

The Press of the German Ethnic Group in Romania

Case Study: *Schaffendes Volk*

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THE STUDY of the German minority in Romania between the years 1940 and 1944, when they were organized in a political organization called the German Ethnic Group in Romania (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien) has seen significant leaps and bounds in the last few decades. Researchers such as Johann Böhm,¹ Paul Milata,² Michael Kroner,³ and others from Germany, as well as Dumitru Şandru,⁴ Ottmar Traşcă,⁵ Florian Banu,⁶ Cristian Scarlat,⁷ etc. in Romania, have made contributions that changed the way the academic world approached the period 1940–1944. Their work not only included the propaganda of those years,⁸ but dove deep into its complexity, thus allowing for new approaches and ways of thinking. The Nazi leaders of the German Ethnic Group (GEG) understood the importance of propaganda, which is why they established the Office for Propaganda and Press (*Hauptamt Presse und Propaganda*), a name from which one deduces that propaganda was not envisaged without the press, the two terms having equal status.

Based on the few preserved archives, publications, memoirs and interviews with certain central figures (including journalists such as Hans Wolfram Hockl, Hans Hartl, and Alfred Hönig),⁹ we shall present the press of the GEG, and specifically the first Nazi newspaper in Romania—*Schaffendes Volk* (The Working People), a newspaper catering to the working class—as a case study. The present essay will cover technical details such as the context and the timing of the publication's establishment, its objectives, its editors and contributors, the target audience and its circulation. We will also analyze the journal's thematic structure, its treatment of propaganda and facts, and the way it reported on the wartime social and economic realities, as well as on the war itself.

Propaganda was one of the first concerns of the Nazis among the Romanian Germans. Much like their compatriots in the motherland, they also aspired to turn the Transylvanian Saxons, the Banat Swabians and other members of the German minority in Romania into Nazis, and to make them true believers in Hitler's worldview. This idea was not new, of course, as other enthusiasts of totalitarianism had had it before, their minds still twisted even after the end of the Nazi rule over the German minority in Romania. They all used propaganda, and the Nazi Germans used it as a sort of *passapartout*. They thought that through slogans, speeches, articles, calls for action, exposes, etc., they could convince people to perform often questionable economic tasks—especially after the country had joined the war effort—like supporting the Wehrmacht and donating to

the troops, supporting the families of those who had left for the front, volunteer for the SS, adopt Nazi slogans, and so forth. In this context, it was natural for the Nazi *fürherers* to pay the most attention to these means of attracting the population so they could win over hearts and minds, manipulate them into submission and thus consolidate their power and, ultimately, reach their expansionist goals. Consequently, they aimed to recruit as many agents of propaganda as they could, and the journalists were the frontrunners for the job.

In fact, this is exactly what the structure of the propaganda apparatus reveals. Seeing how important a role propaganda plays in any authoritarian regime, the GEG's Nazi leadership decided to include in its structure a central Office for Propaganda and Press, led by young Walter May,¹⁰ a close friend of the leader of the GEG, Andreas Schmidt, as well as the other prominent figures in the organization. In a report made to Berlin in 1943, Schmidt wrote that the Office for Propaganda and Press was established to lead the entire press, propaganda, cultural centers, ideological guidance and education, as well as supervise and manage local writers.¹¹ On all levels of the GEG organization, from top to bottom, there was a person in charge of propaganda and the press. The importance of the press in the Nazi takeover of the German leadership in Romania is demonstrated particularly well by an assembly in Timișoara held on 13 October 1940, a month after they seized power, when forty-seven editors and writers from German publications in Romania came together. Walter May gave his first directives and Andreas Schmidt announced the publications' new alignment (*Gleichschaltung*) and centralization.¹² The first step of this process was also announced in that assembly: the establishment of the Landesverband der Deutschen Presse (The Union of the German Press in Romania). Journalists who refused to join the new association essentially lost their jobs.¹³ Still, it took a few more months for the Nazis to completely take over the press, as they faced legal issues over the property rights of some joint stock companies and individual investors in some newspapers and magazines.¹⁴

The Office used various means of propaganda, including the latest tools, technologies and media, with a special emphasis on visual propaganda. Considering that literacy was high among the German minority, especially the Transylvanian Saxons, the press remained the main means of propaganda. Anyone who did not subscribe to Nazi ideology was removed from the newsrooms. Meanwhile in Bucharest, the GEG's Nazi Party's Press Office was established, tasked with providing news for the entire German press in Romania. The central office would supply the journalists with pre-approved stories, including instructions on how to comment on them, how long the articles should be and where to place them in the newspaper.

On 7 February 1941, all the journalists were called to Sibiu to receive training, where they were informed that they must fully submit to the Nazi leadership of the GEG. The journalists were also introduced to the new directives of the Office for Propaganda and Press regarding the new anti-Bolshevik campaign, which targeted different categories of the population: peasants (showing the horrendous results of collectivization), workers (describing the harsh working conditions, the hunger and lack of housing in the USSR), and priests, clergy and other religious people (presenting the communists' push for atheism, the destruction of churches, etc.).¹⁵

Another radical change was also introduced in the number of publications. The Sibiu-based daily paper *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt* (Transylvanian German Daily) and the Timișoara-based *Banater Deutsches Tageblatt* (Banat German Daily) had to merge, and on 16 March 1941 they formed the *Südostdeutsche Tageszeitung* (Southeast German Daily), with two separate editions for Transylvania and Banat. The editor in chief of the Transylvanian edition was Alfred Hönig, a long-time journalist at the *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt*, where he served as head of the financial section, director, and managing editor (from 1934).¹⁶ Josef Gaßner, former editor in chief of the *Banater Deutsche Zeitung* newspaper in the years 1927–1940, was appointed chief editor of the Banat edition.¹⁷ Johann Böhm estimated that the new newspaper was, at the time, the most important German news outlet in the East, “a kind of *Völkischer Beobachter* of the Southeast.”¹⁸ In 1942, the new daily had a circulation of 15,000 copies (both editions)¹⁹ and served as the official mouthpiece of the GEG’s Nazi leadership. This was the model for merging the other Transylvanian Saxon and Banat Swabian farmers’ publications, unified under the *Südostdeutsche Landpost* (Southeast Rural Post), with a circulation of 30,000 copies. The Saxon and Swabian educational papers were also merged and replaced in 1941 by *Der deutsche Lehrer* (The German Teacher). Similarly, a new monthly magazine was launched, named *Volk im Osten* (People of the East), published in Bucharest with Andreas Schmidt as its editor. He also served as the editor of the *Deutsche Forschung im Südosten* (German Research in the Southeast), the quarterly publication of the German Institute of Research in Sibiu (directed by Otto Folberth, reviewed by Gustav Gündisch), first published in 1942. *Der Parteigenosse* (Party Comrade) was published for the 30,000 party members and GEG officials, with a circulation of 4,000 copies, and *Der DJ-Führer* (German Youth Leader) for the youth. Still, in the years 1941–1944 more publications continued to appear, which by today’s standards would be described as specialist or niche: *Kirchliche Blätter* (Church weekly journal), *Der Arzt im Osten* (The Doctor in the East), *Mitteilungen aus dem Baron Brukenthalischen Museum* (Communications from the Baron Brukenthal Museum) all in Sibiu,²⁰ and *Mitteilungen des Burzenländer Sächsischen Museums* (Communications of the Saxon Museum of the Bârsa Region) in Brașov. We provide these specifics to demonstrate that not all local German press at the time was Nazi-dominated or solely Nazi propaganda. Of course, even these publications had to show their allegiance to the all-powerful leadership of the GEG. Although Andreas Schmidt was extremely proud of the press he had at his disposal, reporting to Berlin in 1942 that “the new press created by the GEG is shaping up to be a useful *political tool* [italics mine, V. C.],”²¹ the “new order” in the GEG press also provoked dissatisfaction expressed in a complaint sent to Berlin by veteran journalist Emil Neugeborn, an early-days Nazi enthusiast who was generally discontented with the team of inexperienced GEG *fürherers* assigned by Berlin.²²

From the very start, Walter May remarked that the press and propaganda in general did not have to confine itself to the written word, but should also make use of visuals, as he was aware of the powerful impact they had on the public. And indeed, although at the time printing images in the paper implied higher costs, during the war, GEG newspapers included numerous photographs and maps of military operations. Many special reporters (declared volunteers) like Hans Hartl, Otto Folberth, Dankwart Reissenberger, Rudolf

Ferch and many more were sent to report from the frontlines. We'd like to point out that thousands of copies of these newspapers were also sent to the soldiers at the front.

The main themes of GEG propaganda were the staples of Nazi Germany: the unity of Germans everywhere as well as of those in Romania, who were not allowed to be called Transylvanian Saxons or Banat Swabians anymore because the Nazis claimed all Germans in the world formed a closely united people; fighting bolshevism; antisemitism; disseminating Nazi ideology and fighting internationalism; justifying the German aggression and mocking the enemies of the Reich; supporting the front by any means; full commitment to supporting the war efforts in and after Stalingrad; volunteering for the SS; paying homage to Hitler and other leaders (on their birthday or on other occasions, publishing their speeches); justifying strategic retreats; etc. The dissemination of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* was also a main concern for the GEG's Nazi propaganda, as was supporting Aryanization, and the presentation of Nazi elite and members of the Action Squad (*Einsatzstaffel*) as the new nobility.

A TRUE PROTOTYPE of this GEG press that hasn't been previously studied is the periodical *Schaffendes Volk*, first published in Braşov on 25 December 1940 as a sixteen-page weekly, when the other German publications in Romania were not yet "aligned," still out of the total control of the GEG leadership. The paper had to cut down to eight pages starting from 1 January 1942 due to paper shortages.²³ The periodical had the subtitle "weekly paper of the German workers in Romania". It was the GEG's first publication printed as an organ of the Deutsche Arbeiterschaft in Rumänien (DAR) (German Labor in Romania) organization, headed by Fritz Cloos, an old comrade of the Deutsche Volkspartei in Rumänien (Party of the German People in Romania)²⁴ as well as by other people assigned by Schmidt, such as the weekly's managing editor, Rudolf Ferch.²⁵ At first he was against the National Renewal Movement of the Germans in Romania, but after peace was established between conservatives and the supporters of Nazism, he joined the latter and became one of A. Schmidt's closest allies.²⁶ As he successfully completed the mission assigned to him by the local Nazis, on 19 March 1942, Schmidt awarded him the title of honorary head of office.²⁷ Joseph Fuchs was appointed editor of the *Schaffendes Volk*.²⁸ The last to join the paper's editorial team in 1942 was Dr. Hans Marzell, who was to deal with the *Deutsche Arbeiterschaft* in Rumänien, the newspaper's economic and social sections. In February 1941, Fuchs defined the paper as a weekly for the working class, "in content and in form," aiming to strengthen the unity of Germans by paying special attention to the workers, who "did not really feel like a part of the community."²⁹ The next month he added that the newspaper was a digest of news and guidance written in clear language that the workers could understand, with the goal of instilling Hitler's worldview in their minds.³⁰ The weekly also attracted contributors from the German intellectual elite of the day, who realized the potential reach their pieces could have on the newspaper's platform. Among the writing staff were leading cultural figures like the writers Otto Alscher and Adolf Meschendörfer, professors and artists such as painter Hermann Morres, musician Emil Honigberger, architect Günther Franck, and even the former member of parliament and journalist Emil Neugeboren, and many more. These guest articles were accompanied by pieces written by GEG offi-

cials, and by heads of offices and local organizations. Even some Romanian writers like the Mediaș-based publicist George Togan and war correspondent A. Ghermann took part. Initially the paper was printed in gothic script, which was reserved to the German language, but gradually it was given up. The weekly was published on Sundays, on the workers' day off, when they had more time to read.

A big portion of the paper was dedicated to propaganda, editorials, GEG official announcements and communications or speeches by Hitler, Goebbels and other important figures in the Nazi hierarchy. This type of materials is specific to political periodicals, especially in totalitarian regimes, but they usually cannot be classified as worker-oriented, concerning working conditions, salaries, and standards of living. The most valuable pieces in the paper were war correspondence, reports of the devastating effects of the war, but these were mostly meant to highlight the bravery of the German troops, the victories, the misery of the liberated people of Ukraine, etc. A. Schmidt himself was famously sent to the front and even decorated for his action, but that was mostly in response to the German population's criticism that the Brașov *fuhrers* felt comfortable sending others to fight in their stead on the frontlines while keeping safely away from the battlefield. Even the editor in chief of *Schaffendes Volk* was sent to the front and even injured (his picture appeared in the newspaper); he sent several of his reports to the newsroom. Similarly, editor Fuchs was at the front, as attested from his signature on all his editorial pieces ("currently on the front lines").³¹ This was done, of course, to lend authenticity to the texts and to show the GEG's personal involvement in the war effort, just as it had asked of its audience. The paper also appealed to readers to send in their letters and articles, but such correspondence is very rare.

The newspaper, the first to be fully owned by the GEG, served as the main communication outlet for the organization until March 1941, when the *Südostdeutsche Tageszeitung* was established. *Schaffendes Volk* was financed by the GEG and distributed for free to all members of the DAR. As the organization kept growing, so did the circulation of the publication. And so, in February 1941 there were 15,000 registered members, in May of the same year the circulation was 27,000, and it grew to 47,000 by 1942.³² As a result, the paper grew to include two supplementary pages written especially for the GEG members: *Die Deutsche Mannschaft* (The German Team),³³ *Einsatzstaffel* (The Action Squad), *Frauenwerk* (Women's Action); for a time there was also a monthly supplement for soldiers, after 1 February 1942, and the *Wirtschaftsbeilage* (Business Supplement) was also added, *Wirtschaftsdienst: Mitteilungen des Wirtschaftsamt* (The Economic Service: Announcements from Economic Office). The latter substituted two previous weekly publications of the Wirtschaftsamt (Economy Office) containing useful information for traders, craftsmen, small business owners, and a little less for workers.

Created after the German model, the DAR fought the notion of a class struggle³⁴ and aimed to include almost anyone who performed a job—be it physical or intellectual, be they employer or worker—over whom the Nazi GEG Party wanted full control. The name of the newspaper reflected that: not *Arbeitendes Volk* (laboring people), but *Schaffendes Volk* (working people). According to the DAR, all people working in a specific field had the same goals. There was also a big emphasis on the unity of all Germans in the country, regardless of class, gender, or religion.

In the same line, a recurring theme in almost every issue was the unity of Germans from all over the world, with the Germans in Romania comprising merely a small part thereof. This was especially evident in the first edition's editorial by Rudolf Ferch, who associated the Christmas celebration with this statement:

a single candle burns in all homes: the candle of the unity of Germans all over the world. We have received the most beautiful Christmas gift we could have ever asked for . . . Although the enemies of the German people want to keep fighting, there is a belief that the only salvation is the führer. The legionary revolution has shaken the long hand of the Western plutocracies away from positions of leadership and put the Iron General Antonescu, a friend of the führer, at the head of this state. Codreanu's prophetic prediction that the Romanian people would join the Axis within forty-eight hours of the Legionary Movement's coming to power has come true. This is the road towards the light. The day the führer's victorious troops set foot on our lands, their hearts beating so hard that even the most adamant pessimist had to admit that this was truly Solstice Day, a changing of the times.³⁵

The article contains no small measure of cynicism and lies, but it is very well written in terms of Nazi propaganda. The author then moves on to other Nazi staples: the need to work hard, the importance of contributing to the ever-approaching victory, how lucky the German people are that they had Hitler to guide them. We can only imagine the readers' reactions, sitting down to a miserable Christmas dinner in their frozen house, which we found out about in other articles, because another frequent theme is the workers' harsh conditions, which the DAR claimed to want to fix. The very same first edition also contained a detailed report of the DAR's founding assembly in Reșița on 15 December 1940. The head of the organization, Fritz Cloos, considered that first edition to be the first step towards a "new social work organized by the GEG," and named *Schaffendes Volk* as the official mouthpiece of the DAR as well as "an instrument of war, guidance and clarity."³⁶ He also emphasized that the newspaper was the only publication dedicated to the German workforce in Romania, because the fragmentation that had existed in this field up until that moment also had to be eliminated (referring to the social-democratic leaflets in the German language). He affirmed that it took "hard work, discipline and sacrifice," because some people tend to forget about that in moments of happiness. "We, the German workers," he continued, "blindly believe in the ideas and the way of Adolf Hitler. Let us work and fight, in our turn, for the New Order in Europe!"³⁷ It was an uninspired choice of words on his part, as the people he addressed undoubtedly had other things to worry about in the dead of winter.

Schaffendes Volk had always dedicated entire pages and segments to the DAR, the "working front." Work was praised, the workers hailed as the builders of the "new world," as Nazism strived to be the first to ensure that the workers took their rightful place in the nation.³⁸ The GEG leaders set out to make workers "the führer's most faithful followers."³⁹ Alongside slogans such as *Blut und Boden* (Blood and soil) and *Segen der Scholle* (Blessing of the clod), the motto *Adel der Arbeit* (Noblesse of working) also made the rounds.⁴⁰ The paper published many more articles about areas with large concentrations of German industrial workers: the mountains of Banat (Bergland) and the Jiu Valley. Another topic explored in the newspaper is the workers' difficult living conditions,

but they were only brought up to highlight the DAR's interventions in raising wages and improving quality of life. Initially, these interventions only came to pass in factories that catered to the front lines. Then the GEG asked German employers in Romania to enforce a system of minimum wage for their employees, the majority of which were German.⁴¹ Other articles and pieces covered vocational schools where future craftsmen and workers learned their skills, encouraging many young people to follow in that professional direction.⁴² There was no lack of information on the Romanian legislation regarding salary regulations and other aspects pertaining to the workforce.⁴³

During the war, more and more women went to work because the men were conscripted to the military. The DAR even had a special section to organize the female workforce, and the paper dedicated entire pages and a monthly supplement to working women. Articles featured workplaces where women could be employed, like factories, hospitals (both civilian and on the frontlines),⁴⁴ and involved in supporting the war effort by gathering and sending warm clothes, hoses, gloves and holiday gifts for the soldiers.⁴⁵ The role of the German woman in Romania as a mother, to have as many children as possible like Adolf Hitler wanted,⁴⁶ was not forgotten either.

Another frequent subject was recruitment, calls to action, and employment (*Einsatz*) in the homeland front equated to fighting on the battlefield. Workers were often prompted to contribute to victory by increasing their efforts at work, but also through donations to help get through the winter; aiding field hospitals; making up for the labor shortage and working through rest days; helping farmers, who dwindled in numbers, with agricultural work—especially during the harvest, which was necessary to provide for the front. Since volunteering did not yield the expected results, A. Schmidt ordered compulsory “community service,” which involved a mere four weeks of field work for GEG members, but also mandatory participation for fourteen to sixteen year-olds, while girls were to provide childcare to farmers working in the fields in the summer.⁴⁷ The paper supported the campaign,⁴⁸ which neither youths nor adults agreed to. The newspaper also took care to politically educate the members of the DAR through several published materials—reports, editorials, comments, news segments—about the course of the war, especially towards the end of 1943, voicing the usual accusations against the UN for provoking the war, their imminent defeat, and praising the struggle of the German forces and their allies, announcing their inevitable victory. Antisemitism was also an integral part of wartime propaganda.⁴⁹ The newspaper's special war correspondents R. Ferch and J. Fuchs, but also others from the GEG, like Otto Folberth, Walter May, Fr. Cloos, and Walter Orendi, had contributed reports from the front that featured the heroism of the Romanian-German armed forces front and center. The main goal of this propaganda campaign was to secure the workers' devotion to the home front (*Heimatfront*), so they would continue to support the war effort.

Another ever present theme was the praise of the leaders—from Hitler, Göring, Goebbels, Robert Ley and others, all the way to local GEG leaders—Schmidt, Cloos, A. Rührig, etc. They were featured in numerous profile articles, and their speeches often made the front page.⁵⁰

However, the newspaper was not as focused on the workers and the other members of the DAR (craftsmen, merchants, civil servants) as it claimed, because having dozens of DAR activist assemblies listing the organization's so-called achievements cannot be

considered a serious approach to the problems that plagued the German workforce. *Schaffendes Volk* published several articles about public health, and even promoted a GEG campaign that encouraged the population to have a medical checkup, including an x-ray. Alas, this was a ploy to screen and recruit as many future “volunteers” for the SS as possible. Thus, the newspaper did its part in this campaign by not only helping to recruit 63,000 young Germans to the ranks of the SS, but also by praising their departure from Romania.⁵¹

Low on the paper’s list of priorities was the subject of culture. Of course, *Schaffendes Volk* reported on culture, since Nazi ideology viewed culture as an effective instrument of propaganda, and the GEG leadership tried to conform to this ideal as well. Sometimes the newspaper even dedicated an entire page to culture and entertainment.⁵² When the GEG founded its House of Culture on 8 November 1941, it was annexed to the Office for Propaganda and Press.⁵³ The GEG also instituted the *Kraft durch Freude* (Power through joy) initiative, which included a special section for “beauty in the workplace,” with the goal of educating the working masses on aesthetics and keeping a tidy and clean workstation. The newspaper reported on training sessions with local officials, and cultural events for workers like parties, theatrical performances, movies and concerts.⁵⁴ The cultural section of the paper featured the occasional poem about the war (which had no artistic value), but also short stories and fragments from longer literary works written by authors loyal to the regime, such as Otto Alscher, Karl von Möller, and lesser known writers.⁵⁵ The newspaper published aspects of the history of some sciences, historical articles, musical and theatrical chronicles, and coverage of some art exhibitions, such as the art of the Romanian Germans from Braşov, from December 1941, which then went on to tour the Third Reich.⁵⁶ Sometimes there would be informative articles about linguistics, for example about the origins of German names. Readers were encouraged to name their children Germanic names, as nationalism-socialism demanded.⁵⁷ Other times the newspaper featured prehistoric or racial studies or studies⁵⁸ about the presence of certain Germanic groups in Transylvania or the German colonization of Banat. It also presented the contents of the new issues of the *Deutsche Forschung im Südosten*, the publication of the GEG Institute of Research in Sibiu.⁵⁹ And of course, in an age dominated by the spirit of war, no publication would be complete without the famous words of heroic historical figures such as Stephan Ludwig Roth or Prince Eugene of Savoy.⁶⁰ To cultivate German national pride, the paper published a series of profile pieces about German aircraft manufacturers such as Junkers, Messerschmitt, Dornier, Focke Fieseler, and others.⁶¹

Articles about the political climate in Romania at the time were very scarce, even though there was an alliance between Romania and the Third Reich, and even though the armies of the two nations fought side by side on the eastern front. The rare references to Romania that did make it into the newspaper were usually there to sing the praises of General Ion Antonescu, the joint war efforts, some legal issues, and the mutual visits of Romanian and German ministers.⁶² Though published in Romania, *Schaffendes Volk* could have passed for a Reich newspaper.

Although costly, the paper printed lots of photographs, knowing full well that the impact visuals have in enthraling the hearts and minds of the masses is much greater than that of mere words. But as far as pictures of work life go, they were much rarer

than photographs from the frontlines or GEG assemblies, or portraits of the leaders. There were even caricatures, some drawn by the managing editor, Rudolf Ferch, who came up with antisemitic, anti-English characters and scenes, but also social issues (like business owners exploiting their workers, bad working conditions, etc.). Wary of the people's frustration with the war effort and the strain of work, the editors recognized the audience's need to wind down, relax and laugh, so they included articles about the "comradery evenings" held by some companies, and they published the occasional joke or anecdote.⁶³ At the same time, however, the paper also published the GEG's ban on dancing from 21 July 1941 for the entire duration of the war with the Soviet Union, in honor of their fallen German compatriots.⁶⁴

Conclusions

THE GEG's Nazi Party's propaganda in 1940–1944 was similar to that of the Reich in terms of structure, means and themes, but it is hard to judge its efficiency. It was not without its consequences, but alongside its persuasive means, it should be noted that it was not devoid of external political context—namely, the weaknesses of the Romanian state, which allowed the GEG's Nazi party to operate, as well as the repressive measures taken by the organization's Nazi leadership. Similar to the propaganda of the Third Reich, the GEG's propaganda machine had to keep in mind that it was operating in another country with which Germany needed to keep a good working relationship, and that Romania had an army in active combat alongside the Wehrmacht. More than once, Berlin had to restrain Andreas Schmidt, whose initiatives might have disturbed the peace with Romania, for example, his propaganda campaign against the Christian faith and Jesus Christ.

The press sat front and center in the GEG's propaganda effort. Much like in Germany, the newspaper's principles were dictated by the GEG's Nazi leadership. But the first periodical that stood entirely at their disposal was a new publication meant for workers under the *DAR*, the first edition of which appeared on Christmas Day 1940. Taking over the rest of the main German news outlets in Romania took a few more months after that. During that time, *Schaffendes Volk* fulfilled its mission of being the official mouthpiece of the GEG's Nazi leadership, hosting within its pages official communications from the GEG's organizations: *Deutsche Mannschaft*, *Einsatzstaffel*, *Frauenwerk*. Meanwhile, the paper sought to politically educate and guide its readers—workers, merchants, craftsmen, and other employees. Its editors and main contributors all followed the Reich's press model in terms of themes, news and commentary. *Schaffendes Volk* and the other newspapers were all well executed in terms of graphics and technical aspects. At *Schaffendes Volk*, for example, the managing editor Rudolf Ferch's training and vision as an artist had a visible impact. But overall, the entire GEG propaganda machine had all the characteristics of the totalitarian press, and its resemblance to the communist press, with its themes and methods of propaganda, is striking.



Notes

1. Johann Böhm, *Die Gleichschaltung der deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien und das 'Dritte Reich' 1941–1944* (Frankfurt a. M. etc.: Peter Lang, 2003); id., *Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945* (Frankfurt a. M. etc.: Peter Lang, 2006); id., *Einfluss des Nationalsozialismus auf die Presse der deutschen Volksgruppen in Rumänien, Ungarn und Jugoslawien: Zeitungsstrukturen und politische Schwerpunktsetzungen* (Frankfurt a. M. etc.: Peter Lang, 2016) etc.
2. Paul Milata, *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu: Rumäniendeutschen in der Waffen-SS* (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2007).
3. Michael Kroner, “Zur politischen Rolle der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien, 1940–1944,” in *Minderheit und Nationalstaat: Siebenbürgen seit dem ersten Weltkrieg*, edited by Harald Roth (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 133–162.
4. Dumitru Șandru, “Minoritarii germani din România în anii 1940–1944,” in *Itinerarii istoriografice: Profesorului Leonid Boicu la împlinirea vârstei de 65 de ani*, edited by Gabriel Bădărău (Iași: s.n. [Fundăția Academică “A. D. Xenopol”], 1996), 535–552; id., “Divergențe între Grupul Etnic German din România și Bisericile evanghelică și romano-catolică,” *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 8, 1–2 (2000): 43–55.
5. Ottmar Trașcă, “Etnicii germani din România în Wehrmacht și Waffen-SS, 1940–1944/Volksdeutsche aus Rumänien in der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS 1940–1944,” in *Sașii transilvăneni între statornicie și dezrădăcinare/Die Siebenbürger Sachsen zwischen Heimatstreue und Entwurzelung*, edited by Corneliu Gaiu and Valentin Orga (Bistrița: Accent, 2006), 127–211; id., “Constituirea Grupului Etnic German din România și relațiile cu Biserica evanghelică din Transilvania în primii ani ai ‘erei’ Andreas Schmidt, 1940–1942,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “A. D. Xenopol”* 48 (2011): 315–327; id., *Relațiile politice și militare româno-germane: Septembrie 1940–august 1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2013); id., “Grupul Etnic German din România în ‘era’ Schmidt: Septembrie 1940–august 1944,” in *Un veac frământat: Germanii din România după 1918*, edited by Ottmar Trașcă and Remus Gabriel Anghel (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, 2018), 113–148.
6. Florian Banu, “Grupul Etnic German din România—organizație de tip totalitar,” *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 9, 1–2 (2001): 24–37.
7. Cristian Scarlat, “Germanii din România (1940–1944),” in *Istoria românilor*, vol. 9, *România în anii 1940–1947*, edited by Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2008), 456–498.
8. Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 77–223; Mihai A. Panu, *Filiere și mecanisme de propagandă nazistă în Banat 1933–1945* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2014), 150–261, etc.
9. Hans Hartl, *Das Schicksal des Deutschtums in Rumänien (1933–1945–1953)* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1958); Hans Wolfram Hockl, *Offene Karten: Dokumente zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Rumänien 1930–1980* (Linz: self-published, 1980); Alfred Hönig, *Zwischen Mächten und Dogmen: Odyssee eines siebenbürgischen Journalisten* (St. Michael: J. G. Bläschke Verlag, 1984).
10. Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 175–186.

11. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (Central National Historical Archives of Romania) (hereafter cited as ANIC), GDR Microfilms coll., role 9, frame 382, "Raport asupra activității situației GEG din România de la 1 iulie 1942 până la 1 septembrie 1943."
12. The portraits of those two leaders are presented in Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 161–186.
13. *Kronstädter Zeitung* 104, 237 (17 October 1940); Hartl, 58; Böhm, *Einfluss des Nationalsozialismus*, 87–90.
14. Even in the case of the main Transylvanian Saxon daily newspaper, *Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt* (Sibiu), they came across the same problem. Hans Otto Roth, the democratic political leader of the German minority in Romania, was one of the main investors in the newspaper. He had sold his shares to a Berlin agency whose owner was close to Hitler. Hönig, 132–135, 151–152.
15. Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 175.
16. Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 77–89; Elena Dunăreanu and Mircea Avram, *Presa sibiană în limba germană (1778–1970)* (Sibiu: Biblioteca Astra, 1971), 53.
17. Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Donauschwaben 1868–1948: Ihre Rolle im rumänischen und serbischen Banat* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 206.
18. Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen*, 77, note 1.
19. Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuții la cunoașterea istoriei sașilor transilvăneni 1918–1944* (Sibiu: hora, 2001), 346.
20. See Dunăreanu and Avram, 15, 34, 39.
21. ANIC, GDR Microfilms coll., role 9, frames 355–356, Report of A. Schmidt from 1942.
22. National Archives of Romania, Sibiu Branch (hereafter cited as SJSAN), Brukenthal Collection of Documents, Z1-7, no. 31, Memoriul lui Emil Neugeboren, fols. 24–25.
23. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 1 (1 January 1942): 2.
24. Ciobanu, 185–200.
25. Rudolf Ferch (1898–1945) studied at the Art Academy in Dresden and Berlin, where his work was featured in group exhibitions. He collaborated with the Banat newspaper *Torontaler Nachrichten* (News from Torontal) and was the editor of another periodical, *Banater Wochenspiegel* (Weekly Banat Mirror). His artworks appeared in interwar newspapers and magazines. Two of his brothers were also painters, the best known being his younger brother, two years his junior, Franz Ferch.
26. Anton Peter Petri, *Biographisches Lexikon des Banater Deutschtums* (Marquartstein: Breits, 1992), 445–446.
27. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 13 (29 March 1942): 2.
28. Petri, 500–501. Fuchs had studied physics and mathematics in Cluj and Münster, then taught at a secondary school while also collaborating with several newspapers in Banat. He had probably been drawn to Nazism when he studied in Germany (1933–1935).
29. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 4–5 (2 February 1941): 1.
30. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 13 (30 March 1941): 4.
31. Joseph Fuchs, "Begegnung in der Steppe," *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 6 (8 February 1942): 10.
32. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 8 (23 February 1941): 4; 2, 21 (25 May 1941): 8; Panu, 115.
33. Hans Hartl, an experienced journalist, was credited as editor of the first issues of this supplement; the next issues did not have a credited editor.

34. Böhm, *Die Gleichschaltung*, 66–68.
35. *Schaffendes Volk* 1, 1 (25 December 1940): 1.
36. “Zu neue Arbeit!,” *Schaffendes Volk* 1, 1 (25 December 1940): 2.
37. “Zu neue Arbeit!,” 2.
38. Otto Ließ, “Der deutsche Arbeiter baut die neue Welt,” *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 38 (21 September 1941): 1.
39. Ließ, 1.
40. Ließ, 1.
41. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 49 (7 December 1941): 6; 2, 50 (14 December 1941): 5–6, 11.
42. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 5 (1 February 1942): 5.
43. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 18 (4 May 1941): 1.
44. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 24 (15 June 1941): 7.
45. See the supplements: “Die werktätige Frau,” *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 22 (31 May 1942): 6 or “Frau im Volk,” *Schaffendes Volk* 4, 27 (4 July 1943): 5.
46. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 19 (11 May 1941): 8; 2, 20 (18 May 1941): 9.
47. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 23 (7 June 1942): 9.
48. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 24 (15 June 1941): 1.
49. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 26 (29 June 1941): 1–7; 2, 28 (13 July 1941): 1–5; 2, 30 (27 July 1941): 1, 6; 2, 51–52 (25 December 1941): 1, etc.
50. See, for example, *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 40 (5 October 1941): 3 (Himmler); 2, 42 (19 October 1941): 1 (Werner Lorenz, Karl von Möller); 2, 51–52 (25 December 1941): 3 (A. Schmidt, Ribbentrop) etc.
51. For a general overview of the recruitment process and its results, see Milata.
52. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 45 (9 November 1941): 10.
53. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 46 (16 November 1941): 2, 5.
54. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 18 (3 May 1942): 4.
55. *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 19 (10 May 1942): 10.
56. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 48 (30 November 1941): 10. For the Gudrun-Liane Ittu exhibition, see *Artiști plastici germani din România: Între tradiție și compromis ideologic: Anii 1930–1944* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2011), 64–68. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 48 (30 November 1941): 10.
57. Anton Valentin, “Deutsche Rufnamen: Eine zeitgemäÙige Forderung,” *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 5 (1 February 1942): 12.
58. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 45 (9 November 1941): 2.
59. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 45 (9 November 1941): 8, 3; 3, 19 (10 May 1942): 10, 4; 4, 27 (4 July 1943): 11.
60. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 19 (11 May 1941): 9–10; 2, 41 (12 October 1941): 6.
61. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 33 (17 August 1941): 10; 2, 34 (24 August 1941): 10; 2, 35 (32 August 1941): 10; 2, 36 (7 September 1941): 10.
62. See, for example, *Schaffendes Volk* 3, 19 (10 May 1942): 5; 5, 13 (26 March 1944): 5, etc.
63. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 41 (12 October 1941): 12; 2, 50 (14 December 1941): 8; 2, 51–52 (25 December 1941): 5, 3; 3, 1 (7 January 1942): 3.
64. *Schaffendes Volk* 2, 26 (29 June 1941): 2, 5; 2, 30 (27 July 1941): 2, etc.

Abstract

The Press of the German Ethnic Group in Romania Case Study: *Schaffendes Volk*

The leaders of the German Ethnic Group in Romania, installed in power in September 1940, used the press as a main tool for propaganda. They founded, in December 1940, the weekly publication of the German Workers' Organization in Romania, called *Schaffendes Volk* (The Working People). This was the mouthpiece of the leadership of the German Ethnic Group until the subordination of the entire press, in March 1941, and it had to convince workers to align themselves with the politics of Nazism. The paper analyzes the themes covered in the newspaper and its place in the Nazi propaganda among the Germans in Romania in the years 1940–1944.

Keywords

Nazism, propaganda, weekly newspaper, workers