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## Swimming against Rip Currents. Paul Philippi and the Migration of the Romanian Germans in the Postwar Era (1950 – 1960)

**Zusammenfassung:** Der Beitrag versucht, die Auswanderung der Rumäniendeutschen nach Deutschland neu zu bewerten. Auf der Grundlage unterschiedlicher Dokumente, die von der Securitate erstellt oder gesammelt wurden, soll dem komplexen Bild der Migration eine neue Perspektive hinzugefügt werden. Diese resultiert aus einem transnationalen Blick auf die rumäniendeutschen Gemeinschaften in der BRD und in Rumänien. Unterschiedliche Visionen über die Zukunft der Deutschen in Rumänien standen dabei in einem Konflikt: zum einen die der Aussiedlung in die BRD, die von den Landsmannschaften der Siebenbürger Sachsen und Donauschwaben in Westdeutschland vertreten wurde; zum anderen die des Verbleibs der Rumäniendeutschen in Rumänien, die Paul Philippi formulierte. Philippi lag damit auf einer Linie mit der Position, die innerhalb der deutsch-lutherischen Kirche in Rumänien von Bischof Friedrich Müller und von einem Netzwerk deutscher Intellektueller in Deutschland und Rumänien propagiert wurde.

**Schlagwörter:** Rumäniendeutsche Migration; Landsmannschaften; Paul Philippi; Evangelische Kirche Augsburgischen Bekenntnisses (A. B.); Securitate

**Abstract:** In this article I seek to reassess the process of the migration of Romanian Germans into Germany. Based on various types of documents, generated or managed by the specialized structures of the former Securitate, I will try to add a new perspective to the complex picture of migration, one derived from the birth in the German community of the FRG, but also from Romania, in a transnational perspective. There was a conflict between two visions related to the future of the Germans in Romania: the one view, propagated by the organizations called *Landsmannschaften* of the Saxons and Swabians from West Germany, who initiated, pressed, stimulated and maintained the whole process of trans- or relocation; and the other one, formulated and argued by Paul Philippi with a policy formed inside the German-Lutheran Church in Romania by Bishop Friedrich Müller and developed by a network of German intellectuals in Germany and Romania, who wanted the Germans to stay in Romania.

**Keywords:** Romanian Germans migration; *Landsmannschaften*; Paul Philippi; German Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession; Securitate

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## Introduction

In a short telegram sent from the Hotel “Imperial” in Vienna, on 6 October 1961, Henry Jakober (1900 – 1975), the architect and principal proponent of the backchannel organized for the emigration of Jews from Romania, announced to his partners from the Romanian Securitate:<sup>1</sup>

“Signed agreement Munich for five hundred clauses as authorized Bucharest delivery November. Must have all outstanding clauses numbers and delivery completed fifteens October, otherwise cannot fulfill payments as agreed. Departing London, cable Park Lane”.<sup>2</sup>

This prosaic and brief notice was the beginning of an exciting and long story, one in which the previous flux of migration of the members of the Jewish community,<sup>3</sup> mediated by Jakober, was doubled by a new one in which Germans were at the forefront. This episode was not entirely successful despite Heinrich Zillich (1898 – 1988), the leader of the *Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, and Peter Ludwig (1908 – 2001), from the *Landsmannschaft der Banater Schwaben*, putting pressure on officials; they did not succeed in obtaining financial and political support for this operation, including from German Federal Institutions.<sup>4</sup> This situation is significant, because it opened a back door channel for the migration of the German minority from Romania.<sup>5</sup>

It is not my intention to discuss the substance of this process and the first waves of migration of Romanian Germans.<sup>6</sup> Nor will I cover the formal and informal chan-

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**2** Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, București (ACNSAS) [Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Bucharest]. OVS 2871. Vol. 4, 350. Romanian adapted translation of the Securitate was: “I sign the agreement with Munich for 500 persons, as I promised in Bucharest. I need all the numbers of passports and the majority of them out of Romania since 15 October; otherwise, I cannot proceed to pay as we agreed. I leave for London” (ibid., 349).

**3** Cf. Ioanid, Radu: *The Ransom of the Jews. The Story of the Extraordinary Secret Bargain between Romania and Israel*. Lanham 2021.

**4** Peter Ludwig paid for the family of his brother from his own money in order to find out whether the channel was functional, hoping that he would be reimbursed at a later date. Cf. Florian, Claudiu Mihail: *Originea unui proces istoric: “vânzarea/cumpărarea” de etnici germani din România. Un prim episod* [Origins of a Historical Process: “Selling and Buying” of the Romanian Germans. The first episode]. In: Trașcă, Ottmar; Anghel, Remus Gabriel (Ed.): *Un veac frământat. Germanii din România după 1918* [A Tormented Century. Germans in Romania after 1918]. Cluj-Napoca 2018, 290 – 307, here 297.

**5** Ibid.

**6** Cf. Anghel, Remus Gabriel; Gheorghiu, Laura: *The Mass Migration of the Romania’s Germans. Patterns, Timeframes and Romanian-German Inter-Institutional Agreements in the 20th Century*. In: *The Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics* 15/29 – 30 (2020), 25 – 46.

nels used to obtain the cooperation of the Romanian authorities in permitting the reunification of families.<sup>7</sup> Instead, beginning with this telegram, I will seek to discuss the complexity of this process which involved multiple structures and actors: different political state authorities from Romania and Germany, international organizations with local and national branches (i. e. the Red Cross), non-state organizations from both states (national or religious associations) and individuals who played their political, cultural, commercial, juridical or diplomatic roles.<sup>8</sup>

The emigration of Germans from socialist Romania has become of historiographical interest in recent years. Revelations from diplomatic sources, the secret services, or the memories of those who passed over from Romania has rekindled passions, traumas, and memories from another world. Because of this it is a complicated subject that is still rather nebulous.<sup>9</sup>

This article emphasizes how this process evolved in the 1950s and will pay attention to two distinct dimensions of the development of the post-war emigration of Germans from Romania. Based on various types of documents, generated or managed by the specialized structures of the former Securitate (External Directorate I, Berlin and Bonn residences, Directorate II, Stalin [Braşov] Security Regions etc.), I will try to add a new perspective to the complex picture of emigration; one derived from its birth in the German community of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), but also from Romania, in a transnational perspective.<sup>10</sup> This view will be concentrated on the conflict between two visions related to the future of the Germans in Romania: the salvationist view, propagated by the organizations called *Landsmannschaften* of the Saxons and Swabians from West Germany, who initiated, pressed, stimulated, and

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7 In recent years many new documents and histories have appeared in relation to this subject. The most valuable studies are: “Kauf von Freiheit”. Heinz-Günther Hüsich im Interview mit Hannelore Baier und Ernst Meinhardt. Hermannstadt 2013; Florian, Originea unui proces istoric (cf. n. 4); Dobre, Florica; Banu, Florian; Banu, Luminița; Stancu, Laura (Ed.): Acțiunea “Recuperarea”. Securitatea și emigrarea germanilor din România (1962–1989) [Operation Extraction. The Romanian Securitate and the emigration of Germans from Romania (1962–1989)]. Bucureşti 2011.

8 The main interest of the mediator Harry Jakober was a commercial one; activities intermediated by the German negotiators (Stuttgart lawyer Ewald Garlepp, 1962–1968, and Neuss lawyer Heinz Gunter Hüsich, 1968–the 1980s) were connected with various German institutions and policies. Commercial and political interests were also prevalent in the case of Romania’s negotiators (usually Securitate officers).

9 See an evaluation of the literature on the subject in: Beer, Mathias: Emigrarea minorităților germane din România. Premise, Proces, Consecințe [The Emigration of German Minorities from Romania after 1945. Prerequisites, Process, Consequences]. In: Idem; Radu, Sorin; Kühner-Wielach, Florian (Ed.): Germanii din România. Migrație și patrimoniu cultural după 1945 [Germans from Romania. Migration and Cultural Patrimony]. Bucureşti 2019, 23–46.

10 Discussing migration from a transnational perspective is helpful in the existence of cross-border networks that are permeable. The people who migrated tried to maintain their familial, economic, religious, political, or social relations in the country from which they moved. They made diasporic-roots tourism and connected with their relatives; and they delivered goods and other benefits to their former co-nationals.

maintained the whole process of trans- or relocation; and the progressive one, formulated and argued by Paul Philippi (1923–2018) with a policy formed inside the German-Lutheran Church in Romania by Bishop Friedrich Müller (1884–1969) and developed by a network of German intellectuals in Germany and Romania during the period under discussion.

The theologian and historian Paul Philippi was an exceptional character and a great personality and will be at the center of my analysis. It will only be a partial biographical history because I will limit myself to the first part of his career, in other words his cultural and political activities concerning the issue of Romanian Germans emigration in the first two postwar decades.<sup>11</sup> But it will also be a collective approach since the members of the Philippi family had a long tradition of fighting against extreme positions expressed by the new ideological elites and other national socialist groups that became the prominent advocates of the migration of the Germans to Germany. Here I will look at a network of personalities that were closely connected to Paul Philippi: the charismatic leader of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, Friedrich Müller, the Bishop who ordained him as a priest in Vienna in 1955, and influenced his historical and theologian vision; as well as the well-known writer Erwin Wittstock (1899–1962) who was related to Paul Philippi through his brother Kurt Philippi.<sup>12</sup> There were, in addition, a number of other intellectuals that retained relationships with him following his visit to Romania in 1958. His interactions with Romanian institutions – with their representatives from the academic, diplomatic, or secret services milieus – were interesting because he was perceived in the fifties as an enemy. However, by the beginning of the sixties he was seen as someone who was against emigration into Germany and had an acceptable position in relation to the Romanian state.

I will also discuss his biography in the context of recent literature dedicated to the migration of the Germans in the postwar era with a transnational perspective.<sup>13</sup>

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**11** I was inspired, at the epistemological level, by the approach of Harders, Levke: *Migration und Biographie. Mobile Leben beschreiben*. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 29/3 (2018), 17–36. In her view, influenced by the theoretical debates on biography, migration history, and collective biography, a transnational approach, a dynamic perspective on what she called migrant biographies, can combine macro and micro-levels to analyze the agency of people in motion and entanglements with local, regional, national contexts.

**12** Here is a connection with the Saxon elite from Braşov (Kronstadt). Margarete Depner (1885–1970), as the daughter of Wilhelm Scherg (1855–1930), the owner of the most important Factory of textile materials in Transylvania – was married to Wilhelm Depner (1873–1950), surgeon and later owner of a well-known Sanatorium and Hospital in Braşov. They had three children, two girls, and a boy. The first girl, Thea (1911–1985), a doctor, became the second wife of the author Erwin Wittstock, and the second, Maja (1914–1993), a well-established historian, married Kurt Philippi, the middle brother of the Philippi family. In the thirties, the Depner family was in the first line of resistance against the Nazification of the German community in Braşov. Wilhelm Depner was the leader of the conservative Saxon elite in the county of Braşov 1919–1935 and 1936–1939.

**13** Cf. the discussion on ‘transnational Germans’ in Koranyi, James: *Migrating Memories. Romanian Germans in Modern Europe*. Cambridge 2021, 63–114.

I use the triadic construction proposed by Rogers Brubaker which encompasses three intertwined political milieus (nationalizing states, national minorities, and external homelands).<sup>14</sup> Various organizations, movements, and political entrepreneurs interact within these political camps. In the last decade, this theoretical model was enhanced by several researchers engaged in fieldwork on the story of German migration from Romania. First, James Koranyi and Ruth Wittlinger uphold the idea that the evolution of the Transylvanian Saxons in the 20th century led to a situation in which home is “never the actual homeland but the other, external and imagined homeland”.<sup>15</sup> In addition to this nostalgic perspective, Cristian Cercel, in 2017, advanced a new framework when looking to the fate of Romanian Germans in the post-war era. It extends Brubaker’s triadic nexus into a quadratic one, introducing another field: the organizations of the Romanian Germans in the FRG.<sup>16</sup>

With these historiographical and methodological prerequisites, I seek to explain the role played by Paul Philippi in all four of these milieus. He was active in all of them, trying to balance the predominant policy oriented toward the emigration of Germans from their country of origin to Germany.

## Romanian Germans and their organizations in Germany

Germans that emigrated from Romania after the war took their disputes with them, including the one regarding the Nazi past.<sup>17</sup> Inside the *Landsmannschaften*, for instance, different positions toward emigration of Germans from the beginning of the 1950s were discussed.<sup>18</sup> This was something of a generational conflict as well as the vision of the two representative groups of Germans which originated from Romania and migrated to Germany after the Second World War.<sup>19</sup> These Romanian Ger-

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**14** Cf. Brubaker, Rogers: *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge 1996, 55–76.

**15** Koranyi, James; Wittlinger, Ruth: *From Diaspora to Diaspora. The Case of Transylvanian Saxons in Romania and Germany*. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 17/1 (2011), 96–115, here 111.

**16** Cf. Cercel, Cristian: *Postwar (West) German–Romanian Relations: Expanding Brubaker’s Analytic Triad*. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 23/3 (2017), 297–317.

**17** This continued into the 1980s. See Koranyi, James: *Nazi Divisions. A Romanian-German ‘Historians’ Dispute’ at the End of the Cold War*. In: Feller, Jan; Pyrah Robert; Turda, Marius: *Identities In-Between in East-Central Europe*. London 2020, 130–148.

**18** Cf. Weber, Georg; Nassehi, Armin; Weber-Schlenther, Renate; Sill, Oliver; Kneer, Georg; Nollmann, Gerd; Saake, Irmhild: *Emigration der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Studien zu Ost-West Wanderungen im 20. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden 2003.

**19** There is a debate in the literature questioning how the community from Romania should be named. I think that the constructivist formula used by James Koranyi ‘Romanian Germans’ is an instrumental and adequate one. Cf. Koranyi, *Migrating Memories* (cf. n. 13), 22–62 (chapter one: “Mak-

mans were in a strange situation given that they were a minority within the overall number of German expellees and refugees from Eastern Europe who arrived or remained in Germany after the Second World War.

Only approximately 100,000 of the over 12 million Germans who came from Eastern Europe to the territory of the two German states founded in 1949 through a combination of flight, expulsion and resettlement in the end or after the Second World War, had their origins in Romania:<sup>20</sup> It was the only country in the region that did not expel its German population after the War.<sup>21</sup> On the other side, at the request of Soviets, around 70,000 Germans were deported to the USSR in January 1945.<sup>22</sup> Some of them arrived in Germany from 1946 to 1947 and few went back to Romania afterwards.<sup>23</sup> As we see, ethnicity was the main driver behind these transfers and movements of populations in the region before, during, and after Second World War.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, however, in the postwar era, it was social factors that put pressure on migration at the level of ethnic networks and organizations, paving the way for the movement of ethnic Germans from their communities of origin to Germany.<sup>25</sup>

These organizations were key to the build-up of the migration process and, in order to understand this, it is essential to consider the historical context in which they sprang up: their provincial parallelism, and co-existence in religious, cultural, and political milieus. Different geographies, heritages, and traditions of the Romanian Germans remained almost intact after the refugees arrived in Germany, and each community developed their associations in terms of their historical origin.<sup>26</sup> Even

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ing Romanian Germans”); cf. as a different approach: Weber, Annemarie: *Rumäniendeutsche? Diskurse zur Gruppenidentität einer Minderheit (1944–1971)*. Köln-Weimar-Wien 2010.

**20** German minority (more than 745,000 people) that lived in Romania’s territory after 1918 had a different historical background: Saxons arrived in Transylvania in the 12th–13th century; Swabians were colonized in Banat in 18th century; in Bukovina, Maramures, Dobrudja and Bessarabia other communities of German speakers lived without having a common heritage.

**21** See an elaborate discussion on the repressive policies against the German population in the first years after the War in: Baier, Hannelore: *Deportare, deposedare, discriminare 1944–1948 [Deportation, Deprivations, Discriminations 1944–1948]*. In: Trașcă/Anghel, *Un veac frământat* (cf. n. 4), 149–172.

**22** Cf. Weber, Georg; Weber-Schlenter, Renate; Nassehi, Armin; Sill, Oliver; Kneer, Georg: *Die Deportation von Siebenbürger Sachsen in die Sowjetunion. 1943–1949*. 3 vol. Köln-Weimar-Wien 1996.

**23** Many of them remained there, but few intellectuals and people in Romania attempted to return. Kurt Philippi, Otto Liebhardt, Georg Scherg, for example, re-entered Romania without legal forms in 1947.

**24** Cf. Dietz, Barbara: *Ethnic German Immigration from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union to Germany. The Effects of Migrant Networks*. Bonn 1999; Brubaker, Rogers: *Migration of Ethnic Un-Mixing in the “New Europe”*. In: *International Migration Review* 32/4 (1998), 1047–1065.

**25** Cf. Schoenberg, Hans W.: *Germans from the East. A Study of Their Migration, Resettlement, and Subsequent Group History since 1945*. Dordrecht 1970, 108.

**26** Cf. Wolff, Stefan: *The Politics of Homeland Irredentism and Reconciliation in the Policies of German Federal Governments and Expellee Organizations toward Ethnic German Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, 1949–1999*. In: O’Donnell, Krista; Reagin, Nancy, Bridenthal, Renate (Ed.): *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness*. Ann Arbor 2005, 287–310, here 289f.

though the Romanian Germans were a small community, the German authorities recognized them and they received the same support as other homeland societies. From an organizational perspective, the core of the future Romanian German *Landsmannschaften*, that will function in West Germany in the postwar period, was formed around these diverse and weak German communities.

Even though they were few and not very united, the Romanian Germans succeeded in establishing relations using traditional and political networks. Religious organizations dominated the conventional channel of communication. In 1947, to protect and help the refugees, the *Hilfskomitee der Siebenbürger Sachsen und der evangelischen Banater Schwaben* (Aid Committee of Transylvanian Saxons and Evangelical Banat Swabians) was created. It was a network of small associations founded in close relation to church structures. Given that, until 1949, it was forbidden to set up organizations for refugees and expellees in the Western zone of Germany, these Church aid societies were the primary structures for these returnee Germans.

The legislative transformations that occurred after 1949 in the FRG were of tantamount importance in stimulating the return of the Germans to their homeland. They inspired the expellees and refugees' communities and, by 1949, *Landsmannschaften* were being formed throughout Germany, including those for Romanian Germans. In addition to their assistance programs, their shared suffering, and a loss of connection with their homeland, these *Landsmannschaften* did not initially have a common political platform. This was only subsequently obtained and articulated around the idea of the 'reunification of families'. The *Landsmannschaften* were committed to the idea of getting the German minority out of Romania. Their argument was a two-fold development: on the one hand, they accentuated the political, social, and cultural arguments that the German community suffers in communist Romania; while, on the other, they speak about the historical mission, of the German community to return in their homeland, and the fate or destiny involved in achieving it. Here, at the beginning of the 1950s, the debates related to the future of the German community (bringing families back together vs. remaining in Romania to fulfill a destiny that started 800 years ago) was the milieu in which Paul Philippi became a relevant player.

## Paul Philippi and his early career

Paul Philippi was a relatively young Saxon, born in 1923 in Braşov (Kronstadt), and educated at the Honterus *Gymnasium* until 1942. He had a biography that was common amongst younger Germans from Romania. He was recruited in the *Waffen-SS*, trained in Vienna and other places in Germany, and fought on the Eastern Front from the autumn of 1944 (battle of Szombathely [Steinamanger] in Hungary).<sup>27</sup> In re-

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<sup>27</sup> During his life, Paul Philippi did not speak much about his experiences during the war. As a sur-



treat, in south Austria (his military unit was stationed in Graz), he entered captivity in the American zone. After 30 months of reclusion in an American camp, he was released in 1947 and shortly afterwards started his studies in theology at the University of Erlangen. From 1949 he was awarded a scholarship at Zurich, where he continued his studies, working as a private professor in Winthertur and as a servant in the Lutheran Parish of Grossmünster.

Being in contact with a society that was not as affected by war and ideological confrontation was an excellent opportunity for the young Paul Philippi to reflect on his future. His intellectual and social experience in Switzerland was significant because he could compare different historical experiences of Germanness, understanding that the destiny of other communities that emigrated from Germany in the past was also connected with the places where they arrived and had lived for centuries.<sup>28</sup> The main danger, in his view, was that the “Romanian Germans ‘in exile’ would forget their historical and cultural roots and merge into a society to which they did not belong”.<sup>29</sup> The idea was received with suspicion by many leaders of the *Landsmannschaften* in Germany from the beginning. This is because they did not understand his view that they were not only Germans, but also Romanian Germans.

He expressed his views in different cultural and religious circles and enjoyed good personal relations with individuals.<sup>30</sup> However, the elite of the *Landsmannschaften* perceived his positions with a critical eye, although he was not considered as any great danger in their view. Paul, and his brother Hans,<sup>31</sup> were involved in the activities of the *Hilfskomitee* in Bavaria, but also in the newly founded *Arbeitskreis*

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prise, on 11 November 2015, he presented his memories about this biographical episode in Sibiu (Hermannstadt). His lecture is now online (Deutsches Forum Hermannstadt: Paul Philippi – Von der Schulbank 1943 in den Zweiten Weltkrieg. 11.11.2015. URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WiaT\\_mSw8A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WiaT_mSw8A) [26.04.2022]) and was published a year later: Philippi, Paul: Von der Schulbank zur Waffen-SS. In: Spiegelungen 11/1 (2016), 77–86. His recollections about this period are very suggestive. In an interview about his uncommon ‘fate’ he underlined in 1995 how he realized the differences between Germans that had different historical experiences. Cf. Landwehr, Dominik: Der Theologieprofessor Paul Philippi – Ein ungewöhnliches Schicksal. 27.05.1995. URL: <https://www.peshawar.ch/romania/rom-int.htm> (10.03.2022).

**28** Cf. Koranyi, *Migrating Memories* (cf. n. 13), 90.

**29** In his interview with Dominik Landwehr (cf. n. 27), Philippi remembered that he was accepted with enthusiasm at the personal level, but was treated with caution at the institutional level.

**30** *Ibid.*

**31** Hans was the older brother, born in 1911. He left Romania with his family in the summer of 1944. Up to this point he acted as a representative of I. G. Farben in Braşov. He arrived in Germany and started a new career as a teacher of Latin and Greek in Bavaria, at Schweinfurt. He was also elected to be an organizer in the *Hilfskomitee* in 1947. Cf. Möckel, Andreas: Christ und Siebenbürger Sachse: Zum 100. Geburtstag von Hans Philippi, in: *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*. 10.07.2011, URL: <https://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/kultur/11269-christ-und-siebenbuerger-sachse-zum.html> (10.03.2022), but also ACNSAS. SIE 567.



*junger Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Group of the Younger Transylvanian Saxons) to study the history of Transylvania.<sup>32</sup>

In an effort to maintain engagement with the Lutheran Church and remain active in the relevant cultural institutions, they succeed in convincing the editors of the *Siebenbürgische Zeitung* to let them publish a Sunday cultural supplement. The name of this publication is a symbolic one: *Licht der Heimat* (*Torch of the Homeland*).<sup>33</sup> From 1952, the internal conflicts between the *Landsmannschaft* and the *Hilfskomitee* had a new stage, a public one, the representative newspaper of the Saxons in Germany. It was strange that antagonistic positions concerning the issue of German emigration were expressed inside of these publications. And the situation remained the same until the end of the 1970s when the leaders of the *Landsmannschaft*, and of the newspaper, decided to suspend the publication of *Licht der Heimat*.<sup>34</sup>

While Paul Philippi finished his studies in Erlangen in 1952, the emigration of the Romanian Germans remained of vital interest to him. At a crossroads, with offers to become a priest and continue his career in Erlangen or Zurich, or become a Ph.D. student and get on track for *Habilitation* in Heidelberg, he chose the latter and became more and more involved in the religious, historical, and cultural problems of Romanian Germans. For Philippi, it was no longer just a personal option, but a professional and cultural conviction. He subsequently remembered that he discussed the subject with Friedrich Müller, the bishop of the mainly Saxon Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, when he met him on the occasion of the latter's visit abroad after 1945, probably in 1954. The advice of the bishop was to go to Heidelberg because the Church needs theologians that were able to view things from a scientific perspective.<sup>35</sup>

This was a significant step in Philippi's career. He became assistant instructor at the *Diakoniewissenschaftliches Institut* (Diaconal Science Institute – DWI) in Heidelberg in 1954 and prepared a Ph.D. *Dissertation* dedicated to the *Holy Communion and the Reality of the Congregation*, which was defended successfully in 1957. Staying in Heidelberg he finished his *Habilitation* dedicated to the modern stages of the deaconess office, looking mainly at the situation in Transylvania. Completing his studies and having a successful career in academia was essential for his prestige in the external homeland Germany.

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<sup>32</sup> Many of its original members became founders of the *Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* (Society for Transylvanian Studies) in 1962.

<sup>33</sup> Initially it was named *Korrespondenzblatt*, then – at the proposal of Hans Philippi – it was renamed as *Licht der Heimat*. Cf. the discussion in Koranyi, *Migrating Memories* (cf. n. 13), 90f.; Philippi, Paul: *Land des Segens? Fragen an die Geschichte Siebenbürgens und seiner Sachsen*. Köln 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Koranyi, *Migrating Memories* (cf. n. 13), 90.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Philippi mentioned this conversation without making any chronological reference in *Landwehr, Der Theologieprofessor* (cf. n. 27).

## The conflict over the emigration of the Romanian Germans

From 1953, Philippi publicly, during the meetings of the *Landsmannschaft*, expressed his criticism of the policy that favored the emigration of the Saxons from Transylvania to Germany.<sup>36</sup> The leaders of the *Landsmannschaft* discussed this and, in 1953/54, decided that the migration to the external homeland was essential and fundamental to the community's future, because of the establishment of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, who oppressed the German minorities. The fate of the community was not 'abroad' anymore and all Germans should return to their original homeland.<sup>37</sup>

The reply from Philippi was sharp, and it made clear that it was not only a story about two homelands (one external, where they will arrive, and one internal, where they are born and they live), but it was also a problem of historical identity. In a memoir presented in 1954, he considers the ideas proposed and sustained by Heinrich Zillich and his followers in which the *Landsmannschaft* are portrayed as old, and more appropriate for the 19th century (and again during the Nazi period) when the movement of populations was very dynamic.<sup>38</sup> He maintains that the Romanian Germans needed to play their historical role in Romania, where they lived for almost 800 years. They had profound roots in that territory: they resisted invasions (the Mongolian, Tatar, or Turk invasions were counterposed to the existing pressures from the communist authorities). In this line of argumentation, they need to remain there to maintain the community in Transylvania and preserve their established values, traditions, and institutions.<sup>39</sup> Otherwise, he considers that this migration is a major step in ending the presence of Saxons in Eastern Europe.<sup>40</sup>

The year 1955 was an important one for Paul Philippi. He was ordained and received more support from the representatives of the Church for his actions against emigration. In spring, during Bishop Friedrich Müller's visit to Austria and the GDR, the Philippi brothers met him a few times.<sup>41</sup> In this context, they discussed

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**36** His first public performance against emigration occurred in Rimsting, Bavaria, in 1953, where Saxons met for their Congress. Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 5953. Jachet 1. Vol. 2, 67–73.

**37** Cf. Weber u. a., *Emigration der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (cf. n. 18), 254 f.

**38** ACNSAS. SIE 5953. Jachet 2. Vol. 1, 70.

**39** *Ibid.* This informative note regarding the activities of Philippi against *Landsmannschaft* policies, signed by Nicolae Dima, was produced in the mid-1960s, when Philippi was already considered to be the leader of the anti-migration movement inside the Saxon community.

**40** Ideas on this argument about *finis saxonie* were presented later in: Philippi, Paul: *Nation und Nationalgefühl der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1791–1991*. In: Rothe, Hans (Ed.): *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Köln-Weimar-Wien 1994, 69–87.

**41** The bishop arrived in the West for the first time in 1954 and, again in 1955 (cf. Wien, Ulrich Andreas: *Biserica Evanghelică C. A. din România începând cu 1918* [Evangelical Church A. C. in Romania after 1918]. In: Trașcă/Anghel, *Un veac frământat* (cf. n. 4), 199–253, here 240). Pieces of information

and clarified their position inside the Saxon community regarding migration issues. The bishop made interventions in favour of Church aid organizations and against the *Landsmannschaft*.<sup>42</sup> He also tried to convince Carl Molitoris (1877–1972), an old priest from Bistrița (Bistritz), and former Dean of the Church from North Transylvania during the Second World War, to become more prudent and moderate in his relations with the leaders of *Landsmannschaft*. In addition, his criticism of Karl Sebesch, the former curator of the Sibiu (Hermannstadt) parish, who was a supporter of Zillich's *Landsmannschaft* policies, made very clear that the Church position was not represented by such priests. He sustained the positions expressed by the *Hilfskomitee* and by intellectuals that were against mass emigration of Germans.<sup>43</sup> The latter, in parallel with his Ph.D. studies, worked a lot with his younger friends from the *Arbeitskreis* and with other intellectuals, publishing materials related to the history of the Saxons and their church in Transylvania, but he also expressed his intention to go back to Romania.

## Philippi's attempts to come to Romania

When Paul Philippi asked Friedrich Müller whether he would be able to return to Transylvania, the Bishop responded that, while it was difficult at that moment, it would be possible in the future. The idea of coming back was a consistent one in the mind of Paul Philippi. When he attended a Conference in Berlin, a year later, he went to the Romanian Consulate and asked for information concerning his return to the country. There he met a clerk, a professor named Grigoriu, who was the one who provided information to him regarding repatriation.<sup>44</sup> Without knowing it, Philippi entered into contact with a high representative of the Romania Securitate

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related to this tour, and the meetings with the Philippi brothers came to the Romanian Securitate from two different sources. In their view, the informant with code name "Prietenul" ("Friend"), who was the Vicar of the Evangelical Church in Transylvania, Alfred Hermann, delivered a very detailed and conclusive report after they came back. He maintains that Hans and Paul Philippi were the *Hilfskomitee* leaders and the minority faction in *Landsmannschaft* against migration. The other source was the middle brother of the family, Kurt Philippi. His reports that summarize his discussion with Bishop and Vicar were considered without relevance and, most importantly, without elements of sincerity. These notes were why he was excluded from the network of the Securitate informers and became a subject of an informative action. Cf. ACNSAS. I 235743. Vol. 1, 30, 35.

<sup>42</sup> In 1956, in a discussion with an informer of the Securitate ("Otto Krauss" was his code name), Bishop Müller insisted on his opinion that he consider that Hans Philippi, who became the leader of the *Hilfskomitee* in Munich, had a correct position and acted accordingly against emigration and criticized the positions of the *Landsmannschaft*. Cf. ACNSAS. I 260208. Vol. 1, 107.

<sup>43</sup> Following elections, the *Hilfskomitee* was subsequently run by Hans, and the *Arbeitskreis* was coordinated by Paul Philippi.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 5953. Jachet 2. Vol. 1, 26.

in Germany, who soon became the Head of the First Service of the First Directorate of the Securitate (External Informations), Lieutenant Colonel Todiriu Ismail.<sup>45</sup>

When, in April 1957, Paul Philippi came back to Berlin and asked for a visa to discuss the subject again, Todiriu suggested that he apply for a permit to see with his own eyes how Romania is, and to visit his family. He followed Todiriu's advice and came back with letters in 1957, and finally, after more than eight months, he received the approval for his visit. If the officers of the Espionage agency tried to help him and accepted his stay in the country,<sup>46</sup> the representatives of the Stalin (Braşov) Regional Directorate of the Securitate were less well disposed towards him and prepared a plan that eventually could offer an opportunity for the arrest of the Philippi brothers. With the help of an artist in Germany, who took some 'hostile publications' of Paul Philippi for his brother Kurt, Lt. Farkas Adalbert tried to organize a situation where Paul Philippi would be 'caught red-handed' when he arrived in the country.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, in order to increase the surveillance of family activities, an 'operative combination'<sup>48</sup> was approved at the highest level (by the Head of the Region Directorate and Gheorghe Pintilie, Deputy Minister of Interior), in the Depner sisters (Thea and Maja) summerhouse in Vulcan (Wolkendorf). Why did they want such a thing? Because the local branch of the Securitate had surveilled the Philippi brothers since 1950. Initially, they only opened the file on Kurt Philippi. He was observed and, after an inquiry, was co-opted as a member of their informants' network.<sup>49</sup> After assessing his contributions towards Securitate activity, it was decided that they were not significant, because much of his information was deemed to be neither credible nor sincere, and he was abandoned by the Securitate in 1955. At this point a surveillance file was started on him.<sup>50</sup> This was more of a 'family file' since the suspect's

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**45** He entered the Romanian Secret Services in 1944 as an aide of Emil Bodnăraş, who supervised the operations of the Special Service of Information. In the early 1950s, he worked for the First Directorate abroad and then, after a period as Head of Service, he was one of the deputies of the Directorate until his retirement in 1971. For details on his career, cf. ACNSAS, D 165 and Arhivele Naţionale ale României, Bucureşti (ANR) [National Archives of Romania, Bucharest]. Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party – MAI Cadres Fund 4501.

**46** Todiriu, who oversaw the operation, wanted to verify the intentions, but also the actions, of Paul Philippi. He was suspicious because it was a surprise that someone with such career intended to come back to Romania. Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 5953. Jachet 2. Vol. 1, 37–39.

**47** Cf. ACNSAS. I 235743. Vol. 1, 9–11: Plan approved by colonel Gheorghe Crăciun on July 10, 1957.

**48** An order from the Securitate to install surveillance equipment in a house, that required to evacuate it for a period of time to allow the technical team space to install the wires, microphones and other apparatus.

**49** Cf. ACNSAS. I 235743. Vol. 1, 9–11: Plan approved by colonel Gheorghe Crăciun on July 10, 1957. He was recruited under the code name of "Otto Schneider" on the 10th of June 1950 through blackmail ("pe bază de material compromiţător") because he returned to the country without legal forms.

**50** *Ibid.*, 4: "He was not confident and, in many cases, double agent (he tell us that he is deaf on one of his ears, but he is a musician...and how can sing with such illness). He did not come to meetings; when he arrived, he did not bring notes or information; he gave us only generalities, without oper-

brothers were identified as important members of the *Landsmannschaften* in the FRG. The suspicions were also raised in relation to his connections within the intellectual milieu: the ‘nationalistic elements’, and Lutheran priests from Mediaş (Mediasch), Sighișoara (Schäßburg) and the Târnăveni Raion.<sup>51</sup>

The visit took place from the last week of March until the beginning of May 1958. During this time Paul Philippi had a long and fruitful vacation, staying in Braşov, Vulcan, and Sibiu. He met with many representatives of the Romanian state from the intellectual, religious, and administrative milieus. He also was contacted at the end of his vacation by Professor Grigoriu. Securitate verified him in many instances and observed that he was sincere, and his positions were the same as those expressed in Germany. While he wanted to come back in the years after defending his dissertation and obtaining his habilitation,<sup>52</sup> he postponed this intention after lengthy discussions with Bishop Müller. The latter considered that his presence in Germany was significant in preventing an exodus of Saxons from Romania. They had already found that the *Landsmannschaften* had lobbied to increase the number of exit visas for the Germans who want to leave Romania through a number of different channels including the International Red Cross, Federal Institutions, and local governments. In this context, considering his reputation in the community, the bishop asked him to try to go back and speak with authorities to prevent such a development.

It was an important moment for Philippi. He returned to Germany and acted accordingly, publishing prolifically and engaging in many discussions with the authorities, inside and outside of the *Landsmannschaften*, to prevent the large-scale departure of Romanian Germans. He even succeeded in causing a temporary split inside the Saxon *Landsmannschaft*: between Zillich and his group<sup>53</sup> and the new executive leader (since 1958) of the society Erhard Plesch (1910–1977). His activities, even if they did not affect the speed or the dynamic of the emigration process directly,<sup>54</sup> were noticed both there and in Romania. The effects were observed by the members of his family and his friends as well as the Securitate, who constantly surveilled his relations and learned about his actions against emigration. They appreciated his position and granted him visas each year for ‘root tourism’ in Romania.<sup>55</sup> As such, Paul Philippi soon became a transnational traveler, an exponent of the *Heimat-tourismus*, moving from Germany to Romania each summer, playing an increasingly

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ative interest. Even when he was oriented towards his brother-in-law Erwin Wittstock, he sent us only positive materials.”

51 Ibid., 1.

52 He succeeded in finishing his habilitation in 1963. To do the research and see his friends and family, he came each year to Romania.

53 He mentioned in many instances that Zillich, Hans Hartl or Fritz Cloos did not split their connection with their Nazi past.

54 The numbers are very well analyzed in Anghel/Gheorghiu, *The Mass Migration* (cf. n. 6), 34–36.

55 They did not give him hopes for its repatriation until the end of the 1960s.

important role in the debate concerning the fate of the Romanian Germans. But this story, a more complex one,<sup>56</sup> and the situation from the mid-1960s until the end of communism, will soon be discussed in another article.

## Conclusion

Until then, let us conclude that Paul Philippi's role in the migration process became more relevant in a challenging period. His public conflicts with the old guard of the *Landmannschaften* and his intervention against emigration from Romania were more and more articulated. They received increasing attention from different authorities in FRG and communist Romania, where his annual visits were carefully observed. Discussions with different Romanian authorities in order to prepare his comeback in Romania were also under scrutiny. Until the beginning of the 1970s he was refused, but many doors were subsequently opened, and he finally obtained a professorial position in the Lutheran Institute in Sibiu (Hermannstadt). This development was also made in the context of the changing attitudes of the Romanian authorities with regard to emigration. Securitate officers wanted to have him inside Romania in order to prevent his actions in Germany, where he had already gained a serious reputation for his actions against emigration and for the continuation of the German communities' life in their historical place, in Romania. But this part of his life will be the subject of a future paper.

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<sup>56</sup> He became a target for the Securitate but also for *Landmannschaft*. The Romanian political police wanted to exploit him in blind, afterward to use him for different friendly missions (source or agent of influence) and Philippi played a very interesting partiture. It was not anymore in rip currents, but one in deep waters.