



THE COUNCIL OF WORKERS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY AND THE FRONT OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALIST UNITY. HUNEDOARA CASE STUDY¹

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PhD.

Abstract: *THE RETURN OF ETHNIC GERMANS FROM DEPORTATION TO FORCED LABOR IN THE SOVIET UNION IN JANUARY 1945 WAS THE END OF ONE TERRIBLE COLLECTIVE TRAUMA, BUT IT MARKED THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER - A LONG PERIOD OF REPRESSION THAT WOULD LAST HALF A CENTURY. A POLITICALLY COMPLICATED PERIOD, WITH SMALL UPS AND LONG DOWNS, WHICH INCREASED THE GERMAN MINORITY'S DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE NATION-STATE, LEADING TO CENTRIFUGAL SOCIAL EFFECTS. THEIR MISTRUST OF THE FUTURE IN A STATE THAT SYSTEMATICALLY PURSUED A HOSTILE POLICY AGAINST ITS OWN PEOPLE DEEPENED. THE NATIONALIST POLICY OF THE LAST CEAUSESCU DECADES, BUT ALSO THE SHARP DROP IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING, PAVED THE WAY FOR THE MASS EXODUS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE OPENING OF THE BORDERS IN 1990. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE P.C.R. TRIED, FOR DECADES, TO INSTRUMENTALIZE THE PROBLEM OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN ITS OWN INTEREST. ONE OF THE INSTRUMENTS WAS THE COUNCIL OF WORKING PEOPLE OF GERMAN NATIONALITY (C.O.M.N.G.), ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC SHAM OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME.*

Keywords: GERMANS, REPRESSION, NATIONALISM, COMMUNISM

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1. Introduction and context of the study

After the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the repositioning of Nicolae Ceaușescu on the international political stage, at the end of 1968, in an atmosphere of enthusiasm that would not last for many years, The Central Committee of the P.C.R establishes the Socialist Unity Front (F.U.S.). It was not an approach stemming from a democratic start of the leadership of the single party, but only a pragmatic political move, made with the aim of improving Romania's image on the external plane and defusing the inter-ethnic tensions in Romania that could have been speculated by the Great Friend from the East.

The F.U.S. was the political successor of the People's Democracy Front (1948-1968) which, in 1980, would later transform into the Front of Democracy and Socialist Unity (F.D.U.S.). This political body, based on Art. 25 of the Romanian Constitution, was the only political structure in Romania that had the right to submit candidacies in the elections. The socialist constitution established that the Front is the democratic uniting framework, under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, of political and social forces² from Romania. The huge structure of the Front was led by a Central Council, and county councils were established in the territory. On this structure, the organizations of the main national minorities were also established - the Councils of Labor People of German Nationality (C.O.M.N.G.)/ Hungarian/ Serbian or Ukrainian. It is worth mentioning here the firm intervention of Ion Gheorghe Maurer (Saxon through grandfather and French through mother), much more categorical even than that of Nicolae Ceaușescu, who opposed Lajos Takács' proposal that they should be called "nationalities councils", without containing the phrase "working people". It was considered that, through the proposed name, these organizations would acquire a national character, and the party did not intend to make any reference to ethnic representativeness, only to one of social class.

The Romanian Communists relied on these Councils, because they could control all sectors of social life in Romania, including those of nationalities, which were difficult to penetrate due to the language barrier. Communist propaganda was thus created a channel of propagation in the mother tongue, through which it would reach the ears of ethnic Germans through the communist representatives of the community. On the other hand, the minority representatives hoped that these councils would create, after decades of marginalization, that institutional framework through which they would be able to expose and solve their specific problems. And some, and others, would be wrong...

2. The Council of Labor People of German Nationality, a democratic sham

Six councils were established, one each in the counties of Sibiu, Brașov, Timiș, Mureș, Hunedoara, Bistrița-Năsăud, Arad, where an important German minority lived. The management of P.C.R. she was the one who determined the names of the candidates who will be promoted in the leadership structures of C.O.M.N.G. Eduard Eisenburger, for example, was proposed as chairman of the Council at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee on November 8, 1968, and as deputies Peter Lamoth, Anton Breitenhofer, Richard Winter, Paul Schuster were appointed, and as secretary Adalbert Millitz . Each of them was worthy of the P.C.R.'s trust, earned

²Constitution of Romania, Art. 25. "The right to submit candidacies belongs to the Front of Democracy and Socialist Unity, the largest permanent, revolutionary, democratic, representative political body, which constitutes the unifying organizational framework, under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, of of the political and social forces of our socialist nation, of all the mass and public organizations, for the participation of the entire people in the implementation of the internal and external policy of the party and the state, in the management of all fields of activity".



after long checks. I. Gh. Maurer personally arrested Eduard Eisenburger, whom he claimed belonged to the category of "well-trained (communist) intellectuals"³.

In Hunedoara, the president of C.J.O.M.N.G. was Pilly Nikolaus⁴, furnace technician from the Victoria Plant in Călan. From 1968 until December 1989, he was the president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara and one of the vice presidents of C.N.O.M.N.G. from Romania. In 1957, he was part of the Romanian delegation that participated, in Moscow, in the festivities organized on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. The delegation was made up of Chivu Stoica, the president of the Council of Ministers, Grigore Preoteasa, propaganda secretary of the C.C. of the PCR, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Ștefan Voitec, Leonte Răutu et al. As is known, the plane carrying them crashed on landing at the Vnukovo airport near Moscow. Grigore Preoteasa and three members of the (Soviet) crew died. Pilly Nikolaus was not on the plane because, together with other delegates, he was making this trip by train⁵.

The war was over, but the communist world revolution would continue, sustained by the Soviet Union winning the conflict, occupying the countries of Eastern Europe and new spheres of influence. The class struggle became a continued form of internal war, directed against its own people, in countries brought overnight under the communist regime imposed by the Soviet Union.

In post-war Romania, until December 1989, ten electoral ballots were organized, according to the Soviet model⁶, in which the communists never presented themselves to the electorate. They always hid inside some democratic fronts, which were electoral constructions aimed at masking the political monopoly held by the P.C.R. and give the appearance of a democratic game. Four structures were created: "Bloc of Democratic Parties (B.P.D.) in 1946, the Popular Democracy Front (F.D.P.), in 1948-1968, the Socialist Unity Front (F.U.S.), in 1968-1980, and the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front (F.D.U.S.), in the years 1980-1989. With the exception of the first one, which had the form of an electoral cartel, the other structures functioned quasi-permanently, with the aim of ensuring collaboration with all other social and union organizations subordinate to the P.C.R."⁷. The president of this structure was the general secretary of the P.C.R. himself, Nicolae Ceaușescu, a fact that actually confirmed the dominant position of the Communist Party in front of the other entities.

A network of organizations had been woven around the Romanian citizen, which tried to entrap him in a structure in which at any point he was placed, he was still controlled by the P.C.R., the leading

³ Hannelore Baier, *Exodus statt Anpassung - das Versagen des deutschen Antifaschistischen Komitees und des Rats der Werktätigen deutscher Nationalität, Abbrüche und aufbrüche. Die rumäniendeutschen nach zwei Weltkriegen*, Ed. Honterus, Sibiu, 2014, p. 137.

⁴ Pilly Nikolaus was born on November 6, 1930, in Orșova. His father, Pilly Rudolf, was a dentist by profession. Enlisted in the Romanian army, he died on the front in November 1942, in the battles at Cotul Donului, in Stalingrad. His mother, Felicia, née Uzon, was a clerk. Pilly Nikolaus attended, between 1937-1941, the courses of the German primary school in Orșova, the Mixed Gymnasium, between 1941-1945, the M.U.D.R. Secondary Technical School, 1945-1948, the Secondary Technical Iron and Steel School, 1948-1951, the C.F.F. Iron and Steel Institute, but for just one year. After graduating from the Siderurgice Medium Technical School, he was assigned to the Victoria Călan Plant, where he worked as a furnaceman starting on August 1, 1951. In 1954, he completed his military training as part of the Hunedoara Labor Detachment. He was in the situation of young Germans who were not allowed to complete their military service in the armed forces, but were sent to labor battalions back to U.V. Calan. There he was, in turns, furnaceman, team leader, then assistant foreman, foreman, shift manager at furnace 1 and furnace 2. From June 1, he was the technologist of the furnace section at the Victoria Works. He was valued as a specialist with a level of training above the level of many engineers in the Plant.

⁵ Nikolaus Pilly, *Four tulips in a pot*, Editura Karina, Deva, 2022. p. 25.

⁶ Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, Bucharest, Final Report, 2006, p. 129, https://web.archive.org/web/20070704054840/http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/files/fstore/z_is/staticpages/Raport.pdf, accessed on 21.11.2022.

⁷ *Ibidem*.



political force of socialist Romania, as stated in the era. The Socialist Unity Front (F.U.S.) was established around the P.C.R., comprising a conglomerate of 40 mass organizations - the Organizations of Democracy and Socialist Unity, the General Union of Trade Unions, U.T.C. (Communist Youth), U.A.S.C.R. (Communist Students), the Organization of Pioneers, the National Council of Women, the Councils of Workers of Hungarian, German, Serbian and Ukrainian Nationality, the National Union of Agricultural Production Cooperatives, the Central Union of Craft Cooperatives, the Central Union of Production, Purchase and Sales Cooperatives, Association of Scientists, National Council of Engineers and Technicians, Union of Medical Science Societies, Union of Scientific Teachers' Societies, Veterinary Medicine Society, Writers' Union, Fine Artists' Union, Composers' Union, Journalists' Council, Architects' Union, Artists' Association of Theatrical and Musical Institutions, Association of Filmmakers, Association of Jurists, Committee of Ex-Combatants and Veterans of the Anti-Fascist War, National Committee for the Defense of Peace, Red Cross Society, National Council for Physical Education and Sports, General Association of Hunters and Sport Fishermen, Association of Beekeepers, Automobile The Romanian Club, cults⁸. In this conglomeration of organizations, trade unionists alone represented 7.8 million members, including 3.5 million communists and 4.1 million non-party members. F.U.S. will change its name, from 1980, to the Front of Democracy and Socialist Unity (F.D.U.S.).

Socialist democracy within the F.D.U.S. it was a sham. The speeches of the delegates at the C.N.O.M.N.G. Plenums were written and interpreted in the spirit of the time. They were recited in front of the audience, because no one dared to give a free speech. It was also dangerous for the speaker, but also risky for the listeners. The speakers appointed to speak at the Working People's Plenary were carefully selected by the P.C.R. Those sent from Hunedoara county were mainly part of the ranks of miners and steel workers, considered the vanguard of the working class.

In the speech delivered at the opening of the Plenary of the Councils of Hungarian and German working people, which took place on February 26-27, 1987, in Bucharest, Nicolae Ceaușescu spoke to the representatives of the Germans in Romania trying to convince them that these bodies are the living embodiment of the democracy that characterizes the socialist society, "which includes working people of all nationalities and in which the workers represent between 30 and 40 percent"⁹. Both the economic and democratic advances of socialist society were reviewed, in contrast to the failure of capitalist society. "In capitalist countries there are still hundreds of thousands and, in some countries, millions of illiterates, (...) who, just because they have a different skin color, do not have access to education, do not enjoy and they cannot enjoy all the conquests of science, culture and education"¹⁰. In the speaker's opinion, the socialist woman would have been equally privileged, compared to the one living in the capitalist society. The proof is the presence in such large numbers in the leadership structures of the state and the party, in full equality in terms of remuneration, etc.

About the way these speeches were prepared, Pilly Nikolaus, the former president of C.J.O.M.N.G. from Hunedoara county, provided us with new information about the behind-the-scenes organization of such an event. The text drafted by him was submitted for approval to the Propaganda Section of the Hunedoara Party County Committee. Following an analysis, another, improved form resulted, with which the delegate presented himself in Bucharest, at the Congress. There, however, instead of the approved speech, with which he came from home, he was handed, at the last moment, another one, drafted by the activists of the Propaganda Section at the Center. "Comrade," he was told, "read it aloud a few times before, so that you will be fluent." The text was typed in large letters to be

⁸ Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, Final Report, Bucharest, 2006, p. 155, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070704054840/http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/files/fstore/>

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.



easy to pronounce. Only this last version could be read from the podium to the delegates and reached the ears of comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu.

One of the most important issues raised by Nicolae Ceaușescu, which appears in the Plenary documents, is that of the external image of socialist Romania and the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, a theme that obsessively returns in the country's president's speeches. Responsible for the attacks coming from outside would have been "imperialist, reactionary circles"¹¹. In this context, the presence of the General Secretary of the P.C.R. at the reunited Plenary of working people of Hungarian and German origin is used as a good opportunity to transform the representatives of the national minorities into image vectors for the communist regime in Romania. The ethnic German communists (but also Hungarians), living in Romania, are called to mobilize to counter the "brutal attacks from outside". Nicolae Ceaușescu declares himself somewhat reconciled with these positions, considering that they take place in the context of "their class interests": "It does not concern us much and it has never concerned us", says the Secretary General. But it is incomprehensible when such things appear in a socialist country. We do not claim to necessarily present what is being done in Romania. However, I believe that it is a minimal claim so as not to distort the activity of our people, of working people, under the leadership of the party"¹². In support of his claim, he reads a real indictment, appealing to arguments of a historical nature. The message is very clear and is addressed to national minorities, who are called to fight for the unification of peoples for "the cause of socialism, for disarmament and peace in the world"¹³. Packaged in this way, the call is easier for participants to digest. After all, who could say that he is not for peace or against disarmament?

The call of the general secretary of the party cannot go unanswered. Speakers at the reunited Plenary are, among others, two workers from Hunedoara County. The first, as a representative of the Hungarians, Francisc Fazekas, is a foreman at the Paroșeni mine, and the second is also a miner from Valea Jiului, Iosif Krausz, a miner from Petrila, as a representative of the working people of German origin. The speeches of the two go in the same direction. Each of the speakers highlights the "unshakable unity" among the minority to which the majority of Romanians also belong, closely united, naturally, around the communist party, "in a healthy climate, in which one does not speak the mother tongue, but the revolutionary one of socialist work and creation"¹⁴. The approach is common and equally vehement in the face of "hostile attempts, chauvinistic, nationalist ideas, launched and maintained by reactionary circles abroad, who like to fish in murky waters, will shatter from the granite foundation of the national unity of our people"¹⁵. Krausz at the Plenary of February 26-27, 1987, he wanted to be the voice of the German miners from Romania's most important coal basin. His message was that, "regardless of the ethnicity they belong to, the miners of Valea Jiului all speak the same common language - revolutionary, of work and socialist creation"¹⁶. Beyond the usual commitments, we find the same red thread running through the speakers' positions - the firm condemnation, "with conviction, of every hostile attempt, of the chauvinistic, nationalist ideas, launched and maintained by the reactionary circles outside"¹⁷. At the same time, membership in the group of socialist peoples, which knows no race or ethnicity, was affirmed. There, in the Communist Paradise, no other mother

¹¹ The Plenary Sessions of the Councils of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in the Socialist Republic of Romania. February 26-27, 1987, Political Ed., Bucharest, 1987, p. 17.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

¹⁶ The Plenary Sessions of the Councils of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in the Socialist Republic of Romania. February 26-27, 1987, Political Ed., Bucharest, 1987, p. 139.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.



tongues are known than the language of the Revolution (Communism, of course). The report on the participation of working people of German nationality, published on this occasion, speaks of "the principled, just, Marxist-Leninist solution of the national problem, by consistently ensuring full equality in rights and duties for all the sons of the country, without distinction of nationality, as one of the great and lasting founders of socialism in Romania, especially of the Nicolae Ceaușescu Era"¹⁸.

The achievements in the cultural-artistic field are reviewed: the establishment of nine book publishing houses, which, along with the Didactic one, (also) publish in German. Professional theater collectives were established in Timișoara and Sibiu. Four publications, of which two are daily newspapers, "Neuer Weg", the central organ, and three other regional publications. The "Singing of Romania" festival of work and creation, initiated and closely guided by "Comrade Ceaușescu, mobilizes the creative energies of amateur and professional artists of German nationality". The enumeration of these great achievements is obvious to all people of good faith, the authors of the Report claim. "Surprising and dissonant are the voices from abroad, the statements and some tendentious, derogatory materials that try to slanderously discredit this historically important conquest of our Party. It is natural to reject them with indignation, as brazen inventions, as a revival of revengeful, reactionary theses, invented to sow discord, as an uncalled-for interference in strictly internal affairs and that undermines the sovereign rights of the people"¹⁹. The report becomes an indictment against the reactionary forces abroad and does nothing but ventilate, also in German, the official political speech of the P.C.R.

At the Plenary of the County Council of Workers of German Nationality in Hunedoara, which took place on April 22, 1977, 23 members of the Council participated, including: Pilly Nikolaus, furnace technician at the Victoria Călan Enterprise, Glatz Günter, controller C.T.C., Tellmann Iosif, plastic artist, Krausz Iosif, miner at the Petrila Mining Enterprise, Henke Iuliu, P.C.R. activist and 32 other comrades from all sectors of activity, as well as the representatives of the institutions of culture and socialist education in Hunedoara, of the County Council of Hungarian Nationality Labor People, of the municipal and town committees and of the Party from the localities where the members of the German community lived.

As president of C.J.O.M.N.G. - Hunedoara, Pilly Nikolaus read the tasks that fell to the members of the County Council, as they resulted from Nicolae Ceaușescu's presentation at the joint meeting of the C.C. of P.C.R. and C.S.A.T., from March 28 - 29, 1977. Beyond the usual praises brought to the general secretary of the Party, the speeches invariably pointed to "the correct, Marxist-Leninist way, in which the party led and carried out the solution of the national problem in Romania." (...) Only democracy and socialism can ensure the preservation and unhindered development of the ethnic being, of the national identity"²⁰. Moreover, the solution of the national problem is seen by the speaker as one of the greatest conquests of the socialist construction in our country. The statement is supported by the achievements of education in the German language, which are quantifiable through the 700 school units attended by over 60,000 children of German ethnicity, and by the 3,000 teaching staff. Added to these achievements is the existence of a written and audio-video press, which contributes to the "maintenance and flourishing of the language of the cohabiting German nationality"²¹. As a sign of the recognition of the merits of the Germans in building the multilaterally developed socialist society (s.s.m.d.), the nine deputies of German origin and the 630 comrades who carry the "high title of party member" (P.C.R.) are listed. A sensitive subject was the position of C.J.O.M.N.G. against the phenomenon of the emigration of ethnic Germans to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 124.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

²⁰ Pilly Nikolaus personal archive, Plenary of the County Council of Labor People of German Nationality - Hunedoara.

²¹ *Ibidem*.



become a "mass sport" in Romania. The origins of the problem were seen in the disastrous policies carried out by Nazi Germany, which resulted, among many others, in reducing the German population in Romania by several hundred thousand people. The blame for the exodus of Germans would now be the "reactionary circles" in the West, which are the ones who would have launched the thesis that "the population that came to these lands 800 years ago would have had a mission to fulfill, which, under current conditions, it can no longer achieve it, and, as a result, this population must be withdrawn"²².

The communist representatives of the German ethnic group in Hunedoara County identify what is behind the so-called interest in humanitarian issues. There were "certain circles" that aim at nothing more than "inciting Romanian citizens of different nationalities to leave their country, to emigrate, which is a true genocide, an attempt to dissolve an independent national community." Therefore, the instigation of citizens of other nationalities, their enticement to leave our country must be qualified as a gross interference in Romania's internal affairs, the creation of difficulties for the Romanian state, the disorganization of some sectors of activity"²³.

"The council managed, based on the half-year activity plans, to channel its work on the main issues put before it by the county party body and the county council of the F.U.S. (...) it managed to be a transmission wheel that we can characterize as efficient" [Pilly Nikolaus personal archive, Plenary of the County Council of Workers of German Nationality - Hunedoara, Reports on the activity of C.J.O.M.N.G. from Hunedoara county, p. 2, Călan, 17.05.1979.]. As we learn from the internal documents, the president of the County Council of the F.U.S. Hunedoara, tov. Teodor Haș, was the one who supervised the activity of C.O.M.N.R. Hunedoara, "guiding and orienting his activity better"²⁴.

For his part, the members of the Council carried out a wide activity among the German-speaking population, with an emphasis on the youth, whom he guided to enter the ranks of the U.T.C. and then PCR²⁵. In 1973, for example, they reported the reception of 45 German comrades into party, i.e. another four percent of the number of employees of German nationality in the county²⁶. C.J.O.M.N.G. was represented by three members in the national organization per country, and the 21 members of the Council were distributed in such a way that they could include the German population of Hunedoara County.

The county organization had in its agenda the organization of cultural-propagandistic actions. She was engaged in the National Festival "Singing Romania" with the mixed choirs (together with the Romanians) of the Culture Houses from Călan, Orăștie, Petroșani, Lupeni, with the brass bands from Călan, Hunedoara, Deva, Orăștie, Petroșani, with short theater formations. A notable participation took place in the inter-county choral festival "Sarmizegetusa - ancestral hearth", in which the German chamber choir from Hunedoara, led by Hana Bart, always participated and was very successful. Also through the C.J.O.M.N.G., literary evenings were organized for Germans from Hunedoara county with themes such as "the national unity of the Romanian people in the course of history", exhibitions such as "Hunedorean literary creation in the years of socialism", they could participate in debates suggestively titled "economizing of raw materials, materials, energy and fuel". The "Furnalist" wall newspaper, thanks to the contribution of Mr. Roth Dietrich, Muller Johan et al., won second place in the wall newspaper contest, county phase. Conferences were organized on topics such as "the role of the foreman in production", where technicians of German origin presented their professional

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²⁵ Pilly Nikolaus personal archive, Information regarding the mass educational activity carried out by the County Council of Workers of German Nationality in Hunedoara County, December 1973.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 5.



experience. In Hunedoara, Hans Koch organized, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the founding of the circle of amateur photographers, the exhibitions entitled "Man and production" and "Open window to man". A youth marching band was established in Călan. For the first time, through the local party organs and in collaboration with the Committee of Socialist Culture and Education, the tradition of meetings of writers with members of the German community could be rekindled. Thus, the Germans from Hunedoara, Călan, Batiz, Deva, Romos, Aurel Vlaicu, Orăștie were able to meet with F.I. Bulchard, Schleich Franz, Fickinger Gerlinda, Nikolaus Berwanger. It was 1978 and the German community was eager to capitalize on the openness that was living its last days after the Theses launched earlier in the decade. The stands of German books in bookstores sold out in no time. The books of the poet Richard Wagner were bought and well received²⁷ and those of the Hunedorian writer Franz Rimmel.

The official speeches of the speakers paid tribute to the Communist Party. However, the unit was far from monolithic as claimed. In the 80s, personalities from the top of the German community hierarchy remained in Germany permanently, such as Nikolaus Berwanger, vice-president of C.O.M.N.G. from Romania and the president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Timis. The period of openness to the aligned German community also had a flip side. Against the non-aligned, the Security, at the behest of the Party, organized a veritable witch hunt.

The Jiului Valley was covered by Iosef Tellmann, who carried out a tireless educational activity, organizing conferences, painting and graphic exhibitions. As I have documented in this paper, Tellmann's activity was both cultural and informative, being an old collaborator of the Security, for which he worked since the 1950s.

In Calan, the The Comrade Gunther Ay stood out who, together with the artistic group he led, made the graphic-artistic part of the exhibitions organized by the local party organ and the Victoria Enterprise within the "Singing of Romania" festival. We record here the position of the Ay family, who did not agree to sign the C.J.O.M.N.G. petitions for the organization of education in German in the city of Călan, saying, "Comrades, if we live and work in Romania, we don't need education in German!".

C.J.O.M.N.G. organizes and mobilizes the German community in large actions in which hundreds of people from the county participate. Festivals of the popular German traditional clothing, "Fasching", "Kerwai" and then "Kronenfest" are organized. Some of these are attended by Germans "from beyond", the occasion on which the officials express the fact that the Constitution of the S.S.R., Art. 17 and others is applied without any restriction²⁸. The cultural achievements of the Hunedoaran Germans were attributed not so much to the talent of the participants, but to the exceptional conditions created by the Party. The proof was the exhibitions of painting, graphics, photos, titled "Man and Production", made by the tireless animators Iosif Tellmann, the Simonis brothers, Koch et al. Meetings were organized with German-language writers such as Franz Storch, Nicolaus Berwanger²⁹, would also with the writer, who became a Hunedoaran for a few years, Richard Wagner.

²⁷Richard Wagner, writer, founding member of Aktionsgruppe Banat, married to Herta Muller, became a teacher in Hunedoara after his arrest by the Securitate and the dissolution of the Group in 1975.

²⁸ Art. 17. - Citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania, regardless of nationality, race, sex or religion, are equal in rights in all areas of economic, political, legal, social and cultural life. The state guarantees the equal rights of citizens. No limitation of these rights and no discrimination in their exercise on the basis of nationality, race, sex or religion is permitted. Any demonstration aimed at establishing such fences, nationalist-chauvinistic propaganda, inciting racial or national hatred, are punishable by law.

²⁹Nikolaus Berwanger was the vice-president of the Council of Workers of German Nationality in Romania, a member of the Timiș county party office, which in 1984 remained in the West. Eventually, one by one, many members of the Aktionsgruppe Banat will also leave the country.



The latter's personality is worth mentioning here, because destiny brought him to Hunedoran lands. The young writer arrived in the city of Hunedoara in 1975, when he was 23 years old. Although very young, he had distinguished himself in the Aktionsgruppe Banat³⁰, of which he had been a co-founder. In 1975, the group of young German writers came to the attention of the Security and were disbanded. Anyone who came into contact with them automatically became suspect and was taken to task by the D.S.S. officers. Andrei Bodi, the one who would become, after 1989, dean of the Faculty of Letters of Transylvania University in Brașov and editor-in-chief of the magazine "Interval" was prosecuted only for having, for a few hours, a discussion with William Totok. The year 1975 is the year Aktionsgruppe Banat was disbanded, but also the year in which the young Wagner graduated from the University of Timișoara and in which he was assigned to the city of Hunedoara. The working town where he would live was, from the perspective of the authorities, meant to bring the young writer from Banat down to earth. Here, he was to learn about the realities of the working class, from which he would have lost his way, and he would see with his own eyes the achievements of the socialist regime. The working-class tradition and the left-wing orientation of the electorate were strong in these working-class centers, so it is conceivable that the young Wagner's immersion in these social environments was to produce, in the desired way, his re-education. Last but not least, the Securitate, established in November 1948, had built vast information networks in these heterogeneous environments. The party had to know permanently, what the state of mind was in the strongest workers' detachments, those in the basic industries of socialist Romania - mining and steel. Richard Wagner becomes the protagonist of an Informative Investigation File (DUI), which will end with the final sentence of the court against the head of the Security in Hunedoara, for the political police activities carried out against the writer from Timișoara during those years. After his internship, Richard Wagner returns to Timișoara, where he continues his literary activity. He is elected head of the "Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn" cenacle and marries Herta Müller, who would later become a Nobel Prize laureate and with whom, together, in 1985, he submits an application for emigration to the F.R.G. It was also the year in which also Nicolaus Berwanger, the writer, activist and protector of young German writers from Banat, chose freedom and remained in Germany. It is a blow both to C.J.O.M.N.G. and to the young German writers of Banat. We conclude this topic by noting that the situation of Romanian writers of German origin was a little better than that of their Romanian counterparts. It is possible that these degrees of freedom were allowed under controlled conditions, given their small impact in Romanian society. The poet Mircea Dinescu, for example, described Aktionsgruppe Banat that it was a "small colony of pelicans, far away, in Timișoara"³¹.

They also came to Hunedoara County for the purpose of a promotion in the party hierarchy. Famous deputies such as Alexandru Drăghici, former commander of the State Security or Neculai Agachi, were propelled from the working-class electoral circles of Hunedoara³², steel engineer, general

³⁰ The Cenacle consisted of Romanian writers of German ethnicity Albert Bohn, Rolf Bossert, Werner Kremm, Johann Lippet, Gerhard Ortinau, Anton Sterbling, William Totok, Richard Wagner, Ernest Wichner and operated from 1972 to 1975, when it was closed.

³¹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aktionsgruppe_Banat, accesat în 20.11.2022.

³² Agachi Neculai (b. 23 Feb. 1925, Poduri commune, Bacău county; d. 1997, Bucharest) Substitute member of the C.C. of P.C.R. (23 Jul 1965–12 Aug 1969); member of C.C. of the P.C.R. (12 Aug 1969–24 Nov 1989). Studies: Faculty of Metallurgy, Bucharest Polytechnic Institute; "Ștefan Gheorghiu" Party Higher School (1963–1966); PhD student (in 1985). Basic profession: steel engineer. Activity and positions: party member since 1954; party activist (in 1960); general manager of the Hunedoara Steel Works (1964–1968); member of the office of the Hunedoara Regional Party Committee (since May 25, 1965); deputy of the Minister of Metallurgical Industry (21 Dec. 1968–13 Mar. 1969); vice president of the National Council of the F.U.S. (1968–1974); Minister of Metallurgical Industry (March 13, 1969–December 17, 1985); member of



director of the Hunedoara Iron and Steel Plant between 1965-1968, brother-in-law of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The latter lived with his wife, Maria Agachi, who was Nicolae Ceaușescu's sister, and a Romanian language teacher at a high school in Hunedoara, until 1968, after which he was Minister of Metallurgical Industry in the Maurer Government. As told us by Mr. Nikolaus Pilly, who knew them personally, the Agachi family was a "modest one that never paid attention to the kinship relationship with the General Secretary of the P.C.R., Nicolae Ceaușescu". It was a safe area, in many ways. Among the measures taken by C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara to attract the youth to the political-educational actions were the joint participations in the National Festival "Cântarea României" or in the local ones of national interest, such as the one in Costești called "Encounter of youth with history". These actions emphasized the knowledge of the events in the history of the Romanian people, as they were described in the official historiography, and should have led to the strengthening of brotherhood between working people, "regardless of nationality".

Even what could have been a banal parade of the German folk costume and Fasching did not escape the party's propaganda. Ironically, the Feast of Light was one of masks, of the end of winter, but what could be more appropriate in a society full of masks? In 1973, if we believe the documents of the time, the Fasching in Hunedoara was very popular, which was attended by a large number of working people of German nationality from Petroșani, Hunedoara, Călan, and Aurel Vlaicu. "On this occasion, political information was also presented regarding the internal and external policy of our party and state"³³. In contrast, other community events were overlooked by the Party leadership. For example, the commemoration of the 475th anniversary of the birth of the Saxon humanist Johannes Honterus was a missed event³⁴. Even the exposition that should have been elaborated and written in Romanian to be disseminated in the schools of the county has not been disseminated³⁵.

In 1973, the first amateur film festival took place, which took place in Valea Jiului, under the leadership of Iosif Tellmann, the director of the Lupeni film club. On this occasion, a short film was presented on the joint production activity of Romanian, German and Hungarian workers³⁶. It was Tellmann's year, because the artist turned 50, a rather young age for a creator. But Tellmann was a prominent figure in Hunedoara County and enjoyed great political support (and not only that). The County Council of Working People of German Nationality supported the organization, in Deva, of a graphics and painting exhibition. The fact that Iosif Tellmann, the artist, had been decorated for his artistic activity was considered a reflection of the high appreciation that the (communist) party and the state gave to the development of art in Romania³⁷.

As I said, "the concern of the party bodies to guide the councils in order to increase their contribution (sic!) to the improvement of the content of education in the mother tongue, but also of the measures taken to ensure the proper acquisition of the Romanian language" was a constant organizational concern. Consultations took place at the level of the Labor Council and the Ministry of Education. At the national or county plenaries of the C.J.O.M.N.R. a representative of the ministry

the Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development (in 1975); first vice-president of the Central Labor Control Council of Economic and Social Activity (February 7, 1986–October 12, 1988). Deputy in M.A.N., elected in circ. elect.: no. 10 Orăștie, reg. Hunedoara (1965–1969), no. 8 Călan, Hunedoara county (1969–1975), no. 5 Dragalina, Ialomița county (1975–1980), no. 4 Galati-Sud, Galati county (1980-1985) and no. 1 Târgoviște-Nord, Dâmbovița county (1985–1989). Awards: "Order of Labour" 2nd class (1964, 1981); Order "23 August" 2nd class (1965); "Tudor Vladimirescu" Order, 5th class (1966); Order "Star of the Socialist Republic of Romania" 3rd class (1968); 2nd class (1975). cf C.N.S.A.S., Members of the C.C. of P.C.R. 1945–1989, Dictionary, Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 61.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.



was always present. With all the positive aspects recorded, there were many deficiencies in the functioning of this body. Although some proposals were accepted at a higher hierarchical level, they could not be implemented due to the sabotage of local decision-makers. In Hunedoara, for example, the German language section at the general school in Batiz was abolished, and although it had been accepted that students could learn German at two of the three existing schools in Călan, this was not possible due to the lack of local cooperation³⁸.

C.J.O.M.N.G. also boasted in those years about the "improvement of the content of education in the German language [Personal archive Pilly Nikolaus, Dare note on the activity of the C.O.M.N.G. from Hunedoara county, p. 6, Călan, 17.05.1979.]. At the level of the council of workers of German origin in the S.S.R. as a rule, a representative of the Ministry of Education had to participate, and at the county plenaries, one member of the county party inspectorate, so that the proposals and suggestions made by the representatives (of the Germans - n.n.) are sent directly to the competent forums"³⁹. The presence of Germans in these C.J.O.M.N.R. it was supported by the opportunism of some leaders, sustained by the sincere hope that the problems of the community would find, after twenty years of being ignored, an institutional framework for solving them. If there was even the slightest chance of redressing their grievances, it should not be wasted, although the Council had only an advisory function. Whether it was so or not, is evidence of one of the oldest problems of the Hunedoara community, signaled since the first years of the Council's existence. It is about the situation of education with teaching in the German language. In Călan appears for the first time on the agenda in 1973. Comrade Ioan Marinescu, the director of the General School in Călan, sent away parents who requested transfers to the school in Orașul Nou back to Deva.

Repeatedly, only promises were given, without doing anything to achieve them"⁴⁰. In Petroșani, too, the situation was equally difficult. Although a gymnasium class for 31 German children, as well as a kindergarten teacher for 21 children, had been requested for the 1972/1973 school year, the request was not forwarded to the Ministry of Education by the School Inspectorate⁴¹.

C.J.O.M.N.G., through its president Pilly Nicolaus, signaled that even after another six years, the same deficiencies in the organization of Hunedorian pre-university education, remained unresolved. Thus, in a report presented in the Plenary of the Council, in 1979, the following is stated: "For learning the German language as a foreign language where there are not enough students to establish sections in addition to the general schools with teaching in the Romanian language, Instructions no. 53995/1972 of the Ministry of Education provide that the option for the respective language will be made at registration, i.e. at the beginning of the year. Since the requests were not received at Călan and therefore the registration for the German language was not successful because the textbooks for another foreign language were already ordered months before, it was requested in the past plenary sessions, as well as in the plenary session of the F.U.S. that the school inspectorate and then the Ministry of Education intervene for clarification and resolution." . However, this problem remained unresolved, although assurances have been received, and the ministry has promised (at the direction of the Secretary of the CC, Virgil Cazacu) to send the comrade Rada Mocanu to our county. There is a lack of staff for the school departments with German language teaching, which is why, for example, at Deva the activity was restricted to a smaller number than the

³⁸Nikolaus personal archive, former president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara, Calan, May 19, 1978.

³⁹*Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Personal archive Pilly Nikolaus, Information on the practical application of the main issues arising from the Council Plenary of February 1971 in the light of the speech tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu at this plenary, p. 2.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 3.



requirements. In the same way, the lack of staff is felt in Hunedoara (General School no. 7) and in Călan, where there is only one teacher"⁴².

The shortage of teaching staff was compounded by other shortages, such as the lack of means of transport for students from Batiz and Călanul Vechi to Orașul Nou - Călan, so the students had to stay in place, in their home villages, where "they were not provided with education in the German language".

The official speech of C.J.O.M.N.G. it was, at times, ambivalent, duplicitous and contradictory. The reported deficiencies, which in fact betrayed the disinterest of the authorities in solving the problems of the German ethnicity, were mixed with thanks for the attention given to the creation of educational conditions in the mother tongue⁴³.

C.J.O.M.N.G. was an organization with a representative and consultative role within the Front of Unity and Socialist Democracy. The president of the F.U.S., then the F.D.U.S., had the role of coordinating the activity of the County Council. He was "the iron hand in the velvet glove". Hunedoara County had a Council made up of 21 members and was characterized by great stability in their functions. From its founding in 1968 until December 1989, a period of 21 years, it had only one president, Pilly Nikolaus, who was also one of the vice-presidents of the National Council of Workers of German Nationality.

The county organization of C.J.O.M.N.G. had about 1,300 members. They met quarterly, but could convene whenever important political events took place. The meetings were organized with the support of the county Party organization, which ensured their logistics as well as the agenda.

The management of C.J.O.M.N.G. from Hunedoara was made up of the following Germans:

1. Pilly Nikolaus, Călan, technician at the Victoria Company - Furnale.
2. Hanke Iuliu, Deva, director of Avicola Mintia.⁴⁴
3. Hellermann Hugo, Deva, I.E.C. Mintia.
4. Brandenburg Martin, Writer.
5. Bone Alfred, Petroșani, printer.
6. Graf Carol.
7. Krolacsek Alfred, investment sector, I.V. Călan.
8. Glatz Gunter, volunteer correspondent for the German newspaper.
9. Knuff Martin.
10. Freulich Martin, engineer Deva.
11. Rimmel Francisc, n. Banat, Neuer Weg, Hunedoara and Alba.
12. Schneider Mihai, engineer, Deva.
13. Tellmann Iosif, painter, Lupeni.
14. Kleibel Wilhelm⁴⁵.
15. Krausz Iosif, miner, Petrila.
16. Tonch Iohan.

⁴² Personal archive Pilly Nikolaus, Highlighting the work of C.J.O.M.N.G. from Hunedoara county, p. 8, Călan, 17.05.1979.

⁴³ Personal archive Pilly Nikolaus, Information on the practical application of the main issues arising from the Council Plenary of February 1971 in the light of the speech tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu at this plenary, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Hanke Iuliu, a graduate of the "Ștefan Gheorghiu" higher party school, was the secretary of the C.J.O.M.N.G., during the entire period of its operation, from 1968 to December 1989.

⁴⁵ I found a reference regarding Kleibel Wilhelm in a Note from the Petroșani Security Bureau, which, on June 19, 1946, states that the aforementioned came from Brașov to work as a turner at the Petroșani Society. From the supervision of B.S. it turned out that Wilhelm Kleibel is perfectly "assimilated to the spirit of the current regime, not being able to find anything contrary to him or any suspicion from the point of view of Security" (SJHAN, Fondul Comisariat de Poliție Petroșani, D. 19/1947, f. 33) This assimilation will count in tov's future career. Kleibel.



17. Probsdorfer Iohan.
18. Walter Marianne.
19. Kristoff Alfred, office clerk, Orăștie.
20. Koch Hans.
21. Knopf Magdalena, teacher, Hunedoara.

In addition to the 21 members of the County Council, 24 other ethnic Germans from Hunedoara county, doctors, teachers, workers, also participated as guests. The issues analyzed at these plenary sessions consist of debates on current organizational issues, the dismissal of some members of the Council, on the grounds that they have left the county (or the country?) and their replacement with other Germans, cultural activities, meetings with German writers etc. Participation in the discussions was done by registering on a list, usually initiated by the president of C.J.O.M.N.R.

The Councils of the Working People of German Nationality were not independent organizations, but, as stated previously, they were democratic props, politically subordinated through the F.D.U.S., to the Romanian Communist Party. The county party committees had the role of "guiding and supporting the local councils of workers of German (and Hungarian) nationality in order to mobilize them to carry out the tasks resulting from the comrade's presentations Nicolae Ceaușescu at the Joint Plenary of the National Councils of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality"⁴⁶. Emphasis was placed on making the methods of popularization and knowledge of the objectives of the state plan (1978) more efficient, as well as the ways of reflecting them in the local press, radio and in other forms of party propaganda, in order to mobilize and increase the participation of Germans in accomplishing these tasks.

As everywhere where German communities lived, in Hunedoara county too the vector of party propaganda was the mass media, represented by seven titles of newspapers and magazines in German, radio (two hours daily, in total, on Radio Bucharest and Timișoara), Romanian television (a weekly show in German, 105 minutes long). In addition to these, in the six localities in Hunedoara where the German community had a significant presence (Hunedoara, Batiz - Călan, Romos, Aurel Vlaicu, Orăștie, Petroșani), there were "competent persons who informed directly or through editors the newspapers Neuer Weg, Neuer Banater Zeitung, Karpaten Rundschau, Radio Timișoara", as well as through the official Hunedoara Regional Committee of the P.M.R., then the P.C.R., the daily "Drumul Socialismului".

Propaganda went down to the grass roots, to the workplace of every German worker. A tool considered valuable in this sense was considered the wall newspaper, the maintenance of which was done by trained (and) working people of German nationality, who aimed to popularize through photos, articles in the "quality showcase" under the heading "youth and production", the honor panels, the showcases of inventions-innovations", the economic results obtained. German names were also sought after and promoted within the German agitation brigades.

The president of the C.J.O.M.N.G., Nikolaus Pilly, also pointed out some shortcomings in his interventions, for example the lack that is felt through the insufficient reflection, in the regional dailies "Drumul Socialismului" and "Flacăra Roșie", of the achievements of working people of German origin, with the mention that "If this were fixed, the number of subscriptions to these publications could increase"⁴⁷. This observation came back after a similar one, made in 1973, also at a Plenary of the county organization, had remained, it seems, without any effect⁴⁸.

⁴⁶Personal archive of Pilly Nikolaus, former president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara between 1968-1989.

⁴⁷Personal archive of Pilly Nikolaus, former president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara, Calan, December 19, 1978.

⁴⁸Pilly Nikolaus personal archive, Information regarding the mass educational activity carried out by the County Council of Workers of German Nationality in Hunedoara County, December 1973.



Neither the press nor the prints in the German language provided reason for satisfaction for the representatives of the German minority in Hunedoara County because they were in insufficient quantities and did not reach the rightful beneficiaries, the members of the community. Book stands in German were organized only in a few bookstores, and the libraries in Romos, Orăștie, Hunedoara, Călan and Batiz, where there was a German community, had an outdated book collection⁴⁹. This fact was also observed during the visit undertaken by six German-language writers, who did not find in the visited libraries any books written by them (sic!) and a very small number of subscriptions to newspapers and magazines⁵⁰.

In Hunedoara County, ethnic Germans were periodically summoned to meetings with Council representatives to be informed about political events in the Party's life. The aim was to "know the party's national policy and to root the conviction that the true homeland of the Saxons and Swabians is Romania and not Germany." Romania is the country where dozens of generations were born in the interval of more than 800 years since their settlement, as well as the landlers, csipcsers, steiers on the lands they still live on today⁵¹. In Hunedoara county there was no political education in German and no popular universities, however a plan was prepared in which these objectives would be achieved in the 1978/1979 school year.

The document "Combating the activity and propaganda of some malicious reactionary circles from other countries" advanced the idea that the German population in Romania never belonged to a German nation, that it always saw its mission to work alongside Romanians, Hungarians and other nationalities cohabitants, siblings, for freedom and justice and that they shed his blood for this land⁵². In this way, the attempt was made to disconnect the Transylvanian Germans from the German nation and keep them in the Romanian orbit. The unstated purpose was to discourage and temper the wave of emigration requests that the authorities had been facing in those years, in the name of family reunification, in capitalist Germany.

In Hunedoara county, workers of German origin were summoned and had to take a stand when, in the collectives where they worked, they were informed of the emigration requests of their conationals. The most effective were the the working people's council in the unit where the applicant worked because in this way, a kind of social public execution was done. This would subject him to a public shaming, warning him and the possible aspirants of the serious consequences of this approach. The applicant was presented, either as a naive victim of the propaganda of "malicious reactionary circles", as they were labeled in party documents, or, if he maintained his decision, as a dangerous, subversive element of society. In both cases, the issue came to the attention of the party, but also of its armed arm, the Directorate of State Security. The individual was isolated and placed in a social quarantine, in which he was only accessed institutionally, by the Party and the Security. They tried, in a first stage, to bring him back to the party line, possibly to recruit him by the D.S.S., through blackmail, threats, in order to collaborate. If not, he was socially isolated, fired from his job, and around him, informers were directed to constantly watch him, to find out, step by step, his intentions. In exchange for collaboration with the Security body, they were tempted with a friendly regime, let's say, through the opportunity to solve some administrative problems, even the urgent processing of the emigration file. If the character was a technical staff, he no longer had access to the information considered sensitive, or false ones were delivered to him, for the purpose of misleading him. In this way, D.S.S. he ensured that, once he arrived in the West, the emigrant would not transmit real

⁴⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁰ *Ibidem.*

⁵¹ Personal archive Pilly Nikolaus, Information on the practical application of the main issues arising from the Council Plenary of February 1971 in the light of the speech tov. Nicolae Ceaușescu at this plenary, p. 3.

⁵² Arhiva personală Pilly Nikolaus, fost președinte al C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara, Călan, 19 mai 1978.



information about the economic situation in the country to "foreign agents". The deportation of the future emigrant was not the end of one prison, but the beginning of another, because it exposed him to a blackmail that would follow him, from the shadows, all his life, even in the free world. In this way, he became a permanent asset of D.I.E., which would exploit him informatively whenever it has an interest in this regard. Domestically, he was to provide information about his compatriots, who have feelings hostile to the "democratic regime" in the S.S.R. or who would intend to emigrate.

From this point of view, returning to the role of the councils of working people of German origin, they, too, had to exercise a "determined action" at the workplace, in individual or collective discussions against emigration. Looking at the causes of emigration requests, it turned out that they are, as a rule, of a material nature, and hidden behind the request for family unification"⁵³.

3. Conclusions

The return from deportation to work in the Soviet Union of ethnic Germans was only the end of one collective trauma and the beginning of another, a long period of repression, which will span almost half a century. A politically complicated period, with small ups and long downs, which increased disillusionment with the nation-state they lived in after 1918, with a centrifugal effect that deepened Germans' distrust of their future in a country that pursued a policy of hostile against them. The nationalist policy of the last communist decades, the sharp drop in the standard of living, further away from that of the West, opened the way for the mass exodus⁵⁴.

The end of the war and the beginning of the hard years of Stalinism (1945-1953) brought to the Germans in Romania the exclusion from social life, the loss of the right to vote, the means of livelihood⁵⁵. It meant nationalization of property, exclusion of the church, nationalization of the school, deportation to the Soviet Union or forced labor camps inside the country. The years of relative openness (1960 - 1968 - 1971) were felt after the withdrawal of the Red Army troops from Romania. Potemkin-type settlements were being built, dummy structures with a democratic flavor, mass media, publishing houses, which in the context of the "thaw" in the U.S.S.R., the protests in Poznań (Poland) in 1956, the Hungarian Revolution in 1968 in Hungary and the Prague Spring, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, they stand as a surrogate for democracy. The year 1968 is the year of maximum openness, but in the same year a large-scale action of repression directed against the real and imaginary opponents of the regime takes place. It is the year of the lawsuits filed against intellectuals (Noica, Paleologu), and the censorship of Lucian Pintilie, with his film, *Reconstituirea*.

The years of neo-Stalinism or Romanian anti-Soviet Stalinism begin in 1971 with the Theses of July 1971 („Proposals for measures to improve the political-ideological activity of Marxist-Leninist education of Party members, of all people of work"), which included a 17-point program for ideologically and culturally-educational improvement of the level of citizens) and entered a more serious form after 1983, the year of the Mangalia Convention. Like Václav Havel's "vegetable seller"

⁵³ Personal archive of Pilly Nikolaus, former president of C.J.O.M.N.G. Hunedoara, Calan, May 19, 1978.

⁵⁴ Hannelore Baier, *Exodus statt Anpassung - das Versagen des Deutschen Antifaschistischen Komitees und des Rats der Werktätigen deutscher Nationalität, Abbrüche und aufbrüche. Die rumäniendeutschen nach zwei Weltkriegen*, Ed. Honterus, Sibiu, 2014, p. 144.

⁵⁵ If until the Second World War about 75% of the members of the German communities were farmers, following the expropriation of agricultural assets in 1945, it came to be that in the 50s, only 22% worked in agriculture, 86% no longer had independent activities, 57% to be workers. In the face of such uprooting, leaving for the country with which there was ethnic identification and where there was material well-being was preferred to the alternative of adaptation in a state perceived as hostile - Hannelore Baier, *Exodus statt Anpassung - das Versagen des Deutschen Antifaschistischen Komitees und des Rats der Werktätigen deutscher Nationalität, Abbrüche und aufbrüche. Die rumäniendeutschen nach zwei Weltkriegen*, Ed. Honterus, Sibiu, 2014, p. 145.



(from "The Power of the Powerless"⁵⁶), citizens were indifferent to the signature content of the propaganda ventilated in society. Their participation in social life was conditioned by a number of ritualistic, political gestures, which they could not refuse if they wish to be left alone. Verbally, it could be expressed as follows: I, (...), live here and I know what I have to do. I behave in the way that is expected of me. I can be trusted and I am beyond reproach. I am obedient and therefore entitled to be left alone. This message, of course, has a recipient: it is directed higher, to the superiors, and at the same time it is a shield that protects him from potential informers"⁵⁷.

The Germans in communist Romania accepted, to a certain extent, the *Zeitgeist*, the rules of the game, the ritual and appearances as part of the new political reality. Acceptance meant, at the same time, incorporating them into the system, passively perpetuating the regime. There were exceptions, of course. The members of the Aktionsgruppe Banat did not consider themselves dissidents in the proper sense of the term, rather, as Horst Schuller Anger put it⁵⁸, it was about a refusal of collaboration by young German writers from Banat. This is something else entirely. There was no „literature of the drawer”, because no criticism was written against the regime. The leaders of the German community in Romania, in the dictatorships crossed, from the royal one to the communist one, were always imposed, from top to bottom, never elected. Therefore, they did not enjoy much authority, and the impact on the community was still based on coercion and had a conjunctural effect. The purpose of attracting ethnic Germans to the political life of communist Romania was to convey to them, and then permanently remind them, where they live and, above all, what is expected of them. Activists from the stands of C.J.O.M.N.G. were showing the community, perhaps without suspecting it, "what they have to do if they don't want to be excluded, marginalized, fall, again, into isolation and risk losing their peace, tranquility and security"⁵⁹. The systematically repressive nature of communist policies, in a society left without „antibodies”, made the choice much easier. Adaptation meant tacit acceptance, but the alternative was, for ethnic Germans, to flee this lie and emigrate to Federal Germany.

⁵⁶ Essay published by Václav Havel in October 1978.

⁵⁷ Václav Havel, *The power of the Powerless*, October 1978, <https://havel.fiu.edu/about-us/publications-and-resources/the-power-of-the-powerless.pdf>, accessed 28.12.2022, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Horst Schuller Anger (b. 13 August 1940, Moșna, Sibiu - 2. 25 July 2021, Heidelberg, Germany) was the head of the department of German studies at Lucian Blaga University, in Sibiu.

⁵⁹ Václav Havel, *The power of Powerless*, octombrie 1978, p. 16, <https://havel.fiu.edu/about-us/publications-and-resources/the-power-of-the-powerless.pdf>, accesat în 28.12.2022.



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