are aimed at thinking of "ethnicity, race, and nation … in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and

[6] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 7-8.
[7] Rogers Brubaker, "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism," in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John Hall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 294.

disaggregated terms … as political, social, cultural and psychological processes … groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable."[8] For example, Brubaker suggests thinking of groupness as an "event," (e.g. here, the 1933 *Sachsentag*) or as a "project," focusing on particular moments when individuals come together such as for an election. Perhaps even more pertinent is to speak of "organizations" (e.g. "ministries, offices, law enforcement agencies, and armed force units") rather than groups, as specific organizations are often the actual "chief protagonists" of ethnic mobilization. Notably, writes Brubaker, "some of these organizations may represent themselves, or may be seen by others, as organizations of and for particular ethnic groups,"[9] thus giving the impression that an ethnic group, rather than individual actors, are at work. For example, the conservative leaders of the Saxon *Volksrat* often purported to act in the interests of the entire Saxon nation, despite protests from social dissenters that their opinion reflected only that of the elites and not of the majority. Similarly, the *SDT* claimed to be the mouthpiece of the community, although other publications like the liberal journal *Klingsor* sometimes presented radically different views on important societal issues. Thus indications of Saxon "identity" must be made with reference to local institutions, engineering elites, social dissidents, and the external political situation.

In his most recent work, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*,[10] Brubaker states his aims even more concretely, making a distinction between the actions of elites enforcing nationalist agendas from above and the responsive behavior of "everyday" citizens from below. He concludes that there is often disconnectedness between the two. The reason that the Saxon press is analyzed in this thesis

[8] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, p. 11.
[9] Ibid., p. 14-16.
[10] Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, and Liana Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

is to capture this intermediary voice and to balance the disconnectedness of elite and everyday narratives. Journals such as *Klingsor* and *Ostland* largely represented the opinions of Saxon elites and as such appealed to other elites and perpetuated a somewhat unrealistic narrative based on cultural and political ideals. In some ways, the *SDT*, too, embodied elite opinions because it was controlled by the dominant conservative *Volksrat* leaders. Nevertheless, the nature of the press was to serve as the mouthpiece of the Saxon nation. In 1926, Heinrich Zillich maintained, "the newspaper is not a journal, it is a spokesman that penetrates the *Volk*."[11] Conversely, the contributions of readers to the press served as a two-way line of communication that provides insight into the distinctiveness of elite and "everyday" discourse. As will be revealed in criticisms of the *SDT* in Chapter Four, this dialogue was not always present, but other publications will additionally be presented to make up for this imbalance. The separate chapters in this thesis dealing with Saxon-Romanian affairs, Saxon-Saxon affairs, and Saxon-German affairs similarly highlight variances within the community.

III. Striking a Balance

While it cannot be denied that the Saxons had a social and historical basis for claiming a distinct identity in Transylvania, the cohesiveness of this identity must be treated with caution. It is difficult to navigate these troubled waters when examining sources, as almost all literature on the Saxons describing the period of the Reformation up through the 1930s, makes reference to their consistent group identity, specifically expressed through their Lutheran faith, social and political structures, and, later, their ethnic identity. Because elites reinforced this narrative in the interwar period to unify the community in times of

[11] See Heinrich Zillich, "Siebenbürgische-deutsche Presse," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 362.

economic and social tension, it can be particularly difficult to parcel out the various social and literary trends dividing the community. In some cases, conservative Saxon leaders' aims of uniting the community "from above" were effective. For example, the traditional Saxon practice of "voting discipline" (*Wahldisziplin*)—unified ballot casting to ensure the election of a particular party or candidate—was successful even into the mid-1930s, with minor exceptions.

Thus, while not entirely throwing out Krista Zach's assertions that the Saxons maintained a cohesive social, religious, and ethnic identity, this thesis nuances the events of the interwar period. An examination of the Saxon community is incomplete without keeping a continued eye on domestic Romanian developments, just as an explanation of Germany's draw is incomplete without reference to the competing pull of the Transylvanian homeland. Similarly, the unifying policies of conservative Saxon leaders must be viewed in conjunction with the competing voices of social and political dissidents in the community.

In his lectures at Cambridge on the role of history, E.H. Carr asserted that

> The clue to the question of prediction in history lies in this distinction between the general and the specific, between the universal and the unique. The historian … is bound to generalize; and, in so doing, he provides general guides for future action which, though not specific predictions, are both valid and useful.[12]

It is useful to study the variances and changes in identity in Saxon society—especially their twentieth-century development—because they help historians to understand how a small minority community with traditional but highly functional social and religious institutions responded to the modernizing and nationalizing drives of two different nations (Romania and Germany). Theories of minority adaptation, resistance, and transformation can be crystallized from such a study. While this piece by no means aims at a prediction of history,

[12] E.H. Carr, *What is History?* The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961, Second Edition, ed. R.W. Davies (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 68-69.

it reflects the balance between the general and the specific, the universal and the unique, to which Carr refers. Brubaker sometimes goes too far in his analytical nitpicking; essays like Zach's characterize the other extreme.

Before an identity can be deconstructed along the lines of Brubaker, however, it must first be introduced. The following historical background chapter will begin by presenting notions of identity based around traditional Saxon institutions before later chapters test these notions.

Chapter Two
Pillars of the Saxon Community

I. Social Structure of the Saxon Community, 1910-1930

The German-speaking community known as the Transylvanian Saxons, or *Siebenbürger Sachsen*, received their name not because they arrived in Transylvania from Saxony, but because they were given it by the Hungarian kings who invited them to settle in the area in the late twelfth century.[1] Having inhabited the *Königsboden*, or "crownlands," since this time and possessing autonomous rights dating to the charter granted by King András II in 1224, the Saxons had long established themselves in Transylvania as an elite group, comprising one of the three *natio*, or "nations,"[2] of the region, along with the Szeklers and the Hungarian nobility. As such, they were entitled to historic privileges which included the maintenance of their own church and confessional schools; this became especially significant after the Reformation when the Saxon nation joined the Lutheran Church in the mid-16th century, up until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (*Ausgleich*) of 1867 when the Saxons lost this autonomy as Transylvania was joined to the Kingdom of Hungary.

According to the Hungarian census designation which originally provided a category for native language (*Muttersprache*), and not for nationality, in 1910, 8.71% of

[1] A good overview of the early history of the Transylvanian Saxon in the region is to be found in Konrad Gündisch (with the collaboration of Mathias Beer), *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1998), p. 29-46.

[2] Here, the reference is obviously not to "nation" in the modern sense of a nation-state. Rather, the term invokes the Latin concept of *natio*: "The medieval and early modern *natio* was socially exclusive; it was not a 'complete' cross-class community, but was composed of privileged orders or estates. This was a specifically political and legal notion of 'nation.' It designated the predemocratic 'political nation': those with the privilege of representing the realm in late medieval or dearly modern representative assemblies." Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, and Liana Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 36. The term "nation," e.g. "the Saxon nation," will be used to denote this meaning throughout the thesis. When referring to "nations" in the modern sense, "nation-state," e.g. "the Romanian nation-state," will be used.

Transylvania's population identified themselves as German speakers (231,403 people out of a population of 2,658,159).[3] By 1930, when categories were provided for both native language and nationality, these figures had decreased although the total population of Germans had increased, with 7.7% claiming German as a native language (246,587 out of 3,217,988). A similar number, but slightly higher at 7.9%, gave their nationality as German as well (253,426 people).

Table 1: Population of Transylvania 1900-1910, broken down according to native language[4]

Year →	**1900**		**1910**	
Native language (*Muttersprache)*	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Hungarian (Magyar)	806,406	32.82%	909,003	34.2%
German	229,889	9.36%	231,403	8.71%
Romanian	1,389,303	56.55%	1,464,211	55.08%
Other	31,240	1.27%	53,542	2.01%
Total →	2,456,838	100.00%	2,658,159	100.00%

Table 2: Population of Transylvania 1930, according to nationality and native language[5]

	Nationality		**Native language**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Romanian/Romanian	1,852,402	57.6%	1,873,691	58.2%
Hungarian/Hungarian	943,642	29.0%	997,653	31.0%
German/German	253,426	7.9%	246,587	7.7%
Jewish/Yiddish	78,626	2.4%	52,008	1.6%
Gypsy/Gypsy[6]	75,342	2.3%	29,106	0.9%
Other	23,528	0.8%	18,943	0.6%
Total →	3,217,988	100.0%	3,217,988	100.0%

It must be noted that the Saxons were not the only German-speaking population of Transylvania. In the eighteenth century, groups of so-called Satu Mare Swabians (*Sathmar-*

[3] Rosemarie Hochstrasser, *Die siebenbürgische-sächsiche Gesellschaft in ihrem strukturellen Wandel 1867-1992, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhältnisse in Hermannstadt und Brenndorf* (Sibiu: hora Verlag and Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde e.V. Heidelberg, 2002), p. 22. For comparison, see also *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1848-1918*, ed. Carl Göllner, Volume 22 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1988), p. 37-65: Bevölkerung – Soziale Struktur 1849-1914.

[4] Ibid.. Hochstrasser's figures for 1900 are taken from the *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv* (1904), 24 [*Hungarian Statistical Yearbook*].

[5] Hochstrasser, *Die siebenbürgische-sächsiche Gesellschaft*, p. 36.

[6] These are Hochstrasser's categorizations, as they would have been listed on the census.

Schwaben) and Banat Swabians (*Banat-Schwaben*), mostly farmers and peasants, arrived from various regions of the Habsburg Empire and settled in northern Transylvania and the Banat, in part to "repopulate areas liberate from the Turks and counter the rebellious Hungarians."[7] Despite the misleading official designation of a common language, the Saxons saw themselves as distinctly separate from these new Germanic settlers, in part because of the newcomers' inferior social status and in part because of their late arrival to the region.[8] Only in the interwar period did some Saxon leaders consider political cooperation with the Swabians, and these suggestions were largely met with contempt, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Despite their small numbers, the Saxons were a highly urbanized group, and this improved their access to schooling and thus their literacy rate, as most gymnasiums and universities were in the towns. The Saxons were the only ethnic community within the Hungarian Monarchy that had their own complete schooling system, beginning with elementary education and continuing up through secondary schooling. By 1900, 19% of the urban population in Transylvania was Lutheran, signifying that a large percentage of Saxons—who were almost 90% Lutheran[9]—made up the population in towns. This is a high figure considering that Saxons made up only nine percent of the total population. According to the *Hungarian Statistical Bulletin*, already by 1881, 62.3% of Saxons were literate, as

[7] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 137, footnote 24.

[8] Gerhard Seewann claims that "the peasant element dominated" among the eighteenth-century "Swabian" colonists "not so much because of the actual professional-social stratification of the colonists, in which the craftsmen layer was strongly represented," but because of the "horizons of expectation and the economic need on the side of the public authorities and landlords who enlisted the colonists." See "Siebenbürger Sachse, Ungarndeutscher, Donauschwabe? Überlegungen zur Identitätsproblematik des Deutschtums in Südosteuropa," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991) (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 142.

[9] Victor Karady, "Denominational Inequalities of Elite Training in Transylvania during the Dual Monarchy," in *Cultural Dimensions of Elite Formation in Transylvania (1770-1950)*, eds. Victor Karady and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2008), p. 79.

opposed to 31.4% of Hungarians and only 8.8% of Romanians.[10] Harald Roth quotes an even higher figure, claiming that "in the nineteenth century, approximately 75% of [Saxon] rural communities, and over 90% of cities" were literate.[11] Remarkably, this literacy was present not only among men, but also among women.[12] Indeed, the Saxons stood apart not merely in the towns; their status as a privileged group meant that they also had a landed peasant middle class, or landed peasant bourgeoisie, in contrast to their largely unlanded Szekler and Romanian peasant neighbors.[13] As explained by Marylin McArthur, the common landed status of all Saxons, in addition to their common Saxon dialect and Lutheran confession, contributed to "the gradual consolidation of the ethnic group into a *nation* [*Volk*], or *little nation* [*Völkchen*]. In addition to the political ruling class, this also included—in contrast to the other estate-based nations of the privileged *cives*—the clerics, peasants, and townsmen, in short: *everyone*."[14] This status not only gave the Saxons a sense of superiority over their fellow Transylvanians, but also affected the organization of their society, which was primarily structured around the Lutheran Church. This is not to suggest that the church and other institutions described below were the sole basis of Saxon cohesion

[10] James P. Niessen, "Museums, Nationality, and Public Research Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Transylvania," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 41, Nr. 3 (2006): 316. Niessen's source is "A magyar korona országaiban az 1881. Év elején végrehajtott népszámlalás eredményei megyék és községek szerint," *Magyar Statisztikai Közlemények*, vol. 61. ["The results of the census carried out in the Hungarian crownlands at the beginning of 1881 according to counties and municipalities," *Hungarian Statistical Bulletin*, vol. 61].

[11] Harald Roth, "Memoirenkultur bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Ein Überblick," in Krista Zach, ed., *Deutsche und Rumänen in der Erinnerungsliteratur: Memorialistik aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert als Geschichtsquelle*, Volume 99 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2005), p. 175.

[12] Karady, "Denominational Inequalities," p. 67-68.

[13] For a brief but helpful overview of the statuses in sixteenth to nineteenth-century Transylvania (feudal lords, serf cultivators, and privileged groups such as the Saxons), which often coincided with what would today be termed "ethnic" groups, or at least language-use groups, see Katherine Verdery, "The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity: Transylvania's Germans," *American Ethnologist* 12 (February 1985), p. 70-72.

[14] Marylin McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Eine kulturanthropologische Studie, mit einem soziologischen Beitrag – Identität, Ethnizität und Gesellschaft – von Armin Nassehi und Georg Weber*, ed. Georg Weber, Volume 16 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau, 1990), p. 75-76.

and power. Commercial and industrial institutions, as well as banking[15] and neighborhood systems (*Nachbarschaften*), were also mainstays of the community's stability. However, as Katherine Verdery asserts, "although many of [the Saxon] organizations were formed independently of the Lutheran church, the church remained the single most important institution through which … developments were communicated to Germans in settlements throughout Transylvania."[16] As the main focus of this thesis is on cultural institutions, these economic concerns will not be discussed in detail.

II. Pillars of the Saxon Community

a. The Lutheran Church

Vast amounts of literature have been written on the Saxon Lutheran Church, or the *Evangelische Kirche A. B.*, and this thesis is not the place to devote further study to its fundamental role in the identity formation of the Saxon nation.[17] Rather, the following section will present a picture of the church's historical importance as a social and political institution. The national church already began to take on a more political role after the 1876 dissolution of the Saxon political body (the *Nationsuniversität*[18]), although this role is often

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[15] Most recently, see Gábor Egry's monograph on the Saxon banking system between 1835 and 1914: *Nemzeti védgát vagy szolid haszonszerzés? Az erdélyi szászok pénzintézeti rendszere és szerepe a nemzeti mozgalomban (1835-1914)* (Csíkszereda, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2009). [*National Levee or Fair Gain? The Banking System of the Transylvanian Saxons and Its Role in the National Movement (1835-1914)*]. I thank my colleague, Ágoston Berecz, for this reference.

[16] Verdery, "The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity," p. 74.

[17] An overwhelming portion of Paul Philippi's book *Land des Segens? Fragen an die Geschichte Siebenbürgens und seiner Sachsen*, Volume 39 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), is dedicated to the influence of the church in Saxon history; Bishop Friedrich Teutsch wrote volumes on the history of the church and confessional schools. Möckel's monograph *Umkämpfte Volkskirche* also highlights the political importance of the church and its leaders. A shorter essay on the church by Ludwig Binder gives an overview. See "Die Evangelische Kirche, 1849-1914," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1849-1918*, ed. Carl Göllner (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1988), p. 227-242. Many sources on the Saxon national church were written by Saxons themselves, in particular by members of the clergy. While this of course contributes to their bias, it can largely be said that they provide fairly balanced accounts.

[18] The *Nationsuniversität* was not completely dissolved until 1937, but it lost the bulk of its administrative powers when Transylvania ceased to be an autonomous crownland in the Hapsburg Empire and became part of the Hungarian Kingdom with the *Ausgleich* of 1867. For a thorough (but brief) history of the

overemphasized in Saxon historiography.[19] While the disbanding of the *Nationsuniversität* did result in the increasing involvement of the Lutheran church in Saxon political affairs, neighborhood communities and other local organizations also continued to share this weight.

The church was capable of stepping into this political role for at least two reasons: not only because of its centuries-long history, but also because of its success as a social institution. Established in the mid-sixteenth century under the influence of humanist reformers like Johannes Honterus (1527-1564), it had stood the test of time and served to further distinguish the Saxons from their primarily Orthodox, Reformed, and Roman Catholic neighbors.[20] Krista Zach asserts that the distinct Lutheran identity of the Saxons created not only confessional differences among the populations, but also ethnic ones: "In Transylvania and Upper Hungary, the Reformation fostered the division of individual language groups according to confession, thereby [creating] a sensitivity to ethnocultural difference."[21] Thus church membership entailed entry into the ethnic community as well as into the societal and spiritual one. In December 1919, Saxon Bishop Dr. Friedrich Teutsch

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Nationsuniversität until 1925, albeit written from a biased perspective, see Bishop Dr. Friedrich Teutsch, "Zur Geschichte der Sächsischen Nationsuniversität," *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien*, Volume 5, Issues 8-9, August-September 1925, p. 1-10, continued in Issue 10, October 1925, p. 1-9.

[19] See, for example Ludwig Binder's assertion that after the dissolution of the *Nationsuniversität*, "'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.'" From "Die Evangelische Kirche, 1849-1914," p. 238, quoted in Cristian Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity in the Case of Transylvanian Saxons 1933-1944," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 14-15. Translated by Cristian Cercel. While this assertion of the church's predominant political role following the dissolution of the *Nationsuniversität* is true, the problem is this narrative is simply taken over by subsequent authors, undermining the role of other important community institutions like the *Nachbarschaften*.

[20] Traditionally, Romanians belonged to the former denomination. Some Hungarians were reformed (Calvinist or Unitarian), while others were Roman Catholic.

[21] Krista Zach, "Feindliche Fremde – ein Topos zur Motivation der Ausgrenzung. Deutsche, Juden, Rumänen, Andere als Migranten im 20. Jahrhundert," in Krista Zach, ed., *Migration im südöstlichen Mitteleuropa: Auswanderung, Flucht, Deportation, Exil im 20. Jahrhundert*, Volume 91 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2005), p. 56.

described the "particular impact" that the "influence of the church" had had on "the development and formation of our national [Saxon] character." He continued, "Not only has external national and political development" been affected by the church, but also "our inner being and character […] Not least, we are grateful to the church for external unity, and, above all, for inner unity, for the entire depth of the cultural community."[22]

The second reason for the Lutheran Church's success as a representative Saxon body was the all-encompassing social role that it played in the community. Namely, all Saxons, from the lowest social class to the highest elite, were members of the Lutheran Church well into the 20th century, almost without exception. Victor Karady ascribes 87% of Saxons as officially belonging to the Lutheran Church in 1910, and Rosemarie Hochstrasser reports an increase in this number by 1930, with between 91 and 94% (i.e. between 222,000 and 230,000 people) belonging to the church.[23] As will be seen in this thesis, church membership in the Saxon community did not merely represent participation in religious belief, but a much more dynamic societal and political participation. Of the church's social role, Cristian Cercel writes: "the Church had traditionally the highest authority within the life of the various congregations, through the local voices of its representatives."[24] To step out of the church was to step out of Saxon society; in other words, one could not simply "opt out" of this membership, for the social ostracization caused by leaving the church was a high price to pay.[25] In looking at these high membership figures, it is understandable why

[22] Dr. Fr. Teutsch, "Das sächsiche Volk und seine Kirche," *Ostland*, Volume II, Issues 3-4, December 1919-January 1920, p. 129, 133.
[23] Karady, "Denominational Inequalities," p. 67; Hochstrasser, *Die siebenbürgische-sächsiche Gesellschaft*, 37.
[24] Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 30.
[25] One notable and ironic example of Saxon loyalty to the Lutheran Church can be found in the person of Gustav Zikeli (*b*.1876), a Social Democrat and self-proclaimed atheist who remained a member of the Lutheran Church in Bistriț a (German: Bistritz; Hungarian: Beszterce) throughout the interwar period in spite of his personal convictions. I would like to thank my colleague Ágoston Berecz for drawing my attention to this example.

the self-preservation of the Saxon community was intimately bound up in the preservation of institutions such as the church. As will be explored in-depth subsequent chapters, there were both external and internal threats to the unity of the church throughout the interwar period. Yet even those who may have been opposed to the traditions of the church were aware of its power as a socially cohesive institution capable of unifying the community.

b. Lutheran Confessional Schools

The Lutheran confessional schools, too, contributed to the social unification of Saxon society. Harald Roth writes that already "around 1800, the school system of the Transylvanian Saxons was so broadly developed within the framework of the Lutheran Church that it practically encompassed the entire ethnic group [*Ethnikum*]."[26] Although the church may have been the backbone of the school system, the loyalty of the Saxons to their schools was only slightly less pronounced than their loyalty to the church, especially in the mid-1920s when the schools were perceived as threatened by the modernizing reforms of the centralized Romanian state.

The meddling of the Romanian state in Saxon schools during the interwar period was not the first time that the schools had come under threat. As Joachim von Puttkamer explains, the greatly protested reforms of Habsburg Emperor Joseph II in 1781[27] had also attempted "to submit Protestant schools to government control," but with no success. Puttkamer claims that "it was the German Transylvanian Saxons who were the first to express their fear that the politics of government intervention constituted a threat to their

[26] Harald Roth, "Memoirenkultur," p. 175.
[27] Transylvania was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire in 1691, bringing about several changes in the power relations of its various statuses. These conflicts, of course, came to a head in the 1848-1849 uprising of the Hungarians against the Hapsburg rulers, but were present already from the beginning of the incorporation.

group identity."[28] Later, under Hungarian rule between 1867 and 1914, Saxon leaders again perceived their schools as threatened, this time stemming from the magyarizing aims of the Hungarian Monarchy. While the Hungarian school reforms, like those of the Romanians in the twentieth century, can be viewed as vehicles of modernization, conservative Saxons saw them as undermining their centuries-old cultural institutions.

The significance of the confessional schools to the Saxons was manifold. First and foremost, they preserved the German language, provided opportunities for social advancement, and offered an excellent education. According to Karady, the high literacy figures quoted above demonstrate that "the efficiency of the Lutheran-Saxon school network is … far from being a historical myth."[29] Saxon schools also served a secondary purpose: they segregated the ethnic community and ensured its preservation and perpetuation. Although non-Saxons also attended the confessional schools, partially out of the motivation to learn standard German, they were primarily visited by members of the community.[30] The segregated nature of the schools also influenced marital practices, with Saxon classmates often marrying one another. "Of central importance to the formation of Transylvanian Saxon identity was the concept of *sticking together*, or *solidarity*," explains Marilyn McArthur; "this fundamentally moral imperative of solidarity was reflected in a complicated system of rules and prescriptions for behavior—including endogamy—which

[28] Joachim von Puttkamer, "Framework of Modernization: Government Legislation and Regulations on Schooling in Transylvania 1780-1914," in *Cultural Dimensions of Elite Formation in Transylvania (1770-1950)*, eds. Victor Karady and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2008), p. 17-19. For a work addressing the reforms of Joseph II more comprehensively, see Elke Josupeit-Neitzel, *Die Reformen Josephs II. in Siebenbürgen*, Volume 33 of the Studia Hungarica Series (Munich: Dr. Rudolf Trofenik Verlag, 1984), esp. p. 147ff for information on the implementation of German as the administrative language and its effects on Transylvanian populations.

[29] Karady, "Denominational Inequalities," p. 68.

[30] During the Dualist Period, about two percent of students in Saxon schools were Romanian. See Joachim von Puttkamer, *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn: Slowaken, Rumänen und Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Auseinandersetzung mit der ungarischen Staatsidee, 1867–1914* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), p. 245.

ensured the continuity of the ethnic group."[31] Thus, preserving the schools, like preserving the church, represented more than just the perpetuation of certain educational standards; significantly, it was framed as representing the perpetuation of posterity. Indeed, even as late as 1927, when the schools were already showing signs of deterioration due to the Romanian school reforms and financial plight, the daily *Kronstädter Zeitung* declared: "not only our [Saxon] culture, but also our survival as a *Volk* is closely bound together with our confessional schools, which have existed for centuries."[32] Even when National Socialist ideology had penetrated the community and Saxon leaders were looking to Germany for financial support for their schools, Alfred Schlosser remarked in the journal *Klingsor*, "we Saxons could never abandon our confessional schools."[33] Because the schools were linked to posterity in a way that even the Lutheran Church was not, they were of the utmost importance to community members throughout the entire interwar period.

c. German Language

Closely related to the confessional school system was the question of language preservation, which constituted a complicated issue. For, despite the well-established school system of the Saxons and high literacy rate, explains Harald Roth,

> there was nevertheless an often underestimated gap yawning between written and spoken word: the spoken language was the Transylvanian Saxon dialect [*Siebenbürgisch-Sächsisch*], which was far-removed from standard German [*Hochdeutsch*]. It was the language of everyday use, of preaching, of lessons, of communication on all levels of social life … Only with the so-called 'national awakening' of the mid-nineteenth century was standard German systematically promoted in schools and churches.[34]

[31] Marylin McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, p. 6.
[32] "Warum sind die Deutschen in Rumänien unzufrieden? Ein 'Adeverul' Interview Dr. H. O. Roths," *KZ*, Volume 91, Nr. 278, 8 December 1927.
[33] Alfred Schlosser, "Über die Lösungsmöglichkeiten des Nationalitätproblems," *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 1, January 1932, p. 29.
[34] Harald Roth, "Memoirenkultur," p. 175.

Thus, by the interwar period, although standard German had been incorporated into schools and was used in publications, the local dialect was still favored in speech and viewed as a further identity marker separating the Saxons from the distant German *Reich* and from their fellow German-speaking Transylvanian neighbors like the Swabians. Especially in the latter part of the 1920s, therefore, the language issue was closely bound up with the controversy over the spread of Pan-Germanism and Transylvanian German collaboration. Cornelius Zach writes, "As different as the various groups of Germans in Romania after 1918 were, they possessed a common feature—the [German] language—and a general common interest: the complete protection of their rights as an ethnic minority in the new nation-state in which they lived after the First World War."[35] Thus, as will be seen, the differences eventually evened out as all German-speaking groups began to seek shelter under the Pan-German flag by the end of the period under discussion.

The steady flow of Saxons to and from Germany to visit universities was another factor influencing the influx of standard German into the community. Almost all of the leading Saxon intellectuals visited a German (or Austrian or Swiss) university for several years before returning to their Transylvanian homeland. This tradition reached back well before the establishment of the German state in 1871, with Saxon scholars attending German universities even during the Reformation. Wittenburg was a particularly popular destination for youths studying reformed theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, as Michaela Nowotnick points out, these stints abroad, although "not uncommon," cost "substantial sums," thus limiting them to the middle and upper strata of

[35] Cornelius Zach, "Zwischen Ideologie und Pragmatismus," in Krista Zach, ed., *Migration im südöstlichen Mitteleuropa: Auswanderung, Flucht, Deportation, Exil im 20. Jahrhundert*, Volume 91 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2005), p. 156.

Saxon society.[36] Connections between German institutions and Saxon intellectuals remained strong throughout the interwar period prompted by these university stays significantly influenced the spread of National Socialist rhetoric in the late 1920s and early 1930s, not only increasing the emphasis on standard German, but also shaping the political and philosophical currents of publications.

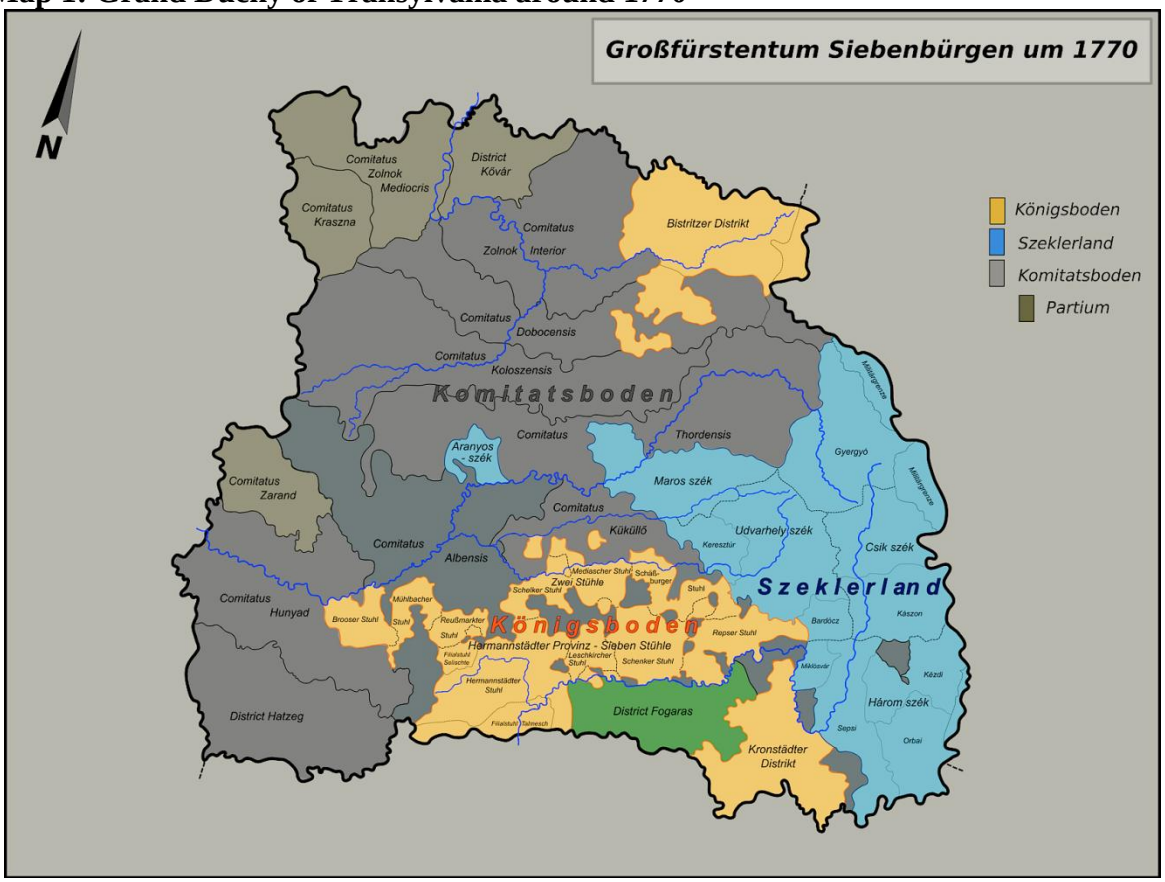
d. The Königsboden and Saxon Resistance to Romanian Centralization

Before moving onto a discussion of these interwar publications, two further factors that were prominent in the press and journals of the time remain to be explored. Unlike the institutions of the Lutheran Church and its confessional schools, or the cultural tradition of linguistic preservation, the final two pillars of the Saxon community are more abstract: the historical tradition of Saxon territorial and administrative autonomy, and the growing resistance to Romanian political centralization.

The historical rights gained by the Saxons when they settled the *Königsboden* in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century have already been mentioned above. These rights were both administrative and territorial, granting the Saxons dominion over the area designated in the map on the following page.

[36] Michaela Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*. Siebenbürgen und seine Beziehungen zum literarischen Leben in Deutschland (1907-1939)," (MA Thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2007), p. 13.

Map 1: Grand Duchy of Transylvania around 1770[37]



Yellow - *Königsboden*
Blue - Szekler territory (German: *Szeklerland*/Hungarian: *Székelyföld*)
Gray - County terrain (*comitatus*)
Brown - *Partium* (the regions to the west and north of Transylvania)

[37] Map taken from the Internet. Accessible at http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/de/1/12/Gro%C3%9Ff%C3%BCrstentum-Siebenb%C3%BCrgen-Komitate-und-St%C3%BChle-1770.png.

However, Krista Zach describes the *Königsboden* as representing more to the Saxons than just a territorial entity; it was furthermore a figurative barrier separating those in Transylvania with privileges and those without:

> The Königsboden, the place of security and protection—as it was anchored in the early history of the group, or at least how it was remembered—does not denote the totality of the … historical region of Transylvania, a typical multicultural transition territory. Rather, [it refers] only to the autonomous territorial and legal region of the German inhabitants from the settlements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries up until 1867. Its symbolic function is to designate the province of "freemen" [*freie Menschen*] in the legal sense and to protect [it] from the disorderly, freely "evolved" surrounding region, preserving it in its "original state." It is associated with the civilized values of "privilege" and "freedom."[38]

During the interwar period in particular, Saxon writers surpassed even this geographical and legal significance when describing the *Königsboden*: at some points, the territory was made out to possess even spiritual significance. While emphasis was initially placed on maintenance of the *Königsboden*, in the twentieth century, elites expanded the definition of the Saxon homeland to include all of Transylvania, in part due to the rise of inter-ethnic regionalism in the mid-1920s. This geographical expansion and increase in regional collaboration was the direct result of another attitude that was on the rise in the years following the First World War: namely, the Saxon disappointment and discontent with Bucharest's political disorganization, centralizing policies, and corruption.

The centralizing policies emanating from Bucharest in the early 1920s were perceived as one of the greatest challenges to institutional preservation. While intended to modernize the country, the Saxons viewed them as endangering the traditional institutions of church, school, language, and territory. However, it was not only new policies and reforms, but also lack of action and failure to honor minority protections promised on the

[38] Krista Zach, "'*Wir wohnten auf dem Königsboden…*' Identitätsbildung bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen im historischen Wandel," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991) (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 120-121.

part of the Romanians that so frustrated conservative Saxon leaders. While Saxon authors seem to attribute this failure either to malicious attitudes or to neglect, much secondary literature asserts that Romania was simply neither structured nor equipped to incorporate the huge influx of minorities and varying regional administrative systems that they gained in the wake of the First World War.

Günther Tontsch, for example, maintains that the very nature of Romania's centralized government, based on the French system, as well as the state's lack of experience dealing with minority populations, made it almost impossible to implement the minority rights that were stipulated with the union of Transylvania to Greater Romania.[39] To begin with, the diverse demographic makeup of Romania, in which Romanians represented 71.9%, Hungarians 7.9%, and Germans 4.1% of the population, posed what would prove to be an insurmountable challenge;[40] following the war, ethnic minorities represented approximately 30% Romania's population, compared to just 8% before the war.[41] Irina Livezeanu, too, offers a similar thesis in her study *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, emphasizing the difficulties Bucharest had in integrating so many diverse new provinces—Bessarabia, the Bucovina, and Transylvania—into their political purview.[42] She characterizes the political environment in Romania as an "unstable landscape, demonstrated by the frequent changes of government, the factionalism of the parties, and the leapfrog of

[39] Günther H. Tontsch, "Zum Nationalitätenrecht Rumäniens zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, ed. Walter König, Volume 28 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 70-72.

[40] National minorities represented 28.1% of Romania's entire population. These figures are from the 1930 census, the only one made during the interwar period. Information from Ioan Scurtu, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Parlamentspartei 1919-1937," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, edited by Walter König, Volume 28 of the Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 55. Scurtu's source is *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1938), p. 148.

[41] Keith Hitchins, "Romania," *The American Historical Review* 97, Nr. 4 (1992): 1069-1070.

[42] Bessarabia was joined on 27 March 1918, Bukovina on 28 November 1918, and Transylvania on 1 December 1918, although only the Treaty of Trianon on 4 June 1920 officially ceded the territories to Romania.

political personalities from party to party."[43] Victoria Brown says the period was "reflected politically by the continuous concoction, dissolution, and recombination of parties."[44] In short, there were ten parliamentary elections during the interwar period (from 1919-1937),[45] most of which were won by Romania's National Liberal Party (although the National Party "was still hegemonic" in Transylvania[46]). Even when the Liberal Party was not in control, it was suspected of hovering behind the political scene. The Germans in Transylvania were represented in all of these ten parliaments between 1919 and 1937, and they were allied with the ruling Romanian party in every election except in 1927 (when they joined the Hungarian opposition party) and in 1919 and 1920 (when they formed their own electoral lists).[47]

Thus the political back-and-forth that characterized the 1920s was not purely an ethnic struggle between the Romanian majority and the new German and Hungarian minorities; primarily, it was a struggle between state and local contingents. In Transylvania, Romanians, Germans, and Hungarians alike were irked by pushy Old Kingdom politicians who continually reneged on agreements concerning local control of the region. Initially there had been a plan to continue local administration through the implementation of an appointed council. This Ruling Council, or *Consiliul Dirigent*, "was a provisional body, with limited prerogatives established by the government." However after serving less than two years, the council was disbanded abruptly and administration proceeded from the increasingly centralized Bucharest regime.[48]

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[43] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 21-24. Quotation from p. 21.
[44] Victoria F. Brown, "The Movement for Reform in Rumania after World War I: The Parliamentary Bloc Government of 1919-1920," *Slavic Review* 38, Nr. 3 (1979): 456.
[45] Ioan Scurtu, "Beiträge zur Geschichte," p. 64.
[46] Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 23.
[47] Scurtu, "Beiträge zur Geschichte," p. 64.
[48] Gheorghe Iancu has devoted an entire monograph to the ruling council. See *The Ruling Council: The Integration of Transylvania into Romania 1918-1920*, Bibliotheca Rerum Transsilvaniæ VIII (Cluj-Napoca:

The question of why the Saxons remained loyal to the Romanian government for so long despite their disappointments with the implementation of minority rights and protections will be explored in the following chapter, but here it suffices to say that hopes were high in the Saxon community immediately following the Great War. This was partially due to Saxon underestimation of the nationalizing projects that Romanian politicians implemented in the post-war years. In 1927 Zsombor de Szász attributed this underestimation to naiveté on the part of the Saxons:

> It is evident that the Germans believed in the Gyulafehérvár Resolutions and naïvely thought that they would be able to obtain an even larger autonomy than that secured in Article 11 of the Minorities Treaty. It was an error they were soon disabused of … There was no such wholesale dismissal of the Saxon officials as of the Hungarians; their schools were not closed like those of the other churches, but the corruption of the administration was felt by them just as strongly as by the Hungarians, and the interference of the authorities in their cultural and educational policy was just as intolerable.[49]

Needless to say, de Szász's view contains personal undertones that reveal a strongly pro-Hungarian bias against the Bucharest regime. Yet he highlights the misconception of the Saxons that the nationalism of the Romanians could and would make room for their minority institutions. The Saxons were not entirely at fault for their misguided beliefs in the Romanian government. At the beginning of the interwar period, the Romanian government made a series of agreements and promises to the Saxon nation that should have ensured the preservation of their minority rights and institutions. These included the minority protections acts (*Minderheitenschutzverträge*) of September 1919 and December 1919, in which the Romanian government promised the Saxons autonomy of religious institutions

Center for Transylvanian Studies, The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1995). The quotation is from page 7. A more extensive version, published in 1985, exists in the Romanian language under the title *Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar roman (1918-1920)* [*The Contribution of the Ruling Council to the Consolidation of the Romanian Unitary National State (1918-1920)*].

[49] Zsombor de Szász, *The Minorities in Roumanian Transylvania* (London: The Richards Press Limited, 1927), p. 320.

and the school system,[50] as well as an electoral pact made between the Saxons and the Romanian Liberal Party in February 1922, in which the Romanian side pledged that "the Government was not to hinder the election of Saxon candidates in constituencies with a Saxon majority, while in the constituencies with a Saxon minority the latter would support the candidate of the Liberal Party." Additionally, the pact "secured 'the recognition of the denominational schools.'"[51] Yet in spite of these promises, the new Romanian Constitution of 1923, drafted by the National Liberals, explicitly neglected to include the previously agreed-upon minority protections while hypocritically proclaiming the equality of all Romanian citizens.[52] Though the Romanian government reneged on many of its promises—whether intentionally or unintentionally—conservative Saxon leaders of the *Volksrat* continued to support the Bucharest regime throughout the 1920s, although bitterly complaining of its organizational flaws, over-centralization, and corruption in the press and published journals.

III. Interwar Publications

From the historical background provided above, it becomes clear why Saxon social, cultural, and political traditions figured prominently in the publications of the interwar years. The political spectrum was widely represented in Saxon publications, and in some the political agenda is quite evident, something that must always be kept in mind. Each of the publications examined in this thesis had its own profile, political orientation, and aims. Editors and owners of papers and journals had a large impact on their content, as did the

[50] Ernst Wagner, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1191-1975*, Volume 1 of Schriften zur Landeskunde Siebenbürgens (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1976), p. 274.
[51] de Szász, *The Minorities in Roumanian Transylvania*, p. 321, 326.
[52] Vasile Ciobanu, "Die Minderheitenfrage in den Programmen Rumänischer Parteien während der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Minderheit und Nationalstaat*, ed. Harald Roth, Volume 31 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), p. 62.

historical tradition of the publication. As was mentioned in the introduction, the significance of the Saxon press on the Romanian landscape was overwhelming, with approximately sixty publications in 1930 for a population of just 235,000 Saxons. The following section will examine the publications used as primary sources in this thesis: the prominent *Siebenbürgisch-Deutches Tageblatt* (*SDT*) and its conservative competitor the *Kronstädter Zeitung* (*KZ*), the journals *Klingsor* and *Ostland*, and the political journal *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien* (*DPH*).

a. The Semi-Official Voice of the Sächsische Volkspartei: The Siebenbürgisch-Deutches Tageblatt

The *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Wochenblatt* (*Transylvanian German Weekly*), the forerunner of the *SDT*, came into existence already in 1867, the same year as the *Ausgleich*. Thus the *SDT*, the daily version of the *Wochenblatt* that began publication in late 1873, emerged during a period of great upheaval in the Saxon community, and its long publication run, from 1874-1944, was destined to live up to the political events that had birthed it. Although the *SDT* was by no means the oldest Saxon daily, it soon fought its way to the top. Quickly after beginning publication, its editor Carl Wolff "managed to make it into the leading organ in the struggle for the Saxon future, and to land it in a preeminent position."[53] Thus from the outset, the *SDT* occupied the position of a national voice within the Saxon community, one that was often contested by other publications. Harald Roth writes that the *SDT* "was governed by Sibiu's upper middle class and therefore was fully available to the *Volksrat*," or National Council.[54] The *Volksrat* was a tight-knit circle of conservative

[53] Hans Meschendörfer, "Presse und Publizistik," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon Geschichte, Kultur, Zivilisation, Wissenschaften, Wirtschaft, Lebensraum Siebenbürgen (Transsilvanien)*, published by Walter Myß, eds. Inge Prader and Günther Schick (Kraft Verlag, 1993), p. 392.
[54] Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen 1919*-1933, Volume 22 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 36.

leaders who dominated the Saxon political scene throughout much of the interwar period. It was part of the *Sächsische Volkspartei* (Saxon National Party), the central organizing body of the Saxon community which had been set up in 1876 in response to the dissolution of the *Nationsuniversität*. Despite its name, the *Sächsische Volkspartei* was not a political party, but rather a social and administrative institution that comprised all members of the Saxon nation. The *SDT* was its official mouthpiece, largely under the control of the *Sächsische Volkspartei*'s political institution, the *Volksrat*.

As such, the conservative daily paper was often viewed with mistrust by more liberal members of the community. Particularly in the late 1920s and early 1930s, press conflict became heated and many social dissenters resented the way the *SDT* claimed to represent the voice of the entire community when it fact it was largely controlled by elite politicians. The popular success of these social renewal movements, or *Erneuerungsbewegungen*, created competition for the *SDT*, if not in terms of distribution rates, then in terms of ideology. For example, social dissident Fritz Fabritius (founder of the *Selbsthilfebewegung*, or Self-Help Movement) created a journal in 1921 to spread his social aims; by the mid-late 1920s, Fabritius' *Selbsthilfe-Kampfblatt* (roughly translatable as the *Self-Help Combat Journal*) had developed a more politicized agenda. By late 1933, the *SDT*, as well as the other conservative daily, the *Kronstädter Zeitung*, were "unable to evade the pull of the reform movement without losing their own independence," and thus adopted the rapidly national socializing agenda of their fellow Saxon publications.[55]

The synchronization of the press along national-socialist lines occurred in the late 1930s, and in 1941, the *SDT* merged with the *Banater Deutsche Zeitung* (*Banat German Newspaper*) to form the *Südost-deutsche Tageszeitung* (*South-East German Daily*), which

[55] Meschendörfer, "Presse und Publizistik," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 393.

was published under the leadership of Hans Otto Roth until fall 1944. Thus, during its sixty-year life span, the *SDT* underwent major transformations, beginning as the national conservative voice of the community and ending as simply another organ of Pan-German propaganda within the Transylvanian community. Even while serving this latter role, however, the paper always claimed to represent the Saxon nation.

b. A Long-Running Tradition: The Kronstädter Zeitung

Though the *SDT* may have been able to claim the highest distribution rates in Transylvania, it was the *KZ* that could claim the longest publication history. Like the *SDT*, the *KZ*, too, was birthed in times of political unrest, immediately following the tumultuous revolution of 1848-1849 in Hungary and Transylvania. The owners of the paper, the Gött family, had a long tradition in Transylvanian press. Johann Gött (1810-1888), the family patriarch, founded the predecessor of the *KZ* already in 1837: the *Siebenbürgisches Wochenblatt*. Gött's publishing successes[56] were perhaps due to the innovations he introduced in his papers: he added supplementary sheets that served to "make the [*Siebenbürgisches Wochenblatt*] more interesting," and "gathered young intellectuals who had studied at German universities around his newspapers, such as Georg D. Teutsch, Stephan Ludwig Roth, Daniel Roth, Johann Hinz, etc., who had an important influence on the mentality of the period."[57] Although Johann Gött was not solely responsible for the leadership of the *KZ*, the paper remained in his family for nearly 100 years. The *KZ*, along with other papers, was subject to strict censorship from Vienna following the squelching of

[56] Additionally, around the same time, Gött was responsible for the first Romanian-language newspapers in Transylvania, the *Foaie Dumenicii* (*Sunday Paper*), the *Foaie de Septemana* (*Weekly Paper*) and the daily *Gazeta de Transilvania*, (*Transylvanian Gazette*). He also attempted to publish a Hungarian paper, the *Erdély Hiradó* (*Transylvanian Gazette*), but with little success.

[57] Hans Meschendörfer, "Presse und Publizistik," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 391.

the revolution. By 1876, shortly after the *KZ* was founded, it was being distributed four times a week, and it became a daily in 1884, under the direction of Johann Gött's sons, Heinrich and Fritz.

Although by the end of the interwar period the *KZ* and *SDT* were eventually forced to take the same path towards a more National Socialist ideology, in the late-nineteenth century, the two dailies were frequently at odds. Both papers were generally conservative, but became the competing voices of generational conflicts between the so-called "Blacks" and "Greens" (*Schwarze und Grüne*) that broke out at the end of the nineteenth century, discussed in Chapter Four. By the mid-1920s, however, both papers came under fire from more radical voices, and the editor of the liberal journal *Klingsor*, Heinrich Zillich, went so far as to lump them together in terms of political content.[58] Due to these similarities and the predominance of the *SDT*, the *KZ* will be used only as a supplementary source in this thesis. In the latter part of the interwar period the *KZ* suffered a fate similar to that of the *SDT*, and while it, too, continued publication until 1944, it was only an echo of its former independent self.

c. Two Cultural-Political Journals of the Interwar Period: Klingsor and Ostland

Ostland and *Klingsor*, two prominent monthly journals of the interwar period, will be considered together in this section. Although they had similar structures, and even many of the same contributors, the tone of the journals varied widely, at least in their first years of publication. *Ostland* was begun in the early post-war years, with its first edition printed in June 1919. However, its publication run was short-lived, and already in 1921 it was no longer in print. After a hiatus of 5 years, *Ostland* resumed publication from 1926 to 1931,

[58] See Heinrich Zillich, "Siebenbürgische-deutsche Presse," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 362.

under the same editorial leadership of Richard Csaki, but with a more outspoken political agenda. This was in part due to its publication by the cultural office of the Association of Germans in Romania (*Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien*), which necessarily gave it a more political than literary profile.[59] *Klingsor*, by contrast, had a much more consistent publishing run, lasting from 1924 to 1939. It too maintained the same editor, Heinrich Zillich, for the entirety of its publication. *Klingsor* was primarily a literary magazine, albeit with political content as well, much of which was polemic. *Ostland*, too, focused on literature, but was not as successful as *Klingsor* at incorporating up and coming Saxon and German authors.

Despite their similar content, the journals had very different profiles. While "between the two world wars, [*Klingsor*] developed into an influential cultural-political journal of the Transylvanian Saxons,"[60] *Ostland* was rather viewed as a more conservative, less daring, journal. Upon the one-year anniversary of its publication in July 1920, *Ostland* contained the following description of its own contents: "The main reproach made of the monthly journal *Ostland* is that it is too reserved, too cautious, in a word, one could say—too Saxon." Yet it seems that *Ostland*'s editorial board was rather proud of this criticism, claiming that its "style, thoughts, and cultural efforts" were indeed Saxon, although asserting that the journal also sought to become a "true mirror image of East-German culture" on the whole.[61] In contrast to this static self-evaluation, *Klingsor* from its start bore marks of a less cautious, more polemical tone. This was true not only of its political articles, but also of its literary ones. Each edition included literature reviews and open letters that often contained strong opinions or critiques. *Ostland*, while containing essays that provided

[59] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*," p. 54-55.
[60] Prof. Dr. Walter Myß, "Klingsor," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 267.
[61] *Ostland*, Year 2, First July Issue, 1920, introductory pages.

contemporary views on current affairs in 1920s Romania and the world at large, was less opinionated than *Klingsor*. Nevertheless, the topics in both journals were similar: descriptions of current political affairs, discussions of race in Transylvania, polls of local newspapers, descriptions of new publications, etc.

In the context of this thesis, it is helpful to examine the two contemporary journals together—the one more reactive and dramatic, and the other more practically minded—because both aptly express the views of more liberal Saxon contributors vis-à-vis the conservative pieces lining the pages of the *SDT* during the interwar period. *Klingsor*'s editor Heinrich Zillich compared the cultural role of the journals to that of daily papers like the *SDT* and *KZ*, whose mission he believed was to educate the nation ("*Volkserziehung*").[62] By contrast he viewed it as the role of his journal to contribute to the cultural edification of the community, and to cultivate literary connections. Ultimately, both journals, *Ostland* and *Klingsor*, were influential in the interwar period, although they served slightly different functions—political and cultural, respectively. Walter Myß writes of *Klingsor*: "If one considers that its distribution never surpassed one hundred copies, the wide impact that *Klingsor* had is even more astonishing."[63] Indeed, as this thesis will show, it was not so much the quantity of a publication as its quality that determined its success. *Klingsor* and *Ostland* were important because they reached the small but active circle of intellectuals who viewed themselves as responsible for determining the cultural course of the entire Saxon nation. To a large extent, by the end of the decade, they were successful in this endeavor.

[62] Heinrich Zillich, "Siebenbürgische-deutsche Presse," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 365-366.
[63] Prof. Dr. Walter Myß, "Klingsor," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 267.

d. Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien

Transylvania's first political journal, published by Saxon politician Rudolf Brandsch between 1921 and 1927, will receive limited treatment in this thesis. This is not because the journal's contents were not influential or interesting, but rather because its profile was different from the other works addressed here.[64] Due to Brandsch's personal aims in uniting the Germans of Romania, discussed in Chapter Four, and his interests in European political affairs, the journal places significant emphasis on the situation of other German minorities in Europe and on western affairs. Nevertheless it also concentrated on internal affairs within Romania, and, as of 1923, contained a regular section detailing the history of the various German minority groups in Romania. Although Brandsch was not, of course, the sole contributor to the *DPH*, the contents of the journal can to a large part be explained with a description of his role as an influential politician in the pre-war and interwar eras.

Rudolf Brandsch (1880-1953) was one of the leading, but also one of the most controversial, Saxon political figures of the interwar period. By nearly all characterizations, he was a contentious figure. While sharing many of the same conservative viewpoints as his Saxon colleague Hans Otto Roth, he tended towards more liberal solutions that did not conform to the traditional Saxon policy of an isolated cultural nationalism. He was, for example, the greatest proponent of the movement in the early part of the century to make political alliances with the other non-Saxon German groups in Transylvania like the Swabians. Such political aims, which the most conservative members of the *Volksrat* viewed as a betrayal of Saxon institutions, were not well tolerated during this period. When

[64] For a complete bibliography of the journal's contents, see Vasile Ciobanu and Alexandra Popa, "O publicație uitată: Revista sibiană *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien* (1921–1927), prezentare şi bibliografie," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane Sibiu* 13 (2006): 15-39 ["A Forgotten Publication: The Sibiu Journal *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien* (1921–1927), Presentation and Bibliography"]. The bibliography comprises p. 19-39.

analyzing contemporary descriptions of Brandsch, however, one wonders whether it was more his actual policies or his polemic personality that caused such an outcry. Harald Roth cites contemporaries of Brandsch who characterize him as "having a conspiratorial nature,"[65] as being more concerned with pursuing his own goals than those of his fellow Sibiu citizens, as "incapable of any productive activity,"[66] and as a "loner" who, while "appearing very congenial" was actually only "good at making himself popular in Germany while it is others at home [in Transylvania] who have actually been doing all the work."[67] These are indeed harsh criticisms.

Yet while many characterized Brandsch in somewhat sinister terms, his productivity in the prewar and interwar period should not be disregarded because of a few personal flaws (including accusations of alcoholism[68]). In addition to publishing and contributing to every issue of *DPH* and to other interwar journals, his diplomatic achievements in cooperating with other Germans extended well beyond Transylvania's borders. For example, in the *DPH*, he closely followed the post-war progress of the German minorities in other parts of Central Europe.[69] Furthermore, he was in contact with both German and Romanian leading politicians throughout the interwar period and sought remedies to the Saxon situation through these personal contacts. One of the sad ironies of Brandsch's efforts to maintain

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[65] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 79. Roth's source: Archiv des Siebenbürgen-Instituts (Gundelsheim am Neckar), Gustav Rösler: Aus meinem Leben, Vol. 1, p. 194.
[66] Ibid. Roth's source: Archiv des rumänischen Außenministeriums, Fonds Deutschland (1920-1944), Vol. 133: Aufzeichnung über Rudolf Brandsch.
[67] Ibid., p. 80. Roth's source: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (Bonn), R73650, Nationalitäten Fragen, Rumänien: Minister Freytag am 14. Oktober 1924 aus Bukarest an Leg. Sekr. Von Grundherr im Auswärtigen Amt.
[68] Ibid., p. 79.
[69] In particular, he wrote a lengthy examination of the Baltic Germans who had recently achieved a minority status in the Baltics that was envied by groups like the Saxons. For an analysis of these reports, see Vasile Ciobanu, "Din istoria minorităților germane din Europa. Relațiile dintre saşi şi germanii baltici în primul deceniu al perioadei interbelice," *Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis*, Series Historica I (2004), p. 267 ["From the History of German Minorities in Europe. Relations between the Saxons and the Baltic Germans in the First Decade of the Interwar Period"], available on the Internet at http://istorie.ulbsibiu.ro/studia/studia1/Ciobanu.pdf (accessed April 2012).

peace between the Saxons and other German minorities was that these efforts came at the cost of peace within his own community. Especially in the early 1920s, his proposals were met with fierce opposition by the conservative Saxon ranks, who viewed Brandsch and his supporters—of which there were in fact many—as traitors to the Saxon nation. By 1927, the *DPH* had run its course, largely due to insufficient funding and the rise of the *Erneuerungsbewegung* and National Socialist ideology. Although Brandsch had long been an advocate of inter-German collaboration, he was still a member of the group that favored a Romanian solution in the Saxon Transylvanian homeland and was resistant to some aspects of the National Socialist propaganda stemming from Germany. In 1933, he withdrew from public political life.[70]

Although the *DPH* do not serve as a primary basis of analysis of Saxon policies of self-preservation in this thesis, the significance of Brandsch as a political leader in the community will be emphasized. In addition to his role as editor of the *DPH*, Brandsch was also a frequent contributor to other publications, in particular to *Ostland* and the *SDT*. Through an analysis of the interwar papers and journals explored above, the following three chapters will examine how the "pillars" of Saxonness described here were used to promote nationalism within the Saxon community by both conservative *Volksrat* leaders and Saxon social dissenters during the interwar period.

[70] Dr. Michael Kroner, "Rudolf Brandsch," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 69.

Chapter Three
External Affairs - Romanian Relations

Despite the desire of Saxon conservative leaders to politically incorporate the community into Romania, they largely continued to view the newly established state as an "external" element due to their traditional isolationist stance vis-à-vis the other social and ethnic communities in the region. While half a century of existence under Hungarian rule had come to temper these isolationist views, the social and cultural patterns of the Saxons—embodied by the social, confessional, and linguistic differences described in the preceding chapter—remained persistent well into the twentieth century. Yet following the war, Saxon leaders gradually recognized the need to adapt these traditional views if they were to expect any political rights in the new nation-state, which was formed around a centralizing, westerly-looking model[1] that sought to modernize the new Romanian territories through a series of reforms. Thus the present chapter will focus on the attitude of Saxon leaders towards the Romanian state as represented in interwar publications, examining how these attitudes changed over time, and how policies of national self-preservation shifted parallel to changes in Romanian policy. In order to gauge the pulse of mainstream Saxon views on nationalism and self-preservation following the First World War in Romania, there is no better place to start than with the *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt* (*SDT*), the official organ of the *Sächsische Volkspartei* and its political body, the *Volksrat*. While looking at other publications as well, this chapter will focus on the changing views of *SDT* contributors as Saxons began to perceive the economic and political situation in Romania as increasingly more intolerable.

[1] Keith Hitchins, "Romania," *The American Historical Review* 97, Nr. 4 (1992): 1067.

I. 1918-1923: The Halcyon Days

The importance of the larger Romanian context lay in the Saxon's inability, as a minority, to achieve their cultural and political aims without participation in a greater national framework. In the years immediately following the war, there was little reason for the Saxons to doubt that the promises the Romanian government made to them regarding minority protections would be kept. One factor contributing to this trust was that the Romanians tended to favor the Saxons over the other minority groups in the Transylvanian region. Although the outcome of the First World War and the instability created by it did largely lead to an inward-drawing tendency among the Saxon community,[2] this was not a direct result of Romanian violation of minority rights policies.

It must be remembered that the Saxons and Romanians had to some extent suffered together under the Magyarization policies in the years following the 1867 *Ausgleich*, although the degree of this suffering is often overemphasized in Saxon historiography. While Saxon sources often complain of oppressive Magyarization during the period from 1867-1914, it is important to remember that Magyarization patterns varied greatly in theory and practice, as well as according to region, and their fundamental intent was to modernize and not to magyarize, although the latter frequently occurred; for example, the Saxons suffered much less from these policies than their Swabian neighbors to the north, many of whom lost their native German language to Hungarian. Due to their strong tradition of private schooling and effective neighborhood associations, the Saxons were not, however,

[2] Michaela Nowotnick points out that this inward-drawing tendency is visible in interwar publications, and it will furthermore be revealed in this chapter. See "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*. Siebenbürgen und seine Beziehungen zum literarischen Leben in Deutschland (1907-1939)," MA Thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2007, p. 10.

greatly affected by Magyarization.[3] In a recent publication, Jonathan Kwan stresses that the Saxons faced a "dilemma" under Hungarian rule in that they "desir[ed] to remain linguistically and ethnically German while living as loyal citizens of a Magyar-dominated Hungary."[4] This characterization demonstrates the dual Saxon emphasis on cultural preservation and external loyalty. In this regard, the situation in which the Saxons found themselves following the First World War under Romanian rule was similar to their prewar status under Hungarian rule.

While Saxon claims of Hungarian oppression may be exaggerated, it is evident that the Romanian populations of the Dual Monarchy suffered more under Hungarian rule than did their Saxon neighbors, largely due to the fact that they did not possess the strong social institutions and statuses that protected the Saxon community during this period. To some extent, therefore, there was a shared sentiment of Hungarian oppression between the Romanians and Saxons which affected Romanian minority policy-making when it came to organizing the newly united territories; Lóránt Tilkovszky writes that "in order to inhibit [irredentist] efforts [among newly acquired minorities], the governments of the Little Entente pursued a split nationalities policy and … granted a relatively more advantageous situation to the German minorities than to the Hungarians."[5] These liberties were recognized and appreciated by the Saxon populations, and facilitated their loyalty vis-à-vis

[3] Thus the argument sometimes made that the Saxons welcomed a union with Romania after the First World War because of their negative experience under Hungarian rule is not entirely tenable. On this point, see e.g. Bernhard Böttcher, "Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden? Kriegerdenkmäler und Heldenkult bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen nach 1918," in Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth, eds., *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa*, Volume 107 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2006), p. 60. See also Zsolt K. Lengyel *Auf der Suche nach dem Kompromiß: Ursprünge und Gestalten des frühen Transsilvanismus 1918-1928*, Volume 41 of Studia Hungarica (Munich: Verlag Ungarisches Institut, 1993).

[4] Jonathan Kwan, "Transylvanian Saxon Politics, Hungarian State Building and the Case of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein (1881–82)," *English Historical Review* CXXVII (2012): 592-624.

[5] Lóránt Tilkovszky, "Die Frage der politischen Zusammenarbeit der deutschen und ungarischen Minderheiten im Donaubecken, in den Staaten der Kleinen Entente," in *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa*, p. 403.

the Romanian state. In the immediate postwar period of 1918 and 1919, it was expected that the policy of the Romanians towards their minorities would be fair, and that the years to come—while perhaps challenging in the beginning—would be happy and calm.

a. The Saxons as Bearers of Culture

In light of the political trust they placed in the Romanian government following the First World War, the Saxon notions of self-preservation and nationalism maintained the form that they had for the past decades and centuries: social and cultural. In fact, Saxon leaders responsible for political decision-making in the community, such as Hans Otto Roth, never for a moment presumed that political power was the mainstay of the Saxon nation. In June 1919, just months after the Mediaş Declaration of Annexation to Romania,[6] Roth conceded to the readership of the newly established journal *Ostland*:

> The basis of German existence in the East has never been external political power … The Germans of the East have been under the sovereignty of Hungarians, Russians, Turks, Romanians, Serbians, and Austrians, but they have never reigned over a state themselves, and they will never be able to. This insight provides us with internal security that not only makes conducting politics easier, but also strengthens the self-assurance of the nation. Our existence is safeguarded exclusively through our inner values.[7]

Here, Roth does not identify political institutions as the source of Saxon strength, although, to be sure, the Saxons had a longstanding political tradition in Transylvania. Instead, the "inner values" of the community are recognized as the spiritual and national buffer against external pressures. This emphasis on inner values supports the idea that nationalism among

[6] The *Mediascher Anschlusserklärung* was the first official declaration of the Saxons as a community in January 1919 to pledge their loyalty to the new Romanian state, made in the town of Mediaş (German: Mediasch; Hungarian: Medgyes). It reinforced the Romanian resolution made at Alba Iulia (German: Karlsburg; Hungarian: Gyulafehérvár) just two months before, when the Romanians of Transylvania declared their desire to be unified with the Old Kingdom provinces. For the text of the *Mediascher Anschlusserklärung*, see Ernst Wagner, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1191-1975*, Volume 1 of Schriften zur Landeskunde Siebenbürgens (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1976), p. 266-268. For a short overview of the meeting of the Saxon *Nationalrat*, see Andreas Möckel, *Umkämpfte Volkskirche: Leben und Wirken des evangelisch-sächsischen Pfarrers Konrad Möckel (1892-1965)*, Volume 42 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011), p. 25-28.

[7] Hans Otto Roth, "Politische Rundschau," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 33-36.

Saxon intellectuals was not linked to politics, but to a spiritual status embodied by the cultural and social institutions of the community. Roth frequently contributed not just to *Ostland*, but also to the *SDT* and other Saxon publications during the interwar period, and it was his commitment to the traditional institutions of the Saxon nation that dominated internal Saxon politics until well into the 1920s.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hans Otto Roth (1890-1953) was a contemporary of Rudolf Brandsch, and they shared many of the same political ambitions. Yet while Brandsch was a teacher by profession, Roth, ten years Brandsch's junior, was a lawyer, trained in Vienna, Berlin, Zurich, and Budapest. A further difference between the two men is that Roth's rise to power was not as steep as Brandsch's, as he was born into an influential upper middle class family from Sighişoara.[8] Thus it was not quite as difficult for him to work himself into the important roles that he inhabited in the community. In 1917, at the age of 27, he put his skills to use to advocate the rights of the Saxons. In addition to becoming a politician, he also frequently served as a senator and as the main lawyer (*Hauptanwalt*) for both the Central Committee (*Zentralausschuss*) and the Lutheran Church.

Harald Roth describes Hans Otto Roth as a "pragmatic" figure who "placed his dealings entirely at the service of his own [Saxon] people"; this is in direct opposition to the charges made against Brandsch, who was often accused of pursuing self-serving aims.[9] Roth, by contrast, was described by his contemporaries as "a man of extraordinary talent, a political head of the greatest quality, with a firm regard for decisiveness and possibility," in

[8] Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen 1919*-1933, Volume 22 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 74. German: Schäßburg; Hungarian: Segesvár.
[9] Ibid., p. 75.

spite of his vain streak.[10] For example, Roth was not solely a political figure, and also took part in the industrial and economic development of Transylvania. As a politician, he was extremely involved in the Saxon *Volksrat*, or National Council, and was to a large extent responsible for the political direction of loyalty to Romania taken by the council following the First World War. In spite of their differences in character, Roth and Brandsch nevertheless shared many political aims: importantly, both were resistant to the rise of National Socialist ideas within the community, although they eventually had to give way to them by early 1930s when it was clear that their traditional means of Saxon cultural preservation were overruled.[11] Furthermore, both advocated that a solution to Saxon predicament be found in Romania, and fervently worked to maintain the Saxon community within the Transylvanian homeland, in contrast to younger generations of Saxons who began to look to Germany for fulfillment. As will be explored in a later chapter,[12] their attachment to the Transylvanian homeland was in part due to their belief in the pseudo-spiritual values of the region and its particular local culture which helped to distinguish the Saxons from other German communities in Europe.

Indeed, this belief was a later reincarnation of the attachment to Saxon inner values demonstrated in Roth's quotation above. If Roth's tone regarding the distinctiveness of Saxon inner values does not exactly translate into an implication of cultural superiority, the words of Rudolf Brandsch writing in the same opening volume of *Ostland* make these sentiments manifestly clear. Brandsch encourages his Saxon brethren to fulfill their duty not only to fellow Germans in Transylvania, but also to the Romanian state:

[10] Ibid., p. 77. Roth's source: Archiv des Siebenbürgen-Instituts (Gundelsheim am Neckar), Gustav Rösler: Aus meinem Leben, Vol. 1, p. 194f.
[11] This will be dealt with in the following chapter, which deals with the internal dissensions characterizing the Saxon community in the interwar period.
[12] This will be investigated in Chapter Five, which deals with the turn of the Saxon community to the German *Reich* and persisting notions of Transylvanian regionalism.

> It is not only about maintaining the most valuable German national virtue, not only about an obligation that we owe to ourselves, our future, and our entire people, but it also concerns an important, beautiful, human duty that above all consists in revealing the wonderful treasure of our German culture to the new state in which we live. It means retying torn bonds of friendship and weaving new relations. All of these duties, if successfully carried out, will be of use to and a blessing to not only us, but also to the state to which we will belong as good citizens in the future.[13]

In reading these lines, the confidence with which prominent Saxon intellectuals viewed the future in June 1919 is what stands out. Not only does preservation of institutions not seem to be a looming issue, the Saxons see it as their duty to enlighten their new neighbors with the long tradition of "German national virtue." Both Roth and Brandsch touted the same self-assured notion of cultural nationalism, acting as if they were evangelizing missionaries of Saxon culture. It is important to note that both of their articles appear in the inaugural issue of the interwar journal *Ostland*, marking the Saxonness and stubborn optimism that would characterize its first short publication run, from 1919-1921.

Like *Ostland*, the *SDT* contained frequent references to the importance of culture in the Saxon community. Considering it their responsibility as the leading Saxon daily paper to address domestic affairs, *SDT* editors often responded to criticisms of the Saxon community that had appeared in the Romanian press. One such article from a Romanian paper in mid-1919 had expressed suspicions about the Saxon cultural agenda, accusing journals like *Ostland* of harboring Pan-German aims because they facilitated cultural collaboration with Germany. In September 1919, just months after his first address to *Ostland*'s readers, Hans Otto Roth this time utilized the *SDT* to defend the Saxon notion of cultural nationalism to a Romanian readership that felt threatened by its cultural presence in the new state:

> We do not want to be "colonists with a privileged status," but rather citizens with equal rights … Our ultimate goal is not political mastery … but simply the maintenance and development of German national character. In this sense, we are also concerned with the general German question, and will continue to be as long as there is a German cultural nation to which we belong. Does it not make sense for us to acknowledge the [international] German cultural community if we view ourselves as German? This commitment to the

[13] Rudolf Brandsch, "Zunkunftsfragen des Ostdeutschtums," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 27-28.

> German cultural community could never become a political threat to the Romanian state … The future will prove that the Romanian state obtained loyal citizens and that the liberties which we confidently expect were not given in vain.[14]

It is unsurprising that the Saxons and Romanians were not on the same page when it came to sizing up each other's postwar aims. Romania, soon to pursue highly politicized reforms concerned with ethnic, educational, linguistic, institutional, and territorial homogenization, naturally suspected the Saxons of similar goals, while the Saxons continued to maintain the cultural definitions of nationalism that they had for centuries. *Volksrat* leaders were too aware of their numerically weak situation to attempt the irredentist goals that their Hungarian countrymen were more prone to. Articles such as the one above appeared frequently in the *SDT*, as signs of reassurance to the Romanian state that the Saxon nation remained politically loyal in spite of their determination to preserve their social and cultural institutions.

However, the self-preservation policy pursued by the Saxons was not as simple as declarations of national unity and cultural superiority. The means for spreading German culture and carrying out the universal duties which would benefit both the Saxon and Romanian nations were through rigid social organization: In the words of Rudolf Brandsch, "Organization is life" ("*Organisation ist Leben*"[15]). Brandsch and Roth were not such naïve statesmen as to think that the inner values and superior culture of the Saxons could alone maintain their existence within the Romanian state; mobilization was also necessary. Throughout the early 1920s, the *SDT* emphasized a few key means to upholding the Saxon cultural nation: fortification of the schools, fortification of the church, and, most importantly, maintenance of national and cultural unity within the community.

[14] Hans Otto Roth, "Die Zeitschrift 'Ostland,'" *SDT*, Vol. 46. Nr. 13955, 14 September 1919, p. 1-2.
[15] Rudolf Brandsch, "Zunkunftsfragen des Ostdeutschtums," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 27-28.

b. Preservation of the Confessional Schools and the Church

As press reports reveal, the Saxon schools were not so much in need of renewal as they were in need of funding.[16] Even the wealthier Saxons were facing a severe economic crisis as the miserable exchange rates from the Hungarian Crown to the new Romanian Lei left the state of their pocketbooks for the worse. Thus the ideal, or theoretical, conceptions of self-preservation through institutional preservation collided with the everyday practicalities brought on by the situation in the new Romanian state, forcing the Saxons to resort to fundraising means and "voluntary donations to come to the aid of the church" and schools. For, as the *SDT* proclaimed in March 1919, "If our church and schools are in danger, the core and central hub of our entire cultural life [will come] under attack."[17] While these voluntary donations may have been forthcoming in the immediate postwar years, by 1922, there were still calls for more, and the financial situation had markedly worsened by this point, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Despite financial woes the Saxon community was happy at least during this period to maintain control of its schools, a condition that they had set for joining Greater Romania in January 1919, and one that also gave them control over the use of the German language. Cristian Cercel emphasizes "that in the first years of the interwar period, namely from 1918-1924, there was practically a void of legislation in the educational field, which led to the complete authority of the Church in the educational affairs."[18] He cites Walter König's study of the Saxon school system, which provides more specific information: namely, "instruction in Hungarian language was cancelled and at the beginning … it was not replaced by instruction in Romanian language. The entire curriculum was in the mother

[16] See, e.g. "Zur Vorbildung unserer Volksschullehrer," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13787, 20 February 1919, p. 5.
[17] "Eine Volksabgabe für die sächsiche Kirche," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13798, 5 March 1919, p 1.
[18] Cristian Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 17-18.

tongue, according to the educational plan of the ecclesiastical authorities and all acts and prints were in German language."[19] The fact that this curricular freedom in private schools lasted until 1924 was remarkable considering the other reforms—political, agrarian, and industrial—being implemented by the Romanian government. Nevertheless, Saxon leaders kept a close eye on the evolution of Romanian state schools, as there were fears that this control might not always be maintained. Indeed, in 1921, Saxon senator Adolf Schullerus explained with concern some of the changes that were set to occur in state schools in Romania, but concluded that "the repercussions of the draft legislation only concern us in so far as they become law in our own schools," something that was not likely to occur.[20] Still, Schullerus was somewhat nervous about the wording of the draft, calling for it to be clarified to explicitly exclude confessional schools. Countless articles appear in the *SDT* in the early 1920s stressing the importance of supporting the confessional schools, and the Romanian school reforms of the mid 1920s, which did affect the Saxon school system, merely served to increase these efforts.

Considering the role of the church as the social web binding the community together, it is somewhat surprising to note that throughout the 1920s, the *SDT* seemed to place more emphasis on the preservation of the confessional schools than on that of the church. But it should be remembered that control of the schools determined the quality of the "new blood," or *Nachwuchs* of the Saxon community. Because children represented the future, they had therefore to be cared for, and not by the Romanian state, but by Saxon teachers who were themselves trained in Saxon institutions. Thus there was a concerted

[19] Walter König, "Das Schulwesen der Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Zwischenkriegszeit" in *Siebenbürgen Zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, quoted in Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 17-18. Translated by Cristian Cercel.
[20] Senator D. Schullerus, "Der Gesetzentwurf über die staatlichen Anstalten des Volksunterrichts," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14430, 3 June 1921, p. 1-2.

effort to provide for the needs of the schools within the Saxon community. The church, by contrast, was not as vulnerable to external threats (such as lack of funding or state reforms) as the schools, which is one explanation for the dearth of articles concerning it in the early interwar period. It was clear that the German language would continue to be used in services and that Saxons would attend church as long as it was still in existence. The future of the confessional schools could not be so easily taken for granted: if parents could not pay for the schools, their children would not be able to attend them, thus endangering the survival of the German language and Saxon educational tradition. Furthermore, if there was no funding for the schools from the side of the state and the parish, then they must be shut down, with similar consequences. Although the church, too, faced severe financial difficulties, its existence was in some form or another ensured by the attendance of its members, and not purely by economic stability. Thus it was more crucial for the *SDT* to emphasize the financial needs of the confessional schools in the early interwar period than those of the church. One aspect of Saxon society that was not neglected however was the importance of preserving a unified national character within the Saxon community; this became particularly important as the economic difficulties in Romania increased and social dissenters began to voice challenges to the conservative *Volksrat* which had long dominated Saxon institutions.

c. Cultural Einheit and Its Political Implications

Some of the most frequent articles appearing in the *SDT* during 1918-1923, with the exception of regular political and economic updates, were those encouraging the Saxon nation to remain culturally, spiritually, and politically unified. Echoing the opinions of the *Volksrat*, editors of the *SDT* interpreted national unification, or *Einheit*, as the key to national self-preservation. Similar to the church and schools, Saxon national unification was

viewed as a sort of institution in its own right. An *SDT* article in June 1919 reflects this parallel:

> The only reason that we were able to pull through the many centuries was because we had already begun to develop a unified national character within the first decades of our settlement in the new homeland … The only true threat to our existence would occur if we were unable to preserve this historically imprinted skill in our new circumstances.[21]

Naturally leaders of the Saxon community did not assume that this unified national character would remain immutable through all generations, but they did assume that it would retain the same fundamental values that marked it as Saxon: namely its unique social, confessional, and linguistic identity. The belief was that the Saxon nation had survived political changes in the past because it had preserved this character, and could survive the new changes following the First World War.

However, Saxon *Volksrat* leaders were relying on the assumption that the economic and political situation in Romania would improve with the coming years, an assumption which, as time wore on, was revealed to be optimistic at best. The centralizing reforms implemented after the war, meant to modernize the new territories, led to regular state inspections of confessional schools, funding cuts for private schools, new exam regulations, as well as extensive land reforms and administrative changes.[22] Perhaps most devastating were the latter, as they converted the autonomous counties of the Habsburg Empire into small territories responsible to the central government in Bucharest. The government went to great lengths to make the new divisions on the basis of ethnic lines in order to balance out the social inequalities previously created by German and Hungarian dominance in certain counties. This is not to imply that the Bucharest government was acting deliberately and malevolently towards their minorities. They were simply acting in a manner that best suited

[21] "Sächsischer Lebensmut," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13869, 4 June 1919, p. 1.
[22] Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 21.

their centralizing aims. In so doing, however, they undermined the unity of the Saxon nation, which led to renewed efforts on the part of the Saxons to maintain it.

In 1919 the Saxons were unprepared for the lengths to which the Romanian regime would go to centralize the new territories by means of agrarian, educational, religious, and political reforms.[23] This was largely due, as suggested above, to the differences in the Romanian and Saxon conceptions of nationalism. While the Romanians sought to create a consolidated, homogenized state, the Saxons continued to pursue a cultural notion of nationalism which preserved their traditional institutions and national unity. The Saxon misunderstanding of Romanian aims becomes clear in the following citation:

> The previous authorities [the Hungarians] needed us as political auxiliaries. To the new ones [the Romanians], we no longer are needed [in this role]. Yet they need us in a greater measure as cultural workers … It is in this value that our strength and future prospects lie … Gradually the Romains will be convinced that it is more to their advantage to have us Saxons as collaborators and helpers than to gain a little bit of territory [*Lebensraum*] by repressing us.[24]

Although it may not have been the explicit intent of the Romanians to "repress" their minorities, they were quick to view Saxon cultural mobilization as capable of leading to political mobilization. In some ways, the Romanian government was right to recognize the harmful potential the "unified national character" of the Saxons might have in future years. In September 1921, for example, an article appeared in the *SDT* in response to criticisms made by the Romanian *Gazeta Transilvaniei* that the Saxons were nurturing political ties with Germany by inviting several German professors to summer courses in Sibiu. The Romanian gazette suspected that the visit of the Germans to the Saxon community "represented nothing more than an opportunity to accentuate [the] warm atmosphere of joint

[23] These centralizing tendencies are overviewed in Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), Chapter 1, "The State on the Cultural Offensive," p. 29-48.
[24] "Sächsischer Lebensmut," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13869, 4 June 1919, p. 1.

national citizenship" existing between the two nations.[25] In defiant response to these accusations of political disloyalty, the author of the *SDT* article emphasized that the ties between the Saxons and Germany were bonds of cultural unity: the Saxons "want to remain in close spiritual and cultural association with Germany and German Austria," recognizing the "great, mighty, and beautiful [things] that the German spirit produced and created." As such, an abandonment of the Saxon German heritage was unthinkable. Furthermore, the author implied the existence of a unified national character binding the Saxon nation to the German one: "The Saxons are in the habit of continually and ubiquitously … accentuating and rejoicing in the fact that they are German, with heart and soul, … in their thinking, feeling, and dealing."[26] Although this article was more emphatic than most appearing in the *SDT*, it demonstrates why the Romanian authorities might rightly have feared the implications of a unified and mobilized Saxon nation. Their fear was that Saxon goals of cultural nationalism might quickly become politicized if ties to Germany were further cultivated. Whether cultural or political, links to Germany could entail danger for the Romanian state. Thus in some ways, the Romanians may have been more forward-thinking in their fear that this cultural character would eventually transform into the political nationalism of the 1930s.

II. Romanian Modernizing Projects

When viewed in light of Saxon historiography, especially in light of contemporary interwar sources, implementation of the agrarian, school, industrial, religious, and political reforms was often seen as a deliberate attempt by the Romanian government to redistribute

[25] The gazette further accused the Saxons of harboring a sense of cultural superiority, implying that they thought they were too good for the existing Romanian universities (probably a just accusation).
[26] "Nörgelei," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14510, 7 September 1921, p. 1.

social and political power along ethnic lines. Victoria Brown combats this view in defense of the idea that these reforms were actually meant to modernize the country. She writes:

> In the labyrinthine world of Rumanian politics, it was easy enough to find striking examples of corruption in high places and low, year after year, both before and after World War I, and to dismiss the country's parliamentary form of government as a sham or as an imitation of the West. But in 1919 many Rumanians had reason to expect the future to be brighter than the past.[27]

Keith Hitchins reinforces this viewpoint, arguing that "An essential aspect of nation-building was the creation of new political institutions."[28] The creation of new institutions—social and political alike—would of course have a bearing on ethnic elements to some extent due to Romania's diverse new ethnic makeup. While many Saxons interpreted the concept of Romanian "nation-building" as negative because it had the potential to interfere with their own national aims, it can—and should—be interpreted as a neutral process instituted with the formation of any new nation. Because of the particular makeup of the new Romanian government,[29] however, which, as has already been noted, was characterized by disorganization and dissension, the neutral process of nation-building soon devolved into efforts to modernize the nation on the one hand and to socially and ethnically homogenize it on the other. The competition between conservative Romanian politicians who largely wished to preserve Romania's agricultural character and the dominant National Liberals who desired to industrialize and modernize based on a western model led to a conflict of interests that ran counter to the actual social makeup of the country. Hitchins points to "a fatal flaw in the political structure itself—the middle-class character of the constitutions of 1866 and 1923, which had been drawn up for a country in which the middle class

[27] Victoria F. Brown, "The Movement for Reform in Rumania after World War I: The Parliamentary Bloc Government of 1919-1920," *Slavic Review* 38, Nr. 3 (1979), p. 456.
[28] Hitchins, "Romania," p. 1067.
[29] Franz Sz. Horváth gives a useful brief overview of the political system in Greater Romania in *Zwischen Ablehnung und Anpassung: Politische Strategien der ungarischen Minderheitselite in Rumänien 1931-1940*, Volume 50 of Studia Hungarica (Munich: Verlag Ungarisches Institut, 2007), p. 45-49.

constituted only a narrow stratum of the population." He continues, "As a consequence … the operation of sophisticated political machinery lay not with an enlightened and experienced citizenry but was left to a small circle of professional politicians and a peasant majority lacking in education and experience whom the politicians could manipulate at will."[30] Thus the difficulties lay not only with incorporation of ethnic minorities, but also with incorporation of the masses of Romanian peasants into a government predicated on modernization via reform and industrialization. Because the various social strata happened to be divided along ethnic lines, the situation was further complicated, as will be revealed through an examination of the 1921 agrarian reform and the 1923 constitution.

a. The 1921 Agrarian Reform

One of the most pronounced signs of the socially and ethnically homogenizing aims of Romanian nationalism, as well as of the complete centralized control the Romanians desired to have over their newly acquired territories, was the Transylvanian land reform, planned already since 1913[31] but finally enacted in summer 1921. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Saxons had long held territorial rights in Transylvania, and much of the *Königsboden* was made up of church property. Furthermore, Saxon landowners were traditionally wealthier than their Romanian neighbors, who often did not even own property. Thus the planned reform had long been the focus of the Saxon press, with particularly those wealthier members of the community attempting to predict its ramifications. These articles demonstrate that even the enthusiasm of optimistic contributors was beginning to flag, as it was feared that the results would be to the advantage the ethnic

[30] Ibid., p. 1068.
[31] Vasile Ciobanu, "Die Minderheitenfrage in den Programmen Rumänischer Parteien während der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Minderheit und Nationalstaat*, ed. Harald Roth, Volume 31 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), p. 62.

Romanians at the cost of Saxon territory. However, as in earlier years, frequent articles still appeared in the *SDT* urging the Saxons not to give up hope in the Romanian government, often identifying enduring hope as an anchor of the community.[32] An article in mid-July 1921, published just a few weeks after debates over the agrarian form began in parliament, belies the fears, but also the resolution of the Saxons regarding the imminent changes:

> We understood that the reform had to be carried out, and we resigned ourselves to it. The parliamentary decision was made that the [reform] should be left in the hands of Romanian representatives. The representatives of the cohabiting nations can only co-advise, clarify, and caution; they will not be given a decisive voice in the decision-making. The proceedings of the agrarian reform in the Old Kingdom already suggested to us that radical attitudes would strongly come to the fore in the Transylvanian reform … because much of the land that is being prospected for expropriation in Transylvania is owned by non-Romanians.[33]

The frequent reports on the progress of the debates published in summer 1921 demonstrate that the Saxon fears were not misplaced. When the reform finally went through, the results were viewed as disastrous for the community. Approximately 20,000 hectares of the community's corporate landholdings were parceled up and distributed among their Transylvanian neighbors, mostly Romanian peasants, to the detriment of church communities, confessional schools, and individual families alike.[34]

Although it was not until 1923 that a more pronounced anti-Romanian shift can be clearly identified in the mainstream Saxon press, the agrarian reforms sparked a deluge of negative sentiments that implied the need for a political nationalism to supplement the cultural version that had previously existed. In early July, Dr. Siegfried Klokner invoked "the necessity of true self-administration, with as few limitations as possible" in the Saxon counties. Such a government, he wrote, "should have a modern administration adapted to local conditions, should be fair and capable of fulfilling its tasks; it should work quickly but

[32] See e.g., "Des Hoffens müde?," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14443, 19 June 1921, p. 1.
[33] "Gefährliche Schlagworte," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14462, 13 July 1921, p. 1.
[34] Katherine Verdery, "The Unmaking of an Ethnic Collectivity: Transylvania's Germans," *American Ethnologist* 12 (February 1985), p. 72.

also well, and should, as far as possible, eliminate all despotic individuals with their corrupt outgrowths.[35] It was exactly this more politicized attitude within the Saxon community that the Romanian government feared. Of course, Klokner's pronouncements were representative neither of the entire Saxon nation, nor even of the *SDT*, which also contained articles proclaiming that autonomy in this form was not desirable, and that irredentist aims were far from the wishes of the small Saxon community.[36]

The article cited above ended on a decidedly pessimistic note that demonstrated the dawning recognition of Saxon leaders that perhaps the postwar situation was not to improve; uncharacteristically, it went so far as to accuse the Romanian government of harboring blatant ethnic aims in implementing the reforms:

> Indeed, [we] all knew well that the question of nationality was important to the Transylvanian agrarian form. But, from those in positions of authority, the social nature [of the reform] was always emphasized, in which no difference was made between citizens of different ethnic groups. In the first session of the agrarian committee, Representative Chilezan, the delegate of the Transylvanian ruling party, spoke candidly. He openly emphasized the national character of the agrarian reform, which is intended to compensate for all of the injustices suffered by the Romanians over the centuries.

The author claimed that historical injustices have no place in political decision-making, as "social and national injustices have been committed since the foundations of the world." Such injustices "should be atoned for, but through a gradual development, not through a new injustice that serves to benefit the formerly disadvantaged." He concluded in an ominous tone that the desire to level all injustices could be fulfilled only through the implementation of communism, one of the most dreaded solutions for both the conservative Saxons and leading Romanians alike.[37]

Indeed, this warning against the road leading to communism was not only meant for Romanian readers; the *SDT* contained frequent articles that implied an internal enemy—the

[35] Dr. Siegfried Klokner, "Kritik des Verwaltungsreformentwurfs," *SDT* Vol. 48, Nr. 14456, p. 1-2.
[36] See, e.g. Dr. K. W., "Siebenbürgen," *SDT*, Vol. 49, Nr. 14721, 29 June 1922, p. 1-2.
[37] "Gefährliche Schlagworte," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14462, 13 July 1921, p. 1.

Social Democrats—who threatened to divide the community from within. Even more than by external threats in the early postwar years, conservative Saxons felt endangered by the internationally-minded Social Democrats who tended towards class, rather than ethnic, collaboration, in radical defiance of traditional Saxon practice. Thus, the theme of maintaining national unity in this context will again be raised in the following chapter, which deals with inter-communal relations. In any case, the voices of the *SDT* reveal that the agrarian reform constituted an external threat, and its outcome permanently tainted Saxon-Romanian relations in the decade to come.[38]

Ironically, writes Hitchins, "agriculture remained the foundation of the economy until World War II," and "not even the extensive land reforms of the 1920s significantly altered the traditional patterns of production, despite clear evidence that they impeded progress." Furthermore, "The reforms that governments did introduce in the interwar period, such as support for cooperatives, an expansion of rural credit, and the promotion of industrial crops, benefited almost exclusively the relatively small number of prosperous peasants." [39] Thus in implementing the reforms, the Romanian government served to isolate ethnic minorities such as the Saxons without even achieving their desired aims for modernization and industrialization.

b. The 1923 Constitution

Despite occasional events that reminded, or at least persuaded, Saxon leaders that they had made the right decision in pledging their loyalty to Greater Romania in 1918, the drafting of the new Romanian constitution in 1923 nailed the lid on the coffin of Saxon optimism and led to redoubled efforts at national self-preservation. Committees comprised

[38] "Unsere Abgeordneten und die siebenbürgische Agrarreform," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14465, p. 1.
[39] Hitchins, "Romania," p. 1068-1069.

of representatives of the Romanian state, including several Saxons such as Hans Otto Roth and Rudolf Brandsch, began meeting in late 1922 to draft the new constitution, which was enacted in March 1923. Proceedings were rocky from the beginning according to the Saxon portrayal in the *SDT*, which followed the progress of the drafting with rapt attention. The importance of the new constitution not only to the Saxons, but also to the other minorities living in Romania, was paramount, as its legislation would mandate the status of religion, education, and language in the new state in the following decades.

Legal experts such as Hans Otto Roth were particularly conscientious about the wording of the new constitution, as the Saxons feared that every ambiguous turn of phrase might be used by the Romanians in order to support their own, homogenizing form of nationalism. For example, as reported by the *SDT*, outrage ensued when the following wording was suggested for Article 5 of the constitution: "All Romanians, without differentiation of origin, language, and religion, will enjoy complete public freedoms, guaranteed through the constitution and laws: freedom of conscience, freedom of education, of the press, of assembly, etc." Although this statement seemed relatively harmless, Hans Otto Roth was quick to decry the article as "unacceptable and meaningless" and to point out that the term "Romanian citizens" must be used in place of "all Romanians," as the latter could be construed as referring only to *ethnic* Romanians and not specifically to *minorities*.[40] However, the ruling party was not so easily persuaded, and Roth's suggestions were not taken, and indication of the entire constitutional proceedings.

In addition to questions of ethnicity, those of religion, education, and language were also of central focus in the *SDT*'s analysis of the constitutional drafting, as was to be expected in light of the early postwar program of Saxon cultural nationalism. For example,

[40] "Die Minderheitenfrage in der Verfassung. Reden des Abgeordneten Dr. Hans Otto Roth im großen Verfassungsausschuß," *SDT*, Vol. 49, Nr. 14867, 17 December 1922, p. 2.

there was great concern over the January 1923 wording of Article 22, which described the "freedom and protection of all *cults* by the state,"[41] rather than of all *churches*. The fear was that the Lutheran Church—naturally not viewed as a "cult" in the eyes of its congregation—would thus be misrepresented in future applications of the law. Descriptions of the schools in Article 24 were similarly viewed as "tenuous" by Saxon representatives. Importantly, the *SDT* reports that "the question of language is only handled in the constitutional draft to the extent that Article 119 states, 'the Romanian language is the official language of the Romanian state,'" thus entirely neglecting the use of minority languages.[42] Of course, some of these concerns were improved upon in the following months before the constitution was enacted in March 1923, but Roth's words in mid-January revealed the prevailing attitude among conservative Saxons: "Today one must almost laugh when remembering the eagerness and belief with which we hoped for self-determination."[43] Nevertheless the continued emphasis on these issues of education, religion, and language in the Saxon press demonstrates that a cultural notion of self-preservation was still viewed as the means of ensuring Saxon national continuity. By ensuring that their cultural institutions were protected by the new laws, it was assumed that their national unity would similarly be sustained.

It is notable that the disappointments with the Romanian government, clearly expressed in the *SDT* during this period, did not lead to an abrupt change in tactic as might be expected. Although many individuals did call out for social and political reforms within the community itself, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the mainstream *Volksrat*

[41] Emphasis added.
[42] "Die Shlußverhandlungen des großen Verfassungsausschusses. Kirche und Schule, Vereinigungsrecht und Sprachenfrage" (Report of the 'Lux' Telegraphic Agency, Bucharest, January 5), *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14882, 9 January 1923, p. 1-3.
[43] "Rede des Abg. Dr. Hans Otto Roth über die politische Lage. Gehalten in den Wählerversammlungen von Reußmarkt und Mühlbach am 17. und 18. Januar," *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14895, 24 January 1923, p. 1-2.

leaders such as Roth continued their strategy of cultural preservation. The question that naturally arises is why this is the case. Why, despite clear disappointments in the new government and its laws, did the Saxons continue their course of cultural nationalism in the following years? After tracing the years following 1923, which can be divided into two periods from 1924-1928, and 1928-1935, this matter will be handled in the conclusion of this chapter.

III. 1924-1928: "Waiting for Better Times" – Disillusion and Heightened Institutional Preservation

> If [our wishes are not granted], we have no other choice but to protest, reject this constitution, and wait for better times. We will never relinquish our rights, and we will never cease to demand them before the entire world. Until now we have been wary of seeking aid outside of the borders of the nation, at the League of Nations. Even today, we do not want to tread this path. To the contrary, we earnestly and urgently plead with all the [authorities] of … our nation [Romania] to not force us to take this path.[44]

With these words, Rudolf Brandsch foreshadowed the policy of the Saxon mainstream actors in the mid-1920s. Unwilling to give up their cultural institutions, yet also unwilling—at least at this point—to turn to the League of Nations for external aid, they renewed the policy of cultural nationalism that had characterized their action in the immediate postwar years. Yet the optimism that had marked the publications of 1918-1923 subsided significantly—although not completely—and the voices of new generations, in particular those of young men returning from war, began to infiltrate the traditional Saxon media outlets with the publication of journals like Heinrich Zillich's *Klingsor*.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, just a brief look into *Klingsor* reveals its differences from *Ostland*, which had ceased publication already in 1921, only to begin again in 1926. Despite their common content, *Klingsor* was infused with a new set of political ideas that was more critical of the Romanian state and of traditional Saxon policy

[44] "Die Minderheitenrechte in der neuen Verfassung. Eine Aeßuerung des Abgeordneten Brandsch" (Report from 'Universul,' Bucharest, February 21), *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14921, 24 February 1923, p. 1-2.

than *Ostland* had been, or than the *SDT* was. This was largely due to its editorship under Heinrich Zillich (1898-1988), who belonged to a younger generation of Saxons which, while not desirous of breaking completely away from tradition, was more forward-thinking and eager to implement changes in the community. Born in Braşov in 1898, Zillich also spent his university years abroad, in Berlin. Before founding *Klingsor* in 1924, he worked as a journalist for the *Kronstädter Zeitung*, the *SDT*'s conservative competitor in Braşov. Already in 1940, Walter J. Mueller claimed that Zillich was "the most prolific Transylvanian-German writer," additionally characterizing him as "the most active exponent of *auslanddeutsche* philosophy," in that he developed a philosophy of the role and task of the German poet writing from outside of the *Reich*.[45] Truly, as an author, Zillich wore many different hats, but Stefan Sienerth describes Zillich's work as being "mostly comprised of politically-themed journalistic contributions and reviews, in addition to works of poetry, narrative, and essays."[46] This description also properly characterizes *Klingsor*'s contents, although it is the political content that will be concentrated on here. Zillich was editor of *Klingsor* until 1936 (and its publisher until it ceased publication in 1939), when it came under the leadership of Harald Krasser after Zillich's departure for Germany.[47] The following section will utilize both *Klingsor* and the *SDT*, as well as a few articles from other interwar publications to demonstrate the changing political tone among the Saxons in the period from 1924-1928. Although the same policy of cultural preservation was still pursued, the discontent with Romanian disorganization and corruption, not so manifest in the previous period, was strongly evident in Saxon publications, especially as a generational divide began to be seen in the community.

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[45] Walter J. Mueller, "Heinrich Zillich," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht* 32, Nr. 5 (1940): 198.
[46] Quotation and additional biographical information taken from: Dr. Stefan Sienerth, "Heinrich Zillich," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 590-591.
[47] Michaela Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 71.

a. The Dawn of Regionalism

By this time it was evident to Saxon authors that the problem with the Bucharest government was not so much corruption as disorganization, although many Saxon sources tended to emphasize the former.[48] Generally, as will be revealed below, there was a clear distinction made between the administrative system in the Old Kingdom, and that of Transylvania, which was objectively more efficient and effective. In *Klingsor*, Heinrich Zillich often made this distinction, claiming to empathize with the "honest" Romanians but to have little tolerance for those politicians seeking to centralize the nation-state. He distinguished the respected "Romanian peasant, who leads a simple and honest life" from the "spirit that has infused all Romanian governments indiscriminately" since the formation of Greater Romania, and he admonished the state to learn from the honest life of the peasant so that the different nationalities in Romania can be "not only good citizens, but also friends."[49] This characterization, differentiating the Transylvanian Romanian from the Old Kingdom Romanian, became a common theme in Saxon publications in the mid-1920s and highlights a slight, but important, shift in strategies of self-preservation. The realization was dawning that a greater sense of regional cooperation might be called for to achieve Saxon aims.

Although the defense of Saxon schools and churches still remained a significant focus of the *SDT*'s articles throughout this period, even the more traditional paper began, like *Klingsor*, to differentiate between types of Romanians when identifying the source of

[48] Hans Otto Roth described the lack of organization in Bucharest already in November 1919: "Regrettably, the political parties of Romania have not really been able to pull together any great resolutions. The Transylvanian statesmen, in particular President Dr. Maniu, have unfortunately not managed to unite all political parties into a collective national government … The psychological moment for Romania to establish true statesmanlike politics beyond the petty struggles of the parties has now passed." From: "Politische Rundschau," *Ostland*, Vol. II, Issue 2, November 1919, p. 95-99.

[49] Heinrich Zillich, "An den Herrn Nichifor Crainic!," *Klingsor*, Year 2, Issue 1, January 1925, p. 7.

attacks on these Saxon institutions. In general, it was not Romanians on the whole who were accused of undermining minority establishments, but rather those meddling agents and committee members from the Old Kingdom, who had little or no understanding for the traditional Transylvanian system. In an article simply entitled "The Chaos," for example, the *SDT* described the state of affairs in the ministry of education as follows:

> While a dazzling parade is being flaunted from the exterior, on the interior Angelescu's school legislation has turned into complete chaos, out of which no one can see an escape today. Mountains of dossiers, searches, papers, authorizations, etc. are piling up in the inspectorates and registrar's offices, among the inspectors, vice directors, general directors, and committees. Curriculum drafts, student reports, and test results of all sorts are sent in to be processed, but are misplaced or patched over, trudging forward like a chronic disease … With satisfaction, we hear that a reorganization of the educational administration is planned on the Prussian model. Hopefully then will this absurd centralization be eliminated.[50]

Laced with cynicism, this characterization of the chaos reigning in Bucharest aptly demonstrates the distinction made by Saxons between the former local Transylvanian system and the new centralized one. Furthermore, the Saxon reference to Prussia is not accidental, and points to the gradual shift from their loyal Romanian stance to a German-dominated solution, which will be the focus of Chapter Five.

However, the increasing regionalist perspective did not take on immediately, and was picked up more quickly by the young *Klingsor* circle. While throughout the mid-1920s, *Klingsor* contained a series of semi-humorous articles on "What the Hungarians think of the Transylvanian Saxons,"[51] "What the Transylvanian Romanians think of the Saxons and Hungarians,"[52] and "What the Transylvanian Saxons think of the Romanians,"[53] all written by authors of each respective ethnicity, the *SDT* was far from embracing such a bantering tone when it came to minority collaboration. In some ways, *Klingsor*, as a literary journal,

[50] "Das Chaos," *SDT*, Vol. 55, Nr. 16505, 8 July 1928 (report from beginning of July, Bucharest), p. 2-3.
[51] Dr. Ladislaus Rajka, "Was die Ungarn von den Siebenbürger Sachsen halten," *Klingsor*, Year 3, January-December 1926, p. 212-214.
[52] Dr. Ioan Lemenn, "Was die Siebenbürger Rumänen von den Sachsen und Ungarn halten," *Klingsor*, Year 3, January-December 1926, p. 343-344.
[53] Heinrich Zillich, "Was die Siebenbürger Sachsen von den Rumänen halten," *Klingsor*, Year 3, January-December 1926, p. 384-388.

could afford to be more creative in its articles and toy with the idea of interethnic relations than a newspaper such as the *SDT*, which was more concerned with real matters of policy.

In August 1924, the *SDT* contained an article entitled "Hungarians and Saxons," which discussed the possibility of a long-term political collaboration with the Transylvanian Hungarians, who had long been pushing for the formation of a minority block to supplement their ranks against what they perceived as Romanian domination. Despite their own complaints against Romanian centralization, *Volksrat* leaders were not so eager to take up the offer of Hungarian collaboration, in part because the Hungarians had a reputation as irredentists that the Saxons wanted to avoid, and in part because the Saxon leaders simply felt that the benefits did not outweigh the disadvantages:

> The difference [between Hungarian and Saxon aims] is so great that the arguments for and against … [a collaboration] can only be judged from a specific tactical situation, i.e. on a case by case basis … A coalition is not possible if only one side is willing to make a sacrifice, while the other is not willing to do so.[54]

The caution with which the *SDT*'s contributors proceeded implies that even after disappointment with the Romanian government, Saxon leaders were not willing to take chances with a neighboring minority group whose aims were not wholly in line with their own, as these chances might risk the limited political position they had in the government.

In stark contrast to Austro-Hungarian rule, there were no local elections in Romania until 1925, a phenomenon which severely restricted the Saxons' political power in the new, centralized government. While Saxons could occupy parliamentary seats in Bucharest, local positions largely had to be negotiated with the heads of the Liberal Party. This naturally led to much frustration and resentment on the part of the Saxons. Notably in a *Klingsor* article this time, and not in the *SDT*, Roth discussed "The Political Situation of the Germans in

[54]"Magyaren und Sachsen," *SDT*, Vol. 51, Nr. 15356, 6 August 1924, p. 1 (taken from the *SDT*'s companion title in Cluj, the *Deutsche Bote*, August 2).

Romania" in the most bitter of tones: "Who was the enemy in the agrarian reform? Which party? Which leading personality? [It was] no one individual, [it was] the entire Romanian people, the mentality of the times …"[55] Roth lays the blame of the past seven years on the entire Romanian people, unwilling to differentiate between the regional attitudes that were emerging among other members of the community. This stands in contrast to Zillich's willingness to at least distinguish between the individual members of ethnic groups, i.e. the Romanian peasant, perceived as honest, and the Romanian politician, perceived as treacherous; with such an attitude, the possibility for inter-ethnic collaboration at least remained open for the Saxons. Yet Roth's bitter sentiments were not to last, and he and other *Volksrat* leaders gradually opened up to the idea of regional collaboration.

When examining the press from the period, it becomes clear that this shift in strategy from the more conservative branch of Saxon politics had been a long time coming. One particular incident of a school closing in fall 1924 incited particular outrage from the Saxon leadership and revealed something about Saxon relations with their neighbors in Transylvania. The school in question was in the Braşov district and was closed by a Făgăraş[56] supervisor because, "contrary to ministerial regulations, the school's rector accepted six students of different [i.e. non-Lutheran] confessions into the school: four reformed Hungarians, a Roman Catholic Romanian, and a Roman Catholic German." The regulations were deemed unlawful by the *SDT*, whose reaction was vehement, mourning the "violence done to one of our [Saxon] nation's schools."[57] In particular, outrage was directed against the extensive school reforms of Constantin Angelescu, who was Romanian minister

[55] Dr. Hans Otto Roth, "Die politische Lage der Deutschen in Rumänien," *Klingsor*, Year 2, January-December 1925, p. 190-193.
[56] German: Fogarasch; Hungarian: Fogaras.
[57] Hermann Plattner, "Sperrung einer evang.-sächsischen Schule," *SDT*, Vol. 51, Nr. 15404, 4 October 1924, p. 1.

of education for much of the 1920s.[58] What is particularly of note is that the Lutheran school had been closed because it had been harboring non-Lutheran students. This was a sign both of the Saxon schools' quality and desirability among non-Saxon communities, and of the Saxons' willingness to accept these outsiders. This latter point comes as a bit of a surprise considering the picture of isolationist cultural nationalism in the Saxon community that has been painted up to this point. Although non-Saxons had always attended Lutheran confessional schools in small numbers, the chaotic school reforms following the war drove more to seek refuge in the higher quality Saxon schools. Because they were privately funded and had a long tradition of humanist education, the schools were esteemed by many Transylvanians of all ethnicities.

Naturally, in part the students were accepted because they could pay the tuition, but if conservative Saxon leaders had *exclusively* been advocating an isolationist form of cultural nationalism, these students of foreign confession and ethnicity probably would not have been allowed in. Thus this example demonstrates conservative Saxon spokesmen were combining cultural nationalism and institutional defense with regional loyalties even as early as 1924. Although the *SDT* may have been slower to latch onto regional ideas than their more forward-thinking counterparts at *Klingsor*, even they were aware of the need to look outside of the community for support, whether financial or political.

[58] Angelescu opened an extraordinary number of new schools and attempted to renovate old ones during his tenure. This expansion led to budgetary problems and met with great tension as he attempted to unify the four different schooling systems that existed in the newly united territories of Greater Romania. In this process, significant pressure was exerted on autonomous denominational schools, such as the Saxon Lutheran ones, in the belief that their existence served to divide "sons of the same country who should have the same ideals and aspirations." For an in-depth overview of Angelescu's school reforms, see Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, p. 34-48. Quotation from p. 47, footnote 82. Livezeanu's source: Ministerul instrucțiunii, *Lege*, pp. 167, 191, 198-200.

b. Transylvanism and the Rise of the National Peasant Party

The mid-1920s were soon to witness an increased interest in collaboration outside of the Saxon community's traditional political framework with the rise of the National Peasant Party (NPP). The self-preservation that had found such an outlet in cultural nationalism into the 1920s, while still in practice, was clearly not viewed as sufficient enough to ensure the continuity of the Saxon nation. Even the usually conservative *SDT* followed the gradual rise of the NPP with rapt attention. The formation of a joint party had long been in the works between the National Party of Transylvania[59] and the Peasant Party of the Old Kingdom but had met with several deadlocks over the years. Already in 1924, the *SDT* was reporting the progress of the merge, which was anticipated to create a party large enough to gain a parliamentary majority, and popular enough to garner support from all three ethnicities and various social strata. Throughout 1924, 1925, and 1926, the *SDT* traced the disagreements that kept the two parties apart.[60] Finally, in fall 1926, the parties were finally merged in a decision that was to become the focus of Saxon political strategy for the next several years. By this time, it was not hard to convince even the most conservative Saxons that collaboration was not to be so quickly shunned.

In mid-1926, Karl Hermann Theil, writing for the *SDT*, went so far as to assert that

> centuries of living together, the difficult times experienced together, and … [the experience] of one nation [the Old Kingdom] advancing into the settlement area of another [Transylvania], have drawn the peoples of Transylvania closer together, and led to a certain

[59] Victoria Brown characterizes the Transylvanian National Party, formed in the late-nineteenth century, as having "a very broad social base and embrac[ing] persons with widely differing aims and needs. This diversity of interests, combined with the inevitable loss of the party's original raison d'être once unification was achieved, resulted in a continuing 'identity crisis' for the National Party … Although less radical than the Peasant Party, the National Party supported generally populist, anti-centralist positions." See Victoria F. Brown, "The Movement for Reform in Rumania after World War I," p. 459.

[60] See, e.g. Dr. W. S. "Grundfragen der romänischen Innerpolitik," *SDT*, Vol. 51, Nr. 15373, 26 August 1924, p. 1; "Nationalpartei und Zaranisten. Wieder eine Stockung der Verhandlungen," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15771, 23 January 1926; "Noch keine Entscheidung," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15777, 30 January 1926, p. 1; *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15828; "Die National- und Zaranistenpartei bleiben der Parlamentseröffnung fern. Eine liberal Denkschrift gegen die Vermehrung des Notenumlautes," *SDT*, Vol. 52, Nr. 15892, 23 June 1926, p. 1.

> assimilation of way of thought and character, to the extent that today one can almost speak of a Transylvanian nation, despite existing national and racial differences.[61]

With Theil's proclamation, it becomes clear that the more conservative voices were finally joining the ranks of Saxons who were willing to engage in inter-ethnic collaboration as long as the benefits were mutual for both the Saxons and their fellow Transylvanians.

In particular, Hungarian intellectuals embraced the idea of a unique regional spirit, advocating a philosophy of "Transylvanism," or Transylvanian regionalism.[62] This was an elite-propagated movement that sought to spread itself through literary collaboration between Romanian, Hungarian, and Saxon authors. Several of these collaborations were successful, but did not have the political effects that were hoped for, namely, the creation of an autonomous Transylvania. The Hungarian Transylvanist sentiment is best expressed through the words of Ferenc Albrecht:

> …in Transylvania we can state it as a fact that besides Hungarian, Romanian, and Saxon national consciousness, there exists a Transylvanian consciousness which endows a unique feature—as unique as Transylvania itself—to each nation's consciousness. Transylvanian consciousness is the same for each nation irrespective of ethnic differences. Thus their national characters have common features to this extent.[63]

Although neither the Romanians nor the Saxons of Transylvania were as willing to embrace this spiritual definition, and were not seduced by the quasi-irredentist aims of Hungarian elites, the preoccupation with the Transylvanian homeland became pronounced in the Saxon

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[61] Karl Hermann Theil, "Die Tragik des Siebenbürgertums," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15918, 24 July 1926, p. 1.

[62] Unfortunately there is not room in this study to provide and in-depth analysis of the multiple dimensions of "Transylvanism." For a comprehensive analysis of attempts at Hungarian collaboration with their fellow Transylvanians, written from a Hungarian perspective, see Zsolt K. Lengyel's monograph on the subject: *Auf der Suche nach dem Kompromiß*, esp. Chapter XI, p. 339-382. Other, less developed studies in English on Transylvanian regionalism include: Piroska Balogh, "Transylvanism: Revision or Regionalism?" in *Geopolitics in the Danube Region: Hungarian Reconciliation Efforts, 1848-1998*, eds. Ignác Romsics and Béla K. Király, trans. Nóra Arató, Volume 97 of "Atlantic Studies on Society in Change (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999), p. 243-262; Zsuzsanna Török, "Transylvanism: A Politics of Wise Balance?" in *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europaischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte 19. Jahrhunderts*, Volume 18 of Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 2003, p. 127-144; Kinga-Koretta Sata, "Transylvanism as Minority Ideology: Study of the Hungarian Minority in Romania in the Early 1920s," MA Thesis, Central European University, 1997; Kinga-Koretta Sata, "The Idea of the 'Nation' in Transylvanism," in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian & Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi, Dragoş Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi, and Zoltán Kántor (Budapest: Regio, 2001), p. 42-55.

[63] Ferenc Albrecht quoted in Balogh, "Transylvanism: Revisionism or Regionalism?," p. 257, footnote 13.

publications of the mid-1920s. In *Klingsor*, Saxon author Egon Hajek spoke of Transylvania as "a territorial unit with its own atmosphere, its own living conditions, its air, its spirit, its language." He continued, "True, a Transylvanian language does not exist in terms of sounds that penetrate our ears as articulated, ordered word patterns, but rather as a spiritual center … For the Transylvanian soul [has become] a historical actuality of which all who live on this soil have a part."[64]

The elusive Transylvanian spirit, as might be expected, was never clearly defined, and just months after Hajek's article appeared in *Klingsor*, another definition of "Transylvania's personality" was given by Dr. Ioan Lemenn that contained more clearly delineated racial restrictions. Although Transylvania may have a unique geography and soul, he wrote, there still remained a clear distinction between the region's races: "It is true that the Hungarians are strongly mixed, with Slavs, Jews, Swabians, etc. [But] the Saxons are hardly [mixed at all], and neither are the Romanians. Additionally, there was the centuries-long isolation of the Saxons and the isolation of the Romanians, in particular of the peasants, through suppression and poverty." Lemenn's concern with race demonstrates the prevalence of these issues during the period, not only in Romania, but in all of Europe. Furthermore, it shows that both cultural and political weight was placed on questions of race. Lemenn concluded by encouraging inter-ethnic collaborations in Transylvania: "So let us get to work! First of all in the cultural sphere, but then speedily and unconditionally in the political sphere as well! … The Transylvanian soul must also express itself as Transylvanian—it must become a personality!"[65] Such words, even from a *Klingsor* author, stand in stark contrast to the talk of a unique *Saxon* personality so widespread in the period

[64] Egon Hajek, "Vom siebenbürgischen Menschen," *Klingsor*, Year 3, January-December 1926, p. 137-139.
[65] Dr. Ioan Lemenn, "Die Persönlichkeit Siebenbürgens," *Klingsor*, Year 3, January-December 1926, p. 221-223.

immediately following the war, and demonstrate the shift from an isolationist to a regionalist policy.

IV. 1928-1935: The Collapse of the Romanian Dream

By 1927 and 1928, the chaotic state of Bucharest affairs, combined with the growing popularity of the NPP, had cemented the policy of inter-ethnic collaboration—albeit cautious collaboration—within the mainstream Saxon community. The Old Kingdom administration was openly derided in both the *Kronstädter Zeitung* and the *SDT*. "If important questions of state could be solved with eloquent expressions," quipped the *KZ* in late 1927, "then Romania would long have been a paradise for national minorities."[66] By contrast, the NPP was hailed as the bearer of political liberation from the chaos of the preceding years. In 1928, in Romania's first fair elections since the end of the war, the party triumphed. While campaigning, the party's leader, Iuliu Maniu, had made significant efforts to cooperate with the minorities by seeking parliamentary seats for them, despite the limited number of positions in local government. The victory of the party was predicted to eliminate corruption, bring organization, and to implement long-promised minority rights. "The adjustment of our public life to the demands of legality, honesty, and justice would be a breath of fresh air for our German nation, expanding our lungs and filling our cells. We desire nothing else for the life of our state and for our life within it," declared the *SDT* in November 1928.[67] Were the Saxons naïve to place so much faith in the party's capabilities? Perhaps not. It had always been the wish of the majority of Saxons to maintain their nation in their Transylvanian homeland, and the victory of the NPP offered this opportunity. With its combination of different ethnic and class coalitions, its firm minority rights policies, and

[66] "Worte, nichts als Worte!," *KZ*, Vol. 91, Nr. 291, 23 December 1927.
[67] "Die Regierung Iulius Maniu," *SDT*, Vol. 55, Nr. 16609, 11 November 1928, p. 1.

its popular support, the NPP seemed to provide a solution to many of the problems that had been plaguing the Saxon community—and all of Romania—for the past decade.

Already as early as spring 1929, however, the *SDT* contained reports that the party's policy had merely come to empty words: "Today the time is too far gone for us to glimpse the fulfillment of our long-cherished expectations in these general formulations [put forward by the party]. We expected clearer formulations and more clearly defined resolutions."[68] In summer 1929, even a somewhat more positive report that praised the work of the party—the news that the government had granted confessional schools a loan of 25 Million Lei—was laced with the bitterness of what should have been:

> The figure that was thrown out is absolutely insufficient. It is neither commensurate with the regulations established in the peace treaty and in the constitution that require that the minority schools be supported in the same measure as the Romanian schools, nor is it in any way commensurate with the demands of justice … We sincerely express the wish that the government pursue the path leading to a solution of true justice.[69]

Although the party remained in power, with some interruptions, until 1933, by this point it was clear even to those Saxons who still desired to maintain the Transylvanian homeland that financial and cultural support lay in Germany and not in Romania.

Thus by the end of the decade, twelve years after the end of the First World War, both the cultural nationalism and the regional collaboration strategies of *Volksrat* leaders had failed to achieve the self-preservation of the Saxon nation. Those Saxons who resisted the turn to Germany, still largely represented by the *SDT* until late 1933, instead mandated a policy of waiting in line with the traditional practices of the Saxon nation:

> For the moment, there is no other option regarding our position on regional politics than to wait and see. For the inner life of our nation, however, one ancient law survives with heightened validity: that we must be determined to encounter all that may come in a unified and like-minded manner. In times of such rigorous tension of all forces, the danger of fragmentation is doubled … However, if we remain together as a united national community

[68] "Unbefriedigte Erwartungen," *SDT*, Vol. 56, Nr. 16737, 17 April 1929, p. 1.
[69] "Der erste Schritt," *SDT*, Vol. 56, Nr. 16778, 9 June 1929, p. 1.

> [*Volksgemeinschaft*], the improvements, which must someday come, will find us a small unfractured group.[70]

Despite this dismal loyalty to tradition, the mention of a "small unfractured group" belies that even the leaders of the community saw that their traditional means were no longer sufficient to garner the support of the Saxon majority. The "wait and see" policy of 1918, and of the preceding centuries, was no longer a viable option for the younger, socially active generation of Saxons, as the following chapter will reveal.

V. Conclusions

Several important phenomena were raised in this chapter, which traced the gradual shift in Saxon policies of self-preservation from a traditional cultural nationalism aimed at protecting the institutions of church, school, and language, to a less isolationist strategy of regional collaboration, realized with the rise of the National Peasant Party. An analysis of Saxon publications, in particular the conservative *SDT*, introduced the mainstream voice of the Saxon community; in the next chapter, this voice will in turn be countered with the dissenting voices of those who pushed for social, and later political, reform, and who rejected the unity of the church in favor of class collaboration with other ethnicities, or with Germany.

Perhaps the most interesting question that was raised was why conservative *Volksrat* leaders continued to pursue a policy of cultural preservation for so long, despite disappointments with the Bucharest government's centralizing policy, lack of funding, and a general disregard for minority demands. Of course, by the end of the 1920s, such leaders turned their gaze to regional solutions and the NPP, but in hindsight it is indeed surprising how long they maintained hope that the situation in Romania would improve. However,

[70] "Zum neuen Jahr," *SDT*, Vol. 59, Nr. 17615, 1 January 1932, p. 1.

from the vantage point of *Volksrat* leaders, such longsuffering was perhaps not so foolish. Firstly, the Saxons had recourse to the collective historical memory of their national existence in Transylvania. Despite difficulties under the dualist system, the Saxons had by and large maintained control over their confessional schools, and despite losing territorial autonomy, they had maintained their land. In light of these memories, the abiding patience of traditional Saxon leaders to "wait and see" made good political sense, especially since the only other potential European ally—Germany—was perceived as too politically and financially weak and too distant to lend aid. Secondly, as mentioned in one of the articles above, this policy of patience was viewed as a Saxon tradition.

Moreover, the Saxons clearly misunderstood the Romanian policies of nation-building. While Romanian leaders viewed the agrarian, political, educational, and other reforms as contributing to the modernized, western character of their nation, Saxon leaders had an entirely different notion of modernization. The results of the reforms—which served to parcel up Saxon land, undermine church funding, and destabilize confessional education and use of the German language—were seen as detracting from the centuries of efforts that Saxon nation-builders had put into modernizing their social and cultural institutions. This realization came too late in the Saxon community, however, because its leaders had not presumed that the implementation of reforms meant to stabilize the new Romanian nation-state would serve to fracture Saxon institutions. Saxon expectations of the future in the modernized Romanian state conflicted with the Romanian expectations of a socially and ethnically balanced, democratic state.

Ironically, the expectations of the Romanians were similarly disappointed as their dreams of achieving this democratic state dissolved into political chaos in the overburdened Bucharest government. Hitchins highlights how Romanian "expectations of political

continuity proved illusory as a drift toward authoritarian government gained momentum in the 1930s. The inabilities of parliamentary government and of traditional political parties to deal with the world of economic depression and other crises have often been cited as causes of the weakening of democracy."[71] The hope for this democracy, experienced by Romanians and Saxons alike at the beginning of the interwar period, provide the greatest explanation for the Saxons' enduring policy of loyalty to Romania throughout the 1920s.

Based on an analysis of the leading conservative newspaper, the *SDT*, this chapter has presented the mainstream views of conservative community leaders, which were epitomized by a balance in loyalty to the state and to Saxon institutions in the early years, accompanied by a gradual expansion of policy to incorporate regional collaboration by the late 1920s. While the following chapter will also use the *SDT* extensively, it will reveal the views of those members of the community who soon tired of both Romanian loyalty and the *Volksrat*'s domination of Saxon society.

[71] Hitchins, "Romania," p. 1068.

Chapter Four
Internal Affairs - Inter-Saxon Dissension and Transylvanian German Collaboration

It will be remembered from the previous chapter that *Einheit*, or unity, was valued as one of the most, if not the most, important factor in maintaining the Saxon nation. Expressed not only through social, but also through cultural and political participation, unity ultimately meant loyalty to the community and to the institutions which represented it. At earlier points in Saxon history, this had not seemed a difficult concept: activities such as church attendance, attending Lutheran confessional schools, and paying taxes were taken for granted, if not by all members of the community, then at least by the majority. This is not to suggest that Saxon society was seamlessly sewn together before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the loss of autonomous rights and the limitation of the Saxon privileged status during these centuries implied certain social and political adjustments that necessarily divided the community. Such drastic changes similarly served as an impetus for political changes within the Saxon community itself, and despite its strong tendency towards cohesion, the multiple political currents that emerged (particularly in the twentieth century) eventually undermined the *Einheit* that had long been a mainstay of the Saxon nation.

The present chapter, in contrast to the previous which emphasized the mainstream Saxon voice, will explore the many divisions within the community, beginning already with the *Ausgleich* of 1867, but focusing on the 1920s. Because these internal divisions are the focus of much secondary literature[1] and this thesis seeks to concentrate on the strategies of

[1] Harald Roth, for example, concentrates almost exclusively on inner-Saxon affairs and takes great care to address the various political currents that emerged within the community between 1919 and 1933. See *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen 1919*-1933, Volume 22 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994). Similarly, the volume edited by Carl Göllner, *Die*

self-preservation advocated by mainstream Saxon leaders in light of external Romanian policy, this chapter will be less in-depth and merely provide an overview of the counter-movements.

By 1933, the entire political makeup of the community had been transformed, and the cleavages that had been so deep in the 1920s had begun once again to level out as the community gradually synchronized itself with National Socialist trends from Germany. This chapter will continue to utilize the *SDT* while bringing in voices from other publications in order to contrast the attitudes of the mainstream Saxon *Volksrat* towards the dissident members of the community and the views of some of these dissidents themselves, who similarly saw their social and political projects as protecting the Saxon nation from external threats.

I. Enemies Within

a. Interwar Predecessors: Nineteenth-Century Conflicts

Antagonistic political attitudes within the Saxon community had a long history. Although the interwar period is the focus of this thesis, it is useful at least to outline a few of the earlier, nineteenth-century divides, as they laid the foundations for later disputes. The two most prominent political conflicts which had a direct bearing on later developments within the Saxon community were those between the "Old" and "Young" Saxons (*Altsachsen und Jungsachsen*) directly following the 1867 *Ausgleich*, and between the "Blacks" and the "Greens" (*Schwarze und Grüne*) in the late nineteenth century. This

Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1848-1918, Volume 22 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1988), addresses in depth the inter-communal dissensions. Finally, an entire body of literature exists addressing the turn of the Saxons to Pan-German and National Socialist propaganda. This will be discussed later in this chapter, as well as in the following.

section, which merely outlines the conflicts, largely relies on the brief but informative essay by Andreas Möckel regarding the topic, unless otherwise noted.[2]

As Möckel explains, and as hinted at within the previous chapter, conflicts within the Saxon community largely revolved around what was perceived as the best means for preserving the unity of the community. The more conservative politicians, labeled the "Old" Saxons in the period following the Hungarian-implemented administrative, language, and school reforms prompted by the *Ausgleich*, were of the opinion that self-preservation was best achieved through an exclusively isolationist policy. This meant that they were in favor of an "energetic defense of the traditional legal positions of self-administration," to the extent that they were unwilling to make compromises with the new Hungarian administration. Their more progressive opponents, the "Young" Saxons, "while similarly desiring to defend the Saxon nation," were open to Hungarian reforms. As the groups' names suggest, the conflict was in fact generational, and thus concerned the two generations' perception of the "absolutist" Austrian regime vis-à-vis the new "liberal" Hungarian one—as they were viewed in the eyes of the optimistic youth.[3] In an 1871 hearing on the administrative reforms, the Young Saxons were able to outnumber their elders by siding with the Romanian representatives in an unprecedented act that viewed with horror as a national betrayal by the older generation. The outcome of the conflict is not as important as this perceived betrayal, as the two groups eventually found common ground by 1872. However, this was perhaps the first time in the modern history of the Saxon nation

[2] Andreas Möckel, "Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch? Zum Selbstverständnis der Siebenbürger Sachsen von 1867 bis 1933," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, ed. Walter König, Volume 28 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 129-148. In the same volume, Karl Reinerth also provides an overview of political infightings among the Saxons during the interwar period, which largely concentrates on the 1930s. See "Zu den innenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen unter den Deutschen in Rumänien zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen," p. 149-167. For comparison on the topic of the "Old" and "Young" Saxons, see also *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1848-1918*, ed. Carl Göllner, p. 128-136: "Jung"- und "Altsachsen."

[3] *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1848-1918*, ed. Carl Göllner, p. 131.

that members of the community had undermined the clear ethnic and social boundaries of the community in order to gain a political majority over their own. As the Saxons made the transition into the twentieth century, similar conflicts—indeed perceived as profound national betrayals by conservative Saxon politicians—were only to increase.

The dispute between the "Blacks" and the "Greens" similarly revolved around the issue of whether the community should look to themselves or to an exterior source for continued development and support. Here the tension lay between the age-old Saxon cry of "*Mer wälle bleiwe, wat mer sen*!" ("We want to remain what we are!") and a modified version of it, "We want to be and to remain what we have always been, an honest German *Volk* and also honest true citizens of the state to which we belong."[4] The latter pledge of loyalty to the state, rather than to the individuality of the Saxon nation, was precisely the type of attitude that created conflict within the community. In 1893, a neo-conservative strain emerged in the Saxon community, the "Greens," who were dissatisfied with the way that older Saxon representatives (now referred to as the "Blacks") had compromised with the Hungarian regime in the preceding decade. The Greens went so far as to promote the resignation of Saxon representatives from the Hungarian parliament. Notably, and somewhat surprisingly, the Greens nevertheless advocated collaboration with other Transylvanian Germans and were attracted to German national movements, and thus were not strictly opposed to looking for aid outside of the Saxon community. However, they denigrated the strategies employed by the older generation of Blacks, which they

[4] Möckel, "Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch?," p. 129, p. 133. Roth's quotation of Stephan Ludwig Roth's 1848 declaration is taken from Friedrich Teutsch, *Der Siebenbürgisch-deutsche Jugendbund*, in *Bilder aus der vaterländischen Geschichte*, ed. Friedrich Teutsch, Volume 2 [Hermannstadt, 1899], p. 359.

characterized as "weak bargaining for small concessions" with the Hungarian government.[5] The Greens' efforts to cooperate with other German groups can be seen as predecessors to Rudolf Brandsch's promotion of inter-ethnic collaboration in the period before and after the First World War.[6] The disagreement deeply divided the *Sächsische Volkspartei*, and even affected the two leading Saxon dailies in the community. Although the *SDT* and *KZ* were both conservative papers, they were at odds in the matter, with the *SDT* supporting the Blacks and the *KZ* promoting the Greens' cause. The conflict was never to be fully resolved, and the question of whether one could be loyal to the Saxon nation while cultivating external political relations remained a pervasive issue into the interwar period.

b. The Social Democrats

Considering these nineteenth-century predecessors to political division in the community, it is not difficult to imagine why the *Volksrat* perceived the increasing popularity of the Social Democrats as a threat to the unity of Saxon institutions in the twentieth century. The Social Democratic party arose out of the mid-nineteenth century workers' movements that were a product of the period's increasing industrialization.[7] According to Michael Kroner, these individual movements soon became politically active, and by the turn of the century, "local organizations of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary and unions existed in all Transylvanian cities, even in market towns," and were known for their frequent strikes.[8] In 1907, writes Kroner, the *Kronstädter Zeitung* contained the following evaluation of these developments: "A workers' movement among the Saxon

[5] Friedrich Gottas, "Die Siebenbürger Sachsen," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, Vol. III/1: Die Völker des Reiches, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), p. 389-390.
[6] Dr. Michael Kroner, "Schwarze und Grüne," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 464; Hans Meschendörfer, "Presse und Publizistik," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 392.
[7] *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in den Jahren 1848-1918*, ed. Carl Göllner, p. 129.
[8] Dr. Michael Kroner, "Arbeiterfrage," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 29.

nation may arise and it may even be healthy; above all, it is unstoppable. It is necessary to meet it preventatively. But an international Social Democrat is unacceptable in our nation, which certainly cannot tolerate it as a foreign body. Our workers must remain in our hands."[9] This was indeed the crux of the matter. While tolerant of the idea of a workers' movement, the conservative Saxon line could not bear the idea of an internationally-minded movement that tended toward class, rather than ethnic, collaboration, as this would undermine the social and ethnic unity thought to hold the community together.

Although a seemingly small group, the Social Democrats came scathingly close to winning at least one battle against the conservative mainstream voice in Sibiu's 1920 parliamentary elections: their representative Rudolf Mayer ran for election against none other than Rudolf Brandsch, in an election that one might assume was a clear call due to Brandsch's popularity as a leading politician. Harald Roth reports that the "official Saxon side" (the *SDT*) clearly voiced its opinion on both the matter of the Social Democrats and of the "predetermined obligations of Saxon voters" during the elections, arguing that "'the common interests of our nation can never be represented by the Social Democrats for the well-being of our people.'"[10] Roth adds that shortly thereafter, Brandsch himself wrote an "antagonistic" article in the *SDT* entitled "Why cannot and why may not a Saxon support the Social Democrats?"[11] Brandsch ultimately won the election, but by a narrow margin of just 2,746 to 2,113 votes,[12] a sign that perhaps the community was not so willing to cooperate with the traditional Saxon practice of voting discipline.

[9] *KZ*, 14 September 1907. Cited in Kroner, "Arbeiterfrage," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, p. 29.
[10] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 97-98. Roth's quotation of the *SDT*: Hermann Plattner, "Die Pflicht des sächsischen Wählers," *SDT*, 13 May 1920, p. 1.
[11] Ibid. Roth's quotation of the *SDT*, 30 May, 1920, p. 1.
[12] Ibid., p. 98.

Nevertheless, it is also important to note that being a Saxon Social Democrat did not necessarily mean that one unequivocally promoted class ties crossing international boundaries; in fact, in these early years following the First World War, many Social Democrats saw themselves as utterly loyal to ethnic institutions. Hence Ludwig Knopp's 1919 pronouncement: "We Saxon Social Democrats want nothing to do with the international … I vouch that I am a Social Democrat through and through, but when it comes to the nation, when it comes to the school and church, then I am blue and red [the Saxon national colors]."[13] To such Saxons, the Social Democratic movement appealed because of its focus on the workers and not because of its international thrust.

Despite such patriotic proclamations, the *SDT* remained wary of the movement, and the Social Democratic party's threat to internal Saxon unity is the focus of several articles from 1919 to 1924. In February 1919, for example, an article warned against internal divisions and "agitation," which sought to "incite mistrust towards [the community's] leaders." It furthermore contained the admonishment that "the one who expresses doubts about the sincerity of our politics and our leaders sins egregiously against our nation, as would its greatest foe."[14] While not explicitly mentioning the Social Democrats by name, the implications of the warning were clear.[15]

In response to these accusations that their work undermined the internal unity of the community, the Social Democrats themselves brought arguments to the table concerning the voices of the "people," i.e. of the farmers, and workers, and even of the townspeople, as opposed to the voices of political elites. In short, it was asserted that the conservative voices

[13] Quoted in ibid., p. 97.
[14] "Für die Einheit unseres sächsischen Volkes," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13791, 25 February 1919, p. 1.
[15] By 1920, however mentions of the party were explicit. See, e.g. "Siebenbürgisch-sächsische Gedanken über den Sozialismus und die Sozialdemokratie," *SDT*, Vol. 47, Nr. 14151, 19 June 1920, p. 1; "'Nationale oder Klassenvertretung,'" *SDT*, Vol. 47, Nr. 14167, 9 July 1920, p. 1-2.

in the community disregarded the interests of the less privileged Saxons. In an extreme 1926 critique of the *SDT*, male members of the Saxon community outspokenly voiced their opinions about the daily paper in response to a survey issued by *Klingsor* in the fall of the same year. Hans Lienert from the village of Bod[16] wrote the following critique, which reflects not only the contents of the *SDT*, but also the mainstream political current which the daily paper claimed to represent.

> According to my knowledge, the [*SDT*] is not subscribed to by farmers in the communities that I know of. Also in the area surrounding Sibiu, the *Tageblatt* is taken only in very few farmers' households. And even in rural readership communities and by way of borrowing, not many farmers read the paper, which is considered to be the newspaper of our Saxon "intelligentsia." As a result, the *Tageblatt* can, in full consciousness, refuse to pay particular attention to the peasant readership and their needs. Whether or not that is right is another question. In any case, I doubt that the peasant readership would increase by much even if the situation were otherwise, because our farmers read their *Agricultural Papers* [*Landwirtschaftliche Blätter*] and, almost without exception, consider a daily paper to be much too expensive."[17]

Lienert was not the only one to make such reproaches. In the same article, Dr. Misch Orend made similar claims regarding the *SDT*'s neglect of "the broad stratification of our nation,"[18] an implication that it was concerned only with the affairs of intellectuals and political elites and not those of workers and peasants.

These criticisms were largely ignored by the *SDT*, and they continued to undermine Social Democrat movements. One tactic to this end was to emphasize their irreligious, or anti-church, tendencies in an effort to discourage Saxons from joining the party for fear that they would be stigmatized by fellow churchgoers. In July 1920, for example, the *SDT* harshly criticized what they reported as the Social Democrats' materialistic attitude towards the church: an institution perhaps necessary for the education of children, but ultimately as disconnected from the true needs of the *Volk*. The *SDT* cited a letter from a Social Democrat

[16] German: Brenndorf; Hungarian: Botfalu. A town in Braşov County, approximately 15 km north of Braşov.
[17] As part of the article "Rundfrage über das *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt*," under the subheading "Das *Tageblatt* und unsere Bauern," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 360.
[18] Ibid.

stating: "One goes to the peasants, one talks to the townspeople about questions about God and about kingdom come. And in 99 out of 100 cases, one hears, 'God is nature.' They call belief in God as the church teaches it something necessary for children." To this, the *SDT* acerbically replied to the author of the letter:

> Because you yourself probably do not recognize any religion with the exception of "God is nature," you lack the understanding, the sense, for the beauty and rapture of the "childish faith" in a personal God … According to my convictions, Christianity … is the true international power capable of bringing men and nations together, and not your materialistic program which raises dumb nature … to the level of deity. The reign of terror of the great French Revolution proved where this belief leads!"[19]

By contrasting religion with the views of the Social Democrats and portraying them as incompatible antitheses, the *SDT* sought to undermine the credibility of the party within the community whose society was so much based around the church. Contrary to these assertions, many Social Democrats, like Ludwig Knopp, viewed themselves as loyal to Saxon institutions such as the church.

By 1924, to further paint them in a negative light and discourage potential followers, the *SDT* had begun to publish direct parallels between the socialist and communist movements, declaring, "One cannot rightly speak of [the two] as hostile brothers. For Social Democracy and Communism are not brothers; Communism is the natural, blood-related child of Socialism."[20] Indeed, communism was perceived as a threat by most Saxons, and there was certainly no communist party within the Saxon community. In the words of Michael Kroner, "the Communist Party of Romania, founded in 1921, had next to no influence among the Saxons. The few Saxon members and sympathizers of the Communist Party were loners without affiliation."[21] To illustrate how opposed even socially discontent

[19] "Sozialdemokraten und Bürgerliche: Eine Erwiderung von August Schuster," *SDT*, Vol. 47, Nr. 14174, 18 July 1920, p. 1-2. I would like to thank my colleague, Caroline Mezger, for help with this translation.
[20] "Die zweite und die dritte Internationale" (Letter from Paris, 14 November), *SDT*, Vol. 51, Nr. 15445, 21 November 1924, p. 1-2.
[21] Kroner, "Arbeiterfrage," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, p. 30.

Saxons were to communism, it is useful to highlight a statement appearing in the dissident paper *Die 'Unzufriedenen'* (discussed below) in July 1925. The article, while containing anti-Lutheran remarks, nevertheless identified Bolshevism as the "common enemy of all churches."[22] Thus statements such as these in the *SDT* which claimed in explicit terms that socialism leads directly to communism can be seen as stigmatizing scare-tactics meant to keep more Saxons from joining the Social Democratic movement.

For various reasons following 1924, however, the Social Democrat issue was not so prominent in the *SDT*. This is evinced by *Klingsor*'s 1926 claims, mentioned above, that the *SDT* largely neglected workers' and farmers' affairs. In part, this was because other, external threats had come to the fore, namely the centralizing agrarian and educational reforms of the Romanian government entailed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, by this time, other social movements within the Saxon community, to be described below, absorbed many of the Social Democrats and workers,[23] weakening the party. As these new internal dissenters encompassed larger numbers of the community, they were seen as a greater threat to conservative *Volksrat* leaders, and thus the *SDT* redirected its emphasis to address these new movements.

c. The Unzufriedenenbewegungen

Indeed, in addition to the Social Democratic movement, there were also multiple smaller movements that begrudged the mainstream Saxon leaders for their bullying tactics of cultural nationalism—factors which, although meant to boost the cultural well-being of the community, also had profound effects on social and economic affairs. The economic difficulties in 1920s Romania, accompanied by dissatisfaction with the rigidly divided

[22] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 114. Roth's source is "Verrat am eigenen Volke," *Die 'Unzufriedenen'*, Issue 3, July 1925, p. 7.
[23] Ibid., p. 99.

social and political structure of the community, contributed to the rise of the movements. The Lutheran clergy and *Volksrat* members had almost exclusive control over the Saxon political and administrative arena. In fact, Harald Roth sees the two issues as bound together, identifying the "close personal relations between Saxon politicians and church leaders" as triggering both anti-church and anti-political movements. Shortly following the War, community leaders had legally arranged the situation so that the Lutheran Church could levy taxes—on top of the Romanian state tax—on church members (it will be remembered that almost 90% of Saxons were church members) in order to alleviate the financial burdens of the church. Furthermore, financial troubles in the community were exacerbated by the 1924 decision "that instead of the self-evaluative [method] previously used for adjusting church taxes, the calculation should be made according to assets and income, which in the long run led to an increase." While Roth identifies the heightened church taxes as the "catalyst … for the emergence of an anti-church protest," or "dissatisfied movement [*Unzufriedenenbewegung*]," he emphasizes that they were not the only basis for dissatisfaction within the community.[24] He also points out that there were smaller predecessors to this larger dissatisfied movement which arose in the mid-1920s.[25]

Importantly, Roth characterizes these *Unzufriedenenbewegungen* as possessing primarily social goals aimed at leveling out financial and social differences within the community. This is, in fact, one of the main thrusts of Roth's argument in *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen*. In summer 1925, the "dissatisfieds" began to publish a paper bearing the name of their movement, *Die 'Unzufriedenen'* (*The 'Dissatisfieds'*), which

[24] Ibid., p. 110-113.
[25] Thus, "at the beginning of the 1920s, approximately half of the Saxon population of the village of Bruiu converted to Catholicism" due to what Roth describes as "inordinate oppression" from high church taxes. Ibid., p. 110, footnote 5. Bruiu is a village in Sibiu County, approximately 50 km east of Sibiu (German: Braller; Hungarian: Brulya).

spoke out against the dismal financial situation and the failure of Saxon leadership to recognize the hardships of the lower classes. Among others, their concrete aims included downsizing the confessional schools, lowering clergy salaries, re-regulation of church taxes, the ability to employ one pastor for adjacent parishes, and making the payment of church taxes not be a condition for school attendance.[26] However, neither the movement nor the paper managed to "gain a foothold" in the main Saxon counties, and its program for reform was disorganized at best. By November 1925, *Die 'Unzufriedenen'* was replaced by the weekly periodical *Sächsische Volksblatt* (*Saxon People's Paper*). In what Roth describes as the first instance in which "a group of Saxon church members brought complaints against their own church before a Romanian authority," members of the dissatisfied movement sought to petition the Romanian Parliament to regulate the taxation of the Lutheran Church.[27] The siding of the Young Saxons with Romanian representatives against the generation of Old Saxons in 1871, described above, comes to mind here. The tension between isolationist policies and seeking external partners had reared its head again in the mid-1920s, and it was only to increase as the decade wore on.

Evidence of dissatisfaction within the community, whether or not it comprised the majority of the population, can be found in the increasing criticism of the *SDT*, not only in regards to its political content, but also to its cultural, artistic, social, and educational content. By 1926, the *SDT* had eliminated any major competition from other Saxon papers and had, due to financial reasons, absorbed Rudolf Brandsch's more liberal *Deutsche Tagespost* (*German Daily Post*).[28] As mentioned above, in fall 1926 *Klingsor* published a

[26] Ibid., p. 113-114.
[27] Ibid., p. 115.
[28] As of January 1, the two papers were combined under the title of *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt: Allgemeine Volkszeitung für das Deutschtum in Romänien* (Transylvanian German Daily: Universal National Newspaper for the Germans in Romania), implying a supposed shifted focus from Saxon affairs to those of all

survey gauging the opinions of readers on the content of the *SDT*.[29] Not all of the responses to the survey were negative, but by and large the sentiment was expressed that the mouthpiece of the *Volksrat* was failing to reach the Saxon people and other Transylvanian Germans.[30] Erwin Reisner, a frequent contributor to *Klingsor*, declared that "as the largest and most widely disseminated German newspaper in the country, the *Tageblatt*'s primary task is a cultural one … Unfortunately it must be said that in this regard, the editors display an astonishing indolence and lack of responsibility …" This assertion that a paper's primary task should be cultural was noteworthy because it demonstrated that many community members were not so much politically dissatisfied as culturally and socially.

Dr. Ernst Jekelius similarly described the role of the press in cultural terms, identifying it as "the pulpit of our times." As such, readers like Jekelius expected the *SDT* not only to provide a daily chronicle of events, but a spiritual, or national, education for the *Volk*. In this regard, another reader, Dr. Konrad Nußbächer, complained about the *SDT*'s lack of "spiritual" contents, in spite of his generally positive opinion of the paper's editors and political coverage: "there is no trace of emotional spirituality [*bewegte Geistigkeit*]; the new spiritual life in Germany, and—as unbelievable as it seems—that in Transylvania, does not exist in the paper. It is manifestly clear that in regards to spiritual matters, our direction lies elsewhere than it does in the *Tageblatt*." This concern for spiritual leadership—not in the religious sense, but in the psychological and philosophical sense—infiltrated the Saxon

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Germans in Transylvania. The inaugural edition contained the assertion: "With the advent of new relations, our paper gives itself the task of placing its full powers at the service of the common interests of the Germans in our country." See "Zum neuen Jahr," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15754, 1 January 1926, p. 1. Complaints from readers in the following year, however, implied that this aim was not achieved. For a brief overview of the *Tagespost*'s profile and its conflicts with the *SDT*, see Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 102-104.

[29] The survey was issued in response to a July article by Otto Folberth harshly criticizing the daily. Otto Folberth, "Das Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt. Eine Kritik," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 7, July 1926, p. 276-279.

[30] Unless otherwise noted, all of the quotations in the following section are part of the article "Rundfrage über das *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt*," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 353-362.

community in the mid-late 1920s, in part as a result of German discourse on maintenance of the *Volk*. This will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter, which deals with Saxon relations with Germany, but readers' interest in spiritual matters again belies the emphasis on culture that still characterized the political strategies of the Saxons—both the conservatives and the dissatisfieds. Dr. Hans Hedrich also emphasized that "a less academic, more folk-like [*volkstümisch*] and lively treatment of our inner-national questions would … be desirable."

Thus the main complaints revolved around the *SDT*'s lack of charisma, or "spirituality." Others took issue with what they called its failure to address domestic and external political affairs, but this latter accusation is largely untenable considering the numerous citations in this thesis concerning Romanian politics (in Chapter Three) and German politics (to be examined in Chapter Five), to which a slew could be added.[31] Although *Klingsor* can by no means be viewed as the mouthpiece of the dissatisfied movement, the opinions expressed in the *SDT* survey represent many of the general attitudes in the community towards the conservative *Volksrat* and its leadership.

In short, as the dissatisfied movement progressed, it became clear that Saxons were ultimately calling for a greater degree of democracy within the community, and not in a purely political sense, but also in a social, cultural, economic, and religious one.[32] Despite these widespread complaints, it seems that the conservative *Volksrat* did not pay much attention to the movement, and only in September 1926, "when the dissatisfied movement

[31] As a conclusion to the survey, Heinrich Zillich himself wrote a five-page article summarizing the main critiques of the *SDT* and primarily faulting its editor-in-chief, Hermann Plattner, for this lack of quality. See Heinrich Zillich, "Das Sieb.-Deutsche Tageblatt und wir," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 11, November 1926, p. 445-449.

[32] For example, Harald Roth cites Heinrich Zillich's complaints about community frustrations with voting discipline. Zillich declares that this method of doing things is no longer possible, calling for a "democratization of our national organization." Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 154.

presented a draft for the statues of a political party," was any action taken.[33] This newly formed party, the first of its kind within the community and headed by Albert Dörr,[34] was the *Sachsenbund*, or the "Political Party for the Maintenance of National Character [*Volkstum*], School, and Church." This self-description as maintainer of national character, school, and church is extremely enlightening considering the project of cultural nationalism put forth by the mainstream *Volksrat* conservatives, described in the preceding chapter. Despite the aims of conservative politicians to preserve above all the institutions of school, church, and national unity, the *Sachsenbund*'s self-declared title demonstrates that many members of the community viewed these attempts as a failure, and had banded together to solve the problems themselves. Interestingly, however, the *Sachsenbund*'s title also demonstrates that they were not advocating a project of nationalism that differed completely from the *Volksrat*'s; for they desired to protect the same cultural institutions, albeit taking a different, more democratic approach meant to level out social differences, especially within the church.[35] Even in the eyes of the dissatisfied movement, the cultural "pillars" of the Saxons, described in Chapter Two, remained the foundation of the community. As Harald Roth points out, the *Sachsenbund*'s statutes draft, which was never published, "did not actually contain any political objectives,"[36] and was centered primarily around church reforms. Most notably, in 1926, members of the *Sachsenbund* threatened to step out of the

[33] Ibid., p. 117.
[34] Albert Dörr was not the sole leader of the group, but he was perhaps its most prominent member. In addition to leading the *Sachsenbund* movement, Dörr was an important community member and mayor of Sibiu from 1906-1918, one of the most important periods of the city's transformation into a modern city. Under his tenure, for example, the entire city was canalled and paved, the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Orthodox Church was inaugurated, and the cross-confessional municipal cemetery was opened, among other achievements. Despite these advances, some of Dörr's contemporaries also held a negative opinion of his tenure. See Răzvan Pop, "Albert Dörr – 10 Mari Sibieni," http://www.razvanpop.ro/blog/, accessed March 2012; Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 120; Harald Roth, *Hermannstadt: Kleine Geschichte einer Stadt in Siebenbürgen* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2006).
[35] Despite these leveling social aims, Michael Kroner identifies the *Sachsenbund* as being a particularly intellectual movement, albeit with supporters in several rural towns. Dr. Michael Kroner, "Unzufriedene und Sachsenbund," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 545.
[36] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 118.

church *en masse* in a radical rejection of traditional conservative authority. This constituted one of the greatest breaches of Saxon society in the twentieth century. Interestingly, Harald Roth identifies those who wanted to leave the church not as anti-religious, but rather as anti-church, or anti-clerical (*nicht antireligiös, sondern anti-kirchlich*). This characterization highlights the supra-spiritual role that the church had developed by the early twentieth century; the socially dissatisfied members of the community were not seeking escape from God, but from the centuries-long tradition embodied by the Lutheran Church, for, to many, the church was not so much a religious institution as a social and historical community. Roth furthermore emphasizes that the *Sachsenbund* was also less concerned with economic matters than their *Unzufriedenen* predecessors had been: "The byword [of the *Sachsenbund*] remained the well-being of the nation and its individual members …"[37] When one considers their radically different social stances, it is very interesting that both groups—the conservative *Volksrat* and the dissatisfied *Sachsenbund*—were struggling for preservation of the same cultural institutions, and emphasized the same concern for the *Volk*, or nation.

Like the Social Democratic movement, the *Sachsenbund* was eventually absorbed into the other, more powerful social movements that rose to power in the late 1920s. It was officially dissolved in 1930. Despite its perceived failure as a party, however, its threats to step out of the Lutheran Church and its creation of a political party actually resulted in an adjustment of the mainstream Saxon position; in response to the dissenting voices, the *Volksrat* frantically strove in 1927 to create a political community comprising all members of the Saxon nation. This was in part accomplished through the institution of frequent visits by Gustav Rösler, the *Volksrat*'s second lawyer after Hans Otto Roth, to rural Saxon

[37] Ibid., p. 122.

communities throughout Transylvania in order to gain a better idea of local situations.[38] The decision of *Volksrat* leaders to form a minority block with other, non-Saxon Transylvanian voters in the 1927 parliamentary elections, rather than to create their own party list for a Saxon-Romanian voting cartel as was customary, was another attempt at compromise with the dissatisfied members of the community.[39] While these attempts were ultimately useless, providing only temporary relief to a wound that had long since become infected in the Saxon community, they demonstrate the willingness of the conservative *Volksrat* to make compromises to maintain unity, and they reveal the two groups' similar emphasis on cultural preservation and national unity.

d. Selbsthilfe and the Erneuerungsbewegungen

The final dissatisfied movement which remains to be discussed, and the one which eventually absorbed all of the others, is the *Selbsthilfe*, or "Self-Help" movement, founded in 1922 by Fritz Fabritius. Much literature has already been written on the movement, and thus this section will merely contain an overview of the group's development and eventual politicization. Originally a social group, a co-operative building society (*Bausparkasse*) that sought to support small animal breeders and gardeners in a type of investment-credit organization, the movement soon took on popular (*völkisch*) dimensions and began to sympathize with National Socialist ideas.[40] Nevertheless, even well into the 1920s, it did not take on political dimensions. Cristian Cercel describes the movement as "saliently opposed [to] social-democracy, communism, bolshevism and class hate and show[ing] allegiance to germinating Nazi ideas. It offered the Saxon lower classes the option of 'popular socialism,'

[38] Ibid., p. 124-126.
[39] The *Kronstädter Zeitung*, among other papers, followed these voting-block negotiations with interest. See, e.g. *KZ*, Vol. 91, Nr. 4, 6 January 1927.
[40] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 106-107.

opposed both to the conservatives within the community and to the internationalist ideas coming from abroad."[41] In particular, the *Selbsthilfe* attracted Saxon lower classes and, importantly, the Saxon youth.

As will be remembered from the discussion of the confessional schools, the influence over Saxon youth was viewed as decisive by the conservative *Volksrat*; for those who controlled the youth held the reigns of the future. In part because they were resistant to the generation under which they had grown up, and in part because they were dissatisfied with the situation both within the Saxon community and in Romania, the youth that came of age during the First World War were particularly responsive to the social movements of the mid-1920s.[42] For example, the first issue of *Klingsor*, appearing in 1924, contained a "list of the categories of social life that unbridgeably separated the generation returning from the war from the generation of their fathers," including a criticism of "gentrified ideas," and a general disillusionment with the "'spirit of tradition'" possessed by the older Saxons.[43] In his monograph on *Klingsor* Walter Myß also points to the divide separating the war generation from their fathers, emphasizing that this rift can be felt in the literary production of the two groups. As a case study he compares *Klingsor* to Alfred Meschendörfer's prewar journal *Die Karpathen* (*The Carpathians*).[44]

Although a Transylvanian German Youth Association (*Siebenbürgisch-Deutschen Jugendbund*) had already been founded in 1848, it failed and other movements were largely

[41] Cristian Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity in the Case of Transylvanian Saxons 1933-1944," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 20.
[42] See, e.g. "Was muß geschehen," *SDT*, Vol. 60, Nr. 18088, 2 August 1933, p. 1-2, which mentions the particular enthusiasm with which the "entire youth" embraced the National Socialist movement.
[43] Sunhild Galter makes a brief but rigorous study of how *Klingsor*'s contents mirror the sentiments of the war generation. See, "Die Zeitschrift *Klingsor* als Sammelpunkt der jungen Kriegsheimkehrergeneration," p. 84, available on the Internet at http://www.revistatransilvania.ro/evenimente.htm (accessed April 2012).
[44] See Walter Myß, *Fazit nach achthundert Jahren. Geistesleben der Siebenbürger Sachsen im Spiegel der Zeitschrift 'Klingsor' (1924-1939). Studien zur Kulturgeschichte der ältesten inseldeutschen Volksgruppe*, Volume 22 of Veröffentlichungen des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, Reihe B (Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten) (Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1968).

unsuccessful until the prewar period, when several youth groups arose. The *Wandervogel* and *Pfadfinder* groups were particularly successful in the 1920s and in the latter part of the decade began to strongly advocate the right-wing ideologies stemming from Germany. In line with this program, Michael Kroner writes that "the Romanian-German youth group[s] made maintenance of national culture a priority and aimed at renewing [schools] and youth work."[45] Erwin Reisner published an article in *Klingsor* in 1925 questioning the future of the youth movements: "The question is whether we are right … to link the youth movements to [our] high hopes for the future … whether we may assume that a process for the establishment of our nation … is underway." Despite these high hopes, Reisner expressed concern about the extreme nature of the movements and their tendencies to blow hot and cold. He nevertheless concluded: "The youth movement also has a productive side. Namely, it roots up the rotted ideas of the old and thus clears the table. And if its overheated utopian ideals melt into a fog and come face to face with utter emptiness, it can set itself to work on solving the problem of existence honestly and without bias."[46] Perhaps not always consciously, this tendency to overturn the ideas of older generations lay at the center of the youth movement. Thus the *Selbsthilfe*'s success in recruiting youths to its ranks eventually helped to turn the tide of the Saxon nation against the conservative *Volksrat* and church leaders.

This overthrow did not take place in a violent manner, but rather was a gradual push towards more democratic, popular participation within the community. Because of Fabritius' increasing interests in National Socialist ideology, however, the movement took on a right-wing bent with a specific focus on racial purity, Pan-Germanism, and a "blood

[45] Dr. Michael Kroner, "Jugendbewegung," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 222.
[46] Erwin Reisner, "Jugendbewegung," *Klingsor*, Year 2, January-December 1925, p. 60-64.

and soil" philosophy.[47] Vasile Ciobanu asserts that only after 1927 did the *Selbsthilfe* begin to adopt National Socialist terms regarding "a national community based on the same blood and same race, promotion of ethnic and of economics of the family, living space, blood and soil, etc." Ciobanu also provides figures that reveal the movement's influence in Transylvania: by 1929, the *Selbsthilfe* had 1,620 members from 112 localities, but just two years later its numbers had already swelled to 3,193,[48] a sign of its increased popularity, as well as of discontent with the economic and political situation in Romania and in the Saxon community. The *Selbsthilfe* became the foundation of the multiple *Erneuerungsbewegungen*, or reform movements, which sought to "renew" the Saxon nation; Michael Kroner contends that "by the early 1930s, Fabritius felt the movement was strong enough to hazard a face-off with the leadership of the Saxon nation and of the church."[49] In 1932, Fabritius fully embraced political aims—the *Selbsthilfe* had hitherto remained a social movement—and founded the National Socialist Self-Help Movement of the Germans in Romania (*NSDR*: *Nationalsozialistische Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien*). Harald Roth considers Fabritius' fellow leader, Dr. Waldemar Gust, as having a more decisive role in this politicization of the movement.[50]

The political conflict between the *Volksrat* and the *NSDR* ultimately culminated in the fifth *Sachsentag*, or Saxon national assembly, of October 1933, but the founding of the *NSDR* one year prior and the political agreement that Fabritius made with Gheorghe Cuza

[47] Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuţii la cunoaşterea istoriei saşilor transilvăneni 1918-1914* (Sibiu: Editura hora, 2001), p. 178-181 [*Contributions to the History of the Transylvanian Saxons 1918-1944*].
[48] Ciobanu, *Contribuţii*, p. 184.
[49] Dr. Michael Kroner, "Erneuerungsbewegung," in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen Lexikon*, published by Walter Myß, p. 117.
[50] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 179-180.

and the National Christian Defense League[51] led to an outcry among Saxon conservative leaders. In May 1932, the *SDT* called the *Selbsthilfe*'s new political program and alliance

> an open breach of national discipline, which could have devastating consequences for our entire nation … The road pursued by Fabritius and the *Selbsthilfe* leads to the annihilation of our national organization, our national discipline, and political impact. If this course of action is silently tolerated and not fiercely combated, then sooner or later we will no longer be a nation, but only a cluster of Saxon and German-speaking people standing completely vulnerable.[52]

Like his predecessors in the *Sachsenbund*, Fabritius had clearly overstepped his bounds in the eyes of the conservative community leaders who, despite their declining popularity, still had significant influence over a majority of the population. This 1932 passage that continues to emphasize national discipline and organization confirms the conclusions of the preceding chapter regarding the policy of the *Volksrat* in the early 1930s: despite disillusion with the political situation in Romania and the divisions in the community, unity and patience were still seen as crucial to remaining an "unfractured" and "united national community."[53] The project of cultural nationalism which above all underscored national unity was still being pursued. Similarly, the *SDT*'s invocation of voting discipline at this late date should not be wondered at. As late as 1933, voting discipline was still a standard, if objectionable, practice within the Saxon community, as evinced by a series of articles in the *SDT* which call for, and successfully implement the practice.[54] However by 1933, the *Volksrat* was forced to give into the *Selbsthilfe*'s demands for a Saxon national gathering and a greater democratization of the Saxon national program.

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[51] The *Liga Apărării Naţional Creştine*, or *LANC*, was a Romaian nationalist, extremely anti-Semitic party formed during the interwar period under the leadership of Alexandru C. Cuza (Gheorghe was his son). It was eventually to be pushed aside by the even more radical Iron Guard (*Garda de Fier*) movement, which was itself preceded by Corneliu Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael (*Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail*).

[52] Dr. Wilhelm Depner and Michael Zerbes (from the Burzenland Saxon County Committee, "Volksorganisation und Selbsthilfe," *SDT*, Vol. 59, Nr. 17719, 10 May 1932, p. 1-2. Originally published in Braşov, 7 May 1932.

[53] "Zum neuen Jahr," *SDT*, Vol. 59, Nr. 17615, 1 January 1932, p. 1.

[54] See, e.g. "Bedingungslose Volksdisziplin," *SDT*, Vol. 60, Nr. 18200, 10 December 1933, p. 1; "Achtung Wähler!", Vol. 60, Nr. 18208, 20 December 1933, p. 6; "Das Wahlergebnis," Vol. 60, Nr. 18211, 23 December 1933, p. 1.

In preparation for this gathering, the *Sachsentag*, in October 1933, the editors of the *SDT* tried to make sense of the change of direction within the community. In some ways already admitting defeat, an August article entitled "What could have happened?" describes how National Socialism had taken hold of the community. Ever since Hitler came to power, conceded the *SDT*,

> the *Selbsthilfe* gained the victory among us. It cannot be contested that we Saxons have always been National Socialists since our very establishment. We hold this statement to be true … As a known saying of the church father Augustine goes, the soul is by nature Christian;[55] we can thus make the assertion that the Saxon sensibility is by nature National Socialist …[56]

While the logic of this statement appears almost preposterous, and the defeatism almost comical, it shows the extent to which National Socialist propaganda had burrowed its way into the community. At this point the *Volksrat* leaders were willing to make almost any sacrifice to preserve the unity of the Saxon nation, and an acceptance of National Socialism seemed the appropriate course of action. In principle, National Socialism's ideals were *not* completely opposed to the project of cultural nationalism that had been put forward by the conservative Saxons for so long: both placed a similar emphasis on preservation of the *Volk*, maintenance of national culture and institutions, and national unity and purity. Late British historian C.A. Macartney claims to have been told the following by a Saxon while journeying in Transylvania in 1936: "'… The Saxons have already been practicing all of the core elements of the National Socialist philosophy for centuries. They were always very German; they always estimated the role of the national community as higher than that of the individual; they based their strength in the wealthy peasants and the petty bourgeois …'"[57]

[55] In actuality, Augustine claims that the soul is by nature *corrupt*. See, e.g. Augustine's *City of God*.
[56] "Was muß geschehen," *SDT*, Vol. 60, Nr. 18088, 2 August 1933, p. 1-2.
[57] C.A. Macartney (1937), quoted in Marylin McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Eine kulturanthropologische Studie, mit einem soziologischen Beitrag – Identität, Ethnizität und Gesellschaft – von Armin Nassehi und Georg Weber*, ed. Georg Weber, Volume 16 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau, 1990), p. 9.

To what extend this statement could have been made in the years immediately following the First World War is questionable, but by the mid-1930s, Saxon leaders had absorbed the belief that they had always had what came to be identified as a National Socialist bent. The major difference existed in their recognitions of diverse fatherlands—Germany versus Transylvania and the *Königsboden*—and in their Pan-German versus isolationist policies.

Less than one month before the *Sachsentag* which was to decide the future direction of the community, the *SDT* wrote that its hopes were that the gathering "would bring us [Saxons] inwardly closer … We cannot expect more from the *Sachsentag* …" Ruefully, the article continues: "Perhaps a year ago … one could have hoped for a complete agreement between the previously-existing majority in the *Volksrat* and the Self-Help Movement of the *NSDR*. Today, hardly anyone can indulge in such hopes."[58] Indeed, the results of the *Sachsentag* were as the *SDT* had predicted, with most of the *NSDR*'s demands adopted into the new Saxon National Program. As Cristian Cercel writes, "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."[59] Shortly thereafter, the Transylvania Saxon community was synchronized with Hitler's Pan-German National Socialist program.

II. Transylvanian German Collaboration and the Rise of Pan-Germanism

The social unrest of the mid-1920s and the political conflicts of the late 1920s and early 1930s were not the only factors dividing the community: already in the early twentieth century there were debates as to whether or not the Saxons should collaborate with their Transylvanian German neighbors. In the interwar years these discussions became more

[58] "Vorbereitung des Sachsentages," *SDT*, Vol. 60, Nr. 18122, 10 September 1933, p. 1.
[59] Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 19.

heated as some Saxons felt that the political situation in Romania mandated an expansion of Saxon policy to include the other Germans in order to strengthen their representation in the government. As mentioned in Chapter Two, there were major social, economic, linguistic, and confessional distinctions between the Saxons and the Swabians (as well as to the other Transylvanian Germans) that impeded such collaboration and, in many cases, amounted to sentiments of Saxon superiority. Thus, to most Saxon conservative leaders in the immediate postwar period, close cooperation with the Swabians or other German populations would have been equivalent to national betrayal. The following brief section will outline how these conservative views gradually changed as the *Volksrat*'s isolationist policy of the early 1920s failed and they began to reach out to their fellow Transylvanian Germans.

a. The VDR and Its Kulturamt

Of course, not all conservative leaders held views of Saxon superiority, as evinced by Rudolf Brandsch's active advocacy of Saxon-Swabian collaboration already at the beginning of the century. Under his leadership, the Association of Germans in Romania (*VDR*: *Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien*) was founded in 1919 in order to unite the various German groups in the newly united nation-state: the Saxons, the Satu Mare and Banat Swabians, and the Germans of the Bucovina, Bessarabia, and Dobruja. Brandsch was the leader of the *VDR* until 1931, and the association was absorbed by the *NSDR* under Fritz Fabritius' leadership in 1935.

Brandsch was not alone in his efforts. Lutz Korodi, a fellow teacher and politician, also believed "it would be in the best interest of the Saxons to help the other Hungarian Germans," and had held this view since the prewar period.[60] Dr. Richard Csaki (1886-

[60] Andreas Möckel, "Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch?", p. 138. The term "Hungarian Germans" can refer both to Germans who remained under Hungarian rule after the Trianon rearrangement of Hungary's borders, or to

1943), the founder and editor of the journal *Ostland*, had similar views and was made leader of the *VDR*'s cultural office (*Kulturamt*), established in 1922.[61] The cultural office was intended "to strengthen the feeling of solidarity between all Romanian Germans through the creation of various cultural institutions and to maintain the spiritual connection to the German homeland [*Mutterland*]."[62] Michaela Nowotnick explains that this latter task was complicated by the fact that, after the First World War, very little was known about the respective regions from both the German and the Transylvanian side; thus, "above all," the role of the cultural office was "initially to illuminate and mediate" the cross-borders situation.[63]

For his part, Richard Csaki aided Transylvanian German collaboration through literary contributions and essays published in his journal *Ostland*. After studying in Berlin, Bonn, and Budapest, he returned to his hometown of Sibiu and worked as a teacher, marrying Grete Copony-Csaki, a well-known artist in her own right. As mentioned earlier, *Ostland* was first established in 1919 but discontinued publication after just two short years, to resume again in 1926. Its publication—unlike that of *Klingsor*—was financially secured through Csaki's connections to the *VDR*'s publically-funded cultural office; thus with the closing of the office in 1931, *Ostland* also folded.[64] Nowotnick, who made a detailed study of the Saxon journals *Die Karpathen, Ostland,* and *Klingsor* and their "connections to literary life in Germany," emphasized the international character of *Ostland*, especially as

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those who lived closer to the border and became citizens of Romania. The majority of these border groups were partially or completely assimilated during the Dualist Period, several coming to claim Hungarian, and not German, as their native language.

[61] Michaela Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*. Siebenbürgen und seine Beziehungen zum literarischen Leben in Deutschland (1907-1939)," MA Thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2007, p. 55-56.

[62] Manfred Wittstock, review of "Grete Csaki-Copony, 1893-1990," from the volume *Malerinnen im 20. Jahrhundert. Bildkunst der 'Verschollenen Generation'*, by Ingrid von der Dollen, in *Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde* 53 (2010): 192.

[63] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 56.

[64] Ibid., p. 94.

compared to the prewar journal *Die Karpathen*. She writes, "While in *Die Karpathen* argued only for the Transylvanian Saxons, the statements in *Ostland* reference the entire German nation and rely on the concept of a Greater German *Reich*."[65] Ironically, Nowotnick concludes that despite Csaki's greatest efforts to recruit authors from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to contribute to *Ostland*, *Klingsor* was ultimately more successful in this regard under the leadership of the more metropolitan Heinrich Zillich.

A glimpse at even the early contents of *Ostland* (Nowotnick's study addresses only its later years) demonstrate Csaki's attempts to advocate inter-German collaboration. The first issue, from June 1919, contains several remarks on the issue, yet a sense of Saxon superiority is still somewhat evident in the texts of his contributors. Hence in 1919, Dr. Friedrich Teutsch declared in *Ostland* that the Saxons must take the lead of all Germans in Southeastern Europe, both because of their geographical position in the middle of the other German regions, and because of their historic role as "bearers of culture" among the other German populations.[66] In the same issue, it will be remembered, Rudolf Brandsch had similarly referred to it as the task of the Saxons to "reveal the wonderful treasure of our German culture to the new state in which we live."[67] Such statements, while demonstrating the willingness of Saxons to collaborate with their fellow German "brothers," reveal an attitude of superiority that would make future relations more difficult.[68] As Hans Hedrich wrote in *Klingsor* in 1926, "our so-called communal German citizenry remains a very delicate thing. It must be handled with much tact and supervision on the part of the Saxons,

[65] Ibid., p. 62. As noted above, a distinction can also be made between the content of *Klingsor* and *Die Karpathen*, the latter of which contained more traditional subject matter.
[66] Dr. Fr. Teutsch, "Vor neuen Aufgaben!," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 14-16.
[67] Rudolf Brandsch, "Zunkunftsfragen des Ostdeutschtums," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 27-28.
[68] Not all contributions expressed this superiority. In the same issue, for example, Lutz Korodi has more modest hopes, simply wishing that the end of the war would bring peace not only between the various nationalities in Romania, but also between the different groups of Germans who had, for confessional and other reasons, grown apart. Lutz Korodi, "Umdenken: Die Kunst des Gegenwart," *Ostland*, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 1919, p. 23-25.

and the sensitivity and envy of the other, less-incorporated brothers [*Bruderstämme*] must be taken into account."[69] To what extent this "envy" was actually felt by the Swabians and other German Transylvanians cannot be determined here, but it is true that the traditional privileges of the Saxons, especially their control over their confessional schools and their self-administration, had long been a source of contention.

Organizations such as the *VDR* and its cultural office, as well as publications like *Ostland*, were meant to overcome these tensions, but they largely proved futile in the early postwar years due to resistance from those *Volksrat* leaders who continued to favor an isolationist policy of cultural preservation and still looked askance at their Transylvanian German neighbors. The greatest advocate of inter-German collaboration remained Rudolf Brandsch, who ferociously defended his Swabian allies against Saxon attacks.[70]

b. A Change in Volksrat Policy

In spite of the glaring differences existing between the various German groups in Transylvania, it became clear to Saxon politicians after the implementation of the Romanian school reforms in 1924-1925 that some sort of collaboration must be attempted. Even in late 1924, however, the subject was still broached with caution by conservative voices: for example the *SDT* contained an article that asserted that "close relations with the Banat Swabians could have disadvantageous effects for us." Interestingly, the article makes the point that just as there were Saxons who did not want to work with the Swabians, so also

[69] Part of the article "Rundfrage über das *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt*," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 354-355.

[70] For example, in July 1920, he submitted a dispatch to the *SDT* protesting an "inflammatory article" by Emil Neugeboren which abused the Swabian members of the German-Swabian National Party. He describes the Swabians as "members of our party, and the sole bearers of national [German] ideals in the Banat for 25 years." This dispatch sparked a debate between the *SDT*, Brandsch, and his own paper, the *Deutsche Tagespost*, that lasted for weeks, attesting to the contentious nature of the subject in the immediate postwar years. "Eine Verwahrung Rudolf Brandsch's beim Kronstädter Kreisausschuss," *SDT*, Vol. 47, Nr. 14167, 9 July 1920, p. 2. Articles continue to appear throughout the summer. See, e.g. July 14, 16, 17, and 18.

there were Swabians who viewed collaboration with distaste. The Swabians, it was asserted, were often fearful of collaboration because they were the weaker party and therefore feared that they could be "patronized and bossed around" by the Saxons; indeed, these fears were not unfounded. Despite the claim that the Swabian party was weaker—an accurate description—the article acknowledged with gratitude that, due to the laws of the new Romanian nation-state, the two groups could be viewed as equals (in comparison to their unequal privileges under Austrian rule). This liberal spirit on the part of the author demonstrates that by 1924, Saxon attitudes towards fellow Germans in Transylvania had significantly shifted since the prewar and immediate postwar years; yet his tone remained condescending, whether consciously or not. He continued,

> The aim of the Swabian national community is the same as [the one that] the Saxons already attained centuries ago. Thus, the national ideal [*Volksideal*] of the Saxons is no longer foreign to the Swabians. In order better to attain it, leading Swabians have occasionally turned to the Saxons for advice and support, and it was of their own free will that the Swabian representatives in Parliament formed a parliamentary party with the Saxons several years ago—incidentally the most natural and reasonable decision that one can conceive of … However, in order to protect the sensitivities of further Swabian circles and to prevent the success of malicious troublemakers, we will have to continually exercise caution in the treatment of the Swabian question.[71]

Just two years later, however, the conservative politicians had abandoned caution and were clearly open to collaboration, as is clear from several articles in the *SDT*. This change in policy was in part due to the disorganized political situation in Romania, and in part to the gradual formation of the National Peasant Party and the rise of regionalism, described in the previous chapter. Another factor contributing to the *Volksrat*'s shifting policy was the National Socialist and Pan-German ideology that had gradually begun to infiltrate the community through sources such as Fabritius' *Selbsthilfe*. A final factor was the 1926 merge of the *SDT* and Rudolf Brandsch's daily *Deutsche Tagespost*, which probably led to the broadening of the *SDT*'s political horizons due to Brandsch's

[71] "Sachsen und Schwaben," *SDT*, Vol. 51, Nr. 15464, 13 December 1924, p. 1.

pronounced pro-German views. Indeed, Rudolf Brandsch met what he called "the new awakening of the sleeping Germans in Satu Mare" in 1926[72] with jubilation, labeling it "the only joyful event" in the present political situation. As of March 1926, a new government, the seventh in seven years since the establishment of the Romanian state, had been elected under the leadership of Alexandru Averescu. Further exacerbating this lack of political stability, wrote Brandsch, were the following conditions:

> the state schools are virtually romanianized; the law concerning the baccalaureate and private school system gravely endangers our educational autonomy and even violates the peace treaty, at least for the Saxons; through the agrarian reforms, we have been unlawfully treated, often explicitly against the clear letters of the law; the autonomy of our parishes has been annihilated, and finally, not a trace of language rights is to be found in any area of public life.[73]

Considering this dismal outlook, an alliance with their fellow Transylvanian Germans certainly no longer seemed that it could do any harm. And an alliance with fellow Germans—with whom the Saxons at least shared a common language—was preferable to Romanian and Hungarian collaboration, although all three would ultimately be tested out in the late 1920s with the rise of regionalism.

In light of this change of policy—from an isolationist stance to inclusive collaboration—an article appeared in the *SDT* in August 1926 that demonstrated the extent to which the *Volksrat* had embraced Swabian cause. Entitled "Cultural Threat of Our Swabian Allies: The schools of the Catholic orders and church are not being treated as confessional schools," the article was about the Banat Swabians, whose "young German

[72] Balázs Szelényi describes the development of "a united Swabian ethnic identity," as a belated and gradual process taking place "among the rural German-speaking peasantry in southern and western Hungary … The leaders of the movement were city lawyers and schoolteachers, German language and literature professors, but at its base were poor, uneducated farmers, peasants and day labourers." Balázs Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch: The Social Roots of Ethnic Conflict in the German Diaspora of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia." *Past and Present* 196 (2007): 230.

[73] Rudolf Brandsch, "Politische Umschau," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 5, May 1926, p. 192-196.

cultural organizations [were facing] a severe threat."[74] Again, such concerns, while sincere, can be seen as backhanded compliments from the side of the Saxons; for the article went on to explicitly refer to the Swabian's cultural organizations as less-developed. This continued attitude of superiority—while not entirely unfounded—gave Saxon politicians leverage in a greater German collaboration, because it allowed them, as the more advanced political and cultural body, to take the reigns in creating a national German program in Transylvania.

c. Dissident Collaboration and the Rise of Pan-Germanism

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the *Volksrat* was by no means the first to embrace German collaboration in the newly created Romanian state. After Rudolf Brandsch and his supporters, it was the Saxon dissident movements who first began to latch on to the idea of cooperation with Germans outside of the Saxon community. Indeed, part of Fritz Fabritius' *Selbsthilfe* program involved the cooperation of all Germans within Transylvania. It is likely that his efforts to recruit Germans from other areas of the country were originally not so much made from the perspective of Pan-German ideology than out of a simple desire to gain more local support for the *Selbsthilfe* movement. As a minority movement meant to appeal to smallholders, it is natural that Fabritius would have looked to the poorer rural Swabian populations for support. Only later did the National Socialist policy of Pan-Germanism begin to take hold, and it worked to Fabritius' advantage that he was already open to the idea, increasing the number of his supporters.

Especially since the conservative *Volksrat* remained resistant to Transylvanian-German collaboration for so long, Fabritius was able to garner support not only among dissatisfied Saxons and youth, but also among Swabians and other German groups who

[74] "Kulturelle Bedrohung unserer schwäbischen Volksgenossen. Die katholischen Ordens- und Kirchenschulen werden nicht als konfessionelle Schulen behandelt," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15937, 15 August 1926, p. 1.

were not organized or large enough to represent themselves. "At the end of 1931 and in the spring of the following year," writes Ciobanu, "Fabritius made great efforts to extend the movement into the Banat, making several journeys there and holding conferences."[75] By this time, his Pan-German intentions were clear, and the supporters he gained from other, non-Saxon groups would serve to strengthen his argument for a synchronization with the *Reich* when he stepped out against the *Volksrat* with the foundation of the *NSDR* in 1932. Fabritius canvassed not only in the Banat, but also in Bucovina (in fall 1931) and Bessarabia (in October), making local alliances that would enable him to form the *NSDR* just a few months later.[76] His ultimate aim, as described in letter to the German embassy in 1932, was to 1) Develop a national community of fate [*Volks- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft*] by eliminating all independents; 2) Organize all external German settlement groups into tightly fused bodies divided according to national and economic standards; and 3) Bind all of these groups together in a central position in the *Reich*.[77] Furthermore, he had already implemented many of these aims, or laid the groundwork for their implementation, by summer 1932, modeling his national program almost exactly on that of the *NSDAP* in Germany.[78] It is thus clear why Fabritius' victory at the October 1933 *Sachsentag* led to almost immediate political changes within the Saxon community, making way for the implementation of Nazi ideology and leaving little room for resistance.

III. Conclusions

Ironically, this transition once again leveled out the political playing field within the Saxon community. As this chapter has revealed, the interwar period was characterized by

[75] Ciobanu, *Contribuții*, p. 185.
[76] Ibid., p. 186.
[77] Andreas Möckel, "Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch?", p. 144.
[78] Ciobanu, *Contribuții*, p. 187. *NSDAP*: *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Worker's Party, the Nazi Party).

lack of political uniformity, perhaps more than any period preceding it. Despite persistent calls for unity from the leading conservative *Volksrat*, the situation on the ground betrayed bitter infightings and fragmented movements of disorganized dissatisfieds. Social demands—made first by the Social Democrats, then by the *Unzufriedenen*, and finally more effectively by Fabritius' *Selbsthilfe*—were more divisive even than political complaints, culminating in anti-clerical protests that threatened communal unity. While all of these movements had their predecessors in the nineteenth-century debates over an isolationist versus an open policy of collaboration, the disorganized economic and political situation in Romania catalyzed them. The tension between traditional modes of thought and modern ones split the community, and it was the latter that eventually won out.

With the acceptance of reforms and more radical notions of "nation" that were less socially limiting (in that they stepped outside the bounds of the traditional Saxon nation) but also more ethnically pronounced (embracing the Pan-German "blood and soil" ideology), the outnumbered conservative *Volksrat* paid the price for the reestablishment of unity within the community. Marylin McArthur makes the argument that "in the beginning, the National Socialist movement in Transylvania apparently gave the Saxons back the *security of a collective identity*," which had been lost in the early interwar period,[79] thus explaining a large part of its appeal. However, the achievement of this collective identity was a step backward when one considers the notion of unity that *Volksrat* leaders had at the beginning of the interwar period. The identity of the Saxon nation was absorbed into the larger umbrella of Transylvanian German unity, even if the Saxons were still at the forefront of the movement. Thus this shift in self-preservation tactic, to be further discussed in the next

[79] McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel*, p. 9.

chapter, implied rather a counterproductive loss of Saxon identity in the eyes of *Volksrat* leaders as Pan-German sentiments began to take hold.

The rather peaceful transition, while not of course eliminating all dissension, restored a single political party—this time the *NSDR* instead of the long-established *Sächsische Volkspartei*—to power. In turn, this narrowing of Saxon politics enabled the synchronization of the Transylvanian German community with the *Reich*. The degree of this synchronization, however, remained questionable, as all but the most fervent of National Socialist Saxons continued to identify Transylvania as their homeland, even as they came to embrace other Nazi attitudes. This ambivalent relationship to Germany as a historical and cultural antecedent will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Five
External Affairs - Germany and Its *Auslanddeutsche*

The ultimate turn of the Saxon community to Germany and the *Reich* in late 1933 has been anticipated throughout this thesis, and the previous chapter in particular addressed the internal divisions within Saxon society that prompted it. Yet in Chapter Three, it was emphasized that well into the late 1920s, and even into the early 1930s, a policy of continued loyalty to the Romanian state was pursued by the conservative Saxon *Volksrat*. The "commitment to the German cultural community could never become a political threat to the Romanian state … The future will prove that the Romanian state obtained loyal citizens and that the liberties which we confidently expect were not given in vain," Hans Otto Roth proclaimed confidently at the beginning of the interwar period.[1] From their side, the Saxons did not see their "commitment to the German cultural community" and loyalty to the Romanian state as mutually exclusive. To the Romanian government, however, the two policies—of cultural and political loyalty to different nations—were unsustainable.

A review of the Saxon press and literary publications in the 1920s reveals that the community was continually focused on Germany's economic progress and cultural development, and, to a lesser extent, its political structure, following the First World War. The gradually increasing attention paid to these matters by the Saxon press would have been a cause for Romanian concern, especially as Saxons began to receive financial support from the German state and cultivated literary connections with German authors in the mid-1920s. Particularly of note during this period was that this increased attention became mutual as Germany began to recognize the importance of the *Auslanddeutsche*[2] or *Volksdeutsche*

[1] Hans Otto Roth, "Die Zeitschrift 'Ostland,'" *SDT*, Vol. 46. Nr. 13955, 14 September 1919, p. 1-2.
[2] Usually spelled *Auslanddeutsche* in interwar publications, the alternate spelling *Auslandsdeutsche* is more common today.

outside of its borders. By the end of the 1920s, little political or economic incentive remained to keep the Saxons loyal to the Romanian government despite their sincere declarations of allegiance following the war. However, as this chapter will explore through an analysis of Saxon publications, several factors kept many Saxons from utterly abandoning Romania for Germany—most importantly, the commitment to the Transylvanian homeland.

I. Early Ties to Germany

a. Prewar Interest in Germany

Distant Germany had always been an object of interest in the Saxon press, even prior to the First World War. As was briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, the long tradition of Saxon student visits to Germany had created a cultural connection between the two lands that reached back for centuries to the Reformation.[3] This tradition continued throughout the twentieth century, and an *SDT* article from 1932 claims that the number of total students studying at German universities (132,000) had increased by 9,000 from the previous year. While not giving the exact number of Saxon students studying abroad, they certainly contributed to this sum.[4]

[3] In an essay on Central European humanist influences on Saxon intellectual and musical development, Erhard Franke writes that "the intellectual exchange [*Geistaustausch*]" between Saxons and Central Europeans "never ceased, but rather increased since [the middle of the 16th century] due to Transylvanian students visiting foreign universities." Similarly, in another chapter of the same volume, Attila Verók identifies the Saxon practice of visiting foreign universities as "typical until 1944." See Erhard Franke, "Kirchliches und schulisches Musizieren der Siebenbürger Sachsen im 16. Jahrhundert," and Attila Verók, "Über die Bücherverzeichnisse der Siebenbürger Sachsen im 16. Jahrhundert." Both essays can be found in *Humanismus in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen. Politik, Religion und Kunst im 16. Jahrhundert*, eds. Ulrich A. Wien and Krista Zach, Volume 37 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), p. 110-111 and p. 224.

[4] The author further writes that this number (132,000 students in 1932) was 20,000 more than in 1928, and double the number of students since 1911, bearing witness to Germany's growing appeal in the early twentieth century. See K. Lennartz, "O Academia! Wie leben und arbeiten die deutschen Studenten? Welche Aussuchten bieten akademische Berufe in Deutschland?" *SDT*, Vol. 59, Nr. 17621, 10 January 1932, p. 11.

As will be highlighted in this section, however, this connection was primarily cultural and not political, as the Saxons had their own established political tradition in Transylvania that remained distinct from those of the splintered German communities of the early modern period. As Irina Livezeanu writes, "Transylvanian Saxons maintained contacts with German high culture as it developed in Germany by sending their sons to study or be apprenticed in Germany"[5]; in other words, these ties were seen as purely cultural, based on common language and confession (Lutheranism), and, to some extent, the vague perception of a common heritage or ancestry. However, even the linguistic connection between the Transylvanian Saxons and Germans must not be overemphasized, as the *Siebenbürger-Sächsisch* dialect which was used almost without exception in the community was more similar to the dialect spoken in present-day Luxembourg (one of the areas from which the Saxons are theorized to have stemmed before journeying to Transylvania[6]) than to the standard, or high, German that was adopted in the nineteenth century and spoken in Germany proper.

Notable political interest in Germany can first be observed among the Saxons only in the late-nineteenth century, with the unification of the German *Reich* under Otto von Bismarck in 1871. Bernhard Böttcher points to the Saxon's increasing "orientation towards the German Empire," following its establishment.[7] Likely, this shift resulted from the

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[5] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 137.

[6] These theories, not "based on historical sources, but rather on theses of language affinity between the Saxon and Luxembourgian dialects," are still of great interest today within the Saxon community. See for example the online article "Transylvania and Luxembourg," 2 August 2007, http://www.siebenbuerger.de/ortschaften/petersberg/nachrichten/allgemein/5834-siebenbuergen-und-luxemburg.html (accessed November 2011), from which this quote was taken. Similar accounts are to be found in Konrad Gündisch (with the collaboration of Mathias Beer), *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1998), p. 30.

[7] Bernhard Böttcher, "Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden? Kriegerdenkmäler und Heldenkult bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen nach 1918," in Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth, eds., *Der Einfluss von*

Saxons' own political instability during this period, as they had just lost many of their traditional privileges following the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* of 1867.[8] Despite minor disagreements over the exact date in which this Saxon interest became more pronounced, there is a clear consensus that—in the words of Cornelius Zach—Saxon "relations to Germany grew steadily stronger after 1900."[9] And yet while many Saxons did attend university in Germany, including many of the authors discussed in this thesis, and while political interest may have been on the rise at the turn of the century, Germany had very little direct influence in Saxon affairs until late in the 1920s. When secondary literature does point to Saxon attraction to Germany, it is often in order to contrast the draw to Berlin over the draw to Vienna due to confessional differences, rather than to signify a specific political connection.[10]

The foremost event that served to bring the Saxons into political contact with Germany in the twentieth century was the outbreak of the First World War, which allied both Saxon and German soldiers fighting under the Habsburg banner. Not only were Saxon troops stationed on western fronts—Heinrich Zillich, for example, fought on the Italian front—but German-Austrian troops occupied Transylvania in order to liberate it from an invasion of Romanians from the Old Kingdom in late August 1916. These interactions

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Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa, Volume 107 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2006), p. 60.

[8] Indeed, Andreas Möckel traces this orientation towards the burgeoning German nation further back, to the 1867 compromise. See "Kleinsächsisch oder Alldeutsch? Zum Selbstverständnis der Siebenbürger Sachsen von 1867 bis 1933," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, ed. Walter König, Volume 28 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 129-148.

[9] Cornelius Zach "Zwischen Ideologie und Pragmatismus," in Krista Zach, ed. *Migration im südöstlichen Mitteleuropa: Auswanderung, Flucht, Deportation, Exil im 20. Jahrhundert*, Volume 91 of the Wissenschaftliche Reihe (Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte) (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2005), p. 158.

[10] See, e.g. Krista Zach, "'*Wir wohnten auf dem Königsboden…*' Identitätsbildung bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen im historischen Wandel," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991), (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 134, note 55. Cornelius Zach also makes this observation in "Zwischen Ideologie und Pragmatismus," p. 158.

between the Saxons and Germans from the West are largely described as positive.[11] Of particular note was Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit to Transylvania in September 1917, one year after the invasion. He and liberating officer Erich von Falkenhayn were welcomed as heroes, demonstrating the Saxons' increasing connections to the *Reich*. Yet most authors would be quick to concede that the increased interest in Germany, which continued throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, was by no means equivalent to a reliance on Germany for political support. Speaking of the period immediately following the First World War, Böttcher, for example, concludes that self-reliance continued to characterize the Saxon community despite the feelings of fraternity between Saxon and *Reich* soldiers that accompanied the German occupation of Transylvania.[12]

b. The Early 1920s: Cultural Rather Than Political Allies

Indeed, following Germany's defeat in the First World War, it became even less an object of political emulation for the self-reliant Saxons who were struggling to find their place in the newly established Romanian nation-state. While attention was paid to Germany's postwar condition in the Saxon press,[13] the burdened nation was seen as

[11] Michaela Nowotnick, for example, characterizes them as opportunities for later literary collaboration. See "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*. Siebenbürgen und seine Beziehungen zum literarischen Leben in Deutschland (1907-1939)," MA Thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2007, p. 93. In his acclaimed 1936 autobiographical novel *Zwischen Grenzen und Zeiten*, Heinrich Zillich recalls how the Saxons "warmly greet[ed]" the German troops and "celebrate[d] them as liberators." (Quoted in Cornelius R. Zach, "Weltkrieg und ethnische Selbstbetrachtung," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991) (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 306). It is interesting to note that Zillich's novel unexpectedly describes the Romanian invasion of Braşov in August 1916 "without hostility, but also without sympathy." This is an unusual portrayal because normally the Romanian invasion of Transylvania is described with abhorrence, not only by German and Hungarian accounts, but also sometimes by Transylvanian Romanians. For example, Böttcher characterizes the invasion much more negatively: "Romania's surprise attack [of Transylvania] in 1916 was compared with the medieval Mongolian invasion. The homeland was existentially threatened and contested, the Hungarian border defense failed, and a large portion of the population fled." (Böttcher, "Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden?", p. 60).

[12] Böttcher, "Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden?," p. 72.

[13] See, e.g. "Zur deutsch-österreichischen Frage" and "Deutsches Reich," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13746, 2 January 1919, p. 1-2; "Die auswärtige Politik Deutschlands," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13800, 7 March 1919, p. 2-3; Dr.

economically and politically unstable. In July 1921, three years after the war's end, Hermann Plattner, editor-in-chief of the *SDT*, asserted:

> The physical and psychological wounds inflicted on the German *Reich* through the war and its outcome cannot be healed overnight. Fighting Germany fell due to a puncture wound, and stab wounds must remain open until healing occurs from the inside out. Both the external and domestic life of the German *Volk* is germinating and fermenting. One can see the rotating elements but does not yet know which crystal forms they will yield …[14]

Even as the political situation in Romania worsened for the Saxons as the new constitution was drafted and land and school reforms were implemented, the uncertain future of Germany excluded it from being a potential ally for the Saxon leaders. In a speech to an assembly of voters in January 1923, Hans Otto Roth bemoaned the state of affairs in Romania, complaining that "we have hardly moved forward from the point where we stood half a century ago, with the union of Transylvania with Hungary: we are [still] fighting for the recognition of the fundamental rights of the German minorities in Romania." Yet in spite of these complaints, in the same speech, he queries, "Where are allies to be found? Outside the borders of our country, I see no potential allies [*Faktoren*] that are willing and powerful enough to help us."[15] This assertion highlights both the changing attitude of *Volksrat* leaders towards the Romanian government and the belief that Germany was not strong enough to come to Saxon aid. In the immediate postwar period, Saxon leaders had been adamant that the future of the community lay within Romania's borders; this statement reveals the nagging doubts that had begun to penetrate, and shows that as early as 1923 leaders were willing to consider external solutions.

August Müller, "Der Wiederaufbau Deutschlands," *SDT*, Vol. 47, Nr. 14217, 8 September 1920, p. 4-5; "Deutschland an der Schicksalswende," *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14885, 12 January 1923, p. 1. These are but a few examples, of which many more could be cited.

[14] Hermann Plattner, "Volk und Parteien in Deutschland," *SDT*, Vol. 48, Nr. 14460, 10 July 1921, p. 1.

[15] "Rede des Abg. Dr. Hans Otto Roth über die politische Lage. Gehalten in den Wählerversammlungen von Reußmarkt und Mühlbach am 17. und 18. Januar," *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14895, 24 January 1923, p. 1-2.

During this period, however, Germany was not a candidate for external alliance among Saxon leaders. A letter from Berlin printed in the *SDT* in June 1923 characterized Germany as lying between the twin terrors of "Scylla and Charibdis" due to its monumental reparation debts on the one hand and its inner turmoil over whether it should take a national or an international intellectual direction (*Geistesrichtung*) on the other.[16] In addition to Germany's abysmal economic situation, even on a cultural level conservative Saxons viewed some of their own institutions as superior to those in Germany. Comparing the cohesion of the Saxon church to the Lutheran churches in Germany, and basing this cohesion on the presence of national religious leaders in the community, an article in the *SDT* declared that the Saxon national church was the envy of *Reich*-German churches: "Because such national [religious] leaders are lacking in Germany, there is also no integrated nation. For without a national leader there can be no nation!"[17] Thus while Germany may have been considered a cultural ally, it was not necessarily considered to be a suitable cultural model. Finally, in addition to these economic and cultural shortcomings, the recovering country's political model was unappealing to conservative Saxon leaders. As Cristian Cercel emphasizes, "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."[18] Indeed, the overview of the divisions caused by the Social Democratic movement within the community provided in the preceding chapter

[16] "Zwischen Schylla und Charibdis" (Letter from Berlin, 22 May), *SDT*, Vol. 50, Nr. 14998, 1 June 1923, p. 1.
[17] Gustav Baron Bedeus, "Eine Gefahr für unsere Volkskirche," *SDT*, Vol. 49, Nr. 14830, 4 November 1922, p. 3-4.
[18] Cristian Cercel "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity in the Case of Transylvanian Saxons 1933-1944," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 19.

bears witness to the unpopularity of the model, despite the country's relative economic success under Gustav Stresemann's short tenure.

Yet despite these deficiencies, which, for the time being, disqualified Germany as a potential Saxon political ally,[19] Germany continued to be referred to in the Saxon press as a cultural partner. This can partially be explained due to the strong Saxon emphasis on cultural preservation of the nation, detailed in Chapter Three. This cultural loyalty to Germany was clearly distinguished from political loyalty to Romania, a fact which several *SDT* articles strove to clarify in the 1920s. Even as late as 1926, the assertion was made in the *SDT*: "We have often emphasized it, and no reasonable person will deny the validity of the notion that our commitment to the German cultural nation does not contradict [our] commitment to the [Romanian] nation-state."[20] When Cornelius Zach writes that "the Germans in Romania felt themselves to be first German and viewed their membership to the Romanian state as subordinate" to this, he does not use the term "German" in a political sense of citizenship but rather confirms: "there is no incompatibility between citizenship in a state and belonging to a multifocal ethnic minority in this state.[21]

In fact, conservative Saxon leaders utterly rejected the idea of a political association of all Germans, preferring to view their participation in the abstract German "nation" as cultural. For example, the early founding of the journal *Ostland* in 1919 and its connections to the *VDR*'s cultural office were meant to establish and maintain cultural—and not political—ties to Germany. For Romanian authorities who were striving to establish a

[19] Although the Saxons were less interested in a political alliance with Germany, Lóránt Tilkovszky argues that the German minorities of Romania, in particularly the weaker ones (such as the Swabians), did look to Germany for support even in these early years. See "Die Weimarer Republik und die Nationalitäten in Südosteuropa, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen und ungarischen Minderheiten in Rumänien," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, ed. Walter König, Volume 28 of Siebenbürgisches Archiv (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 117.
[20] "Staatsnation und Kulturnation," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15761, 12 January 1926, p. 1.
[21] Cornelius Zach "Zwischen Ideologie und Pragmatismus," p. 158.

homogenized social, ethnic, and political state, this distinction was a foreign notion, and they responded with sharp criticisms to *Ostland*'s content, accusing the journal of promoting Pan-German sentiments. In response to these accusations, and in defense of *Ostland*'s publication, Hans Otto Roth made the revealing remarks:

> "Ostland" does not represent a commitment to "Pan-Germanism," but, on the contrary, a commitment to autonomy and independence from the German west. At the same time, the word ["Ostland"] represents the pooling of the different German groups of the Romanian state in a common cultural activity. Thus "Ostland" is not a propaganda word for a new "pan-Germanic" ideal, but rather an inwardly-focused cultural ideal … One of the darkest terms of journalistic phrasing, whose meaning will never be completely clear, is the slogan "Pan-Germanism." It sounds like a horrible denunciation, like a terrible menace, like the blackest political specter. What is it in reality? With this slogan, I can only imagine the pursuit of an imperialist aggregation of all Germans on the globe …[22]

Roth's repulsion at the idea of an "imperialist aggregation of all Germans on the globe" clearly demonstrates that the aims of the community in maintaining contact to Germany were not political. His descriptions of *Ostland*'s goals to gather the Germans of Romania together further emphasize the commitment of the Saxons to the Transylvanian homeland. In this latter regard, Roth would remain steadfast; even after unwillingly accepting the National Socialist synchronization of the Saxon community in the 1930s, he remained committed to the continued existence of the Saxons in the Carpathian Basin, unlike some of his other contemporaries.

Yet as described in Chapter Three, the increasing disorganization of the Romanian political situation in the mid-1920s, combined with the financial burdens and social unrest within the Saxon community, gradually led to a change in the political perception of Germany. Although conservative Saxon leaders continued to pursue a policy of cultural preservation and remained committed to the Transylvanian soil, an eye was turned to Germany's progress. This was especially true as Germany's economic and political situation began to improve and as its leaders began to take in increasing interest in Germans

[22] Dr. Hans Otto Roth, "Die Zeitschrift *Ostland*," *SDT*, Vol. 46, Nr. 13955, 14 September 1919, p. 1-2.

outside of their borders. This new focus, occurring from around the mid-1920s, led to increased economic and literary collaboration between the Saxons and the *Reich*, and marked another shift in the Saxon policy of self-preservation—a gradual expansion of the conservative isolationist policy characterizing the immediate postwar years.

II. The Mid 1920s: Mutual and Increased Economic and Literary Collaboration

One sign of this mutual turn was the transformation of literary content in Saxon publications. While the conservative *SDT*'s pages did not vary significantly until the late 1920s, new or revived journals such as *Klingsor* and *Ostland* rose up to supplement the international focus of the Saxon press. The desire of Saxon readers that the *SDT* would pay more attention to external political affairs, in particular to German ones, was a sign of growing Saxon interest in a political solution outside of Romania's borders.[23] Accompanying this Saxon turn towards Germany by the socially and politically discontent groups described in Chapter Four was a mutual shift in focus from the German side. The rise of ethnic nationalism in Germany led to an increased emphasis on the *Auslanddeutsche*, or ethnic Germans living outside of Germany's borders. Because of the social (and later political) unrest within the Saxon community, dissatisfied Saxon groups were particularly responsive to the interest of *Reich* Germans and were open to Pan-German ideas and literary collaboration. The cultural relations previously established through both wartime liaisons and schooling abroad facilitated the influx of literary content as well.

[23] In the survey published by *Klingsor*, mentioned in the previous chapter, several readers of the *SDT* complained that the paper did not contain enough content about the goings-on in Germany. Dr. Carl Wolff, a frequent *Klingsor* contributor and himself one-time editor of the *SDT* (from its founding in 1874 until 1885), "wish[ed] that [the *SDT*] would give more attention to the occurrences in Germany and to the regions of border Germans and external Germans." See "Rundfrage über das *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt*," *Klingsor*, Year 3, Issue 9, September 1926, p. 353-362.

Even *Volksrat* leaders eventually welcomed financial aid from abroad for the Lutheran Church and its confessional schools, considering it a way to continue the cultural preservation of the Saxon nation. The following section will address these three major factors—economic relations, the rise of ethnic nationalism in Germany, and literary collaboration—in order to demonstrate how cultural connections between the Saxon community and the *Reich* began to overlap with political ones.

a. Financial Support from Abroad

By the mid-1920s, the financial situation of the Lutheran Church and its confessional schools was becoming desperate. The church was in debt 20 million Lei with a yearly interest of 4.8 million Lei.[24] The initial policy of conservative leaders such as Hans Otto Roth was to find solutions to these financial problems within the community; hence, in cooperation with the clergy, church tax regulations were changed in 1924, causing an increase in taxes—accompanied by an increase in social discontent—as described in the previous chapter.

During the same year a personal conflict arose between Hans Otto Roth and Rudolf Brandsch in regards to handling community finance affairs; the incident, recounted by Harald Roth, is telling because it reveals the rapidity with which Roth and other conservative leaders changed their views on this matter as the financial situation of the community worsened and relations with Romania deteriorated. In order to gain support for his floundering newspaper, the *Deutsche Tagespost*, Brandsch successfully petitioned for financial aid from Germany in 1924. This action was immediately decried by Roth and others, in part because the *Tagespost* was at political odds with the *SDT* and Brandsch's

[24] Harald Roth, *Politische Strukturen und Strömungen bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen 1919*-1933, Volume 22 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), p. 136. The following short section largely relies on Harald Roth's informative narrative in *Politische Strukturen*, p. 101-104 and 135-140, unless otherwise noted.

request was seen as furthering political goals, and in part because of the "carelessness" with which Brandsch had turned to Germany. With the official Saxon policy still one of resolute loyalty towards the Romanian state, Brandsch's financial flirtation with Germany endangered Romanian-Saxon relations. Roth responded vehemently to Brandsch's capriciousness with the following letter to the councilor in Berlin who had pledged the significant donation of 30,000 *Reichsmark*: "In clear recognition of domestic and external threats, we want to prevent that money comes to us from Germany for political purposes … Inner oppositions are our intimate family affairs that may not be carried outside the borders of our community [*Siedlung*]."[25] The harshness of this reply is in accordance with the picture that has thus far been painted in this thesis of Roth's isolationist policy of cultural preservation. His perception of the Saxon community as a "family" politically unrelated to the Germans of the *Reich* reinforces the limited *Volksrat* interest in German affairs other than those dealing with cultural matters.

But the financial strain on the church—the foremost Saxon cultural institution—soon led Roth and other *Volksrat* leaders to change their policy; indeed the extent of the strain was so great that it threatened the very existence of the church and thus mandated a new financial course. In the very same year that Roth had refuted Brandsch's attempts to garner support from Germany, the leaders of the Saxon clergy, certainly with the *Volksrat*'s support, petitioned Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a loan of half a million *Reichsmark*. Eventually, in March 1925, a loan of 600,000 *RM* (approximately 30 million Lei) was granted, although this sum served merely to offset the church's debt and not to provide for its future needs. As a result, in 1926, individual clergy members and political

[25] Letter from Hans Otto Roth to Erich Krahmer-Möllenberg on 21 November 1924, quoted in Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 103. Roth's source is Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (Bonn), R 73650, Nationalitätenfragen, Rumänien.

leaders—including Hans Otto Roth—strove to gain independently acquired funding from the *Reich*, though without success. In clear contrast to his behavior just two years before, Roth could justify financial support from abroad if it served a recognizable cultural purpose, namely the preservation of the church and confessional schools. It is of course relevant to point out a major difference in Brandsch's securing of funding and Roth's: while in 1924 Brandsch had received a donation, Roth sought funding in the form of loans to be paid back, a more cautious political step. Yet even if it could be asserted that Roth's actions were a continuation of his policy of cultural nationalism, the borders between the Saxons' cultural and political association with Germany were becoming blurred by the mid-1920s.

From Germany's side, however, the requests for financial support of Saxon cultural institutions evidently piqued an interest in foreign affairs. Because the Lutheran Church could not pay back the initial 1925 loan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, Saxon Bishop Friedrich Teutsch wrote a personal letter in 1927 to Gustav Stresemann, by this time Foreign Minister, requesting continued support "for Saxon schools and other cultural institutions" over the next several years. Although the outcome of the exchange remains unknown, Stresemann gave the following reply, which clearly outlines Germany's combined economic, cultural, and political interest in the Saxon *Volk*:

> We now face the circumstance that, despite the greatest efforts of the Saxon *Volk* in Transylvania, the German educational system is on the verge of collapse. If an intervention is not made, we will necessarily lose this cultural base in the Southeast. The result of this would not only be the collapse of our policy of cultural-political expansion in southeastern Europe, but also the worst economic injury of the entire German nation [*Deutschtum*].[26]

Such remarks were not isolated, and only increased as more radical ethnic nationalism and expansionist aims became the focus of German policy. Michaela Nowotnick writes that "from the German side, as well, an increased interest arose in the Germans abroad, for

[26] Letter from Gustav Stresemann to the Minister of Finance Heinrich Köhler on 7 October 1927, quoted in Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 138. Roth's source is *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1933*, Series B: 1925-1933, Vol. VII (Göttingen, 1975), p. 48.

whom the government of the Weimar Republic felt responsible … An expression of this development was the wider usage of the term '*auslanddeutsch*' …"[27] The external support promised—and later given—by Germany was a critical selling point for those Saxons who might have had conservative tendencies and hoped that Germany would offer protections for Saxon institutions. Although some Saxon leaders may not have been as open to collaboration on this level, their German counterparts most definitely were, and were eyeing the easterly-lying territories with more and more eagerness.

As described in the previous chapter, dissident voices within the Saxon community were more than willing to jump at opportunities abroad. Surprisingly, Harald Roth writes that the majority of Saxons, including the majority of the leaders of the dissatisfied movements, were unaware of the *Volksrat*'s and clergy's attempts to gain financial support from Germany.[28] These negotiations were probably kept under wraps for several reasons: Saxon leaders did not want members of the community to suppose that the Saxon nation was not self-sufficient; furthermore, the financial relations with Germany could reflect badly upon Saxon-Romanian political relations; and finally, the efforts were not guaranteed, and if they were made known before they were successful, it could reflect badly upon the credibility of Saxon leaders and their (in)ability to negotiate. In turn, the fact that the majority of Saxons did not know about the loans from abroad helps explain why their discontent was all the more aggravated by the seemingly hopeless financial situation, and explains why they themselves would have turned to Germany for support.

[27] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 16.
[28] Roth, *Politische Strukturen*, p. 135.

b. Establishment of Literary Connections and the Politicization of Ostland and Klingsor

However, financial support was harder to come by than cultural support, especially as the dissident groups in the Saxon community remained small and fragmented in the mid-1920s. Thus, it was cultural feelers, and not political or economic, that were first extended towards the *Reich* by groups such as the *Klingsor* circle. As Stresemann's assertion above reveals, these feelers were mutual, thus contributing to multiple successful literary and cultural collaborations. In July 1925, for example, Misch Orend described the increasing presence of German organizations in the east. He referred to the founding of the German Foreign Institute (*Deutsche Auslandsinstitut*), opened in Stuttgart already during the war in order to "establish cultural and economic relations between the *Reich* and the Germans living outside Germany in the knowledge that these Germans, wherever they are to be found, are the bearers of German cultural ideas ..." The institute, wrote Orend, published its own newspaper, *Der Auslanddeutsche*, which contained "reliable reports on political, cultural, and economic events from all German settlement areas in the world." Orend further mentioned the recent establishment of the Institute for Border Germans and External Germans (*Institut für Grenz- und Auslanddeutschtum*) in Marburg, and the German Academy (*Deutsche Akademie*) in Munich. Perhaps more notable than his promotion of these institutions among the Saxons, though, is his use of *Reich*-German ethnic propaganda in his concluding lines: "… For we believe in German culture, which cannot be buried by western civilization, because it lies in the German blood."[29] Although in the past, many Saxons had promoted an isolationist policy, this exclusion of foreign elements had largely been based on social restrictions, rather than on ethnic ones (even if the two often happened to coincide). The *Klingsor* circle's increasing emphasis on ethnicity in publications

[29] Misch Orend, "Rundschau: Deutschland und die Auslanddeutschen," *Klingsor*, Year 2, Issue 7, July 1925, p. 279.

throughout the mid-late 1920s demonstrated an influx of *Reich*-German ideals. Indeed, Nowotnick confirms that "the general tendency of the convergence [of *Reichsdeutsche* and *Auslandsdeutsche*] made itself felt on the book market and in journalism … A further achievement of the strengthened relations was that Transylvanian authors increasingly published in German publishing houses, and books and journals from Germany could be more easily and quickly procured in Transylvania."[30]

Despite *Klingsor*'s often more outspoken contributors, such as Heinrich Zillich and Karl Hoch, it was by no means the only journal to respond to the *Reich*'s literary call. After resurfacing in 1926 after a five-year hiatus, *Ostland*, too, had evidently changed its profile from an obstinately Saxon journal[31] to one much more focused on the German *Volk* as a whole. The first sign of this shift was manifest in its title: When it resumed publication in 1926, it was under the new subtitle *Ostland: From the Spiritual Life of the Germans Living Abroad* (*Ostland: vom geistigen Leben der Auslanddeutschen*), as opposed to its previous, more neutral, 1919-1921 subtitle *Monthly Journal for the Culture of East Germans* (*Monatsschrift für die Kultur der Ostdeutschen*). Like the newly founded journal *Klingsor* (in 1924), these later editions of *Ostland* expressed a more romantic tone, clearly evinced in the opening paragraphs of the January 1926 edition:

> Things have changed since that time, and the [Germans in Romania], previously welcomed as guests and richly presented with honor, the freemen and masters of their territories, have come to be viewed with suspicion, hated by all, [they have become] oppressed German "minorities" … Yes, the times have changed, and we with them. Where now is the effusive power of the German *Volk*, that could send out the currents of its best blood without sensing this bloodletting in the least! The world has grown older, and we with it. The burden of civilization lies heavy and gray on us and has constricted our limbs and souls, hardened our hearts, and made us calculating, small, and unbelieving.[32]

[30] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 17.
[31] It will be remembered that in its second year (1920), the editors had written, "The main reproach made of the monthly journal Ostland is that it is too reserved, too cautious, in a word, one could say—too Saxon." *Ostland*, Year 2, First July Issue, 1920, introductory pages.
[32] "Zur Einführung," *Ostland*, Year 1, Issue 1, January 1926, p. 1-2.

These lines not only betray the anti-Romanian sentiments that had cropped up in the Saxon community by the mid-1920s, but also the infiltration of *Reich* vocabulary: through the reference to German *Volk* and blood. Nowotnick, who made an in-depth study of Saxon literary collaboration with authors in Germany, also points to an increasing "radicalization and politicization" of *Ostland*'s literary "rubric" in the second year of its publication (1927).[33] *Klingsor*, too, underwent similar changes, although its contents had been more radical from the start.

Klingsor's major advantage over its new competitor *Ostland* was the gregarious personality of its editor, Zillich, who worked tirelessly to establish literary contacts in the west. Some of his connections were from his university days in Berlin, while others were made during the war, or simply during his journeys abroad. Although Richard Csaki sought to differentiate *Ostland*'s content from that of *Klingsor* by inserting more political articles (as opposed to the emphasis on cultural issues in *Klingsor*),[34] he, too, tried to make literary connections with German authors. Yet Nowotnick describes Csaki's attempts as largely unsuccessful, especially as compared to Zillich's, who received frequent contributions from abroad. Csaki was very aware of the dangers that a limited readership could create, and had strategies for overcoming the failures that had doomed *Ostland*'s first two years of publication. In 1925, he jotted the following note on "Previous experiences with German newspapers in Transylvania":

> The readership in Transylvania and also in the whole of Romania [is] too small to maintain an intellectual journal. Both *Die Karpathen* and *Ostland* [in its early years] failed due to this. But also the pool of staff and materials [is] too narrow. Lack of enough stimulating and truly oriented colleagues [results in] much half-baked [material]. Frozen in the eternal cycle of the same subjects, narrowing of viewpoints, danger of unfertile polemics, strong local nature. Danger in the area of literature very severe … Also, danger of forming an intellectual clique, because usually a narrow group of dispositions stands behind such a journal and will, due to

[33] Quotation from Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*," p. 60.
[34] Ibid., p. 62.

> the circumstances, instinctively form a clique in a negative sense[35] … [Thus the importance of maintaining] the connection to decisive intellectual and artistic currents of the new Germany without neglecting the specifics of one's own heritage.[36]

Csaki's efforts to create this balance between foreign and local are clear from *Ostland*'s new content. In its first issue of 1926, the following was proclaimed:

> Our journal is published in Sibiu, the spiritual center of the Transylvanian Saxons, and it is understandable that the intellectual and cultural life of the Transylvanian Saxons and the Germans of Romania must be its main focus. But if we limited ourselves to this domain, we would ourselves obstruct the path to fertile growth. In the intellectual domain, no borders apply to kinsmen of the same nation [*Volkstum*], and we can glimpse one of the fullest future moments of our national development in the lively exchange with the other German settlers of the east.[37]

He goes on to list the "Germans of the East": from the Baltic and the Sudeten territories, from Poland, Romania, and "all other countries." Although no specific mention is made of Germany, there are several references to the "entire German *Volk*" and implications that the Germans of the east are but different branches of the same German family. While perhaps not as radical as *Klingsor*'s politicization around the same time, such content was in fact very radical considering the isolated cultural profile that many *Volksrat* members sought to maintain. Again the age-old cleft between those Saxon who wished to seek help in the external world and those who preferred to keep cultural and political affairs private arose in the mid-1920s. While the conservative *SDT* largely kept its isolationist profile (with the exception of acceptance of regional collaboration), the literary journals shifted to a broader European outlook.

Klingsor's shift to a National Socialist agenda was more exaggerated than *Ostland*'s due to Zillich's more successful canvassing of German authors. Although its focus on

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[35] Karl M. Reinerth asserts that *Klingsor*, too, fell victim to this danger, and was not able to attain a wide enough support base to spread its ideas due to the fact that it catered almost exclusively to intellectuals. See "Zu den innenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen unter den Deutschen in Rumänien zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen," in *Siebenbürgen zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, ed. Walter König, p. 150-151.

[36] Quoted in Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 61. Nowotnick's source is Richard Csaki: "Gruendsätzliches zur Zeitschrift des Kulturamtes [1925] in NaH, FLC, D. 95, p. 88-91; and Richard Csaki, *Ostland*.

[37] "Zur Einführung," *Ostland*, Year 1, Issue 1, January 1926, p. 2-3.

Germany began already much earlier in its first years of publications,[38] Nowotnick and other authors notice a definitive shift in *Klingsor*'s content only in 1930, after which time it abandoned a "pluralist" profile and concentrated almost exclusively on *Reich* affairs.[39] Unsurprisingly, Nowotnick identifies this "new orientation" as truly beginning in 1934, after the takeover of National Socialism in Germany and the October 1933 *Sachsentag* in Sibiu; she observes that after this point, *Klingsor* "took over the fascist and racist attitudes of the cultural politics of the Third Reich almost without criticism,"[40] and maintains that this shift was directly related to "the strengthened attachment of Transylvania to Germany and its literary market following the First World War."[41]

The prevalence of these topics in early-1930s articles bear witness to the change that was in the Saxon air preceding the 1933 *Sachsentag*, as the various dissatisfied groups began to band together for a common, *Reich*-oriented cause. Even without direct reference to national socialism or to Hitler's political philosophy, *Klingsor*'s contents make it clear that Nazi ideas were seeping into Saxon politics. In the 40-page "Draft for a Saxon National Program" from October 1932, explicit agendas based on National Socialist terminology were being disseminated, notably meant for implementation within the Romanian nation-state. Although avoiding terms implying Pan-German sympathies, the article speaks openly of the Saxon need for *Lebensraum*, and furthermore cites "vigorous national reproduction, as well as physical and racial health of the nation's members" through "national health,

[38] As is evinced by such articles as "Our Political Existence and the *Reich*-German Parties." See Alfred Pomarius, "Unser politisches Wesen und die reichsdeutschen Parteien," *Klingsor*, Year 2, Issue 11, November 1925, p. 405-308.
[39] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 84. Nowotnick further claims that "Heinrich Zillich's affinity to the self-proclaimed Third Reich and his overt sympathy for the idea of National Socialism can be safely proven by 1930 at the latest (p. 77).
[40] However, Nowotnick also gives exceptions to these ever-more right-leaning tendencies in the period following 1931. For example, she cites the case of *Klingsor* contributor Peter Huchel, whose seven pieces in the journal were left-oriented. See Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen, Ostland, Klingsor*," p. 91f.
[41] Ibid., p. 75-77.

hygiene, racial hygiene, and national reproduction" as necessary for the basis of existence of the national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*]. Family values are emphasized, as is the spiritual and physical maintenance of the national body and the important role of the youth in this process.[42] The contents of the October article bear a striking similarity to a lengthy piece published by Alfred Pomarius in April 1932, in which he more explicitly expounded upon the basic principles of National Socialism, this time without mentioning the Saxons. The work is practically a regurgitation of *Reich* propaganda, including several quotations from Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.[43] Of course, not all articles are so lacking in local character, as will be discussed in the section below, but by and large *Klingsor*'s adoption of German ideology was much more swift and complete than that of *Ostland* or the conservative daily press.

III. The Saxon Paradox: Accommodating Reich Politics and Saxon Tradition

Although the greatest hindrance to the complete adoption of National Socialist ideology within the community was the attachment to the Transylvanian homeland and Saxon institutions—a matter which will be discussed below—questions of conscience also played a role among some members of the community. This topic lies somewhat outside the scope of this thesis, as these questions arose in the mid-late 1930s, but the basic tensions within the community will be outlined in the following brief section.

Several leaders of the church were particularly resistant to some of the basic tenants of National Socialism, for example its anti-Semitism. However, despite individual opponents of anti-Semitism, the issue remained secondary to inter-Saxon affairs. This must

[42] "Entwurf zu einem sächsischen Volksprogramm," *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 10, October 1932, p. 364-404.
[43] Alfred Pomarius, "Zur Philosphie des Nationalsozialismus: Rasse-Volkstum-Judentum" and "Zur Philosphie des Nationalsozialismus: Staat-Volk-Persönlichkeit," *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 4, April 1932, p. 131-142 and Issue 5, May 1932, p. 176-183.

be mentioned in contrast to several of the German communities in neighboring Central European countries, who often framed the Jews in ethnic terms in order to strengthen their political ranks or weaken those of their opponents. Within the Saxon community, the Jewish question was largely neglected, although it was a fundamental element of *Reich* propaganda. Surprisingly few articles in the *SDT* address the Jewish question, and only in fall 1933 was the topic really picked up. This late appearance in Saxon publications is evidence that the issue arose not due to Saxon interest, but rather because of the National Socialist rhetoric that was seeping into the Saxon press and journals.

It seems that those clergy most opposed to the rise of National Socialism in the community were less concerned about questions of conscience like anti-Semitism than about questions of tradition. Many church leaders, not necessarily opposed to the tenants of the movement, nevertheless resented it for meddling in the organization of the church. The 1940 *Volksgruppengesetz* (or ethnic minorities law), which granted the Germans of Romania granted corporate rights, was "followed by a deep involvement of Third Reich institutions in the internal affairs of the Lutheran Church."[44] The *Reich* takeover of the Saxon national church undermined the centuries-old structure of the church and posed deep threats to its organization. Cristian Cercel writes that in face of the "developing social and ideological constraints brought forth by the appeal of the Nazi-oriented German identity" in the Saxon community, "the matter-of-fact endeavors of the Church to keep its role are to be found in a number of distinct actions and events." For example, Cercel continues, "The incorporation of the *Bruderschaften* (brotherhoods), *Schwesterschaften* (sororities) and *Nachbarschaften* (neighborliness schemes) under the authority of the Church or the creation of its own text-books for schools and the side effects of the interdiction of using text-books

[44] Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 49.

published in Germany are relevant for understanding the attempts not to lose the capacity to pull the strings of the Saxon self-consciousness." Indeed, Cercel's reference to textbook usage reinforces one of the main strategies of the *NSDAP* to appeal to youth. Marylin McArthur was quoted in the previous chapter as saying that the "collective identity" that the National Socialist movement gave the Saxon community was a great part of its appeal in light of the fragmentation it had experienced in the mid-1920s.[45] However, Cercel rightly points out that traditional leaders in the church were particularly resistant to this new collective identity; as an example he cites the church's publication of circulars, which "can be easily perceived as tentative efforts to affirm and reaffirm the monopoly on regulating and adjusting the identity of the community … It is not at all a coincidence that similar activities [such as physical exercise or taking proper care of parish fruit orchards] were distinctly promoted by the Transylvanian Saxon National Socialist movement and presumably with more success."[46] The Lutheran Church and National Socialist movement presented competing "nationalisms" or "identities" in the mid-late 1930s in a battle waged for community members. Ultimately the Lutheran clergy were divided on the issue; thus in his study of the Lutheran Church during this period, Cercel concludes that the church took an "ambivalent stance towards National-Socialist affiliation."[47] Several clergy became active National Socialists and played a significant part in influencing the youth organizations in this role. Others, notably including the Saxon bishop Viktor Glondys (elected in 1932), rejected its radical agenda and were edged out of their leadership positions as a consequence.

[45] McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel*, p. 9.
[46] Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity," p. 35.
[47] Ibid., p. 29-30.

Yet it is this very radical agenda that first attracted many members of the community to the movement; a brief examination of one pastor's initial acceptance and later rejection of National Socialism reveals why it may have been viewed with ambivalence by Lutheran leaders. Konrad Möckel (1892-1965), pastor of the Honterus Parish in Braşov and one of the leading Saxon spiritual figures throughout the changing regimes in twentieth-century Romania, initially welcomed the principles of National Socialism with joy. He saw the movement as utterly compatible with the Christian faith, claiming that "the national feeling [*Volksgefühl*] belongs to the eternal existence of creation and is involved in the primary articles of the Christian faith. By contrast, nature, territory, blood, race, history, culture, language, and custom belong only in second place."[48]

Thus, Möckel focused on the one element of National Socialism—its emphasis on *Volk* and national unity—that seemed to be in accordance with his ideals of Christian unity; he did not reject the movement's other tenants, but relegated them to a secondary position. According to his son, Andreas Möckel's, description of his father's works, "Konrad Möckel analyzed neither the core texts of National Socialism, such as *Mein Kampf*, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, or the program of the NSDAP or of the *Erneuerungsbewegung*, nor the hard facts of the newly instituted concentration camps in Germany, but rather wrote from the perspective of a pastor who loved and defended the Lutheran (*Volk*) Church of Transylvania."[49] While this sounds trite and suspect coming from the pen of his son, it illustrates the ability of many Saxon churchgoers to isolate those elements of National Socialism that fit into their worldview from those which did not. This process is similar to

[48] Konrad Möckel, *Idealismus und Wirklichkeit* (1933), p. 17, quoted in Andreas Möckel's biography of his father: *Umkämpfte Volkskirche: Leben und Wirken des evangelisch-sächsischen Pfarrers Konrad Möckel (1892-1965)*, Volume 42 of Studia Transylvanica (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011), p. 123.
[49] Andreas Möckel, *Umkämpfte Volkskirche*, p. 122.

the contradictory attempts to accept both "Small-Saxon" and "Pan-German" solutions, described below.

For a pastor such as Möckel who was truly concerned with the unity of his flock, however, the tension between Christianity and the totalitarian elements of National Socialism could not be resolved. As more efforts were made to politicize the Lutheran Church, Möckel began to recognize that the aims to unify the German *Volk*—at the expense of isolating other races—were ultimately at odds with the spiritual tasks of the believer. By 1933, he had already become isolated from those who sought to politicize the church, a movement which he decried as a "struggle for power" ("*der Kampf um die Macht*"). He rebuked those who sought only power and neglected the spiritual unity of the Saxon *Volk.* "The struggle for power has inwardly poisoned us all and our affairs and, even worse, has also tainted our thoughts and feelings," he wrote in 1936; "what does *God* want from us?" he emphasized instead.[50] This conviction led Möckel to abandon the National Socialist movement, although later under communism he was accused of being a Nazi collaborator, as were many Saxons who tried to take a more neutral stance. Those, like Möckel, who were opposed to the totalitarian nature of National Socialism were soon drowned out by its proponents, who mistakenly saw the cultural and national focus of the movement as a way of preserving Saxon tradition. By the mid-1930s, the latter group had gained control of both the political and literary organs of the community.

b. Commitment to the Transylvanian Homeland

Even the degree of this literary control can, however, be questioned when examining the contents of Saxon publications. Although by the mid-1930s *Klingsor* had adopted more

[50] Ibid. p. 174-175.

radical rhetoric than either *Ostland* or the *SDT*, all three publications demonstrated a continued commitment to Transylvania as the spiritual center of Saxon life, even though they may have frequently focused on *Reich* occurrences or intellectual trends.[51] On the one hand, it was implied that the Saxon role within the greater Pan-German scheme was to perform their spiritual duties in the east. It is not difficult to see how the early interwar concept of the Saxons as "bearers of German culture" was transformed into "bearers of National Socialism" in later years. As pointed out at the end of the preceding chapter, many Saxons began to accept the notion that the community had always been primed for National Socialist beliefs. On the other hand, the difference between the Germans of the Reich and the Saxons was simply that the latter belonged in the east, and this sense of belonging excluded an acceptance of Pan-Germanism to some extent. In 1926, the *SDT* explicitly outlined its views on political unification with the *Reich* and the role of German minorities within their community. Hermann Plattner emphasized the spiritual (*seelisch*) harm that a political unification with the *Reich* would cause:

> If a German minority … wanted to adjust its politics to [be unified with] the *Reich*, it would never emerge from a spiritual conflict … For each German minority it is important to maintain and strengthen one's own nation through one's own work in national, cultural, and economic areas … In this regard, nations are no different than an individual man: the man who is spiritually of two minds, who has not made peace with himself and his world, cannot manage to thrive in his work.[52]

This was an overt warning that it was the duty of German minorities to cultivate their own affairs before looking to those of the *Reich*. At this point in Saxon history, of course, the *Volksrat* and editors of the *SDT* were still focused on Transylvanian regionalist solutions as

[51] For example, *Klingsor* still contained pieces that reveled in the wonders of the Transylvanian spirit, even in the early 1930s. See, e.g. Gerhardt Schafer, "Vom Sinne unserer siebenbürgischen Sendung," *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 11, November 1932, p. 430-433. While *Klingsor* articles were consistently more focused on German themes. *Ostland* ceased publication in 1931, and it is plausible that if it had continued into the 1930s, as did *Klingsor*, that its contents would have similarly become more radical.

[52] Hermann Plattner, "Auslanddeutschtum und Grenzenlandeutschtum," *SDT*, Vol. 53, Nr. 15878, 6 June 1926, p. 1-2.

described in Chapter Three, a fact which partially explains their continued reluctance to rely on the *Reich.*

But by 1929, when it was becoming clear to conservative *Volksrat* leaders that the recently elected National Peasant Party would not be able to fulfill its promises to the German minorities of Romania, the *SDT* began to pay much more attention to German affairs. Articles such as "Who is German," "The Rights of the National Minorities in Germany," or "Germany's Foreign Policy" in 1929 show that the political focus had shifted from Romania to the rising *Reich*. The *SDT* was not the only daily paper to make this change. The opening article of the Saxon *Kronstädter Zeitung* on New Year's Day 1928 proclaimed, "Germany is ever more becoming the focus of the attention of the entire world."[53] Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin confirm this shift in focus, writing, "in the late 1920s the general socio-economic and political climate in Europe developed favourably. The victorious powers in the First World War began to treat the Weimar Republic with more consideration. The burden of reparations was eased and between mid-September 1929 and the end of June 1930 the Rhineland was cleared of the armies of occupation."[54] Especially in light of Saxon attitudes towards Germany in the early interwar years, these improvements in Germany (accompanied by a worsening of the situation in Romania) necessarily would have drawn the attention of the Saxons. Throughout the entire interwar period, the *KZ*, like the *SDT*, contained reports on Germany's continued progress in paying their war reparations, making improvements to their country, and making a move

[53] "Vorwärts und aufwärts!," *KZ*, Vol. 92, Nr. 1, 1 January 1928. Despite the fact that Germany had become a definite object of international attention, the same article proclaimed that the *Reich* appeared as "impotent" as it had at the end of the war, ten years prior, demonstrating that the Saxons still had doubts about Germany's economic and political capabilities.

[54] Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92: A Laboratory for Social Change* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1996), p. 15.

to join the League of Nations.[55] Yet this interest in, and even occasional identification with, the *Volk* movement in Germany still did not translate into irredentism among conservative Saxons, and there was still much resistance to Germany's pull. This was evinced through the continued concentration on local affairs, and a continued emphasis on a Transylvanian spirit in the *SDT*, the *KZ*, and *Ostland*.

There is a similar trend to be found in *Klingsor*'s pages, although it is more moderate. Even after 1933, many Saxons—and not just the conservatives—resisted the acceptance of the *Reich* as the *Vaterland*, even as they accepted the basic principles of National Socialism. Authors such as Zillich who shifted their political loyalties to the *Reich* still concentrated on Saxon themes in both their personal writings (for example, his 1936 *Zwischen Grenzen und Zeiten*, which is largely set in Transylvania) and in their journals. Some of *Klingsor*'s earliest content reflects this paradox between the simultaneous desire to cultivate German relations and maintain a Transylvanian existence. In 1925, Misch Orend contributed an article entitled "From the Intellectual Life of Transylvania" which proclaimed the seeming hopelessness of Saxon situation in Greater Romania. He spoke of the Saxon longing to renew the community's spiritual and intellectual (*geistig*) life in the Transylvanian context, but then pointed out the contradictory means implemented to achieve this goal:

> Even more contradictory is the circumstance that the youth are sent to Germany in order to establish the relationship between Transylvania's intellectual life and that of Germany – so that it keeps pace with that of Germany, so that the newest accomplishments of intellectual life can be brought to us with vivid experience. And then, when the youth return, hundreds of eyes will be opened to examine everything that comes down here …[56]

[55] Beginning in 1926, Germany's potential acceptance into the League of Nations was followed with rapt attention by the *SDT*, as such an acceptance would have obviously increased Germany's reputation as a potential political ally for the Saxons. In 1932, there is a noticeable increase in *SDT* articles pertaining to the political situation in Germany.

[56] Misch Orend, "Vom geistigen Leben in Siebenbürgen," *Klingsor*, Year 2, January-December 1925, p. 13.

The very idea that the Saxons would look to a foreign nation—even one with which they had a long tradition of cultural ties such as Germany—in order to improve and preserve their own nation is paradoxical. Orend's words reflect the frustrations felt by community members who sought to look to Germany as a cultural model while maintaining their traditional way of life in Transylvania. Needless to say, the quickly modernizing ideals of the *Reich*, which included such endeavors as Pan-Germanism, were not compatible with the isolationist cultural nationalism of the Transylvanian Saxons.

Even one of the staunchest proponents of National Socialism, Dr. Karl Hoch, did not ignore the conflict which was dividing the community. He told his readers that the decision to unify the Saxon community with the Pan-German movement should not be an "either/or" but rather an "and" question: the Saxons could and should be open to aspects of both the "Small Saxon" and Pan-German factions. How this compromise was to be made, however, was not so clearly explained. He, too, resorted to the romantic argument that the national aims of the Saxons had always been in accord with those of the *Reich*: "As our Saxon ancestors left the unified German-speaking territory, the consciousness of German culture as a national culture was already developed. They entered the vastness of Stephan's Kingdom in full consciousness of belonging to the great German community of being [*Wesensgemeinschaft*]." Hoch went on to claim that this consciousness of belonging to the German nation—originating in the twelfth century—continued to exist within the Saxon community up to the present day. By this pseudo-historical justification, or relativization, the Saxon who loved his homeland (Transylvania) was also able to love his Fatherland ("Germany"—of the twelfth century).[57] These are the types of arguments that were put forth to ameliorate the tension between the desire for political change within the community and

[57] Dr. Karl Hoch, "Siebenbürgisch-sächsisch oder gesamtdeutsch?," *Klingsor*, Year 10, Issue 7, July 1933, p. 261-262.

the incongruence of National Socialist ideals such as Pan-Germanism with the prevailing notion of a unique Saxon culture.

While for the more liberal readership of *Klingsor* such arguments might have been more plausible, conservative papers like the *Kronstädter Zeitung* remained skeptical well into the 1930s. A brief examination of the Braşov-based daily from the years following 1933 gives a different impression of the absorption of Pan-Germanism in the Saxon community and supports the idea that many Saxons had second thoughts about the rise of Germany and its role as a suitable environment for the political aims of the Transylvanian Saxons. In contrast to journals like *Klingsor*, the *KZ* maintains a reserved tone well into the 1930s—even more reserved than the *SDT*, which was known for its passionate rants and refutes. Part of the delay in the turn of *KZ* editors to Germany was due to misgivings about what was actually transpiring on the German political landscape. As late as December 1934, the *KZ* contained an article describing "The Inner Situation of Germany," in which its author, a correspondent in Germany, purported to reveal the true nature of Nazism in Germany to his readers. The author's statements contain an ominous foreboding:

> Because there are no parties in Germany, one tries to artificially work groups and factions into the National Socialist Party. But the one who better understands things knows that all deviations and all diversities of ideas have nothing to do with the current in Germany. How superficial must one be to discuss the makeup of the aforementioned groups without once mentioning the person of Hitler? Now, as in the past months, one who considers Germany may never forget that what actually happens is exclusively and completely determined by Hitler … It is … conceivable that many officials may lose their posts in the case of grave decisions because the *Führer*'s decision goes against their will … Anyone who assumes that somewhere in Germany [Hitler's] decision could be opposed by a resistance, or anyone who could be entitled to hope for the collapse of the National Socialist regime, would be deceiving himself.[58]

Reports such as these of Hitler's authoritarian rule would necessarily have given Saxon readers doubts about the stability and optimism of turning to Germany, no matter how unstable the Romanian system may have proven to be. To a great extent, these fears help to

[58] "Die innere Lage Deutschlands," *KZ*, Vol. 98, Nr. 276, 2 December 1934.

explain the continuing desire for regionalist solutions expressed in all of the Saxon publications discussed here. Indeed, the New Year's edition of the *Kronstädter* from 1935 still identifies Romania as its "common *Vaterland*," albeit one with which the Saxon minority was extremely frustrated. This acknowledgement of Romania as the fatherland implies that the transfer to the *Reich*'s policy was not yet complete, even if the political pieces were all in place.

The author of the New Year's edition dramatically lamented, "Our Saxon cities are threatened as never before, what can rescue them?" The Saxons' rescuer, implied in the conclusion of the article, was neither Romania nor Germany (which is not mentioned once), but rather the unquenchable spirit of the Saxon *Volk* and those who would lend them a helping hand. He asked his readers to pause and consider "whether they want to belong to those who are doomed to destruction, whose people damn them to destruction, or to those who believe and therefore live because they work and defend [their people]?!"[59] This challenge to the Saxon readers to believe in and work for their own preservation, while not the most practical solution, demonstrates that several Saxons still preferred their internal community for support to the external powers of Romania or Germany.

Despite these expressions of Saxon patriotism, the authors of the *KZ* were aware that without some sort of external aid the Saxon nation was greatly endangered. Thus, while pleading for Romania's implementation of minority protections, a keen eye was kept on the developments within Germany. By April 1935, the *KZ* expressed the need for a drastic change of political environment. "Without a doubt, we have come to a crossroads in our policy at which it must be decided whether we can continue our political struggle with the same means and methods that we have used until now, or whether we must pursue paths on

[59] "Neujahrsgedanken," *KZ*, Vol. 99, Nr. 1, 1 January 1935.

which we have never tread … [paths on] which we have hardly anything to lose."[60] From these despairing claims, it seems to the reader that the author is finally advocating a rejection of Romanian and a turn to Pan-Germanism and foreign assistance from the *Reich*. Yet even this "crossroads" did not mean a transition to irredentist means, according to an article appearing a month later in May 1935: "We Germans are not interested in the least, even less do we have the faintest intention, of achieving our rights or our *Volk*'s propositions through irredentism or even through the fragmentation of or chipping away at the national territory."[61] It is somewhat surprising to read these conservative words coming from the pages of the *KZ* rather than from the *SDT*, and even more surprising to read that they were written in 1935, two years after the adjustment of the Saxon National Program to that of the *Reich*.

The sentiments expressed in Rudolf Brandsch's journal *Deutsche Politische Hefte* help to explain the continued resistance to the *Reich* despite the official change of the Saxon National Program at the 1933 *Sachsentag*. Already in 1922, the journal declared that "On average, *Reichsdeutsche* had very little understanding for the *Auslanddeutsche*." The author of this article, Gottfried Fittbogen, himself from the Germany, maintained that this misunderstanding on the part of the *Reich* Germans was not a product of ill-will, but rather of external factors: "Of its own accord, the formation of [the two groups'] self-consciousness has followed different historical developments."[62] A frequent *Klingsor* contributor, Erwin Reisner, made a similar statement two years later. Reisner, a Viennese officer who settled in Sibiu following the war, called attention to this gap, asserting that

[60] "Dr. H.O. Roth verliest die Erklärung der Deutschen Partei," *KZ*, Vol. 99, Nr. 79, 4 April 1935.
[61] "Minderheitenschicksal I.," *KZ*, Vol. 99, Nr. 111, 17 May 1935.
[62] Dr. Gottfried Fittbogen, "Reichsdeutsche und andere Deutsche," *Deutsche Politische Hefte aus Großrumänien*, Volume 2, Issue 5, May 1922, p. 2-3. Fittbogen was also the author of such publications as *Was jeder Deutsche vom Grenz- und Ausland-Deutschtum wissen muß* (Munich and Berlin: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1924).

"the Saxon can only be German in so far as he is not Transylvanian, and can only be Transylvanian in so far as he is not German."[63] It was this sentiment that hindered a wholesale acceptance of Pan-Germanism among members of the Saxon nation.

IV. Conclusions

The official synchronization of the Saxon press with that of the *Reich* transpired in 1937,[64] although as this chapter has revealed the turn to Germany had been in the works since the mid-1920s. First viewed as a cultural ally, only gradually did the Saxon community begin to cultivate economic and political associations with Germany. The social unrest and financial distress within the community contributed to this shift, which was first initiated by the younger war generation. Heinrich Zillich's *Klingsor* circle was particularly adept at making literary connections and was instrumental in popularizing early National Socialist ideology. By 1926, *Ostland*, too, had followed suit and even the conservative press was soon to follow. In December 1933, just two months after the decisive *Sachsentag* in Sibiu, the *SDT* contained the following declaration of loyalty to the *Reich*:

> A new worldview arose in our motherland [Germany], which was thrown into a deep abyss by the outcome of the war. It is forever linked with the name of one man, who belongs to the greatest in German history, Adolf Hitler. This year, a veritable reformation, comparable only to that of the church in the sixteenth century, seized the spirits [of the people] and successfully broke through and conquered. It would have contradicted our entire development, which has been closely affiliated with that of our motherland since time immemorial, if such a monumental spiritual movement had not also seized us … We, too, see our rescue in a renewal movement [*Erneuerungsbewegung*] … What is the role of the *SDT* in this struggle to renew the nation? … Its chief task during this time is to recognize the aims of the movement and to help find the way to it. From the first days of its existence, our paper has been national; indeed, this was its destiny. Now it must also reestablish the social thoughts with their far-reaching effects, which have always lived in our nation and were only obscured and distorted in recent times, within the context of the greater movement in the motherland, and bring them to full development.[65]

[63] Erwin Reisner, "Die nationalen Fehler der Siebenbürger Sachsen, wie sie der Binnendeutsche steht," *Klingsor*, Year 1, Issue 8, November 1924, p. 293-300.
[64] Nowotnick, "*Die Karpathen*, *Ostland*, *Klingsor*," p. 72.
[65] Emil Neugeboren, "Die Erneuerung und das *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsche Tageblatt*," *SDT*, Vol. 60, Nr. 18216, 31 December 1933, p. 9.

This romantic parroting of National Socialist propaganda by the conservative *SDT*, unimaginable at the beginning of the interwar period, sealed the transformation of the entire community. Officially, the Saxon nation had shifted its economic, social, cultural, and political loyalties to Hitler's Third Reich. As is evinced through this quotation, the Saxon community believed that it was acting in the best interests of its centuries-old political and cultural institutions by conflating the distinct histories of the Saxon and German nations into the neo-romantic history of a united Pan-Germanic *Volk*.

Yet as the voices of multiple Saxon authors quoted in this chapter demonstrate—particularly those from the *KZ*—the Pan-German movement was inherently incompatible with the long-promoted policy of Saxon cultural isolation. Furthermore, the love of the Transylvanian homeland and the spiritual beliefs of many Saxons guaranteed that the shift to Germany was far from complete within the community even as late as the mid-1930s. Although the mainstream voice may have declared allegiance to the new German *Reich* and its Pan-German aims in a final shift in the Saxon policy of self-preservation, there would always be those who would continue to uphold the red and blue banner of the Saxon nation.

Chapter Six
Agitation and Renewal - A Comparison of Sudeten German and Transylvanian Saxon Turns to National Socialism

As just one of the multiple ethnically German groups scattered across Central Europe in the wake of the First World War, the Saxon situation was not unique. Germans were present in nearly all of the post-war nations, and many faced difficulties in gaining minority rights similar to those described in Chapter Three. Thus, multiple comparisons could be drawn between the Saxon community and the communities of other Central European German populations. This chapter will make an asymmetrical comparison of the turn of the so-called Sudeten Germans (*Sudetendeutsche*) in the newly formed state of Czechoslovakia to National Socialist ideology. While both groups ultimately made the official shift to the Third Reich, the manner in which this occurred was different due to their diverse historical traditions, population sizes, and geographic location vis-à-vis Germany. This chapter will reveal Cristian Cercel's observation that, "though quite similar in effects, the radicalization of the two groups took place against different backgrounds."[1] Unfortunately an exploration of these backgrounds must be made on the basis of secondary sources due to research constraints, but even such a superficial examination lays the groundwork for future comparative research.

This section will deal almost exclusively with the Germans in the Czechoslovak territory following the First World War, up until the Munich Agreement of September 1938 when the German areas were ceded to Germany. It will trace the rise of National Socialism and Pan-German ideas among the German populations inhabiting the Czechoslovak lands during the interwar period. The term "Sudeten Germans" will primarily be used to identify

[1] Cristian Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity in the Case of Transylvanian Saxons 1933-1944," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 69.

all Germans in Czechoslovakia; although the term did not arise until the later interwar years, it eventually came to be "use[d] … to signify these Germans as a collective." Nancy Wingfield declares that "the collapsing of the disparate identities of Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian Germans into a single, overarching, Sudeten Germandom was as artificial a construct as the majority Czechoslovak identity of the state," but as artificial as it may have been, it was an important factor in the spread of National Socialism throughout the country in the 1930s.[2]

References explaining similarities and differences of the Sudeten Germans to the Saxon community in Transylvania and its political leaders will be interspersed throughout. Following a brief explanation of why these two groups were chosen for comparison, the chapter will analyze the attitude of the majority of Sudeten Germans towards the Czechoslovak state, the social and economic factors in Czechoslovakia (particularly Bohemia), and the perception of oppression that facilitated the reception of Pan-German ideology. This will be followed by a differentiation between the various German political factions in Czechoslovakia and their aims, as in neither the Sudeten nor the Saxon community was the adoption of National Socialist ideology uniform. Finally the means through which the *Reich* utilized local elements to spread Pan-German ideology in Czechoslovakia in the mid-late 1930s will be described. A short chapter conclusion analyzes the differences between the Saxon and Sudeten adoption of National Socialist propaganda, and provides tentative explanations for these differences.

[2] Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 232.

I. A Brief Historical Comparison

There are a few reasons that the German populations in the Czech lands were chosen for comparison with the Transylvanian Saxons. Firstly, both groups had somewhat similar histories: although migrating from different Germanic regions for different reasons, both the Saxons and the Bohemian Germans traveled to their respective territories during the High Middle Ages. The Saxons arrived in Transylvania in the twelfth century, while the Bohemian Germans settled in the thirteenth century. German groups had been present in Moravia and Silesia for almost as long. Since that period, both the Saxons and the German inhabitants of what was later Czechoslovakian territory, in particular those in Bohemia, had enjoyed a favorable economic and eventually political status, despite their minority existence among the largely peasant dwellers of the region. Leaping over several centuries, both German diasporas maintained these privileged and dominant positions well into the nineteenth century, despite their non-ruling status (until 1918, Hungary was in control of Transylvania, and Habsburg Austria of the Czech crownlands). Similarly, both German groups underwent the same shock of suddenly becoming part of a greater nation-state (Romania and Czechoslovakia) after the decisions of the Peace Treaties following the First World War, and both had to deal with the diminishment of their traditional privileges. Although the leaders of both political communities initially desired a semi-autonomous status, they soon resolved to peaceably join the newly established nation-states, and both were granted minority treaties that proclaimed equal rights for all citizens regardless of their language, religion, or ethnicity. After several years of frustration under their respective governments, whose nationalizing aims were at odds with their own, both German groups gradually rejected these nation-states, and by Hitler's takeover of the Weimar Republic in 1933 had begun to turn to Germany and its Pan-German propaganda as a political refuge

from the institutional oppression—whether real or imagined—of the Romanian and Czechoslovak regimes.

The parallel developments of these two German groups allow a productive asymmetrical comparison to be made of their turn to Pan-German propaganda. Yet as a backdrop for this shift, first it is necessary to examine the early attitudes of the German populations towards the joining of their new respective nation-states, particularly those in Czechoslovakia. As will be demonstrated below, there was not a uniform political trend among Germans in the region, despite their common self-identification in the later interwar years as "Sudeten Germans"; rather there existed a multiplicity of political voices and opinions, with the right-wing strand of politics winning out only in the end.

II. Incorporation into the Czechoslovak State

Indeed, this multiplicity is evident from the fact that in the early postwar years in Czechoslovakia, problems began to arise not so much from external struggles between the Czechoslovak state and its German populations as between the members of the German community itself. The first troubles arose in the short period between the war's end and the settling of the new borders of Czechoslovakia at the Treaty of St. Germain in September 1919. During this time, the Germans of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia briefly set up an autonomous government on the democratic basis of Wilson's principles of self-determination. There was little unusual in this desire for autonomy, and many other small German populations dotting the political landscape of Central Europe desired similar solutions. Yet J.W. Bruegel describes that controversy that the theoretical option of such political freedom caused among members of the German political communities who inhabited what would soon become Czechoslovakia:

> In this respect all German political parties were of one mind, but they were not of one mind about the way how self-determination should be exercised in case it was granted. Some were dreaming of a direct *Anschluss* to Germany of the western and northern regions of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia bordering on Germany. Most of them were thinking of somehow maintaining the unity of the territories which formerly had made up the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy through a certain collaboration between the new national states … Others, mainly the German Social Democrats, demanded self-determination only in order to be able to decide freely whether, under certain conditions, to join with the Czechs in one state or to join with German-Austria and then, perhaps, to become part of the Weimar Republic through the *Anschluss* of German-Austria.[3]

Thus from the start, much of the dissension over the political future of the Germans formerly inhabiting Cisleithania emerged from within; similar internal tensions were explored among the Saxons in Chapter Four, although the Saxon dissension was initially more social then political. Although the Treaty of St. Germain decreed that all of the German factions should become part of the new Czechoslovak nation-state, this decision did not work to simply bind together their political aspirations, nor did their common minority status in the same state serve to unify their interests. Nevertheless, these dissenting voices described by Bruegel were largely limited to the sphere of political elites, and the general population was not as sensitive to the sundry political solutions as were their leaders.

The political trends of the Sudeten Germans during the interwar period, as well as the social and economic causes of dissatisfaction with the Czechoslovak state, will be discussed below, but first the general German population and their attitudes towards their new nation-state after the Treaty of St. Germain will be examined. Josef Korbel, along with many other scholars, clearly distinguishes the early interwar period of the 1920s from the 1930s when discussing the political leanings of the Germans in Czechoslovakia. He writes that "in the 1920s, … the majority of the Sudeten Germans … gradually … developed a

[3] J.W. Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic 1918-1948*, ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomír Luža (Princeton, N.J., 1973), p. 168-169.

positive attitude toward Czechoslovakia as their own state."[4] This attitude of contentment was partially due to the minority protections promised at St. Germain. Similar to those drafted at the Treaty of Trianon settling the borders of Romania in June 1920, the new Czechoslovak laws declared that all Czechoslovak citizens "shall be in all respects equal before the law and shall enjoy equal civic and political rights whatever be their race, their language, or their religion … Every manner whatsoever of forcible denationalisation is prohibited."[5] In light of these promises, which were in fact believed by many Germans, there was little need to reject the new Czechoslovak government, which pledged to treat all of its citizens equally. In Romania, too, this was the case with the Saxons, who concomitantly with the other Germans in the region chose to pledge their loyalty to the new nation-state in Alba Iulia in December 1918, even before any minority protections had been legally instituted. Iuliu Maniu and the new Bucharest government had declared their willingness to provide equal political, religious, and educational opportunities for the Saxons and other minorities in return for their political loyalty. Left with few other options, most Saxons were willing to come under what they believed would be the protective umbrella of an enlarged Romania.

Unlike the Saxons, however, the geographic location of the Czechoslovak Germans gave them more options for political alliances; situated immediately on the border of the German *Reich*, the potential existed for irredentism. Yet Bruegel supports the idea that the German populations of Czechoslovakia were not necessarily enthusiastic about joining adjacent Germany as an alternative to living in the new Czechoslovak nation-state:

[4] Josef Korbel, *Twentieth-Century Czechoslovakia: The Meanings of Its History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 115-116.
[5] Quoted in Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 162-163.

> In contrast to their representatives … the German population as a whole, though naturally unhappy over the loss of the privileged position they had enjoyed in old Austria, were by no means in a furiously nationalistic or anti-Czech mood at the end of 1918. The German industrialists feared that an incorporation into Germany might result in a decline and extinction of their industries … Instinctively, the German population disliked the idea of being cut off from their Czech hinterland and brought into a combination which would have been new and untried.[6]

In other words, in the immediate wake of the First World War, it was by no means inevitable that the Bohemian and later the Sudeten Germans would eventually fall prey to National Socialist and Pan-German propaganda and turn to Germany. Perhaps the initial rejection of the idea of German rule was in part because the Germans of the Czech crownlands had been citizens of Austria, and Austrian and Prussian relations had a tradition of antagonism. It may have been because of Emperor Franz Joseph's traditional multicultural policies that discouraged ethnic nationalism. Or perhaps they thought that they could maintain their privileged political, economic, and industrial status over the Czech populations in the new nation-state, an edge that they might lose if they joined the German nation. Considering the questionable economic and political condition of the Germany following the war, examined in the preceding chapter, the ambivalence of German communities in Czechoslovakia towards the *Reich* is not surprising.

Whatever their reasons for preferring the Czechoslovak state, the question arises how Pan-German propaganda took hold among a minority that at first seemed willing to behave as Czechoslovak citizens. As with the Saxons, the reasons for the turn of the Sudeten Germans to Germany are manifold, and as with the Saxons, a large part of this had to do with the struggle to preserve their traditional rights, institutions, and social status, as well as with agitation by key political figures. Yet unlike with the Saxons, the Czechoslovak government, under the leadership of Tomáš Masaryk and, after 1935, of Edvard Beneš, advocated and more often than not implemented a much more tolerant policy towards its

[6] Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 169-170.

German populations than did the Romanian government in the interwar period. Although the Romanian government legally professed a tolerant stance towards its minorities, in actuality it was far less tolerant in terms of minority religious, educational and language rights than was the Czechoslovak. As detailed in Chapter Three, however, this failure on the part of the Romanian state was not so much due to malevolence as to administrative disorganization and difficult financial circumstances.

III. The Sudeten Turn to Germany

a. Economic and Social Factors and the Rise of a Czech-German Ethnic Divide

In exploring the turn of the Sudeten Germans to Germany, it is necessary—similar to the Saxon situation—to distinguish the early from the later interwar period, as well as to delve into the status of the regional Germans in the nineteenth century. In addition to political dissatisfaction among the Sudeten German minorities of Czechoslovakia, which will be discussed below, the late 1920s brought worldwide economic difficulties that did not bypass Central Europe. These economic ramifications particularly affected the more developed German-inhabited regions of Czechoslovakia.[7] As described above, much of the land inhabited by the Sudeten Germans, particularly Bohemia, had a tradition of more advanced economy and industry than the land inhabited by the Czech and especially by the Slovak populations. According to John and Sylvia Crane, "The skilled German workers predominated in the export production of high quality glass, porcelains, and textiles, whereas the heavy industries, mines, and engineering plants were chiefly manned by Czechs." Even in the realm of agriculture, the Germans occupied a more prestigious space:

[7] For a much more comprehensive overview of economic and social factors leading to Czech-German conflict, see the authoritative work by Radomír Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), esp. the "Introduction: Economic and Social Foundations of the German-Czech Problem," p. 1-20.

"German farmers raised most of the famous Bohemian hops, and the Czechs grew the sugar beets."[8] However, these status differences, which had existed for centuries, had not caused any serious societal divides while the Germans and Czechs had both been citizens of the Habsburg Monarchy; this fairly peaceful coexistence was to change following the First World War, as will be seen below.

Under Habsburg rule, however, it was Habsburg loyalty, and not Czech or German ethnicity as such, that was of fundamental import to citizens of the Monarchy prior to the First World War. In other words, although the economic competition between the traditionally dominant German and the upward-moving Czech populations of Bohemia was drawn along ethnic lines, both groups were free to compete and excel. Alfredo Laudiero asserts that "the cause of the conflict between the Czech and the German bourgeoisie was the unequal growth of capitalism in Bohemia, where the German ethnic element was definitely predominant. The issue at stake was who was going to control the Bohemian and Habsburg Empire markets."[9] Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Czechs of Bohemia had made significant economic and political gains and were inching their way towards equal status in terms of political and educational institutions, industry, and social status. Even this economic competition which divided society along ethnic lines, however, failed to take the violent forms that it would directly following the First World War.

There were, of course, exceptions to this, as is somewhat overstated by Balázs Szelényi who describes the "bitter struggle … waged" between Czech and German citizens

[8] John O. Crane and Sylvia Crane, *Czechoslovakia: Anvil of the Cold War* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 72-73.

[9] Alfredo Laudiero, "Nineteenth-Century Bohemia in Contemporary Czechoslovak Historiography: Changing Views," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 68, Nr. 3 (1990): 480. Laudiero links the economic nature of this conflict to the Czech Marxist theory that "nineteenth-century Czech nationalism sprang from the bourgeois groups whose struggle was basically of an economic nature."

in the nineteenth century.[10] For example, the prominent right-leaning Austrian politician Georg von Schönerer was one such notable exception who aggressively advocated the "[liberation] from the 'racial impurities of the Habsburg Empire,'" which of course included the neighboring Czech populations.[11] Despite such exceptional figures in the nineteenth century, however, the competition between Czechs and Germans under Habsburg rule—although at times divisive—did not pose a threat to the overarching state. If anything, it forced the Habsburg rulers to play favorites, creating a continual back and forth between German and Czech representation.

Yet the formation of the Czechoslovak nation-state, in which the German population became a numerical minority, necessarily changed societal dynamics between the two groups.[12] Even though the Germans remained economically dominant throughout much of the 1920s, the effects of the crisis of the breakup of the Empire in the early interwar period, and the economic crisis of the early 1930s played a fundamental role in the division of Czech society. Crane comments that "class conflicts were sharpened noticeably,"[13] while Szelényi goes a step further with reference to the breakup of the Habsburg Empire, claiming that "While social context is critical to understanding ethnic identity formation and the roots of ethnic conflict, a second and equally important source stems from the effects of an abrupt

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[10] Balázs Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch: The Social Roots of Ethnic Conflict in the German Diaspora of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia." *Past and Present* 196 (2007): 233. King's monograph is more reliable as a source of Czech-German conflict in Bohemia and uses less problematic, more balanced terms.

[11] Ibid. Szelényi's source is Elisabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (Oxford, 1938), esp. p. 40-42. Vojtech Mastny points to Schönerer as a nineteenth-century forerunner of National Socialist Pan-German propaganda, though both Szelényi and Mastny admit that Pan-Germanism as such did not truly develop until later. See Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance, 1939-1942* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 10. Luža also makes connections between earlier Pan-German movements and the later rise of the National Socialist parties in Czechoslovakia. See *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, p. 63ff.

[12] "In the 1921 census Germans constituted 23.4 per cent of Czechoslovakia's population, dropping to 22.3 per cent in 1930. In the Lands of the Bohemian Crown the Germans made up about 30 per cent, while in Slovakia they constituted only 4.5 per cent." Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92: A Laboratory for Social Change* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1996), p. 12-13.

[13] Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 80.

crisis."[14] It has already been mentioned above that the majority of the German populations were willing and even eager to join the Czechoslovak state for political, economic, and industrial stability. However, in the wake of this union, unexpected violence broke out in parts of Bohemia in response to Czech complaints that signs of Germanness were not disappearing quickly enough from the region.

When the mediating force that the Habsburgs had played between the Czechs and Germans disappeared with the institution of the Czechoslovak state, the Germans were naturally left in a disadvantaged position, and the rise of Czech nationalism further contributed to conflict between the groups. Carol Leff identifies the Czech national revival as being marked by a "defensive character" in response to centuries of "ethnic German predominance in the Austrian sector of the empire."[15] One is reminded of the defensive and homogenizing form that Romanian nationalism took in the same period. After the borders of Czechoslovakia were settled, this defensiveness necessarily took a territorial form. The late nineteenth-century work of Czech statesman František Palacký foreshadowed the conflict that would break out in the 1920s due to Czech-German competition. He vigorously maintained the equality of nations but saw each nation as having its own qualities and roles to play in modern Europe. Palacký demanded that the Habsburg Empire (within which he wished to remain) apply "the same justice to all." If it did not, he foretold, "then nature will assume its rights, and its inevitable resistance will change peace [in the Empire] into unrest … hope into desperation and will ultimately give rise to friction and struggles."[16] Palacký's

[14] Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch," p. 218.
[15] Leff, Carol Skalnik, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 26-27.
[16] František Palacký, "The Idea of the Austrian State" (Národ, 1865). Reprinted in Volume III/1 of *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, eds. Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, Vangelis Kechriotis, Michal Kopeček, Boyan Manchev, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marius Turda; translated by Derek Paton (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 31-32.

predictions were not far off, as conflict broke out almost immediately in the wake of the First World War in traditionally Czech-German regions. Jeremy King reports riots in the Bohemian town of Budweis/Budějovice that culminated in the Czechs publicly burning "confiscated portraits of members of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties, busts of Bismarck, German-language signs, and similar items." Notably, these riots did not end in any arrests by the Czech authorities: "Indeed, the new district captain and a gendarme accompanied the lawbreakers, simultaneously legitimizing and curbing their actions." Although King writes that "After 1920 … such crude methods almost disappeared," they certainly had a decisive influence on how the German minorities of Czechoslovakia began to view their new nation-state.[17]

It is noteworthy that in the early years following the union of Transylvania to Romania, the Saxons did not experience such violent repercussions at the hands of the Romanian majority. This was partially due to the fact that they were not viewed as an irredentist threat by the Romanian government: the non-threatening status of the Saxons, as compared with the Germans in Czechoslovakia, was in large part related to their geographic distance from Germany. The close proximity of the Czechoslovak Germans to Germany's border kindled constant fear of irredentism, although the Czechoslovak government sought to implement tolerant minority policies. Furthermore, due to the traditional social separation between the Saxon townsmen and Romanian peasants, the history of economic competition between the groups was almost nonexistent. Conversely, while ethnic Czechs had by no means dominated their neighboring Germans in the nineteenth century, they had at least had the opportunity to compete with them. Thus, a tradition of competition already existed between the ethnic Czech and German populations when Czechoslovakia was formed, and

[17] King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, p. 163-164.

it became exaggerated after the Habsburg Empire. The distinct social statuses and institutions of the Saxons and Romanians precluded the development of such competition in the Romanian case. Yet, as will be shown in the following section, the Sudeten turn to Germany was not merely a social or economic issue, but moreover was closely bound to the German perception of their ethnic and political treatment in their new Czechoslovak homeland.

b. Oppression? Czechoslovak and Sudeten German Perspectives

The Sudeten Germans were not alone in their new minority status after the First World War. Millions of ethnic Germans throughout Central Europe found themselves in the same situation, many of whom had held a previously privileged political position in the territories they inhabited.[18] After just a few years, in some cases even a few months, of living in their new nation-states, several of these diasporic German populations began to complain of political discrimination, the Sudeten Germans and Transylvanian Saxons included. The most difficult question for a researcher in this field is to try to determine to what extent this oppression was real and to what extent it was perceived by the minority group who had previously held dominant status and, within a short period of time, was subverted to an inferior one.

The case of the Transylvanian Saxons is a bit more clear-cut than that of the Sudeten Germans due to the political instability that characterized the Romanian government in the interwar period, which greatly affected Romanian-Saxon relations. As described in Chapter Three, the dissatisfaction of the Saxons towards the Romanian government can in most

[18] "Approximately ten million Germans became national minorities living in East Central Europe after the war's conclusion, with an estimated three million in Czechoslovakia, one million in Poland, 750,000 in Romania, 700,000 in the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, and 500,000 in Hungary." See Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch," p. 216.

cases be traced to inconsistent policy, disorganization, and later corruption on the part of Bucharest. However, the case of the Sudeten Germans was much different. First and foremost, the Czechoslovakian political situation, unlike that of Romania, was characterized by stability throughout the interwar period. Tomáš Masaryk was Czechoslovakia's first president from 1918-1935, and he was succeeded by Edvard Beneš, who led the nation until 1938, and then later in exile and back in the country until 1948. The political ups and downs and frequent changes of government and leadership characteristic of Romania in the interwar period were absent in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, both Czechoslovak presidents propagated an official tolerant stance towards the nation's German minorities. Despite their tolerant stance, however the Czechoslovak leaders were nevertheless resolved to retain their German citizens and refused to grant them autonomy until the late 1930s. From the outset, Czechoslovakia's official stance was one of tolerance, and not of oppression, and in theory, its fairly stable political leadership would have allowed it to fulfill these tolerant policies. In fact, according to the conclusions of the Committee on New States, Beneš had the "intention [to] treat the Germans with the greatest liberality" in the belief that "the prospects and perhaps almost the existence of the new [Czechoslovak] State will depend on the success with which it incorporates the Germans as willing citizens."[19]

Nevertheless, as in most Central European states including Romania, it is clear that the Germans' new status as a minority in the Czechoslovak state would necessitate a degree of political and economic "downgrading." The Czechoslovak government perceived this as the natural result of the new boundaries drawn, while the German populations—unused to their new minority status—tended to identify it as oppression. Perhaps there is some truth to

[19] Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 172-173. Bruegel's source is David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference in Paris* (New York, 1924), Vol. XIII, p. 78-80 and 162-163; Also *La Paix de Versailles*, vol. X, p. 61-62, also 122.

this latter view. While Bruegel asserts that "*there can be no question of a suppression of the rights of the non-Slav population*," in interwar Czechoslovakia, he also agrees that "there was *never any systematic attempt to master existing difficulties*" that existed between the ethnicities in the new Czechoslovak nation-state: "There was no precise government plan for tackling the subject, and much was left to chance and the policies pursued by the various government coalitions."[20] At the top of the political spectrum, Masaryk and later Beneš touted a tolerant policy, yet Bruegel highlights the problem as existing in the way this policy was (or was not) filtered down to the general population. In other words, Masaryk's optimistic advice to "proceed … in the spirit of universal human ideals" by making "heads … more enlightened" and "hearts … warmer" in a "triumph" of spirit "over matter"[21] was, in the words of Bruegel, "not always heeded by the far too powerful bureaucracy of the state."[22] One telling example of this unbridgeable gap between official policy and its actual implementation is the drafting of the Czechoslovak Constitution in February 1920. Although containing paragraphs on the equal "protection of national, religious and racial minorities," the drafters notably consisted only of ethnically Czech and Slovak citizens.[23] Neither the Germans nor any other minority took part in its writing. The ramifications of such political oversights on the minority populations are clear, and a similar situation occurred in Romania three years later when its new constitutions was drafted.

Although the Czechoslovak government was having trouble implementing its official policy on all levels of society, it must be conceded that the German minorities

[20] Ibid., p. 186-187.
[21] Tomáš G. Masaryk, "The Czech Question and the Social Question" (Prague, 1895). Reprinted in *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, eds. Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, Vangelis Kechriotis, Michal Kopeček, Boyan Manchev, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marius Turda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 207.
[22] Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 178.
[23] Quoted in Korbel, *Twentieth-Century Czechoslovakia*, p. 117.

themselves experienced divergent degrees of oppression, and the picture on the ground often varied significantly from the complaints—often exaggerated—that made their way to international headlines. The example of minority education highlights these disparities between real and perceived oppression. According to most literature on the subject, both primary and secondary, the Sudeten Germans enjoyed an extremely tolerant educational policy in Czechoslovakia. Korbel even goes so far as to conclude that "no other country in Europe offered its minorities such educational opportunity as did Czechoslovakia" during the interwar period.[24] Nevertheless, the Sudeten Germans registered constant complaints of oppression that eventually reached the ears of the international press. On May 18, 1938, when Sudeten separatist sentiments had begun to reach fever pitch and England and France sought to maintain the peace of Central Europe, Prague was advised by France to make conciliatory efforts towards its German citizens "in order that there could be no reasonable accusation of oppression." To this accusation, Beneš (according to J.M.K. Phillips) "rather pertinently pointed out" that the German speakers of Czechoslovakia "had their own newspapers, their own opera houses, schools, churches, and their own councilors, and elected their own deputies to Parliament, so that they could hardly be regarded as a genuinely oppressed people."[25] Indeed, Krejčí reports that "as far as the secondary and tertiary education in Czechoslovakia were concerned the German minority upheld its slight advantage over the Czech and Slovak schools until the dissolution of the Republic in 1939."[26] Even at this late date, when Pan-German sentiments had already spread like wildfire throughout the Sudeten populations, the Germans continued to maintain their own (sometimes dominant) social, religious, and educational institutions, and nevertheless, they

[24] Ibid., p. 118.
[25] J.M.K. Phillips, "The Czechoslovakian Debacle," *The Australian Quarterly* 10, Nr. 4 (1938): 34.
[26] Krejčí, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92*, p. 14. Bruegel charts these gradual educational changes in "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 184-185.

still viewed themselves as being oppressed by the tolerant Czechoslovak state. One must read between the lines when comparing the bitter complaints of the German minorities to the actual situation.

On the one hand, when compared with their previous status in the region, it is true that the German elite had lost much political and economic ground in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This was also the case of the Saxons in the late-nineteenth century. However, these shifts in power did not mean that Czech oppression of the Germans was real, and the majority of literature seems to attribute it to German perception, rather than reality. Similarly, the Magyarization efforts in Transylvania that followed the 1867 *Ausgleich*, which were vehemently decried by conservative Saxon leaders, also served to modernize the educational system in many ways. Beneš was correct in asserting that Sudeten German political, social, and economic institutions had not lost their competitive edge in the interwar period; likewise the Saxons still maintained thriving literary and press circles and remained better off than some of their Transylvanian neighbors despite the financial strain on their community during the same period. Krejčí claims that "Czechoslovakia not only honoured its commitments laid down in the Peace Treaties, but interpreted the spirit of the latter more generously." He minimalizes the complaints of the Sudeten Germans, claiming that the only thing about which they really had cause to complain was that they "were not considered as partners but only as a minority" in the new Czechoslovak nation, in other words, that they had lost their century-long political and economic status.[27] Although it cannot be denied that the Czechoslovak state did not always succeed in implementing its tolerant policies, the statistics of German political and

[27] Krejčí, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92*, p. 14.

institutional representation at the end of the interwar period attest to the fact that minority oppression was more perceived than real.

c. Pan-German Agitation

The existence of Pan-German agitation, beginning already in the 1920s but truly taking shape in the 1930s, constituted a large part of this perceived oppression. There remain conflicting views in the literature as to when this agitation actually began. While most of the sources quoted above identify a critical turning point between the 1920s and 1930s, catalyzed by the economic depression and subsequent class divide, as well as by the rise of National Socialism in Germany, forerunners of the movement in the Czechoslovak region cannot be ignored. One such "prophet" has already been mentioned: Georg von Schönerer, who even Adolf Hitler claims to have been influenced by. Vojtech Mastny also identifies the "links between the German National Socialist Workers' Party (*NSDAP*) founded by the Bohemian Germans in the early twentieth century, and its infamous National Socialist namesake two decades later."[28] Yet despite the existence of these forerunners and spreaders of Pan-Germanism, Szelényi concludes that "because they did not receive state support, their impact was limited."[29] Even if, as Jeremy King claims, "the relationship between the Czechoslovak state and its German citizens was at root negative," there remained a large gap between those Germans willing to act on this sentiment and those willing to live as Czechoslovak citizens.[30] In fact, one can simply look at the agendas of interwar German political parties in Czechoslovakia in order to observe they were generally in favor of non-separatism. Pan-German ideas were not embraced by most parties, although

[28] Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule*, p. 10.
[29] Szelényi, "From Minority to Übermensch," p. 233.
[30] King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, p. 166.

other differences existed between their goals. "While up to 1926 all German political parties were in opposition," writes Bruegel,

> only the German Nationalists and German National Socialists, who were not numerically very important at that time, were in opposition to the Czechoslovak state as such. The German Social Democrats, who emerged from the first elections of 1920 as the strongest German party … and held that position until 1935, were advocates of national autonomy but stood ready to collaborate within the framework of the Czechoslovak Republic.[31]

This is further evidence that cries of oppression from the Germans were limited to a minority of the minorities, and a large role of the spread of Pan-German ideas can be attributed only to the right-wing parties, and this only in the late 1920s.

National Socialism in Central Europe was largely spread by Pan-German agitators, and Hitler himself took a personal role in this propaganda. "While there was always a vociferous and extremist minority among the German population of the country that followed the idea of pangermanism," writes Bruegel, "German nationalism became a real threat to Czechoslovak democracy only after Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933."[32] Because most Sudeten Germans were content to live within the Czechoslovak state, Hitler had to find a platform from which to gain their sympathy. His agenda was trifold: first he found a local spokesman, then he sought to appeal to sentiments of perceived oppression, and finally, he offered Germany as an alternative homeland for the "oppressed" German populations of the East. When these methods failed to convince Sudeten Germans to join the Pan-German cause, threats were used. Furthermore, Hitler used the depression of the 1930s to gain supporters outside of Germany's borders. King attributes Hitler's success in dealing with the depression to the increase of "what Rogers Brubaker calls a German 'homeland nationalism'—a perception of Germany as the mother state to all ethnic Germans." King asserts that this nationalism "took hold … to some degree in official

[31] Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 178-179.
[32] Ibid.

policies but even more so in civil society."[33] Crane provides an apt description of this phenomenon in Hitler's paternalistic declarations of responsibility towards the Sudeten Germans in 1938: Hitler, along with "the Third Reich felt obliged to rectify the wrongs to its nationals living beyond Germany's frontiers to assure their liberties and well-being."[34] This "obligation" on Hitler's part to care for external Germans contains an element of victimization that was sure to appeal to them after the loss of their dominant economic and political position to the Czechoslovak populations. As Crane explains, "Hitler had little trouble stirring up enough turmoil to give the Sudeten Germans a prima facie case for their grievances."[35] King gives quantitative evidence of Hitler's and Germany's influence, citing that "Czechoslovakia's German National Socialist [Party] … saw its members double in number between 1930 and 1932, less because of its own actions than because of those of the *NSDAP* in Germany. What is more, the new members were much less willing than the old ones to accept the Czechoslovak state."[36] As helpful as Germany's influence may have been in stimulating irredentist and Pan-German sympathies, Hitler's appeals were manifestly strengthened by the local presence of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (*SdP*: Sudeten German Party), led by Konrad Henlein.

Henlein provides a suitable example of just how much weight one political voice could carry in the interwar period. Naturally, economic and social conditions also contributed to this about-face of the Sudeten Germans, but he himself singlehandedly gained supporters through his agitation, double-handed diplomacy, and eventually through threats. A large part of Henlein's appeal lay in his alleged political aims. "[Denying that] he

[33] King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, p. 169. Luža and others also mention the role Hitler's handling of the depression played in recruiting external Germans. See *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, p. 68.
[34] Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 105.
[35] Ibid., p. 113.
[36] King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, p. 169.

was a dictator aiming at totalitarian rule," (as was suspected of him), Henlein claimed that "he wanted to see a rapprochement between England and Germany and a restoration of friendly relations between Czechoslovakia and Germany."[37] When Henlein first founded the *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront* (Sudeten German Home Front) in October 1933, which would later become the Sudeten German Party in April 1935, relations between England, France, and Germany were tense, to say the least. Germany was on the rise after its defeat in the First World War, and Hitler's ascent to power in 1933 was met with great concern, not only in England and France, but also in Czechoslovakia where the Sudeten Germans made up a sizeable proportion of the population. The ethnic Czechoslovakian leaders of the country saw it as imperative to remain in contact with England and France in order to not be swallowed up by Hitler's Germany.

Bruegel maintains that Henlein's unexpected rise to power "was not due to any magic qualities" in Henlein himself, but rather "to the natural repercussions of the upsurge of National Socialism in Germany … The decisive factor was that Hitler's success unleashed a wave of national fanaticism among the Germans outside Germany." By the mid-1930s, Hitler's agitation of the Sudeten Germans, even if not initially effective in recruiting all of them, was posing a major threat to Czechoslovakia's border territories. As a result, both the German National Socialist Party and the German Nationalist Party of Czechoslovakia, whom Bruegel describes as "agencies of the Berlin government in Czechoslovakia," had been banned from participation in the government. Therefore Henlein's declared plans to soften international relations appealed to Czechoslovak leaders who were unaware of his ulterior motives to act for Berlin himself. Bruegel describes the political background that served as a timely basis of Henlein's appeal:

[37] Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 135.

> Henlein had come to the fore at the moment when the Czechoslovak government dissolved the German National Socialist party and removed the German Nationalist party from the scene … [He] professed loyalty to the Czechoslovak Republic and readiness to come to terms with the Czechs. Many realized from the beginning that this was only a subterfuge to give the members of the dissolved parties a new and safer platform, but the warnings of German democrats that Henlein was simply the executor of Hitler's policy on Czechoslovak soil was not generally believed.[38]

Possessing fewer options after the disbanding of two German parties, and stirred by Henlein's rhetoric of Czech oppression, the majority of Sudeten Germans backed Henlein's *SdP*, which gained over 60 percent of German votes in the crucial year of 1935.[39] By 1938, the *SdP* was fully backed by the *NSDAP* in Germany, and Henlein could openly speak from his pro-Nazi, Pan-German platform. During this year, he accused the Czechoslovak government of "[carrying] on discrimination and persecution," calling it "'an enemy of the people'" and overtly advocating irredentist aims.[40] In November 1937, Henlein wrote a letter to Hitler declaring that "[The *SdP*] at heart … desires nothing more ardently than the incorporation of Sudeten German territory, nay of the whole Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian area, within the Reich …"[41]

It was in this year of heightened fear and agitation that France gave the aforementioned order to Prague to cease any action that might be perceived as oppressive by the Sudeten Germans and provoke an attack from Germany who was selling itself as the protector of external Germans. Marshal Hermann Göring declared that one of Germany's national aims included "the redemption from oppression of the German minority in

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[38] Bruegel, "The Germans in Pre-War Czechoslovakia," p. 182.

[39] Crane writes that Henlein captured "some 70 percent of the German Bohemian votes," while Korbel lists the figure of "63 percent of all German votes." See Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 82 and Korbel, *Twentieth-Century Czechoslovakia*, p. 119. See also Paul E. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 16 and Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, p. 80-81.

[40] Quoted in Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 133. For Crane's source, see footnote 9: "Runciman Mission," August 19, 1938, FO 800/v. 304, pp. 141-142. Because I do not have direct access to primary sources dealing with the Sudeten Germans at the present time due to language barriers, the majority of my primary sources in this section will be drawn for secondary sources. I apologize for this inconvenience.

[41] Quoted in Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule*, p. 15. For Mastny's source, see footnote 19: "Henlein to Hitler," November 19, 1937, *Documents on German Foreign Policy* [*DGFP*], D, II, p. 57.

Czechoslovakia" and demanded that the Sudeten Germans receive "full autonomy."[42] Early in 1938, an intelligence report from Germany similarly warned that "if the Czechoslovaks did not give a suitable degree of autonomy to the Sudetendeutsch, more active steps would be considered … in two or three months' time," ominously foreshadowing the September 1938 Munich Agreement.[43] In response, British minister Basil C. Newton convinced Beneš to make concessions so that "the Germans should be given no excuse whatever for intervention on [the Sudeten's] behalf."[44] Concessions included the promise to gradually increase the amount of German representatives in government to reflect the population ratio, as well as separation of Czech and German school boards. These changes demonstrate the powerful effect that Hitler's threats and rhetoric, channeled through Henlein, had on foreign policy. Although Beneš had so adamantly decried accusations of Czech oppression of the German minorities, and still in 1938 insisted that "facilities for schooling for German-speaking children are actually better in Czechoslovakia than in Germany," he saw the need to implement changes in order to preserve Czechoslovak unity.[45] In September 1938, in what Krejčí terms an "almost suicidal sacrifice," Beneš went so far as to draft his Fourth Plan, which granted tremendous concessions to the Sudeten Germans but was rejected by Hitler, thus ruining any chances at reconciliation between the Czechoslovak government and the *SdP*.[46] Beneš' concessions were to no avail, for Hitler's and Henlein's strategy for the Sudeten German Party was that "we must always demand so much that we

[42] Quoted in Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 112. For Crane's source, see footnote 45: "Memo from G. Ward Price to Foreign Office," FO 800/313, pp. 54-57.
[43] Quoted in Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 107. For Crane's source, see footnote 25: "Intelligence report from Germany," FO 800/309, p. 152.
[44] Quoted in Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 107-108. For Crane's source, see footnote 26: Newton, Prague, March 14, 1938, FO 800/309, pp. 130-131.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Krejčí, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92*, p. 18.

can never be satisfied."[47] In his 1941 reflections entitled "Czechoslovakia's Struggle for Freedom" Beneš again asserted that the nation had "maintained democratic equality with regard to all the language minorities in the country" throughout the entire duration of the First Republic. Furthermore, he promised to continue this treatment, "consider[ing] all loyal citizens of the State as equal without distinction of origin, religion or language in the restored Republic" that he strove to implement from exile in England.[48] At this point, however, it was much too late, and statements such as those recorded between Hitler and Henlein demonstrate how Hitler's Pan-German propaganda eventually devolved into threats which had no regard for conciliatory efforts.

Indeed, such forcible means became necessary to unify the Sudeten Germans for several reasons. On the one hand, unified aims reigned neither within the *SdP* nor among the Sudeten German population as a whole. Within the *SdP*, Mastny links this division to the party's two leading figures, Henlein and Karl Hermann Frank: "Henlein … was never virulently Czechophobe," while Frank "represented Sudeten German nationalism at is worst."[49] The two leaders' differences were a constant source of tension within the party, but it was Henlein's more moderate methods that won out because it remained imperative to hide the nationalist aims of the *SdP* from the Prague government.[50] It was more difficult, however, to overcome the divisions among the Sudeten Germans as a whole than to patch those within the party. In spite of Henlein's overwhelming victory in 1935, several German

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[47] Quoted in Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule*, p. 14. For Mastny's source, see footnote 18: "Note on a conversation between Henlein and Hitler," March 28, 1938, *Documents on German Foreign Policy* [*DGFP*], D, II, p. 198.

[48] Edvard Beneš, "Czechoslovakia's Struggle for Freedom," (London: The Dalhousie Review, 1941). Reprinted in *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, eds. Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, Vangelis Kechriotis, Michal Kopeček, Boyan Manchev, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marius Turda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 192, 194.

[49] Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule*, p. 13-14.

[50] See Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, p. 73-74; and Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, p. 233, esp. note 4.

parties, notably the German Social Democratic, the German Agrarian Union, and the German Christian Socialist Party, remained opposed to the *SdP*'s Pan-German and irredentist agenda. The Communist Party, founded in March 1921 and joined to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, went so far as to oppose "secession of the Sudetenland and its attachment to Germany" with what Josef Korbel labels "particular courage."[51] Yet this resistance was soon met with threats by the *SdP*, who used its political advantage to pressure the outlying Sudeten Germans: "non-Henleinists were ostracized from the national community, and many German employers favored those employees and workers who became members of the Henlein movement," writes Luža.[52] Krejčí describes this pressure in much more violent terms, asserting that the "Sudeten German Party unleashed a campaign of terror against democratic Germans and against the Czech officials in the borderland. Frightened Agrarian and Christian Social parties disbanded … and joined the [*SdP*]."[53] By the time Czechoslovak leader did have the presence of mind to make conciliatory efforts towards the outlying Sudeten Germans, with Prime Minister Milan Hodža attempting to "[establish] talking relations with moderate Bohemian Germans, Socialists, and Agrarians" in spring 1938, it was "too little, too late." Facing increasing pressure from the *SdP* and unwilling to compromise with the Czechoslovak government, describes Crane, "The Sudeten moderates panicked, and along with other pro-Nazis, joined the *SdP* to create a landslide favoring Henlein that now constituted 83 percent of the Sudeten vote."[54] Whether they had been truly converted or merely forced into the *SdP*, Henlein's Pan-German propaganda, directly backed by Berlin's policy and funding, had infiltrated Czechoslovakia's Sudeten German population.

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[51] Korbel, *Twentieth-Century Czechoslovakia*, p. 115-116.
[52] Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans*, p. 76.
[53] Krejčí, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92*, p. 17.
[54] Crane, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 114.

As is clear from the narrative above, the turn of the Sudeten Germans to Pan-German and National Socialist ideas was a combination of multiple factors, the most important being economic and social unrest and the perceived (and sometimes real) failure of the Czechoslovak government to evenly integrate its minorities. In addition to this proclaimed oppression, Hitler's adept handling of the economic crisis in Germany provided the first impetus for Sudeten German minorities to look for solutions outside of the framework of the Czechoslovak nation-state. But the most significant role in achieving a complete turn to Germany was performed by pro-Nazi agitators, working both from Berlin and within Czechoslovakia's borders. Although Konrad Henlein proved to be the most successful of these agitators, his *Sudetendeutsche Partei* was by no means a streamline political body with unified aims. Nevertheless, the *SdP* used the political successes they gained in 1935 to their advantage in order to coerce outlying Sudeten Germans into the National Socialist agenda.

IV. Concluding Comparisons: Sudeten Agitation and Saxon Renewal

Several questions are raised when comparing the Sudeten turn to the *Reich* to the turn of the Saxons, described in preceding chapters. While both groups shared a similar early historical development and privileged socio-economic status vis-à-vis their ethnically Czech and Romanian neighbors in the nineteenth century, and while both were granted similar minority concessions following the First World War, they took very different paths in the interwar period—even if both paths eventually led to an embrace of National Socialist ideology. One of the most prominent differences between the two groups was their proximity to Germany and their size. The close geographic distance of the Sudeten Germans to the *Reich* enabled an easier infiltration of the *NSDAP*, both on a physical and ideological level. And while approximately three million Germans inhabited the lands that were ceded

to Czechoslovakia following the war, the Saxon population was well under 300,000. This small population created a cohesiveness within the Saxon community, which, despite the social divisions that rose in the 1920s, remained much stronger than that of the various German groups of Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, as described above, the latter group was characterized by political diversity and included multiple parties with different aims. Notably, the Social Democrats were a powerful force in the German community in Czechoslovakia, unlike in the Saxon nation where they were consistently ostracized. The multi-party affiliation of Czechoslovak Germans stood in direct contrast to the Saxon political structure, comprised of only one "party"—the *Sächsische Volkspartei*—which was not even strictly a party in the political sense. Only in the mid-1920s did any competing political groups arise. The diversity in the political and social structure of the two German groups far outweighed any nineteenth-century economic similarities that they may have shared. Furthermore, in terms of politics external to the two German communities, it has been demonstrated that the Czechoslovak government was able to enforce a much more liberal minority policy than the Romanian state, in spite of their similar aims in this regard. This was largely due to the different historical, ethnic, and administrative makeup of the two new nations, with Romania being forced to incorporate more diverse regions that served to complicate its centralizing agenda.

The question that then arises in light of these many differences is why National Socialist ideology managed to effectively crop up in both communities at approximately the same time. While the turn to Pan-Germanism was of course not concurrent among the Sudeten Germans and Saxons, one would imagine that the proximity of Czechoslovakia to the *Reich* would have accelerated its acceptance. Likewise, one would think that the small, tight-knit, easterly-lying Saxon community would have been able to resist its pull for

longer. But by 1933, and by the mid-1930s at the latest, both the Sudeten Germans and Saxons had adopted National Socialist rhetoric, despite isolated acts of resistance. The persistent regionalism of Saxon authors, described in the preceding chapter, is one example of this resistance, just as the front put up by the Social Democrats until the mid-1930s in Czechoslovakia, is another.[55]

This chapter has revealed that the foremost difference in the spread of National Socialism to the two territories was the presence of Pan-German agitators, controlled directly from Nazi Germany, within the Sudeten community. The Saxon community lacked such active forces in the early 1930s, and its connections to the *Reich* were predominantly literary and cultural as opposed to political. Because of the large and politically diverse nature of the Sudeten populations, such cultural means would not have been sufficient for uniting the community in Pan-German aims; the *Reich* Germans would not have been able to create a common cultural appeal to such a diverse group of three million Sudeten Germans. Thus, it seems that it was the very tradition of cultural and institutional cohesion within the Saxon community that enabled Pan-Germanism—or the belief in an overarching German spirit—to be spread through cultural means. Because these cultural connections between the Saxons and the *Reich* were generally acknowledged by all members of the community, the infiltration of National Socialist ideals through cultural channels like *Klingsor* were perceived as relatively innocuous by many Saxons. By contrast, an abrupt

[55] Interestingly, in speaking of the Germans of Czechoslovakia, Sabine Bamberger Stemman maintains that this mixture of National Socialist ideas and regionalist solutions was not unique to a specific German minority, but rather was felt by all German populations of Central Europe: "For the national minorities [of Europe], the National Socialist takeover of power conclusively confused the network between minority solidarity, co-national solidarity, and loyalty to the state in which they lived." Thus despite the Sudeten German's close proximity to Germany, they, like the Saxons, harbored regional sentiments. See "Zwischen vielen Stühlen?: Nationale Minderheiten Zwischen staatbürgerlicher Loyalität und konnationaler Solidarität," in *Loyalitäten in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918-1938: Politische, nationale und kulturelle Zugehörigkeiten* (Vol. 101 of *Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum*), ed. Martin Schulze Wessel (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), p. 76.

political takeover in the mid-1930s—such as the one implemented by the *SdP* in Czechoslovakia—would have been perceived as a shocking betrayal of local Saxon tradition. While the October 1933 *Sachsentag* did ultimately amount to a political takeover, spiritual ideals of unity and a greater cultural movement were continually emphasized in Saxon publications, thus softening the political nature of the National Socialist movement. Indeed, Alfred Pomarius proclaimed in 1932 that "According to its own definition, National Socialism is not a political party in the traditional liberal sense, but rather a national renewal movement [*Volkserneuerungsbewegung*]."[56] This was the message emphasized over and over again in Saxon publications in the early-mid 1930s (even by such conservative organs like the *SDT*) as it was this message that was most suited to the cohesive, culturally-oriented Saxon community. It will be remembered from Chapter Four that even when the *Erneuerungsbewegung* of the mid-1920s became politicized in the last years of the decade, they still saw their aim as preserving the cultural heritage of the Saxon community.

By contrast, the Sudeten Germans had no such unified social or political aims in the 1920s, and were instead politically fragmented. Thus, in order to efficiently and effectively eliminate this fragmentation, Hitler had to utilize more extreme methods to unify the Sudeten German populations such as the threatening agitation policies described above. These differences in tactic—political agitation in Czechoslovakia and cultural persuasion in Transylvania—help to explain why both German groups turned to National Socialism at approximately the same time, although one would suppose that the Sudeten turn would have occurred much earlier due to their proximity to the *Reich*. Thus the gradual infiltration of *Volk* ideas had won over the Saxons by the mid-1930s, by which time Hitler, utilizing Henlein, had made a swift political takeover in Czechoslovakia.

[56] Alfred Pomarius, "Zur Philosphie des Nationalsozialismus: Rasse-Volkstum-Judentum" *Klingsor*, Year 9, Issue 4, April 1932, p. 131.

While primary sources for the Sudeten case that would naturally allow a much more in-depth examination of the matter could not be utilized in this chapter due to research constraints, an initial comparison of the turns of the two groups seems to reveal that two very different forms of Pan-German propaganda were used to rally the Sudetens and Saxons to the *Reich* in the mid-1930s. The large population and diverse political makeup of the Sudetens necessitated a harsher political solution that coerced outlying members into the *SdP*; this was facilitated by Czechoslovakia's close proximity to the *Reich*, giving Hitler more geo-political control. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, a distant, small, and cohesive community which had historically maintained an interest in preserving cultural ties with Germany, the *Reich* rather chose to transmit a message of spiritual unity in accordance with the age-old strategy that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Conclusions

Harald Roth identifies the fifth *Sachsentag* of October 1933 as a sort of point of no return, in large part an abandonment of traditional Saxon policy and an embrace of the Pan-German and National Socialist agendas stemming from the *Reich*. He therefore prematurely concludes his analysis of Saxon political currents, which covers the period from 1918-1933. The present study extends a further two years, until 1935, in order to demonstrate the local complexities that accompanied this changeover. While Roth is correct in asserting that Saxon policy changed irreparably after this date, and while most publications largely did adopt the National Socialist rhetoric of the *Reich*, this thesis has provided clear evidence that there were continual misgivings well into 1935 about the decision to turn to Germany.

In particular the quotations from the *Kronstädter Zeitung* in Chapter Five, but also a continued interest in the Transylvanian homeland in *Klingsor*, reveal the abiding regionalist attachments of many Saxon authors. Not only was there a continued loyalty to Transylvania and the *Königsboden*—a natural sentiment considering that most authors cited in this work were born and raised there—but there were also doubts that the *Reich* was a viable political alternative to Romania. Thus a continual self-reliance still characterized many conservative Saxon leaders, even after political concessions had been made with dissident members of the community. The Saxon nation was still regarded as an inviolable entity by those who had not wholeheartedly embraced National Socialist ideology.

One of the primary research questions that then emerges is why those Saxon political elites who had originally aimed at self-preservation conceived in terms of cultural maintenance turned to the *Reich* in the early 1930s in a step that would abolish the very cultural differences they had sought to preserve. It has been shown that their doing so was an attempt to preserve the *Einheit*, or unity of the community, and in fact they were

successful in this regard, as the democratization implemented at the 1933 *Sachsentag* reunited the conservative and dissatisfied ranks of Saxons. Just a few years later, however, when the Saxon press was officially synchronized to the Third Reich's in 1937, this unity was again undermined by the official embrace of Pan-Germanism by German communities in Romania. Christian Cercel writes that after Andreas Schmidt was made leader of the *Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien* (*DVR*: German Minority Group in Romania) in 1940, the "accepted useage was not anymore 'Transylvanian Saxons,' but 'Transylvanian Germans,'" a marked blow to the social, religious, and linguistic identity of the Saxon nation.[1] After this active implementation of Nazi policy in Transylvania, it became impossible for Saxon publications to resist the usage of such terms. It is worthwhile then to study the Saxons beyond the 1933 *Sachsentag* in order to reveal the tension between adoption of National Socialism and a continual strong sense of national and regional belonging. In light of these conflicting interests, the ultimate shift in Saxon interwar publications to Pan-German ideology is the most curious and fascinating aspect of strategic self-preservation, because Pan-Germanism at its core would eventually eliminate the local differences of the *Auslanddeutsche*. Thus it was almost certain that the communal unity and the social, religious, and linguistic identity of the Saxons would be gradually annihilated by union with the Third Reich.

Nevertheless, especially when compared to the political pluralism of the Sudeten Germans in the late 1920s, described in Chapter Six, the Saxons remained highly unified even into the 1930s. Cornelius Zach writes:

> The Transylvanian Saxons exhibited a form of non-aggressive but tight nationalism. Excluding other groups, never considering expansion, for the most part they wanted to

[1] Cristian Cercel, "The Relationship between Religious and National Identity in the Case of Transylvanian Saxons 1933-1944," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2007, p. 49.

> continue to exist unmixed, preferably as autonomous as ever; they refused everything that appeared to threaten their ancient rights.[2]

Though this assertion cannot be taken at face value, and the social and political variances within the community must be taken into account, this thesis has in fact highlighted several similarities between the self-preservation strategies of conservative *Volksrat* leaders and Saxon social dissidents. While possessing radically different social goals, with the former leaders desiring to perpetuate their elite control of political and social institutions and the latter calling for a greater democratization of institutions, both groups placed the greatest emphasis on the preservation of cultural institutions and national unity. The moniker of the dissatisfied *Sachsenbund* movement, "Political Party for the Maintenance of National Character, School, and Church," is evidence of this goal, and is almost an exact reiteration of the policy of the *Volksrat* as shown by the majority of *SDT* quotations in Chapter Three. The two competing social groups advocated different means for achieving this objective—*Volksrat* leaders initially favored an isolationist policy within Romania, while many social dissident groups saw the value of regional or even cross-border collaboration—but both recognized the significance of the community "pillars" described in Chapter Two to the Saxon nation.

One of the greatest proofs that both groups had a similar agenda was the degree of literary mobility within the community. Despite being vocal members of the conservative Saxon leadership, for example, Hans Otto Roth and Rudolf Brandsch were both frequent contributors to the liberal journal *Klingsor*. Similarly, *Klingsor* and *Ostland* drew from a communal pool of authors: when one scans the contents of the journals, one recognizes

[2] Cornelius Zach, "Weltkrieg und ethnische Selbstbetrachtung," in Gerhard Seewann, ed., *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa: Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz: The Minority Question in Historical Perspective 1900-1990* (8-14 April 1991) (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), p. 305.

many familiar names in both publications. While it is more difficult to establish the authorship of press articles, there was also overlap between *SDT* writers and journal contributors, although this to a lesser extent, in part due to the different functions of a daily press organ and a cultural journal. Contributions to publications often seem rather incestuous, with many of the same authors writing for many, if not all, Saxon papers and journals. This overlap of authorship demonstrates that the community was not so divided that literary collaboration between Saxons holding differing social or political views was not taking place even in later interwar years.

This surprising correspondence in cultural aspirations bespeaks an enduring sense of Saxon national identity notwithstanding the gulf between elite self-preservational strategies and the social demands arising from everyday economic practicalities. Despite Rogers Brubaker's criticisms, outlined in Chapter One, that it is erroneous to attribute a fundamental "sameness" to members of a group, and just as misleading even to speak of "groups" as such, a clear continuity can be identified in the self-preservational objectives of Saxon community members during the interwar period. While Chapters Three and Five have shown that the Saxons by no means represented an "externally bounded" group, and Chapter Four demonstrates that *Volksrat* leaders and social dissidents were far from being "internally homogenous," the shared cultural aims of the competing political and social entities in the Saxon community reveal a tendency that cannot be explained without reference to a common cultural identity. Those theorists who deny the existence of such an identity will struggle to explain a crucial factor of Saxon history during this period. The propensity of those Saxons who were not wholly converted to National Socialism in the 1930s to look to themselves—to their long-established social institutions and cultural traditions, and to their regional Transylvanian homeland—manifested itself in a concerted

effort to preserve national unity. Ironically this very effort would lead social dissidents and Saxon elites alike down a path that would dissolve and scatter them.

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