

Dr. Hans Gehl

About the Future of the Banater Swabians

The existential question about the future of the Banater Swabians and therefore of the Glogowatzer compatriots gains more and more importance in the course of time with the dissociation of the great majority of the settlement area in Middle East Europe and with their scattering in the whole of Germany and in many other countries. What happens with their cultural inheritance after their integration in the host societies and above all after the extinction of the generation with personal experience, which happens in front of us today?

Integration after the Expulsion and Resettlement

The first years and decades in the new homeland—despite copious assistance of the host society—were linked with multifarious difficulties for all the resettled Banater Swabians. Yet their optimism and their irrepressible pioneering spirit helped them to take one hurdle after the other and to become full members of the country which received them. They sought and soon found a satisfactory job, were quite soon socially accepted on account of their knowledge of the German language, their mentality and their willingness to work and mutually lent a hand to build dwellings for themselves and to be able to move from the barracks to the security of their own homes.

The *late emigrants*, above all those from Romania, Russia and Kazakhstan, from the 1970s up to the present were accommodated in *transitional homes* of the federal government and after that of the states of the federal republic to which they were assigned. In this certainly cramped yet also quite comfortable accommodation one spent the first days until one received an assigned state-subsidized apartment or was able to rent an apartment himself or even build on his own with a government construction loan.

Three important prerequisites are part of integration: *language, work* and *dwelling*. These three indispensable pillars of social integration certainly have fundamental importance and priority but are not sufficient. Therefore, strengthening of self-confidence, the clarification of origin and of the historical background—also to become more easily recognized—and strengthening of the inherent cultural identity are also important for complete integration. A self-confident, unbroken relationship to one's own history and culture and the preservation of one's identity are important bases for a successful social integration. In order to be able to manage and maintain this so important foundation, initiatives for the preservation and cultivation of the culture are necessary. In the course of this, it concerns the "invisible baggage brought along," which means the formative memory of the lost home, which had a lasting effect on the attitude and reorientation of the exiles and emigrants. For the familiarization in the new, unfamiliar surroundings, the place of origin, in the broader sense the home of those affected, is of particular importance.

The relationship of the German exiles to their *new home* was determined by numerous factors. Of great importance is that the integration of the exiles took place during the West German economic upturn, which quickly brought financial and social security for those affected and lightened the dispossession of the past. At the same time, the exiles played a catalyst role in the process of the German economic miracle. Through statutory compensation like emergency relief, financial compensation for losses and federal exile law, the exiles gained a better material situation, which favorably influenced their acceptance by the German population. Already in the mid 1950s they began *building a house* (through mutual help of the compatriots), which led to acceptance or even to the envy of the locals, who initially derogatorily called them “Hungarian” or else “Hungarian Gypsies.” The emigrants from Romania feel the description as “Romanian” just as unjust. But the continued Swabian mentality of saving and cottage building let the people settle in for the first time in their own homes, to which holy pictures kept and brought along, sewn-up wall covers and the like contributed. The integration was fostered by children already educated in Germany and—even if more rarely—by native spouses.

The first two generations still maintain the connection with the home community by regular visits. There were also partnerships between German and Romanian communities set up. The avalanche-like resettlement of the Romanian-Germans after 1989 visibly reduced the connection with the home communities, provided not occasionally newly-formed economic relations are continued.

Recently, WALDEMAR MAYER reported about the history and present of the settlement Entre Rios set up in 1951 by Banater and Batschkaer Swabians in the “Banater Post.”¹ And PETER DIETMAR LEBER sought in 2005 traces in La Roque sur Pernes in South France of the Banater Swabians brought in 1948/49 by Johann Lamesfeld (*1909-†1981) from occupied Austria to France. Their fate was not as favorable as in Brazil so that most of the traces led into the village cemetery and consist of German grave inscriptions.²

Home as a Cult of Memory

With the much-discussed and diversely-interpreted concept of home, its meaning can be summarized more or less thus, *home* is:

- place lived or else experienced and created by people;
- experienced and survived time, thus memory;
- the place of work and occupation;
- communication, acquaintance, friendship and love.

¹ Cf. WALDEMAR MAYER: Bei unseren fernen Schwester und Brüdern. Eindrücke von einer Reise zur donauschwäbischen Siedlung Entre Rios in Brasilien (*With our distant brothers and sisters. Impressions of a trip to the Danube Swabian settlement Entre Rios in Brazil*). In: “Banater Post” vom 20.01. und vom 20.02.2006.

² Cf. PETER DIETMAR LEBER: Die Banater in Südfrankreich ein halbes Jahrhundert nach ihrer Ansiedlung (*The Banaters in South France a half century after their settlement*). In: “Banater Post,” 20.01.2005, S. 5; 20.03.05, S. 6; 2.04.05, S. 5; 20.04.05, S. 3 and 5.05.05, S.4.

Every individual must become clear himself about what home really means for him. For the Danube Swabians, home means history experienced together, the memory of which lives on in the collective memory of the group. The time of the *great Swabian migration* is frequently called into their memory because the knowledge of a common origin gives the members of the group a feeling of security inwards and of solidarity outwards. The community away from which they were torn—mostly a *village community*—is an important element to this day for the conception of home of the exiles because along with its customs, its way of life and hierarchy characterized the whole life of the village inhabitants. The approach to life acquired there also appears in Germany in the behavior of the exiles. The traditional community, on the one hand, gave a feeling of security: One belonged to the community and was able to count on its help in a pinch. On the other hand, this integration in a village community also led to a kind of captivity because one was able to free himself from the inherited background with its boundaries with difficulty.

After the Second World War, the traditional social and economic structures in the Banat and in the Sathmar region disappeared as a result of the total dispossession of the Germans, their deportation to the Soviet Union and the immigration of Romanian colonists from other regions. Nevertheless, many displaced people created an *idealized image* of home. Furthermore for the first and second generations of exiles, the family relationship also remained decisive in Germany, which is evident to this day from the organized *hometown meetings* of the former village inhabitants. The third generation, which no longer experienced the resettlement, shows less interest in it.

The *hometown rooms* of numerous Banater villages in Germany serve to cultivate the collective memory of the abandoned hometown. The displayed objects have a highly-emotional meaning for the group: They strengthen the memory and document the pride of the place of origin. According to HANS-WERNER RETTERATH, the smoothing of history and the cutting out of problematical aspects are part of the maintenance of this positive memory. As coming to terms with the past does not take place completely, so also the references to the new beginning and the discussion with the new home are only at the beginning. To be sure, the author admits that with hometown rooms museum documentation is not at the fore but self-stabilization of the respective group. The pride shown is actually a work of sorrow for getting over and preserving the past, as shows in the faithful models of the houses, churches and agricultural machinery in the hometown rooms, in the dolls dressed in traditional costume found in many households and also in the annual meetings of the former village.

Self Identification through Compatriot Connections

Also after decades, self-identification of the late emigrants is no easy job, but with all the difficulties it was not always a first-rate problem. It appeared that the integration of the exiles in Germany, Austria and other host countries cannot be separated from the value system brought along and their upbringing; this “invisible baggage” does not let itself be denied and stays around a long time.

The mentality passed on over generations had a special significance, but for the evolution of a new feeling of home the state of integration and with it above all the economic and social situation played a special role. The first and second generations with experience, despite a satisfactory financial situation, only rarely found their places in West German society and felt strange at the new place of residence a long time. The expulsion and resettlement was a breach in the life of every generation, in the course of which the younger people managed the tremendous rearrangement more easily, the older people with greater difficulty. The majority was never able truly to assimilate the loss of home because often there was no time for it, after all the success of the personal career had absolute priority. With it came age and the spiritual attitude to the events, which had entirely changed every course of life. The *internal* integration therefore lasted much longer for all the exiled and resettled Banater Swabians than the relatively uncomplicated economic and social integration and for many it is still not finally completed to this day.

The *compatriot associations* and *hometown associations* carry out an important aid to integration through the organization of meetings of the widely-scattered members, during which attention is drawn to the unity of the village groups often through speech, choir and dance presentations or kermis celebrations. Naturally, the Banater Swabians try to integrate the people around them into the social structure and join in various associations and cultural groups. The continuation of the tradition of choirs by the compatriot associations is remarkable, in connection with which the numerous Banater lay choirs were already able to hold their eighth *Federal Choir Meeting*. Aside from the Banater or Batschkaer Swabians, their new relatives and friends from Germany not rarely take part in it. The carnival society “Noris Banatoris” (old term for *Nürnberg* and word play on *Banat*) brought into being by the HOG (Heimatortsgemeinschaft, **Hometown Association**) Sanktanna in Nürnberg self-confidently calls itself “1. Banater Karnevalsgesellschaft—weltweit (1st **Banater Carnival Society—Worldwide**),” is a member in the Bund Deutscher Karneval e.V. (**Association of German Carnival regd. org.**) and in the Fastnacht-Verband-Franken (**Shrovetide Carnival Association**) and during their Shrovetide carnival functions started collective actions for the needy in the Banat. According to an assessment by Josef Lutz, the members of the carnival society “Noris Banatoris,” like most of the Banater Swabians and Franconians, achieve connection by “laptop and lederhosen” but also by “internet and cake,” thus the connection of tradition and progress through their activity. In this way, the cultural heritage of the home region is retained as a permanent component of the German and European culture.

Through generous donations of the resettled compatriots, food packages and medicines are distributed to needy people in all settlement areas in the old home, old peoples’ homes looked after together with Banater relief organization, German schools and cemeteries maintained, churches and monuments renovated. The many well-attended events through the entire year show the continued life of tradition and the piety of the people, of the local dialect and of family consciousness. These values handed down have secured the survival of

the German minority in the old home despite the multifarious attempts at assimilation of the new regime and are the basis of the cooperation of the resettled Danube Swabians with those left behind. They pass on the values and ideas handed down to the young generation.

Coping with History and Definition of Position

The question about the *future of the Banater Swabians* is already on the minds of those affected for generations, naturally strengthened since the expulsion and persecution after the Second World War, which turned the home in Romania into a foreign country to the Swabians. Reflections on this topic lead to the conclusion that the Banater Swabians as well as other exiled ethnic communities certainly will die out as individuals but not as a community, since they established new homes and families after the persecution and expulsion suffered, won a new home by industriousness, willingness to work and thrift and became valued citizens today in the new places of residence. Of course, their unmistakable roots lie in Southeast Europe and many traditions, ideas and values were retained and they are worth passing on.

That will succeed if the Banater Swabians adapt to the requirements of the information age and replace the former meeting places “Bank vor der Gassentür (**bench in front of the street door**)” and church square by telephone and e-mail. Optimistically, the assessments of representatives suit the generation with experience. The inheritance worth preservation of the Banater Swabians, which shows itself in their language and customs, in their cultural assets and their standard of living, will be carried on in the course of time less by organizations but nevertheless by village groups existing in the future and passed on to the children and grandchildren. The hometown meetings of the former village communities continued unchanged, their village monographs, illustrated books, family books and video recordings are a guarantee for the passing of and survival of the German cultural assets from Southeast Europe.

This realistic perspective is a chance for the compatriots scattered worldwide, whose new generation is liberal-minded and just gets ready, to find the way to each other via the new media. Already in 1996, there was a mailing list about Danube Swabian genealogy, with the main foci Banat and Batschka, on the Internet. Further discussions extended from the kermis up to grandmother’s *Hinglpaprikasch* (**dialect for paprika chicken**). A list of villages from the Banat and the Batschka formerly with a German population was drawn up jointly by three members of the Banat-List: Monika Ferrrier (Canada), Rick Heli (USA) and Franz Quint (Germany). The IdGL (Institut für donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde, **Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies**), Tübingen and the Arbeitskreis junger Banater Akademiker (BanatJa, **Study Group of Young Banater Academics**), the Arbeitskreis donauschwäbischer Familienforscher (**AKdFF, Study Group of Danube Swabian Genealogical Researchers**), but also the Donauschwäbische Klub (**Danube Swabian Club**) from Milwaukee and the Donauschwaben (**Danube Swabians**) from Chicago present themselves on the Internet. Here one finds a list of the books published

in America on the subject Donauschwaben,³ which was supposed to be extended worldwide; someone must only carry out the relevant investigations.

Partnerships between Banat-German hometown associations and the communities from their region of origin in Germany are forward-looking as for example the partnership between the Banater village Guttenbrunn (SE of Arad) and Fürth in the Odenwald (NE of Mannheim) or between the Alemannic village Saderlach (SW of Arad) and Görwihl in the Hotzenwald (SSE of Freiburg) prove. In the Südschwarzwälder Herrischreid (Herrischried of the South Black Forest, NW of Görwihl), a “Schicksalsweg der Banater Schwaben (Fateful Path of the Banater Swabians) was set up on the 2nd of September 2001. It consists of four stones, in front of the church, school, at the leisure time center and in front of the Ödlandkapelle (Wasteland Chapel), on which bronze plaques with inscriptions tell about the emigration, the construction and downfall of the German settlement and the return home of the descendants. A novel by Gerda von Kreis about the transfer of population from the Black Forest to the Banat,⁴ from which a dramatization was shown in Herrischried in summer 2002, also refers to this difficulty.

Admittedly, only ten years after the erection of the Saderlacher memorial stone in Görwihl (Black Forest) an “erosion of the feelings” already can be ascertained. Ten years before, the Saderlacher group, which emigrated from the Hotzenwald to the Banat in 1737 and in the meantime returned to the Alemannic region of origin, had resolved to meet every year on the first Saturday in September at the memorial stone in Görwihl. That also went well for a time, but on the 3rd of September 2005 just a dozen Altsaderlachers were at the pilgrimage to the Ödlandkapelle, because:

*(...) in the meantime a lot has changed; much of the euphoric mood no longer has remained. Ten years were enough to change our emotions visibly. This erosion and leveling out of the memory certainly is also part of forgetting and of getting on in the new world, which is less sentimental and less orientated towards the experience of the group. (...)*⁵

It comes out that groups of Banater emigrants pursue research on origin through their HOGs or even individually and now establish that a larger number of colonists of the 18th century come from a limited area in Germany. Thus, the HOG Sanktanna (NNE of Arad) established that many colonists come from the South-Franconian-speaking area of the Kraichgau (region SE of Heidelberg) and that similar dialectal characteristics, similar customs and behaviors appear here to this day.

Now a connection with the local organization Kraichgau was established

³ Cf. FRANZ QUINT: Das Internet und die Banater Schwaben (The Internet and the Danube Swabians). In: Banater Post Nr. 23/24 vom 10.12.1996, 5.

⁴ GERDA VON KREIS: Verein Enderlin. Wanderschaft und Heimkehr (Verena Enderlin. Travels and Homecoming). München 2000.

⁵ HANS BURGER: Erosion der Gefühle. 10 Jahre Saderlacher Mahmal in Görwihl (Erosion of the Feelings. 10 Years Saderlacher Memorial in Görwihl). In: “Banater Post” vom 5.10.2002, S. 11.

and a partnership with joint cultural functions and exhibitions planned for the future, which will lead to a closer cooperation between the local organization and the HOG Sanktanna and beyond this also with the German forum to the Banater community Sanktanna. This initiative of the HOG Sanktanna, which gets a lasting character through numerous meetings and joint activities, has a model character in any case. The discourses of a joint conference in Eppingen appeared in a remarkable booklet of 80 pages published in 2004 by the local organization Kraichgau and the HOG Sanktanna.⁶

Foreigners Write about the Germans

While no Banater Swabian has dealt with his entire story in a novel (taken from personal experiences), there is the Romanian novel “Lindenfeld” by IOAN T. MORAR (came out in Iași/Jassy in 2005), which lets the dead village in the Banater Bergland live on in a fiction and also includes the dispossession, deprivation of rights and the deportation of the Germans (to the Bărăgan Steppe and to the Soviet Union).

Lindenfeld (SSW of Caransebeș) is an abandoned Bohemian settlement at the foot of the Semenic Massif, which could be taken in possession of by itinerant herdsmen and summer vacationers. The last German living here, Paul Schwitzenbeck, was run over a few years before by an automobile in Karansebesch. Therefore, the short German history here (of only 170 years) came to an end, and that is symptomatic of so many Banater—partly deserted and fallen into ruin—villages. On the other hand, the emigration to the cities is already a universal European phenomenon for a century. And that it especially pulls people to the place of their childhood and youth again in a late phase of life is also notorious. These trains of thought offer themselves to an overall literary depiction, which a Banater Romanian has produced. It is remarkable that more and more far-sighted Romanians include the cultural achievements of the national minorities in the overall cultural heritage of the milieu which once was our home as well.

Werner Kremm published the review of the novel “Lindenfeld” rendered in extracts in the “Banater Zeitung” ([Banater Newspaper](#); weekly supplement of the ADZ [[Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung, Universal German Newspaper](#)]).

Ioan T Morar, a Bucharest journalist and lyricist who comes from the Banat, creates a fictitious village, in that he has the German-Bohemian village Lindenfeld, which has fallen into ruin, completely overhauled at the expense of the millionaire Klaus Bernath who comes from there on an idea of his biographer Otto von Romanoff. (...) Then the Temeswar German state theater together with director and engineers is recruited for the depiction of a reality-fiction in order to present the illusion of a lively village life to the aging Klaus during his visit. (...)

⁶ Vom Kraichgau nach Ungarn. Kraichgauer Katholiken wandern Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts nach Sanktanna bei Arad (Rumänien). ([From the Kraichgau to Hungary. Kraichgauer Catholics Migrate in the middle of the 18th century to Sanktanna near Arad \[Romania\]](#)). 2004.

*The book brings the world of the Banater Germans closer to the Romanians. (...)*⁷

At the moment, Werner Kremm is working on a German translation of the Banater historical novel.

Less well-known is the volume of Romanian prose “De o sută de ori Banat” (Hundred-fold Banat) by NICOLAE SÂRBU, director of the district library “Paul Iorgovici” in Reșița, which came out in 2003. As is well-known due to the peace treaty of Trianon (a palace in Versailles, France), two thirds of the Banat and Transylvania went in 1920 to Romania, which rejoiced over the enlargement of area (to “greater Romania”), but still see the Austrian-western character of the new areas as an alien element in their own easterly-orientated mental attitude. One thinks that the Romanian radical change of 1989 came from Temeswar, which still teaches German at its “West-Universität” and at the “Lenau-Gymnasium.” That constitutes the peculiarity of the Banat in Romania.

Germans live in the Banater plain and the Bergland to this day—even if they have become fewer; the German state theater of Temeswar still plays for them since 1956 and the 50-years’ existence of the German philology (university) chair is celebrated in 2006. From time immemorial, the German population has made an important contribution to the cultural history of the Banat. Therefore, it is nothing out of the ordinary that the author of the volume, NICOLAE SÂRBU, dedicates a separate chapter to his German fellow citizens who have accomplished something important and also have a part in the cultural development of the region from foreign countries. On pages 142-145, he reports about “Our Germans and Their Home” (also described as *heimat* in Romanian), and important subject which today not only stands for him, whose German wife, Helen, facilitates the reference to the German culture for him. For his district library, the author receives the works with reference to the Banat by the resettled Germans KARL TIRIER (Essen) and DR. HANS GEHL (Tübingen) through Mr. Ioniță. The writer GEORG HROMADKA was given the freedom of his home city Reșița post mortem. TIBOR LICHTFUSS brings out at his own cost an “Orawitzaer Zeitung” (Oravița, SSW of Reșița) for his compatriots in Innsbruck and ERWIN JOSEF ȚIGLA looks after the German library “Alexander Tietz” of the Bergland Germans and the Reșița series of lectures for grown-ups after the pattern of the popular German series of lectures of the Temeswar people’s university, which took place at the “Lenau-Gymnasium.”

The tri-language monthly publication “împreună, miteinander, együttesen” (“with one another” in Romanian, German and Hungarian), which is published by the Reșița Library with support of the Romanian Ministry for Inter-ethnic Relations and is very well received, is also remarkable.

How Will It Go On?

⁷ Werner Kremm: Die Fiktion von der Auferstehung (The Fiction of the Resurrection). In: Banater Zeitung (Wochenbeilage der ADZ) vom 13.08.2005, S. III.

Anyone who thinks about the future of the Danube Swabian community will discover pleasant and less pleasant developments. For the critical incorporation of history and of the cultural heritage, the transmission absolutely must pass over to the young generation so that they accept and continue this heritage. And for that, a lot of understanding, acceptance and knowledge of the German language belong in the first rank in order to attain access to the tradition.

In the Banat, in the Batschka and in Hungary, there was the tradition in the 20th century of the “Tauschkinder (**exchange children**),” i.e. children of Swabian farmers and craftsmen (mostly boys) who spent a year or longer in neighboring villages with friendly families to learn the Hungarian or else Serb language. Parallel to that, children of the host parents learned Swabian in the friendly German families. In multilingual areas, one was always compelled in the economic and social life to master several languages. In the course of this, the children received insights into the way of life and thinking of the neighbor people, which was very important for mutual understanding and acceptance.

Stays abroad of “exchange pupils” are sponsored every year by various organizations. In August 2005, the exchange year of the Romanian pupil Stefan Gencărau in Hilders bei Fulda (**NE of Frankfurt**) ended. The youth writes retrospectively:

(...) I have learned, from the experiences which I have had here, exactly what is so hard like receiving good marks in the report: to avoid conflicts without some help or if they arise to resolve. Most of all, however, I value the realization from the exchange year that all of us—no matter where we live in the world—are people. (...) International understanding is not first and foremost politics but getting to know, understanding and acceptance of the foreigner. (...)⁸

Documenting and Passing On Has the Highest Priority

Instead of stereotypically holding onto deteriorating structures (dwelling and culture houses, churches and burial places), what is only in the mind of the shrinking generation of experience, what can still be ascertained in the way of traditions about the way of life, culture and behavior of the forefathers in the area of settlement, would have to be recorded in word and picture by the knowledge carriers of the old generation. For after the generation of those affected, this information can only be drawn from the documentation started today or will be totally lost.

Although the time for it has almost expired, aside from some—improvement-worthy—volumes about the *Geschichte der Donauschwaben* (**History of the Danube Swabians**; JOSEF VOLKMAR and INGOMAR SENZ), the documentation series “Leidensweg der Deutschen im kommunistischen Jugoslawien” (**Path of Suffering of the Germans in the Communist Yugoslavia**; Arbeitskreis, 4 volumes, 1991-1995 and summary information about the “Verbrechen an den Deutschen in Jugoslawien [**Crimes Against the Germans in**

⁸ GENCĂRAU, STEFAN: Austauschschüler (**Exchange Pupil**). In: Allgemeinen Deutschen Zeitung für Rumänien (ADZ), vom 28.09.2005, S. 5.

[Yugoslavia] 1944-1948, 1998) as well as a Wörterbuchreihe (**Dictionary Series**; 4 volumes specialized term treasures, HANS GEHL) and a folklore (Donauschwäbische Lebensformen [**Danube Swabian Ways of Life**]; HANS GEHL) there hardly are representative synthesis works about history, economy, culture and folklore of the individual groups of Danube Swabians. The compatriot groups (before their forthcoming dissolution) hold paradoxical internal trench battles and are hardly capable of bundling up and purposefully using the forces for the accomplishment of the balance so important historico-culturally. The documentation volumes “Das Banat und die Banater Schwaben” (**The Banat and the Banater Swabians**; Church, School, Folklore, History in preparation) presents every village in a stereotypical manner full of repetitions instead of a synthesis of the entire region. Hardly anything useful, aside from information booklets, has come out about the Banater history.

For this reason, the idea arose to work out a *History of the Germans from Romania from 1945 up to Today* (Transylvanian, Saxon, Banater and Sathmarer Swabians who in the 20th century suffered a common fate in Romania and after that in Germany or else Austria). The editor is working on a collection of about 50 memory accounts and interviews of knowledge carriers, which are embedded in the suitable setting of an introduction by a competent historian. The topics: outcomes and results in the personal and social, cultural, economic and political field, difficulties and obstacles, necessary compromises and contact with them are considered. After the resettlement (with all the harassment and hindrances), problems of the professional, social and language integration as well as the acceptance of the years of work and of the job training as well as the documentation and transmission of the cultural heritage are added. An academic conference is supposed to prepare the planned synthesis volume.

Establishing the Connection to the Future

Conveying Information through Classical and Modern Media

Publications like “Banater Post” for the Banater Swabians and “Unsere Post (**Our Post**)” for the Germans from Hungary, magazines like “Das Donautal Magazin (**The Danube Valley Magazine**),” the “Donauschwaben-Zeitung (**Danube Swabians Newspaper**)” and the “Mitteilungsblatt der Donauschwaben (**Notification Paper of the Danube Swabians**)” report about functions and interests of the community scattered worldwide and also want to preserve the connection between the members of the hometown associations. The calendar books coming out annually also pursue the same purpose with reports, stories and other reading material.

More and more, Banater Swabians of the 3rd or 4th generations discover special features in the character and in the behavior, which are based on family traditions. Because of that, they begin to seek their roots and arrive at *family research*, at examination of special features in the way of speaking, in particular customs or in the eating habits. In this way, they seek the desired information and find it on the Internet or the homepage of a group of compatriots or else of a

hometown association or the Arbeitskreis donauschwäbischer Familienforscher (AKdFF), with which they establish a connection. Sometimes, they also arrive at academic institutions, also among them the IdGL in Tübingen or else the Johannes-Künzig-Institut in Freiburg, where they find information about the desired subject also, should the situation arise, advice for the collection of material and the writing of a doctoral dissertation or of a final examination work in the areas: history, economy, culture or folklore, in the reference library and in the archives.

Modern publications also serve coming to terms with the past. Descendants of Banater emigrants, on the search for traces, come across monographs on places which are out of print for a long time and no longer can be printed in a small edition at affordable prices. For this reason after a hundred years, emigrants to the USA after 1900, for example, brought out both the scanned German Heimatbuch (**hometown book**; by Dr. Hans Gehl), which contains 730 pages and came out in Germany in 1988, as well as its complete English translation, furthermore the German translation of the *Historia Domus* (the community's church history from 1765 to 1976) as well as other documents with regard to the native community and the American emigrants, on a CD for the young generation in the USA and in Germany. The connection between them is produced by a homepage and direct connection on the Internet but also by biennial meetings in Gersthofen/Augsburg of the HOG members.

Certainly, the care of our *churches, cemeteries*, memorials and ceremonies for victims left behind are an important part of the Danube Swabians' coping with history, which constitutes an important concern of the generation of experience. But how long still and, above all, can the following generation, with their different-natured desires and ideas, even be won over to it? And would not our native cultural assets have to be handed over to the contemporary inhabitants of this region so that they also are interested in their care and continuation? The costly restoration of the churches, for instance in the Banat, is carried out through contributions of the HOG only once for the most part, and occasionally village inhabitants left behind or other inhabitants can be won over for care of the cemetery through transfer of an annual compensation. But that is not a permanent solution and already more likely the idea is realized, in agreement with the contemporary cemetery administrations, to combine well-maintained gravestones (like in the Wojwodina [**an area N of the Danube, W of the Banat**] and the Batschka), lined by trees and bushes with crosses and benches for the visitors, with central cemeteries and to give up cemetery sections fallen into disrepair in the course of time.

The Banater reporter WERNER KREMM reported about a conference in the Donauschwäbische Zentralmuseum (**Danube Swabian Central Museum**) in Ulm, which was dedicated to the "Erhalt der Kulturlandschaft Banat (**Preservation of the Cultural Landscape Banat**).” Although Transylvanian-Saxon Kirchenburgen (**Church fortresses—in Transylvania protective walls were built around the churches, behind which people sought refuge**) because of their age are more likely to be classified a historical monument and worth preservation, which the successful Transylvanian initiative for the protection of historical monuments

shows (massively supported by Germany), there also are as many representative churches and other historic buildings in the Banater cultural heritage. But who is supposed to look after them and, above all, finance their care? KREMM concludes in his report about the conference:

*The chances of also enjoying the unique cultural landscape of the Banat intact in 50 years are not good. There are not too many initiatives for the preservation of the same after which model they should always have been orientated as well. Romania itself has too little money for it, UNESCO no inclination to include still more European cultural assets on its list of those worth preservation, for fifteen years the compatriot groups argue over the topic whether the native church, the chime of whose bells determined the daily rhythm in the old home, should be preserved or abandoned to decay. (...) The diocese of Temeswar, as the owner of the churches, has established a list of priorities for itself, what should be saved, when and why, but also feels totally underfinanced. (...) In the course of this, the responsibility for the cultural assets left behind would be transferred at least to the next generation. (...)*⁹

Presumably, one will also be able to proceed only with regard to the main point—like with the cemeteries—on this point, in order to stop for the long term the total decay of our cultural landscape.

The *Banater Kultur- und Dokumentationszentrum* (**Banater Culture and Documentation Center**) in Ulm organizes monthly talks about cultural topics of general interest and the *Donauschwäbische Zentralmuseum* in the same Danube Bastion of Ulm (**just east of the Adenauer Bridge from Neu-Ulm**) imparts information about the history and culture of the Danube Swabians and their previous guest peoples since its opening in 2001. Among others, the preview of programs January to March 2006 announces:

A discussion of the journalist Johann Steiner with the top handball player Hansi Schmidt, who comes from Billed. The film and theater actor Karóly Mécs (Budapest and Szekszárd, **Hungary**) speaks about German language literature in Hungary and the Martin Rill on the museum staff presents the cloisters of North Moldavia in an illustrated lecture. Culture expert Dr. Swantje Volkmann organizes talks, seminars and workshops for pupils and teachers in cooperation with the museum. The following displays of the museum can be borrowed by those interested free of charge:

- Danube Swabian Culture and History;
- Faith Turned into Stone—church architecture in the Banat in the 18th century;
- Romania—a European Cultural Landscape.

Hometown associations illustrate their achievements not only on CDs and DVDs either. The HOG Sanktanna, which has existed for 25 years, has constructed a touring exhibition with diagrams about cultural days, football (**soccer**) tournaments, pilgrimages, Freiburger (**Germany**) Singing Circle, Nürnberger Shrovetide carnival, May pole celebrations and other events, which are shown among local Sanktannaer groups, during the conference of the HOGs

⁹ ADZ vom 28.09.2005, S. 3.

in Frankenthal, and during the hometown day of the Banater Swabians in Ulm at Pentecost, after that in the Banater Culture and Documentation Center in Ulm, in the German schools and in the town hall of Sanktanna, in the Banat and in Eppingen, a center of the emigrants from the Kraichgau to Sanktanna. “Traditionen bewahren heißt die Flamme weitergeben (**Preserving traditions means passing on the flame**)” is regarded as the motto.

Seeking and Walking Mutual Paths

One starting point for getting over history is also the literary, which moreover conveys the tradition for the future. The STEFAN TEPPERT, born in Entre Rios and living in Germany, brought out in the year 1995 the first, in 2000 the second and in 2005 the third volume (H – J) of an *Anthologie donauschwäbischer Literatur nach 1945* (**Anthology of Danube Swabian Literature after 1945**) in the Oswald Hartmann publishing house in Sersheim (**NNW of Stuttgart**), which not so much esthetic as documentary value and records the cultural tradition of the Danube Swabians literarily. Aside from well-known authors with their own publications, casual writers and amateur authors also get a chance to speak, whose remembrance literature, nevertheless, offers informative insights into family life in the old home, into the popular culture in everyday life, into the customs and into the approaches to life of all groups of Danube Swabians and as unique documentation, a treasure trove is offered even a long time for interested ethnologists, folklorists, historians, students of regional and cultural studies and dialect researchers.

Recently, I received an interesting publication from Romania: *MELENTE NICA: Vladimirescu-Glogovăț – File de monografie. Editura “Viața arădeană” 2004, 180 S., ISBN 973-7972-40-6*. The title of these “monographic pages” makes one’s ears prick up: Aside from us, who still remembers the old place name “Glogowatz,” since the new immigrants only know the place name sign and the community name “Vladimirescu?” The author MELENTE NICA was a teacher of Romanian in Glogowatz and Arad. Aside from his educational work, MELENTE NICA also dealt with the history of the Arader area and elaborated the publication on hand with an extensive circle of people. In the foreword, the author writes his main concern is the presentation of the case for the uninterrupted Romanian presence in the Arader region along the course of the Marosch (**River**), and in the correction of foreign historiography, in which the indigenous Romanians often are ignored. Nevertheless, our German monograph of 1988 (GEHL, HANS: *Glogowatz im Arader Komitat; Glogowatz in the County of Arad*) is also adequately taken into account. Of course, traditional German street names are mutilated to incomprehensibility: nobody seems to understand them any more. According to 2002 statistics, among the 9817 citizens of today’s community Vladimirescu (with the village belonging to it) there are 5651 and only 222 Germans. In the year 1966 at any rate, they still were 4070, that is 69% of the village population.

And yet: in 2007 Romania will join the EU and also widen the connection with Germany. In the year 1992, a “Rumänisch-Deutsche Stiftung zur professionellen Ausbildung (**Romanian-German Foundation for Professional**

Education)” was founded in the community Vladimirescu/Glogowatz. Lessons in English and German languages also belong to the technical courses. The HOG (Heimatortsgemeinschaft; **hometown association**) Glogowatz therefore was supposed to investigate possibilities to organize joint informative and cultural activities with this foundation, with the local community administration and the schools. Just as the Romanian side examines and presents its community history, it would also have to be our concern not to let the long German tradition of our home community fall into oblivion but make known to the contemporary inhabitants of the community through as much cooperation and cultural exchange as possible. Only like that, will we succeed in preserving and passing on traces of our century long work in this part of Southeast Europe.

Where Are There Common Grounds?

It is urgently necessary to incorporate critically in monographs and record, for scholarship but also for Danube Swabian descendants, the *Danube Swabian cultural heritage* in all spheres: history, economy, language, folklore and culture. It is gratifying that our literary and cultural heritage many times is valued as a Hungarian and Romanian cultural heritage in *bilingual editions*, for example poems by PETER JUNG, which have come out bilingually in German and Romanian in his home city Hatzfeld (Jimbolia; **W of Temeswar**); similarly, a publication of the well-known Swabian painter STEFAN JÄGER. Or another example: In 1996, MICHAEL RITTER brought out his German and Hungarian Wuderscher (**German name of Budaörs**) folklore in Hungary, which bore the double title: “Ein Jahr in Budaörs (**One Year in Budaörs**) – Egy naptári év szokásdai Budaörson.” In this way, the connection between the resettled Hungarian-Germans and today’s inhabitants is established, who of course must continue the history and customs of the community.

The question also presents itself here whether today’s local Banater inhabitants will even see and carry on the *kermis festival* as well then if the German sponsors no longer are members of the kermis procession. In the 1970s and 1980s, the annual kermis celebration was seen as a festival of all the village inhabitants, who took part in it as organizers of the festival or as their guests at it. In some cases (like Sanktanna), the HOG organized a trip of the kermis young people from Germany to the Banat so that the Romanian and Hungarian young people are supported solidly.

Recently in the Romanian Banat, “multiethnic kermis festivals” take place. Under guidance of the Busiascher (**SSE of Temeswar**) local forum of the Germans, 44 couple dressed in traditional costume took part in the kermis procession in the small town, in the bouquet auction (**a tradition at kermis festivals**) and in the dance entertainment, Romanians and Hungarians next to Swabians, at the 131st Busiascher kermis festival, which a long time before became an occasion for celebrating together. Despite emigration and growing too old of the Germans, the festival began already on Thursday with a prayer at the ancestral cemetery and ended Sunday evening with a joint dance. The date of the feast actually is Mariä Namen (**Mary’s name**; September 12; **name of the**

parish church, the feast celebrates the end of the Turkish siege of Vienna 1683), but there is celebrating on the weekend after that. The Orthodox Romanians celebrate their kermis feast on the Sunday after the 8th of September. Then, the Swabians and Hungarians also join in and the Orthodox pastor blesses the Swabian kermis bouquet in the church.¹⁰

Journeys of resettled Hungarian-Germans to their region of origin were usual since the 1980s and were not hindered by the Hungarian government authorities. In Romania it was first possible without hindrance after the change of 1989 and in Serbia only for a few years. It appears as if journeys home of resettled Germans from Romania recently are even turning into a kind of fashionable phenomenon like the glut of jubilee and class year meetings of former pupils and students with their teachers for the exchange of memories and into a social get-together, about which the "Banater Post" reports for a few years in every edition with countless panoramic photos. The HOG Sanktanna travels, as a rule, with a group of couples dressed in tradition costume every year, at the end of July, to the kermis celebration in the home community. But also for other HOGs, visits home for more and more seniors turn into the unwritten challenge. Thanks to the longer life expectancy, inexpensive bus trips to the places of their memory always become more attractive for many sprightly and not fully occupied Banater Swabians.

Thus, a group of 24 seniors from Tschanad (Cenad, Romania; SE of Makó, Hungary) undertook a trip, from the 1st to the 6th of September 2005, to the Banat, during which donation goods for the Tschanader compatriots were also taken along. Because "people who had spent the greatest part of their lives in Tschanad are pulled again and again to the place where their cradle was," wrote Franz Kahles about the motivation of the 20-hour drive. Aside from several visits in the church and at the cemetery, there was a roundtrip through the neighboring villages Großsanktnikolaus, Nero, Marienfeld, Großkomlosch, Lunga, Gottlob and Lowrin, during which symptoms of decline but also some restorations and the forward-looking work of foreign investors were discovered. Thus, the memories were supplemented by new impressions from the present of the home region.¹¹

That is pleasant news which also reached us from other regions. Thus, Jorge Karl, president of the *Cooperativa Agraria* Entre Rios/Brazil, met with the national board of the LM (Landsmannschaft) of the Danube Swabians in Germany on the 2nd of August 2005 in Sindelfingen. Jorge Karl reported that a Danube Swabian-Brazilian cultural foundation was founded, which dedicates itself to the cultivation of the German culture handed down and of the customs of the Danube Swabians (coming from the Banat and the Batschka) and looks after 17 cultural groups. The ages of the active participants, from 4 to 73 years, ensure the continued life of the Danube Swabian culture in the settlement. Despite the pressure of the Portuguese national language in all the media, the dialect brought along is used further. In order to integrate themselves, the

¹⁰ Cf. "ADZ," Bukarest, in ihrer Monatsbeilage "Banater Zeitung" (Bucharest, in its monthly insert "Banater Newspaper") vom 21. September 2005.

¹¹ Cf. "Banater Post" Nr. 2, vom 20.01.2006, S. 11.

Banater and the Danube Swabian settlers have gotten to know the national culture in the 50-years' residence and faultlessly acquired the language of the host country. On the wish list are a German teacher (German remains 1st foreign language), also a music educationalist and a German Catholic priest. Exchange of pupils with schools in Germany and furthermore possibilities for practical professional training are promoted because those are investments for the future. Also, the worldwide cooperation of the Danube Swabians should be intensified, just like cooperation with the countries of origin is also striven for.¹²

The integration of millions of displaced persons in Germany was a great historic achievement. Their assimilation in Germany turned out not into a trouble spot but even into a stabilizing economic and political factor. This historic development must be well-known Europe wide and accepted as a model. The first signs about it are promising. The subject expulsion and "ethnic cleansing" for homogenous nation-states has newly revived after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. It also meets more and more understanding in the regions of origin of the Danube Swabians and is attacked in Germany also by the young people in the schools. The idea of reconciliation in the renovation of the picture of history is newly revived daily by the exiles and emigrants. The multiple visits in the homeland, the cultivation of old acquaintances and the forming of new connections prove that the history of expulsion is discussed in more and more detail in the homelands. These contacts are an essential contribution to a common history of Europe. The increased visit of Romanian, Hungarian and Serb young people in Germany is also important in order to get to know today's realities and thus grow into a common Europe.

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¹² Cf. "Der Donauschwabe. Mitteilungen (**The Danube Swabian. Announcements.**)" 51, Jg., Nr. 9/15.09.2005, S. 5.

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