

# The Emigration of the Ethnic Germans of Romania under Communist Rule

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Articolul "Etnicii Germani din România. Motive și dinamici ale emigrării" reprezintă o încercare de radiografiere a fenomenului emigraționist care are loc ulterior celui de-al doilea Război Mondial din România înspre Republica Federală Germania. Istoria sașilor și șvabilor transilvăneni dinaintea epocii postbelice a fost doar pe scurt înregistrată printr-un index cronologic și evenimențial, în care am încercat să tratăm liniile generale ale existenței populației germane pe actualul teritoriu al României, începând cu colonizarea acestora. În timpul propriu zis al articolului este prezentată situația etnicilor germani din România începând cu anul 1945, cu un accent deosebit pe drama socială, economică și identitară a acestei componente importante a populației Transilvaniei. Poziția îngrădită, de „nolaboratori ai regimului național-socialist”, urmată de deposezări, naționalizări ale proprietăților deținute, reducerea minorității germane la un statut inferior, lipsa de importanță politică și economică, îngustarea treptată a spațiului de manifestare culturală și identitară a germanilor precum și înrăutățirea treptată a condițiilor de viață au constituit factori cu importanță diferită în crearea unui curent clar favorabil către emigrare drept singura promisișă a supraviețuirii culturale și identitare a acestei populații. Începând cu anul 1957 se conturează treptat și cadrul oficial al acestui fenomen emigraționist, lărgit ulterior relațiilor diplomatice dintre România și RFG, prin intermediul contactelor oficiale dintre factorii de decizie ai celor două state. Evoluția sistematică a acestui fenomen, marcată atât de rețența regimului comunist și de teama apariției unei imagini de tip „stat al emigranților” în layărul comunist care ar fi echivalat cu o „pierdere de prestigiu”, cât și de „lăcomnia” de a profita financiar de pe urma emigrării (controversatul episod cu „răscumpărarea” celor emigrați) este o temă de reflecție cu o importanță deosebită. Culminând cu plecarea a peste 100.000 de germani după căderea cortinei de fier și a prăbușirii comunismului din România, emigrarea germanilor din România a dezzechilibrat ireparabil caracterul multicultural al Transilvaniei. Motivele acestui exod fac încă obiectul unor dezbateri aprinse, iar înlăturarea zonelor de umbră cu privire la acest fenomen ar trebui să constituie, în opinia noastră, o direcție importantă de cercetare cu și o promisișă decisivă pentru conservarea patrimoniului cultural și identitar al germanilor români. Conștienți fiind de faptul că prin prezentul studiu am reușit doar să familiarizăm cititorul cu o parte redusă a acestei teme, sperăm că subiectul de față va constitui o temă predilectă a noii generații de cercetători din România, eliberați de constrângerile ideologice ale scriburii istorice.



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## TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS AND THE BANAT AND SATMAR SWABS

In long convoys, with their children and household tools, the settlers arrived where today the city of Sibiu lays; their leaders thrust a pair of crossed blades in the ground and, arms pointing the sky, took an oath: to stay faithful to themselves, the country and the King [...] but the men who form the circle carry not only their weapons [...]they bring with them the plough, the axe, the hammer and the scythe, weapons of a peaceful conquest <sup>1</sup>.

Friedrich Teusch, *Die Ansiedlung des Landes durch die Sachsen*

The Germans of Transylvania can look back on a 850 year-old history in their homeland, although, by now, more than 90% of them no longer live there, most of them having chosen to leave.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of the ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe, after the end of the Second World War those in Romania were not driven away from the lands they had settled a long time before. During the 20th century every family of Transylvanian Saxons and Banat or Satmar Swabs has known the drama of becoming refugees, of deportation, of dispossession and of emigration. Up until 1989, many emigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) after a long struggle with themselves and with the officials of the Romanian state. Afterwards, with the exception of a rather small number - generally including older people, who have remained - most have their homeland in a rather sudden way.

The Saxons and the Swabs inhabited, for centuries, a multiethnic and multicultural region, with a complex social environment. They kept a strong German cultural and national identity, as well as identifying with the role, which they themselves assumed, as intermediaries between the different cultures that interacted in the region. Nevertheless the

Germans from Romania, as well as the German emigrants from other south-east European countries, point to the need of “living as Germans among other Germans” as the chief reason for their departure <sup>2</sup>.

These emigrants have been, and sometimes still are, perceived as belonging to the state from which they came: the Germans from Russia as Russians, those from Poland as Poles and the ones from Romania as Romanians. This inappropriate attribution of nationality hurts them, as their assimilation with the Nazi-rule of Germany once did. This verbal cliché is based on the use of the two concepts – “state” and “nation” – as if they were synonyms, thus ignoring the ethnical diversity of nation-states. To the political-territorial concept of nation others oppose the concept of “Kulturnation”; it is understandable that this concept is better able to satisfy the emotional requirements of a “stateless nation” <sup>3</sup>. This differentiation is necessary if one considers the fact that for almost 900 years, the ethnic Germans of Romania, while maintaining their identity and autonomy as a community, have belonged to six different political-state structures:

- in the first three centuries to the medieval Kingdom of Hungary (after settlement sometime in the 12th century and up until 1541);
- for a century and a half to the autonomous Principality of Transylvania, which lay under the sovereignty of the Sultan, thus belonging to the sphere of influence of the Ottoman Empire (1541-1699);
- for almost two centuries to Austria, as part of the Danubian Monarchy of the Habsburgs, as its rulers occupied, until 1806, the throne of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation (1699-1867);
- for a very short time, between 1848-49, to revolutionary Hungary, and, after the Austro-Hungarian compromise, for five decades, to the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy;
- from 1918 on to Romania, which received Transylvania as part of the peace settlement after World War I after the split-up of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy;
- since the end of the Second World War and beginning especially with the 1970s increasing numbers of Saxons and Swabs became Germans, as they settled in Western Germany as emigrants or repatriated after 1989, thus becoming citizens of the FRG. Others live in the United States, in Canada, in Australia or in other parts of the world where they were driven by the war, the post-war developments or their own decision.

This mass-exodus has been caused by the constant degradation of the Saxons’ and Swabs’ special social status over the last decades and by the danger of losing their well preserved identity, factors not necessarily determined by the political nature of regimes that ruled the south and eastern European countries alone. The FRG therefore was the favourite emigration-target, as it presented none of these dangers and offered a high probability of integration.

Observing the tumultuous history of the German community in this region, with the sometimes sudden and dramatic changes in its legal, social and economical status, as well as its degree of self-awareness, we consider that the preservation of the cultural existence and the function as carriers and intermediaries between Western and Eastern Europe on one hand

and the peoples and cultures of Transylvania, Banat and Satmar on the other, is one of the most important features as well as a proof of the continuity of the role of the German population in Romania.

## **THE SITUATION OF THE ETHNIC GERMANS IN ROMANIA AT THE END OF THE 1940s**

We have seen that Romania has shown more sympathy towards the ethnic Germans compared to other East European states. This statement is the result of a horizontal inter-state comparison, accomplished by those familiar with the situation. The Germans of Romania compare vertically, taking as standard for the comparison the historical past. In this case, Romania enjoys a less favourable image. Within this comparison, the feeling of being at the disposal of an all-mighty state apparatus, continuously nationalist, weighs a lot, sometimes being even more frustrating than the one caused by expropriations.

Ernst Wagner, *Istoria saşilor ardeleni*.

The aim of this chapter being an analysis of the themes of the Germans' mass-emigration under the communist rule of Romania, we shall limit ourselves to sketching a superficial image of the German settlers' history in Romania until 1945. We therefore offer a chronology of events meant to recount the long existence of the community in the present territory of Romania in a general way (see Chronological Table below).

According to the 1948 Romanian census, 2.2% of the total population of 19 million (that is, 334,913 citizens) were of German origin. In the 1930 census there were 760,687 ethnic Germans (4.2%); many had left Romania during the period between 1900 and 1927 period, including much of the mature male population <sup>4</sup>. In Romania, because of the political and legislative changes in 1945-1948, German families suffered dispossession, except for those who, once tables were turned, fought in the Romanian military units.

Approximately 60,000 German farmers lost their homes and farms, their fields, their agricultural machines and cattle. Some of them were allowed to remain in parts of the buildings they had owned, but others were assigned new living spaces within local communities <sup>5</sup>. An internal migration phenomenon occurred, as many left their villages hoping to find better working and living conditions in the growing cities. Such developments are not unique, as they can be found in almost every region that was subjected to forced industrialization and urbanisation. Their specific characteristics may be identified in the increasing ideological pressure and the prohibition of a public debate about the problems Romania was facing.

Simultaneously, the great Saxon or Swab enterprises and banks were nationalized. The middle-class merchants and craftsmen were not spared. Their urban residences were also confiscated.

After 1949 a slight détente can be seen in the status of the German minority. The building of a German Antifascist Committee was allowed, and after 1950 the Germans reacquired the right to vote. The initial anti-German measures were cancelled by the (unpublished) Decree 81/1956, but the Germans' lost properties were, from that time on, only partially returned. Moreover, the provisions referring to the "cohabiting national minorities" in the Constitutional Law legitimated the status of the ethnic Germans, thus making visible an obvious change in the Romanian government's attitude.

Besides internal migration, the above mentioned measures also triggered a current of thought generally favourable toward emigration among the Romanian Germans.

All considered, we also must state that the Germans retained their Romanian citizenship and, within certain limits, were allowed to practice their own language and culture as well as to preserve an education system in their mother tongue (although, after 1948, it was placed under the control of the Romanian state). The existence of the Evangelic Church was also allowed. Thus, it appears that banishing the Germans or their cultural assimilation was not among the objectives of the political regime that followed the instauration of communism in Romania. However, the new government never convinced the German minority of its legitimacy.

## **THE EMIGRATION PHENOMENON**

The year 1949 is commonly seen as the end-point of the post-World War II banishment, the driving of the German population out of the eastern and south-eastern European States toward Western Germany being, from this point on, considered “emigration”. According to the German Federal Law for the refugees, “emigrants” were all those who “as German citizens or ethnics, have left or are leaving, after the end of the banishing measures, the German territories of the east - Danzig, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and China – without having been driven out of these territories or having returned there, until 31 March 1952, and having been a resident of these countries after 8 May 1945”<sup>6</sup>.

The emigration of the Romanian Germans began in 1950-1951 when approximately 1000 people received the right to be “reunited” with their families from the FRG through the efforts of the German Red Cross. In the following years, until 1956, approval of requests to emigrate was granted to only 269 persons. Only after 1956 was there a continuous emigration of the Germans from Romania. Between 1955 and 1990, 337,082 people left their native places in Transylvania, Banat and Satmar; half of them were Germans. In this respect, one can observe certain fluctuations in the yearly numbers of emigrants. This is not because the desire of the Romanian Germans to emigrate faded (after 1956 over 10,000 emigration requests were addressed to the Red Cross). In 1976, over 90% of the Transylvanian Saxons answered with a strong “Yes” to an opinion poll concerning their wish to emigrate. The explanation lies in the fact that the emigration process was regulated by the Romanian state. The use of this issue as an instrument of political pressure by Romania in the negotiations with the FRG is a well-known fact<sup>7</sup>.

## **REUNITING THE FAMILIES. THE EMIGRATION ISSUE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROMANIA AND WESTERN GERMANY**

As Stephen Ludwig Roth foresaw, 150 years ago, the sunset of the German being from inside the Carpathian Arch, constantly warning about this danger, for the south-eastern Germans there was no prospect of returning to their Motherland. This possibility appeared only in the second half of the 20th century and we have done everything possible make everybody consider it.

Wilhelm Bruckner, *Die Aussiedlung der Deutschen*.

One of the most difficult problems for the Romanian Germans which appeared after World War II was that of reuniting families which, in some cases, had been separated for many decades. The Germans who had served in the Wehrmacht, though recruited on the basis of official protocols signed with their countries of origin, had lost their citizenship, and thus were not able simply to return to their homes. Beside those, the Germans who had been deported to forced-labour camps in the USSR established themselves, after their release, in the Frankfurt am Oder region and, from there, went on further to Western Germany. Although a legal opportunity for these families to reunite appeared a decade after the end of the Second World War, in 1957, through the sole action of the German Red Cross, the actual process developed only from the moment when the diplomatic relations between Romania and the FRG were reactivated. Between 1957 and 1959 over 2000 Germans emigrated to West Germany, a fairly small number if we consider the 8432 names that are to be found on the emigration list of the Red Cross.

The attempt to get approval for emigration from a series of personalities in Romanian German political and cultural life dates back to this moment. On this occasion the Association of the Transylvanian Saxons in Germany also made its presence felt.

The emancipation of Romanian foreign policy from Soviet dominance, as well as the relaxation of the Eastern-Western relations in the time that followed Stalin's death, allowed the resumption of contacts between Western Germany and Romania, beginning with a first round of commercial negotiations in Vienna (1954) followed by a meeting in Bucharest in 1958. Once diplomatic relations had been re-established (31 January 1967), contact between the decision makers in Bonn and Bucharest became possible. This 'normalization' period allowed increasing numbers of Germans to fulfil their wish to emigrate to the FRG. Under these circumstances a definite agreement was reached between the two sides regarding the increase of the emigration rate. An additional provision was also made regarding a "ransom" that was to be paid by the German state for each emigrant who was allowed to leave Romanian territory<sup>8</sup>.

Both sides agreed on keeping that additional provision secret: the Romanian state wanted to avoid acquiring an image as a 'Republic of Refugees' or losing prestige in the socialist camp as a trader in living bodies, while the FRG wanted to avoid awakening the greed of other socialist states that had German minorities<sup>9</sup>. As the Romanian government did not, initially, respect its side of the bargain, the FRG reacted with a brief but effective commercial 'blockade'.

Though filled with disillusion, the beginning of the Ceaușescu era coincided with a slight amelioration of the economical and cultural situation of the German community in Romania. As a decade had gone by since the 1967 agreement, a new one was signed between the Romanian dictator and the Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, providing that the emigration flow should exceed 10,000 persons every year.

Another element of rather great importance for the dynamics of the emigration process was the law of 1 December 1974 Law which regulated the sale to the Romanian state of the properties belonging to those Germans who wished to emigrate. The implementation of this law and the promptitude with which the commissions appointed to take care of the sales fulfilled their task - once the emigration of the owner had been approved - also

influenced the rate of emigration. In 1977 the 10,000 annual rate was surpassed for the first time. After the Ceaușescu-Schmidt agreement (1978) this limit was constantly exceeded.

Wishing to take advantage of the financial power of Western Germany, the Romanian state charged, starting in 1978, approximately 5000 German marks for each German that emigrated from Romania.

For Romania this evolution signified the drastic reduction of the German community, as a series of other factors concurred to strengthen an orientation favourable to emigration among the Romanian Saxons and Swabs: the deterioration of the living conditions in the last decade of the communist rule, the increasingly severe censorship, the drastic limitation of the possibilities for travelling abroad (that is, in Austria and Germany) - enhanced the effect of the economic motivations for departure. The German community further dissolved because of the negative demographic dynamics of those who remained, a direct result of the departure of a large part of the adult population.

Thus, the annual rate of emigration for the Romanian Germans to West Germany looks as follows:

- between 1950-1959	345	persons
- between 1959-1969	1,629	persons
- between 1970-1979	7,141	persons
- between 1980-1989	15,116	persons
- 1990	111,150	persons
- 1991	32,178	persons
- 1992	16,146	persons
- 1993	5,811	persons
- 1994	6,615	persons
- 1995	6,519	persons
- 1996	4,284	persons <sup>10</sup> .

Having, according to the German Federal Law, Art. 166 §1, the right to obtain German citizenship after establishing permanent residence in the FRG and, also taking into account those who fled to the GDR or to Austria, risking their lives by crossing the border illegally, the numbers of emigrants targeting Western Europe from 1950 until today ranges between 250,000 and 300,000 persons. At the end of 1989 the German population of Romania had already decreased to approximately 260,000 persons. Half of those who were left emigrated when, after the fall of the regime, the Romanian borders finally lay open.

## THE REASONS FOR EMIGRATION

The Romanian Germans have emigrated mainly for economical reasons. They wanted to drive an Opel instead of a Dacia, to have their own house instead of an apartment in a block of flats.

Interview, 7 February 2002, in Ulrich Burger, *Welches Deutschland soll es sein? Das Deutschlandbild der Siebenbuerger Sachse in den siebziger Jahre.*

The reasons for which most of the Germans from Romania have taken the path of emigration are a matter for debate. The majority of the German intellectuals, as well as a number of authors who have written about emigration and the dilemma of staying or leaving, mention the Saxons' and Swabs' desire to "live among people of the same language and culture without having to feel that they are being tolerated in their own homeland anymore" as the chief reason for emigration. "In comparison with this motivation, all others are of secondary importance" <sup>11</sup>. The other way to put it is that these peoples yearned to "live like Germans among Germans" <sup>12</sup>.

For us, an objective way of approaching this delicate matter would be to look for the chief motivations for the Germans' exodus in the living conditions and the status of their community after the end of the Second World War, and even before. By doing so one can observe that economic motivations ranks high among the main causes of the phenomenon of emigration.

The economic conditions of the 1970s in Romania - as a result of the forced industrialization policy - seriously affected the living standard of the whole population. One must also not forget that in 1970 the share of consumer goods respect to the total GNP was 29%, and that, simultaneously, the energy problem became more and more acute.

From 1971 the Romanian government also introduced measures that were perceived as an attempt to weaken German identity, as well as continuously narrowing the spaces in which it could manifest itself. The reduction of the possibility of creating new educational opportunities for the Germans in their native language, the reduction of visits from relatives from the other side of the curtain, the refusal to allow the use of non-Romanian place names, the confiscation of different goods and private art collections in order to conserve the national patrimony, the falsification of Transylvanian history as taught in schools and universities were all elements that concurred in forming a certain type of environment, perceived as hostile and repressive by the members of the German community.

An idealistic image of the living conditions in the West, rather optimistic expectations, augmented by packages or gifts received from relatives, contributed to the situation <sup>13</sup>.

On the other hand, the German community from Romania has always been pictured as a closed, rather "self-sufficient" community, which, though it consisted of more than 350,000 members (49,000 were members of the Communist Party), had neither the benefit of having representatives in the intimate circle of Ceaușescu, nor that of having specially appointed secretaries of state – as the Hungarians did. The political representation of the Germans of Romania, the so-called Nationalities Council, functioned more as a body for official propaganda, than as an organization of a political lobby for minority rights. Moreover, the Romanian Secret Service (Securitate) never succeeded in its efforts to attract important members of the German community by waving material privileges in their face.

Equally interesting was the ambiguous attitude of the dictator in his relationship with the German minority. Ceaușescu, also influenced by international events, could never make up his mind whether to allow the ethnic Germans to emigrate or to arrange for bearable living conditions for them in Romania. On the one hand he did not forbid the publication of letters belonging to German emigrants which painted living conditions in the FRG in vivid colours, on the other, in a speech held in the mid 1970s he advised the Germans from Romania to give up any thoughts of emigrating. Some measures were also taken by the administration apparatus against those who had claimed their right to emigrate.

As a conclusion to all that has been said until now, we can state that, although economic reasons were decisive, it would be wrong to consider the German refugees from Romania to be “economic emigrants”. Political and cultural uncertainty, perceived discrimination and a lack of perspective, especially for the younger generation, of freedom of movement and speech: these were all relevant factors - having a different degree of importance - for the appearance and development of the emigration phenomenon. Emigration had, in its turn, a “psychological recoil” effect which influenced even more members of the remaining community to follow the example of those who had already departed.

The rapid decrease of the German community of Romania certainly weakened the position of those left behind: their political, economical and cultural structures whose building had taken years of patient struggle were now left without foundation.

A very important part in this matter was played by the degradation of the education system. Many of those who left motivated their decision with the shocking but simple: “we are leaving too because all the Germans are leaving!”<sup>14</sup>.

The official, humanitarian motive for departure – that of reuniting broken families – was the only one that could justify this phenomenon without criticizing the regime or its leader or causing a widely-feared “loss of prestige” on the part of the Romanian state. Unfortunately, this false assumption cannot, anymore, give us very high hopes for the future of Germans in Romania.

#### *Chronological Table of the Transylvanian Saxons and of the Banat and Satmar Svabs*

1142-1162	during the reign of Geza II colonists are called in the Province of Sibiu; the major part of them are Franconian;
1147-49	a crusading army crosses Hungary (the 2nd Crusade);
1186	King Bela II sets the annual amount of taxes imposed on the “guest-colonists of the King from the other side of the woods” at 15.000 silver marks;
1191	the Pope recognizes Sibiu Abbey;
around 1210	the Cistercian Monastery of Kerz is founded;
1211-1225	the German Knight Order establishes a series of castles and towns in Burzenland;

- 1224 “The Golden Brief” (Andreanum) for the Germans of the Sibiu Province is granted;
- in 1235 Sibiu and Braşov are mentioned as cities;
- 1241/42, 1285 invasions of the Tartars in Transylvania;
- 1325 riot of the Saxons under the lead of Henning von Peters-dori against the Transylvanian Voivodas is defeated; the administrative and judicial system of “Saxon Seats” is introduced;
- 1349 first plague epidemics in Transylvania;
- 1376 oldest mention of the Guild for the Seven Seats;
- 1395 first invasion of the Turks in Burzenland;
- 1420 the Turks destroy Broos and invade Unterwald;
- 1437/38 a riot on the ground of the Comitatus; first Union of the three nation-strata (noblemen, Saxons and szeklers); Turkish invasion, city of Mühlbach is destroyed;
- 1453 the Seven Seats take over the defence of the Turnu Roşu pass, thus becoming sovereign over the nearby city of Talmesch;
- 1475 the city of Bistritz is given sovereign rights over Rodna in exchange for the defence of the above mentioned pass;
- 1498 the inhabitants of Braşov (Kronstadt) take over the dwelling of Törzburg for good, and thus, also, the defence of the nearby passes;
- 1486 King Mathias Corvinus recognizes the unity of the Saxon community on the Royal Possessions (*Universitas Saxonum*);
- 1526 battle of Mohacs; the Turks conquer the Low Plain of Hungary;
- 1542 the Transylvanian Parliament recognizes Turkish sovereignty;
- 1543 Johannes Honterus starts the Reformation in Braşov and Burzenland;
- 1547 “the religious order of all Saxons from Transylvania ...”; the Saxons become exclusively Lutherans;
- 1557-1568 the completion of a regime of moderate tolerance in Transylvania;
- 1572 the Saxons adopt the Augsburg Rite, Biertan (Birthälm) becomes the centre of the Lutheran Bishop;
- 1583-1853 introduction of the Saxons’ own Land law, which will stay in force until its replacement by the Austrian Civil Law Codex;
- 1595-1606 Emperor Rudolf II of Habsburg tries unsuccessfully to regain Transylvania; war, destruction, epidemics and famine; Michael the Brave, Prince of Valachia occupies Transylvania, formerly in the name of the Austrian Emperor, the general Basta of the Imperial Army orders his death;

- 1612 in the battle of Marienburg, fought against the tyrant Prince Gabriel Bathory, the Governor of Braşov and all Gymnasians remain on the battlefield;
- 1613-1629 the main concern of Prince Gabriel Bethlen is that of securing peace;
- 1657-1680 ravaging of the Country during the dynastic crisis in which Habsburgs as well as Turks are involved;
- 1637 after the liberation of Ofen the imperial armies take over Transylvania;
- 1691 at the death of Prince Michael Apafi, Emperor Leopold I officially introduces the title of “Prince of Transylvania”, thus recognizing the autonomous organization of the country, including its tolerance acts;
- 1734 first members of the Evangelic Church from Austria are settled by force in Transylvania;
- 1741 first evangelic believers from South Baden (Comitate of the Baden-Durlach Mark) emigrate to Transylvania;
- 1774-1787 Samuel von Brukenthal, High Counsellor of Empress Maria Theresa, becomes Governor of Transylvania;
- 1780-1790 Emperor Joseph II. tries to accomplish “the vertical Revolution”;
- 1835 establishment of the Economy House Braşov;
- 1840/42 founding of the Association for Transylvanian History;
- 1845 founding of the Guild Association of the Transylvanian Saxons; arrival of settlers from Württemberg;
- 1848 the March Revolution of Vienna spreads into Transylvania , the Romanians and the Saxons support the Imperial side; civil war, destruction of the Saxon Regen;
- 1849 Stephan Ludwig Roth is executed in Cluj-Napoca (Klausenburg); Austrian troops regain Transylvania with the Tsar’s help;
- 1863 the Parliament from Sibiu: Romanians and Saxons introduce a series of reforms;
- 1867 the Austro-Hungarian Compromise – Transylvania is no longer a domain of the Crown, but becomes part of the Hungarian Half of the Empire; the seat of the Saxon Bishop is moved from Biertan to Sibiu;
- 1872 first Celebration of the Saxon at Mediash; last epidemic of cholera; ultimate disappearance of the Royal Possessions, administrative reform;
- 1885 Dr. Karl Wolff founds the first Raiffeisen Associations (consumer leagues) and coordinates the “internal settlement” programme;
- 1914 First World War;

- 1918 end of the War; through the Alba Iulia Declaration the Transylvanian Romanians decide to unite with Romania, under the recognition of minority rights;
- 1919 the Mediash Union Declaration of the Saxons, founding of the Association of the Romanian Germans;
- 1921 First Agriculture Reform in Transylvania;
- 1923 political representatives of the Germans reject the new Constitution as it ignores minority rights;
- 1933 Fifth (and last) Celebration of the Saxons in Sibiu;
- 1939 the Second World War begins; the Romanian-German economic Treaty;
- 1940 Romania has to renounce North Bucovina and Bessarabia in favour of the Soviet Union, the Germans are moved out of Romanian territories; the Second Vienna Settlement; Northern Transylvania falls to Hungary; general Antonescu becomes chief of state; the German Military Commission takes residence on Romanian soil; law on ethnic groups;
- 1941 Romania takes part in the war on the German side against the Soviets;
- 1942/43 Hungarian-Romanian Treaty regarding the incorporation of ethnic Germans in the Wehrmacht (Waffen-SS);
- 1944 23 August: Romania capitulates and turns the weapons on Germany; 6-19 September, evacuation of the Saxons out of northern and central Transylvania;
- 1945 beginning with 11 January Germans are deported in the USSR in forced labour camps; March: agriculture Reform: the German peasants are dispossessed of their lands; armistice all over Europe;
- 1946 founding of the Assistance Association (later Help Committee) of the Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Svabs within the German Evangelic Church;
- 1947 Peace Treaty with the Allies; King Michael I is forced to abdicate; the Peoples Republic of Romania (RPR) is born;
- 1948 Socialist Law in Romania;
- 1949 new organisation of the Evangelic Church A.B. of Romania; founding of the Theological Institute of Academic Status; founding of the Association of the Transylvanian Saxons in Germany (later, the Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland);
- 1950 the Germans of Romania regain their right to vote;
- 1953 the Parliament of Bonn votes the Laws regarding the refugees and their compensation; the Saxons pass, as miners, from Austria to the Ruhr Basin;

- 1956 the homes and farms (without farmlands) are given back to the Germans in Romania;
- 1957 the Nordrhein-Westfalen 'Land' takes over the patronage of the Transylvanian Saxons from Germany;
- 1965 Nicolae Ceaușescu becomes the General Secretary of the Communist Party (PCR), the Socialist Republic of Romania begins its existence;
- 1967 the diplomatic relations between the RSR and the FRG become official;
- 1968 dialogue between Ceaușescu and the representatives of the German intellectuals; founding of the German Workers' Council of Romania;
- 1973 president Ceaușescu welcomes the representatives of the Association of Transylvanian Saxons from Germany;
- 1974 the National Patrimonial Protection Law; harshening of the visiting conditions in Romania;
- 1978 Federal Chancellor Schmidt and President Ceaușescu agree on increasing the pace of the German emigration from Romania within the project for bringing German families together;
- starting with 1981 constant economic crisis that leads to serious difficulties in food and energy provisions for the population in Romania;
- 1989 the Ceaușescu regime and the communist rule collapse; founding of the German Democratic Forum of Romania (DFDR);
- early 1990 massive emigration of the Saxons from Transylvania to the FRG; starting with 1994 the emigrant numbers stabilizes (partly because of the severe emigration laws – a contingent is fixed) at a low rate; the German population of Romania diminishes: compared with the 1989 statistics, by more than 70%.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> In M. Cosma, *Colonizarea sașilor: începutul unei istorii care moare* [The Settlement of the Saxons: the Beginning of a Dying History], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca*, XXXIII, 1994, p. 61.
- <sup>2</sup> E. Wagner, *Istoria sașilor ardeleni* [History of the Transylvanian Saxons], Bucharest 2000, p. 10.
- <sup>3</sup> H.-D. Mieskes, *Siebenbürgen, eine 850 jaehrige Geschichte im Überblick*, <http://Geschichte-Heimkehrende-Aussiedler-und-ihre-Geschichte.htm>.
- <sup>4</sup> One must not ignore the fact that after the end of the Second World War, in the East European countries many ethnic Germans avoided declaring their origin as some feared reprisals. This situation persists even today in some Eastern European states, especially among the members of the young generation, as decades of nationalist campaigns and obstruction of the minority rights inflicted upon them the fear of being “different”.
- <sup>5</sup> Wagner, *Istoria* cit., p. 87 ff.

- <sup>6</sup> F. Koch, *Deutsche Aussiedler aus Rumänien. Analyse ihres räumlichen Verhaltens*, Cologne-Vienna, 1991, "Studia Transylvanica", vol. 20, p. 110 ff.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> S.P. Bolovan, I. Bolovan, *Germanii din România. Perspective istorice și demografice* [The Romanian Germans – Historical and Demographic Perspectives] Cluj-Napoca 2000, p. 79.
- <sup>9</sup> W. Bruckner, *Die Aussiedlung der Deutschen aus Rumänien in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* in Hsg. *Vom Kulturreferat der Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland e.V., Rumänien nach 1945*, Munich 1989, p. 158
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Istoria* cit., p. 94.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- <sup>12</sup> M. Kroner, Hsg. *Vom Bundesreferat für Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und von der Kreisgruppe Nürnberg-Fürth-Erlangen der Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland, Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Zeit der Nationalsozialismus, Kommunismus und Postkommunismus 1940 bis 1999* [...] Nürnberg 1998, p. 57.
- <sup>13</sup> U. Burger (ed.), *Welches Deutschland soll es sein? Das Deutschlandbild der Siebenbürger Sachse in den siebziger Jahre*, "Transilvanian Revue", 3, 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> R. Munz, W. Seifert, W. Ulrich, *Zuwanderung nach Deutschland – Strukturen, Wirkungen, Perspektiven*, Frankfurt- New York 1997, p. 32.



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- Bolovan S.P., Bolovan I., *Germanii din România. Perspective istorice și demografice*, Cluj-Napoca 2000.
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- Burger U., *Welches Deutschland soll es sein? Das Deutschlandbild der Siebenbuenger Sachse in den siebziger Jahre*, in *Transilvanian Revue*, no.3/2003.
- Munz R., Seifert W., Ulrich W., *Zuwanderung nach Deutschland – Strukturen, Wirkungen, Perspektiven*, Frankfurt - New York 1997.

Fragen zu Interview I, Lotte Seifert, vom 1.11.00:

- 1) Also o.k., willst du dich mal vorstellen? Wer du bist, wo du lebst, wie alt du bist!
- 2) Wo kommst du her? In Rumänien?
- 3) Wie würdest du es beschreiben wie es damals war, wie ihr da gelebt, gewohnt habt, in Rumänien?
- 4) Und wie war das, habt ihr damals schon so mitbekommen, oder wie alt warst du damals bevor ihr ausgewandert seid?
- 5) War das dann z.B. in der Schule hart für dich? Irgendwie das System da, oder war das einfach schon so gewohnt, dass du sagst, dass war einfach schon inner so, dass hat man dann einfach so hingenommen, dass man z.B. nichts sagen durfte über Ceausescu und das Regime und so?
- 6) Und ich mein so das du jetzt sagst, dass z.B. das, was ihr damals kaufen konntet, oder so, oder dass ihr nicht wegfahren durftet, hat dich das gestört, also dass ihr nicht in andere Länder reisen konntet?
- 7) O.k., und ich mein, von Deutschland hast du ja auch schon viel gehört, und wie hast du dir dann vorgestellt, wie Deutschland ist?
- 8) Wann seit ihr ausgewandert?
- 9) Aus welchem Grund? Also wegen dem wirtschaftlich, also sozusagen weil hier mehr Wohlstand war oder weil einfach alle ausgewandert waren?
- 10) O.k., und war es irgendwie schwer auszureisen? Also dass man jetzt sozusagen das, alles organisiert? Das hat ja was gekostet, dass man ausreisen, also der Antrag, war ja mit Kosten verbunden und auch die Ausreise selbst.
- 11) Und wie war das dann, als ihr dann hier angekommen seid in Deutschland? War es dann irgendwie so: endlich zu Hause, endlich ...

Interview I: Lotte Seifert

- 1) Also mein Name ist Charlotte Seifert, werde diesen Monat 25 Jahre, wohne momentan seit 2-2.5 Jahren in Bruckmühl, früher in Bad Aibling, und mein Beruf, ja Bürokauffrau in einem Autohaus.
- 2) In Rumänien komme ich aus Siebenbürgen, das Dorf das war ein kleines Dorf, am Ende der Welt praktisch. Da gab's keine, da ging der Bus nicht mehr weiter, da hat er drehen müssen, weil keine Straße mehr weiterging. Aus Dendorf, das ist im Landkreis Murreesch, also bei Schäßburg, wo der Dracula her ist...
- 3) Also ich muss sagen für uns war das schon toll, weil wir nichts anderes gekannt haben. Man hat viele Leute gekannt, man hat jeden gekannt, es gibt eigentlich keinen Hof an dem ich nicht war in dem Dorf. Ich hatte eine Freundin na ja mir waren ziemlich unzertrennlich, eine Dritte im Bunde gab es einfach nicht. Entweder wir beide oder keiner. Schlimm waren wir jetzt nicht so, sind viel rumgezogen. Im Wald, Feldern und da haben wir mehr gespielt..
- 4) 14, gerade achte Klasse beendet.
- 5) In Rumänien eigentlich nicht so. Ich muss ehrlich sagen, wir waren zu jung, das wir das so richtig mitkriegen. Kann jetzt net viel sagen über dieses Regime, weil das hat man alles hier im Nachhinein erfahren, von den Eltern und so. Man selber hat das nicht so überrissen.
- 6) Um ehrlich zu sein nicht, gestört hat's mich nicht, man hat immer Ausflüge gemacht mit der Schule, so 2 bis 3 Tage weg, das war schon toll.
- 7) Ziemlich toll eigentlich, weil jeder den Eindruck vermittelt hat hier gibt's Sachen und super ist's. Und dann kommst her und dann hast eigentlich nicht so recht viel Geld. Die Eltern

mussten erst mal Arbeit suchen dann von einem Lager ins andere, das war halt auch ziemlich hart an Anfang. Da hat man hin und her geschoben, zuerst in Niederbayern im Landkreis Freundgreifenau. [Im Übergangwohnheim, oder?].

8) Das war Juni 1990, ja.

9) Eigentlich nicht so, erstens weil meine Eltern das nur für uns Kinder getan haben, muss ich ehrlich sagen, weil wir da unten keine Chance gehabt hätten, vom Lernen her, oder vom Job mäßig oder sonst irgendwas, [weil ihr Deutsche ward?] weil wir Deutsche waren. Und zweitens dann halt, weil alle Deutschen am Ausreisen waren. Wir waren zwar nicht die letzten aus, die aus dem Dorf ausgereist sind, aber so mittendrin.

10) Dieser Antrag war ursprünglich ein Urlaub und haben sozusagen vergessen nach Hause zu fahren. Damals ging das noch, da hat man halt recht schnell die Sachen gepackt ganz schnell und ist hierher gekommen. Das ging halt alles recht schnell, mit dem Zug, das wat knallhart. Da waren so viele am Ausreisen, die haben die Plätze zum Teil doppelt verkauft. Das wir nur 2 Plätze zur Verfügung hatten für 4 Leute, mein Vater und ich immer abwechselnd mal im Stehen und im Sitzen, halt, irgendwie nach Deutschland gekommen sind.

11) Ja, es war hart, weil man sich von allem trennen musste. Ich hatte nicht nur deutsche Freundinnen, sondern rumänische auch. Und das war hart – Am Anfang war's ziemlich toll, weil wir waren in Nürnberg im Lager und von da kamen wir nach Ahrweiler, das ist da Bonn. Da waren ziemlich viele Jugendliche, also sehr viele Jugendliche und die haben ja auch immer was gemacht. Ich kann nicht genau sagen wie ich mich fühlte, ich war so chao.

From: A. Pildner, Chancen und Schwierigkeiten der Integration von Aussiedlern in Deutschland am Beispiel der Siebenburger Sachsen [Chances and Difficulties of the Integration of Refugees in Germany with the example of the Transylvanian Saxons], Leipzig, 2001

### Interview

1. So, would you please introduce yourself? Who are you? Where do you live? How old are you?

My name is Charlotte Seifert, this month I will be 25 years old, and I live, for the time being, for the last two, two and a half years, in Bruckmuller. Before I was in Bad Aibling. I work in a office as a car saleswoman.

2. Where do you come from? From which part of Romania?

In Romania I come from Transylvania. The village I used to live in was a very small one, practically at the end of the world. There was nothing more from there on, even the buses made their last stop there and then had to turn around since there were no more roads going on ...the village is Dendorf, in the county of Mureş, near Sighişoara, the birthplace of Dracula...

3. How would you describe the situation in Romania as it was formerly? How did you live and what were your habits?

I must say that we didn't see it in a bad way, for us it was wonderful, because we knew nothing else. We all knew each other, there was no yard in the village I hadn't been into. I had a girl friend there, we were inseparable. There wasn't a third girl. Either the two of us, or no one...for us it wasn't too bad, we went around, we played, we went in the woods, in the field...

4. How old were you when you left?

Fourteen years old, just finished the eighth grade.

5. Was it difficult for you at school? Or the system? Or were you simply used to it, for example that you could not say anything about the regime or about Ceausescu?

In Romania really it wasn't like that. Honestly I must say that we were too young really to fight the situation. I cannot tell you a great deal about the regime from Romania, because we really didn't experience it much. I actually learned more about it after we emigrated, from our parents. We were not really very aware of the situation.

6. Were you bothered by the fact that you couldn't buy the things you wanted or that no trips abroad were allowed?

To be honest, not very much. We used to go on a lot of trips, organized by the school. Some of them lasted for 2 or 3 days. For us it was ok.

7. You heard a lot about Germany and how did you picture Germany then?

We had a rather nice picture of Germany, because everybody said that here you could find anything you wished for. As we arrived we couldn't allow ourselves to buy very much of what we wanted. At the beginning it was pretty hard and they sent us here and there, at the beginning in southern Bavaria in the community of Freundgraefenau [in a communal residence], my parents were searching for work, we were going from one refugee camp to another...

8. When did you emigrate?

In June 1990

9. What were your reasons for emigrating? Did you emigrate especially for economic reasons or simply because all the Germans left?

It wasn't quite like that. Our parents did it especially for us children, because we didn't have any chance back there to get a proper education or a job or something [because you were Germans?] Yes. And secondly because all Germans were getting ready to emigrate. We weren't the last from the village to go, we were in the middle of the emigration wave...

10. Was it hard for you to emigrate? Were there any other costs for that, I mean beside the costs directly related to the trip?

It was possible then. We actually went on vacation and then we sort of forgot to come back. We packed our things very quickly and we left. The train ride was a nightmare, we were so many in the trip and they sold double the number of ticket as there were people, so we had to share two seats and there were four of us. My father and I took turns at sitting and standing. So somehow we reached Germany..

11. And how did you feel when you got to Germany? Did it feel as if you had finally reached your home?

It was hard because we had to leave everything. I didn't have just German friends but Romanian friends too, and this was hard. At the beginning it was nice enough, in the refugee camp in Nuremberg, From there we went to Ahrweiler near Bonn. There were quite a few young people, in fact a lot, there was always something happening. I don't know exactly how I felt, I was pretty disoriented [...]

