
“Nicht fliehen, hinschauen.”
Inter-Ethnic Relations in Eginald Schlattner’s
Transylvanian Novel *Rote Handschube*

ISTVÁN GOMBOCZ
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Eginald Schlattner is the most productive fiction writer of the German diaspora of East Central Europe. Over the past two decades, he has distinguished himself as the author of three highly successful novels--*Der geköpfte Hahn*, 1998; *Rote Handschube*, 2001; and *Das Klavier im Nebel*, 2005. All focus on the recent history of the Transylvanian Germans, popularly referred to as Saxons. At this writing they have not been translated into English.¹ Schlattner’s volumes are literary chronicles of the decline of the German-speaking culture in Romania. Stefanie Bolzen notes that they are written in a style filled with archaic charm. They employ vivid, expressive and powerful vocabulary. Moreover, Schlattner’s work exquisitely captures the absurdities of the Eastern European setting.

Rote Handschube merits particular focus because of the complex historical, political, cultural and personal dilemmas that it addresses. Published in the original German first by Zsolnay in Vienna in 2001, it enjoyed multiple reprints (in 2003, 2006, and 2008) by the Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. Subsequently, it was translated into Hungarian (*Vörös kesztyű*), Polish (*Czerwone rękawiczki*), Romanian (*Manusile roșii*), and Spanish (*Guantes rojos*). A film version directed by Radu Gabrea in 2010 (*Manusile roșii*) further attests to the success it enjoys with the general public in Europe.

So far, Schlattner’s critics, for example Balthasar Waitz, have interpreted *Rote Handschube* primarily as an account of the author’s incarceration and of his testimony at a secret trial in the city of Brașov, known in German as Kronstadt, which took place in 1959. Markus Bauer credits “its literary account of the trial,” while Alexandra Oșan emphasizes the “arrest, torture, and detention of two years” as leitmotifs. Daniela Strigl highlights the autobiographic inspiration of *Rote Handschube* and identifies it as a “*vita cum grano salis*,” while Nicole Henneberg lauds it for sharing the “prehistory and story of a captivity of two years.” Walter Mayr of *Der Spiegel* calls it a “protocol of painful self-blame, a vivisection of one’s own body, performed with the instrument of language” (Mayr 2001, 182). Corinna Petrescu reconstructs the protagonist’s ideological transformation into a “New Man,” i.e., “a passive and dutiful tool for the regime” as the result of coercion and manipulation exerted by the Communist secret police of Stalinist Romania (465). The

reputable Lutheran theologian Christoph Klein investigates the Christian implications of *Rote Handschube* with an emphasis on forgiving and redemption (32).

Studies and reviews on Schlattner as an advocate of Transylvanian multiculturalism have so far focused on *Der geköpfte Hahn* and *Das Klavier im Nebel* (Breitenstein, Fichera, Jauch). In a concise review of all three, Andreea Dumitru took a promising step toward analyzing *Rote Handschube* as a Transylvanian novel by identifying the autobiographic inspiration and by recognizing the “intercultural relations within a given framework” and “the multicultural face of Transylvania” (40), yet her short study does not go beyond providing a summary of the plot and a brief description of the setting.

Geographic, historical and biographical background information pertaining to the author and his homeland helps establish *Rote Handschube* as a novel born of the Transylvanian multiethnic setting. More specifically, portrayals of various nationalities, i.e. the Germans, Roma, Jews, Hungarians and Romanians in Transylvania, originate from the inspiration that the narrator receives from members of these ethnicities. The coping mechanisms that he develops during his captivity also merit particular focus. Taken together, these analyses are important in understanding Schlattner’s hopes for preserving the multinational conglomeration in Transylvania and for sustaining peaceful coexistence among the region’s ethnic groups.

I. The Geographic, Historical, and Biographical Background

Located in Western Romania and comparable in size to Kentucky, Transylvania is distinguished by notable accomplishments and cultural traditions. Areas and enclaves with German, Hungarian and Romanian majorities, localities with sizable Armenian and Jewish populations, as well as numerous districts with mixed ethnicity have created a conglomeration unparalleled in Central Europe. The remarkable cultural prosperity of Transylvania includes religious freedom granted to all confessions (proclaimed officially at the Diet of Thorenburg [Turda] as early as 1558); the emergence of Unitarianism as a denomination of Transylvanian origins; a multitude of educational institutions; and an abundant book production in German, Hungarian, Latin and Romanian. The scenic beauty of the Carpathian mountains, the multitude of natural resources, and the broad variety of architectural landmarks have understandably contributed to a distinct sense of belonging and pride among the members of various nationalities and religious affiliations.

Throughout his career as a pastor and novelist, Schlattner has consistently embraced the cause of peaceful cohabitation among all of Transylvania’s multi-ethnic groups. Born in 1933 as the son of an established Saxon merchant and a Hungarian countess, he enjoyed optimal preconditions for developing a Transylvanian identity. At home, his parents, siblings and relatives

conversed exclusively in German, but in communication with housemaids, during vacation periods spent in the ethnic Székler regions, and on occasional visits to Budapest, he became familiar with Hungarian culture and acquired a command of the language that was sufficient for mastering situations of daily life. During his studies at the University of Cluj, known in German as Klausenburg, he developed native fluency in Romanian. Despite the hardship endured in the fifties and sixties, including a detention of nearly two years and subsequent harassment by Romania's secret police, the *Securitate*, he has never entertained plans to leave for Germany and has remained a loyal citizen of Romania. Even after having lost his Saxon congregation to emigration in the early nineties, he kept his commitment to helping those in need by serving as an ecumenical prison pastor throughout Transylvania, and also by sponsoring charitable actions to the benefit of the disadvantaged Roma population in his village of Roşia, known in German as Rothberg. As Schlattner states in his unpublished autobiography "Lebenslauf Stand VI2013," at the age of eighty-two he regards his mission as far from accomplished. The author spares no effort in creating better living conditions for the local population: "Man verlasse den Ort des Leidens nicht, sondern wirke dahin, daß [sic] das Leiden den Ort verläßt [sic]" "One does not abandon a place of suffering, rather one works there with the goal that suffering will abandon the place" (545). The sentiment is reflected in the novel as well.

As a result of political persecutions, an initial career as an engineer, theological studies, and a new profession as a Lutheran pastor, it was only in retirement that Schlattner had the time and opportunity to develop his talent as a fiction writer. *Der geköpfte Hahn*, his debut on the German-speaking literary market in 1998, shows a strong interest in Transylvanian affairs. Schlattner reconstructs the development of a Saxon high school student from his affiliation with a paramilitary group of youngsters under the influence of National Socialist ideology to an enlightened and responsible member of the community around Fogarasch (Făgăraş) and Kronstadt (Braşov). In the end, the young man treats members of other communities with respect, including the Jews and Roma. Critics in Germany and Austria overwhelmingly praised Schlattner for contributing to understanding the National Socialist infiltration of ethnic German communities in the forties and for advocating reconciliation among the region's inhabitants (Breitenstein; Hove). According to Egon Schwarz, his refined portrayal of characters invites comparisons with German literary classics, such as the novels of Theodor Fontane (D12).

Had he continued to recall the turbulent times which the Saxon community experienced in the late thirties and early forties, Schlattner could have secured a loyal audience and lucrative book contracts in the German-speaking countries and beyond. Yet memories of an unresolved and highly debated

chapter of his life, i.e. his participation in a secret trial in 1959, compelled him to take a different direction. Following Nikita Khrushchev's dissociation from the grossly inhuman policies of Stalin's regime, Romania saw a short period of de-Stalinization with prospects for a certain liberalization in the party's cultural policies. Intellectuals among the country's ethnic minorities also hoped to benefit from this loosening of restrictions. Literary production in minority languages disseminated by newspapers, journals, and even publishing houses was not only tolerated but also subsidized, as long as it refrained from covert or overt criticism of the regime.

Yet this period of political thaw proved to be quite short-lived. Following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the declarations of solidarity it generated in various university communities of Transylvania (Hitchins 236; Pauling 37; Tismaneanu 154), hardliners in the party, including General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, decided to tighten control over every social group with a potential of political resistance. The primary targets of this renewed vigilance ranged from members of the clergy to the former upper middle class educated in Western languages, as well as artists and intellectuals of diverse interests and ethnic affiliations. As Lucian Nastasă notes, members of the Hungarian minority, particularly representatives of the intelligentsia, were observed from an "extreme, distrustful perspective," which in turn resulted in increasing alienation felt by that ethnic group (167). Similarly, as an ethnic minority with close Western European ties, the Transylvanian Germans repeatedly invited the scrutiny of the new rulers, who were supported for the most part by their Soviet mentors (Petrescu 463).

First, their affiliation with the venerable Lutheran Church and their traditionally strong commitment to education often created the impression of individualism and elitist seclusion. Because of their high share of professionals and academics with language skills (ranging from teachers to natural scientists, theologians and creative writers), the Saxons understandably became targets of anti-intellectualism and plebeian egalitarianism, particularly during periods of increased political oppression. As Vladimir Tismaneanu notes in his deliberations on the Romanian effects of the Hungarian Revolution, "...anti-intellectualism seems to be a perennial characteristic of the communist strategy; for communists nothing is more dangerous, more subversive, and eventually more odious, than freedom of imagination and the claim to the right to critical thinking and creative doubt. (155)

Second, the Saxons in their historic cities, including Sibiu, known to Germans as Hermannstadt, as well as in Braşov (Kronstadt), Mediaş (Mediasch), and Sighişoara (Schäßburg), have repeatedly enticed the envy of other Transylvanian inhabitants because of their traditions in highly skilled craftsmanship and trade and, above all, because of a high standard of living

attained prior to World War II. At a time of increased class struggle, with the ultimate goal of eliminating old elites (Hitchins 231), the Communist Party and its security forces had little tolerance for an ethnic group known for its long history of business and wealth.

As a member of Saxon family with roots in the pre-war bourgeoisie, and as the leader of a German-speaking literary club at the University of Cluj (Klausenburg), Schlattner was selected to testify at a secret military tribunal orchestrated against a number of established Transylvanian German authors in the city of Braşov (Kronstadt). Following an investigative custody of eighteen months, he agreed to cooperate with the authorities. In testimony provided first in writing and then confirmed at the trial, he rendered an expert's opinion in support of the charges of anti-Communist agitation made against the five defendants. The writers who were prosecuted included Wolf von Aichelburg (1912-94), Andreas Birkner (1911-98), Georg Scherg (1917-2002), Hans Bergel (1925-) and Harald Siegmund (1930-2012).

Decades later, Schlattner's appearance at the trial still generates heated controversies and occasional attacks of a personal nature. Without ever defining the term "treason," some have interpreted his consent to cooperate as a literary expert as a treasonous act committed with the intent of aggravating the predicament of his colleagues in the dock (Balogh 47; Oşan; Windisch-Middendorf 54, 79; Konrad Klein). More than fifty years after the trial, he is still confronted with allegations of having been an informant for the *Securitate* (Pauling 121; Harald Siegmund), and such reproaches have occasionally been exacerbated by anonymous death threats (Ziegler 775). Yet often enough, as Corinna Petrescu points out, critics eager to accuse Schlattner of betrayal often overlook that in this thoroughly prepared trial aimed at intimidating the entire Saxon community, he was not the only witness who had been persuaded to testify (462). Thus, he cannot be unilaterally blamed for the excessive punishment meted out to the defendants, who received sentences totaling ninety-five years. In secret trials like the tribunal of 1959, the sentence was often pre-determined prior to the court proceedings, and there is no evidence that Schlattner's testimony contributed to the unusually harsh verdict. Few of his critics have denied that he delivered his testimony while in prison following a long series of interrogations that were enhanced by regular physical and verbal abuse. Recollections of unusual verbosity (Windisch-Middendorf 54-55), "agitated vigor" (Bergel 2007), and a "perfunctory reiteration" reminiscent of a "phonograph record" ("Podiumsdiskussion" 109) in Schlattner's diction at the trial reveal no evil intentions but, rather, a state of agitation experienced in the court room and a condition of hypertension. Furthermore, the defendants of 1959 were not unanimous in the allegation of betrayal. As Harald Siegmund phrased it:

. . . there would have been a possibility for him to send me to the gallows, so to speak. He failed to reveal any of the really dangerous things in my case. He did raise certain things that were in no way incriminating. In my case he behaved just as one could have expected him to. (“Podiumsdiskussion” 115)²

In retrospect, Schlattner’s appearance at a Stalinist military tribunal over fifty years ago qualifies principally as a case of over-officious and loquacious testimony. While it contains compromising information, it does not warrant categorical condemnation as an act of deliberate betrayal. He never offered his services to denounce anybody, and there is no evidence of any plea agreements in return for his cooperation. Nevertheless, haunted by the aforesaid allegations and also by recurring self-reproach, Schlattner decided to clear his name by means of creative fiction (Christoph Klein 36-37). Planned originally with the title *Eisenbrille*, that translates as “Iron Spectacles” (Mayr 1999) and eventually titled *Rote Handschube*, his second novel presents a literary account of his imprisonment between 1957 and 1959, including the testimony of September 1959. By his own admission, Schlattner conducted neither political nor historical research in preparation writing it and relied solely on his memories as the source (“Interview;” Doerry and Hage 175). An anonymous narrator recollects his detention in the headquarters of the *Securitate* in the city of Kronstadt (Braşov) from the time of his arrest (December 1957) to the trial (September 1959) and his eventual release in the winter of 1959. The abuses suffered during captivity include confinement in a tiny cell of seven square meters with poor ventilation and minimal light, inferior food, sleep deprivation, humiliating denial of basic personal hygiene, offensive language, slaps in the face, and beatings with door keys. In typical good cop-bad cop scenarios, promises of immediate release alternate with threats of excessive torture, life imprisonment, and even execution. For a long time, in spite of the “showers of insults” (237) and “slap rituals” (243), he refuses to render any incriminating information regarding a number of Saxon individuals about whom he is questioned, including the five accused authors, his peers at the Romanian University of Klausenburg (Cluj), his former girlfriend Annemarie Schönmond, and his brother Kurtfelix.

On the verge of physical and mental exhaustion, and in return for an assurance that both his brother and his literary circle will be spared persecution, the narrator eventually agrees to cooperate with the *Securitate* and to testify at the trial. The reconstruction of the police interviews and the subsequent trial yield a mixed and not completely consistent picture. At times the account reveals a talkative, brain-washed young man who becomes empathetic with the role of his captors; confirms the charges against the defendants (Hügel: 408-09, Schömund: 481, Erler: 559); takes curious pleasure and pride

in having a say in the fate of his senior colleagues; and occasionally even needs to be cautioned not to provide too much incriminating information about his compatriots (418). His appearance as a well-prepared automaton indicates the conversion into a “New Man” as desired by the regime (Petrescu 468-69). Yet other passages portray a witness eager to minimize the damage whenever possible by bravely arguing with the judge for his colleagues’ potential to develop into authors who could be useful to the Socialist cause (462, 481). Paroxysms of self-blame and self-regret further attest to his state of confusion and to his erratic personality (482). Following the testimony, the narrator is sentenced to a prison term of two years but receives immediate release. Contrary to the promise given in return for his cooperation, his brother Kurtfelix receives a long prison term. The members of his literary club are, however, spared prosecution.

After his release, the narrator experiences an extended period of crisis. His stigma as a traitor in the view of his fellow Saxons and his expulsion from the university on grounds of unexcused absence drive him into a state of depression. Voluntary psychiatric treatment provides only temporary relief. Eventually, when the narrator is in a state of desperation, a quite unexpected purifying spiritual experience in a convent rescues him from his torments and inspires him to seek a new life with the support of his family. Unlike the majority of his fellow Saxons, the narrator entertains no hopes of emigrating to West Germany, believing that such a step yields no benefits beyond “bread crumbs picked from the winners’ table in a divided country” (361). Additionally, the narrator avers that emigration often results in degradation, loss of identity, and the sad fate of being buried in foreign soil (193, 597).

For his recollections of the quandaries experienced by an unstable person imprisoned for two years, Schlattner earned proper recognition and even sympathy both from the general public and the majority of critics (Christoph Klein; Mayr 2001). Yet for a number of reasons, with *Rote Handschuhe* he failed his original purpose of offering a personal gesture of reconciliation to his former colleagues (Schuster, Konrad Klein, Ziegler 772). Those personally affected by the outcome of the trial and thus hoping for an explicit apology or at least an explanation, were not content with the reconstruction of the prisoner’s torments and thus felt once more disappointed by the recollections. After all, the narrator’s occasional spells of self-accusation never translate into an open and explicit admission of any wrongdoing. Moreover, according to his critics, including the former defendants, creative fiction is not an appropriate medium for seeking understanding, nor is it the proper venue in which to apologize for an over-officious testimony rendered against a group of defendants at the mercy of a Stalinist military court

(Moldt 30). As Hans Bergel noted, the promise of immunity for the German literary club and also for the defendant's brother, negotiated by the novel's defenseless prisoner with his powerful captors, lacks both historical authenticity and credibility (Moldt 31). Not surprisingly, upon reading it, Schlattner's former colleagues who had been prosecuted and sentenced in 1959 felt deeply offended by their portrayal as irresponsible intellectual adventurers who did not object to flirting with totalitarian ideologies both in their leftist and right-wing versions. And the sarcastic, yet easily decipherable pseudonyms used in reference to the defendants (Hugo Hügel for Hans Bergel, Baron von Pottenhof for Wolf von Aichelburg, Getz Schräg in reference to Georg Scherg, Oinz Erler for Andreas Birkner, and Herwald Schönmund for Harald Siegmund) caused further dismay among those intellectuals victimized by the trial, who interpreted these aliases as inimical provocation in poor taste. In Georg Scherg's view, for example, Schlattner's novel presented no clear explanation of his cooperation with the authorities, let alone an apology for his appearance at court. Instead Scherg sees a self-pitying, in fact, self-serving attempt by the narrator to justify his appearance on the witness stand:

In anticipation of the need for a justification, the attempt at one was deliberately off the mark. Both because of and in spite of considerable effort, the justification deteriorates into a lamentation rather than becoming a true confession. It is a lamentation about what all of his damned sacrifices . . . have done to his anonymous ego, an ego that blithered more than it narrated. After all, there is one thing we can certainly believe of him: The issue is not others (other evildoers) and their destroyed lives. No, the sole issue is his ego.³

Thus, as the author recognizes and regrets, the novel indeed exacerbated the controversies surrounding Schlattner's testimony from the middle of the previous century (Christoph Klein 37). Yet reducing *Rote Handschube* to a failed attempt of vindication does not do justice to it. In fact, the plot by itself adds little to what is already known about his detention: after having endured a long confinement and abusive treatment, a desperate young man agrees to lend his name to a secret trial and is released soon after he testifies. As Schlattner himself confirmed, "Das Wichtigste von dem, was dargestellt wird, haben sie [die Kritiker] schon vorher gewußt" [sic] "They (the critics) had already known the most important aspects from among those that are portrayed" (Moldt 29). The testimonies themselves are summarized in Chapters 23, 25, and 26 (403-13, 459-62, 474, 479-82). Thus, the narrator's participation in the trial comprises but a minuscule portion of 600 pages of text.

Beyond the half-hearted and widely criticized account of testimony that yields neither a clear admission nor an explicit denial of transgression, *Rote Handschube* presents a panoramic view of Transylvania's multi-ethnic

conglomeration that also merits the attention of readers and critics. Inspired for the most part by Schlattner's recollections, it serves the following three purposes: it describes the political atmosphere of the late fifties; offers a welcome departure from the jail setting; and, overall, it widens the target audience.

First, the recollections and imaginary excursions offer a response to the bleak future that the government and its secret police envision for the Saxon community and also for Transylvania's multicultural identity. During the interrogations, members of the Saxon minority are repeatedly accused of being "conspirers" (131); "poisoners" (134); "you superior people" (126); "swindlers, speculators, and brokers" (245; 251); "two-faced capitalists" (245); "bacon-hoarding, well-to-do Saxons" (248); "Saxon exploiters" (294); "public enemies" (295); "class enemies" (296); and "locusts" (393), who deserve no role in building the socialist society of the future:

If you are not a prole or a communist, and only the smallest number [of Saxons] are, then you are a bourgeois, a member of the middle class or a petty bourgeois, in other words a reactionary, and as such either a nationalist or a cosmopolitan, escalating to fascist, follower of Hitler, or an imperialist.⁴

In an effort to break the detainee's spirit, the officials consistently refer to his family and acquaintances as followers of National Socialism. The allegations range from mocking German as Hitler's language (200) to declaring everyone with the first name Adolf as a suspect (220); accusing the narrator's seventy-year-old grandmother named Grossi, who has a hearing problem and varicose veins, of being a dangerous Nazi conspirator (244); "detecting" the part in a Saxon's haircut as a declaration of sympathy for Adolf Hitler (245); and labeling the Honterschule (a famous, historic high school in Braşov/Kronstadt) as a "nest of Hitlerist conspirators" (293). These claims lack accuracy and subtlety, yet they sound threatening enough to maintain the pressure on an insecure and intimidated person. When the interrogators define the detainee's maternal ancestry in the Hungarian nobility as an indication of criminal affiliation, they aggravate his sense of isolation and alienation (399). Moreover, references made simultaneously to Germans and Hungarians as "wandering homeless fellows" leave little doubt about the bias in the secret service against Romania's minorities (248). As the narrator is repeatedly reminded, the *Securitate* reserves the right to punish everyone who does not actively support the party and its policies (316, 408) and pays special attention all those who are different in any regard: Over and over again, the investigators remind their captive that his ethnic group is predestined to disappear with or without action by the authorities: "Ihr seid erledigt" 'You are done for.' (416), "Wer anders ist, muss vernichtet werden." 'Whoever is different must be annihilated.' (251-52). They intensify the threats with scenarios of

deporting all Saxons to remote locations, such as Siberia (245).

In the stressful situation of the interrogations, the captive is not able to distinguish between scenarios seriously contemplated by the party and sham threats made by the police officers. At times the verbal abuse he must endure inflicts more pain than the physical mistreatment he experiences during the interrogations. The threats become a primary reason why the narrator dwells on the ethnic diversity of Transylvania. He believes the danger is real and makes every effort to show that minorities, including his own, also deserve a place in a future Romania. Contrary to his captors, the narrator believes that Saxons as well as other minorities are able and willing to participate in building a socialist society, and he uses every opportunity to underscore their usefulness. As Christoph Klein points out, defending those in need lies in the nature of the narrator, and those in need include the ethnic minorities suffering under Stalinist oppression (34). Initially, the detainee shares his thoughts and experiences relevant to this question during the lengthy interviews and interrogations with officials, but also, whenever possible, in his conversations with cellmates of diverse nationalities.

A second reason for the prisoner's reconstructed panorama of multi-ethnic Transylvania is an effort to develop a defense mechanism in the trying circumstances of captivity. Smoothly integrated subplots, episodes, anecdotes, internal monologs, and even occasional dreams pertaining to Transylvania's past and present grant him a temporary relief from the tedium of the jail cell. Dissociating himself from his past would make his imprisonment easier to endure, yet he has neither the ability, nor the desire to complete that step:

I sit with my legs pulled in . . . in the cell In the silence I notice that the senses become powerful. They are filled with desire for recollections that press intrusively: Every step, every gesture spits out not just memory, but every thought that was ever had. Precisely now, when I wish not to have a biography.⁵

A third explanation for the prominent references to multiple ethnicities is that by incorporating the subplots within the panoramic setting of Transylvania, Schlattner sought to enhance interest in his novel. Indeed, by this means he succeeded in reaching a broader audience. A novel solely focusing on the authors' tribunal would have yielded interesting, albeit sobering and depressing reading, but it would have never reached an audience beyond a small circle of people affected by, or interested in, secret Stalinist trials of the mid-twentieth century. Encouraged by the success of *Der geköpfte Hahn*, Schlattner decided to continue using the broad Transylvanian spectrum found in his first novel.

The subplots in question also show a curious feature in the nar-

ration. A young man in his early twenties is not likely to have accumulated the knowledge and memories from family life, campus life, and Transylvanian public life shared in over hundreds of pages. Schlattner, of course, who wrote this novel when he was in his sixties, had decades of experience to his credit. Thus, readers must either suspend their disbelief or keep Schlattner continuously in mind as an omnipresent and omniscient narrator.

II. Portraying Transylvania's Ethnicities: Accurate Descriptions, or Stereotypes?

When contemplating the future of multi-culturalism in Transylvania, the narrator of *Rote Handschube* repeatedly draws from precedents of adaptability and loyalty shown by individual ethnicities, including his own minority. His occasional guilt complexes because of his affiliation with a formerly privileged social class and an "unhealthy milieu" (443) do not prevent him from articulating his pride in the Saxons' achievements for over seven-hundred years in Transylvania. As he explains, since the Middle Ages, his ancestors have been consistently loyal and productive subjects of their respective rulers, ranging from the Hungarians to the Habsburgs and the Romanians: "*Ad retinendam coronam, zum Schutze der Krone, oder laut Luther: jeweils der Obrigkeit untertan.*" "*Ad retinendam coronam,*" 'to preserve the crown, or, according to Luther, always subject to the authorities' (23). Despite the deportations and expropriations his family had to endure after the Communist takeover, the narrator still believes in social justice and progress in post-war Romania, and gullibly embraces the Communist Party's commitment to these advances. Driven by ethnic pride as well as by historical idealism and, in fact, by romanticism, he identifies the achievements of Saxon democracy (including the institutions of political autonomy and the elimination of serfdom in the Middle Ages) as early manifestations of the social equality promised by the party:

"Incidentally, the Saxon National University in Hermannstadt declared already in April 1848 that the Romanians in the *Königsboden* [the Saxons' historically autonomous territory], were on an equal footing with us Saxons. And eliminated serfdom. And Major, isn't your new order striving for just that?" . . . I am so agitated, that I begin shaking the little table. Tears come to my eyes.⁶

The indifferent or sarcastic comments that the prisoner receives from the officers in reply to his historical analogies do not lessen his dedication to demonstrating the Saxons' usefulness to the new regime. To underscore his claims of historical and cultural continuity, he repeatedly cites the open-minded and progressive mentality of his own family. Charitable actions benefitting members of diverse ethnic groups ranging from Hungarians to Jews, Roma, and Romanians attest to the commitment that the patrician dynasty made to the

common good in Transylvania. The narrator's father was known for greeting every resident of Fogarasch (Făgăraș) in his or her own language (245), and also for welcoming guests to social events, regardless of their ethnic identity or financial situation. Recollections of policies of equality enforced in an old-fashioned Lutheran dynasty could well have contributed to the success that *Rote Handschube* enjoys with its readership in the contemporary German-speaking world: "All school children of both genders were welcome, without regard to their social background, ethnicity, race and religion, just as it now clearly stipulated in the constitution."⁷

At the same time, the narrator acknowledges that desperate pleas for acceptance addressed to hostile authorities are not the only way to ensure survival. Therefore, he takes special interest in ethnic communities that have maintained or developed local pockets of autonomy. After having been questioned about trips he had conducted to Saxon villages as the reporter of the newspaper *Neuer Weg* ("The New Way") in the summer prior to his arrest, he continues to reminisce about his visits to these communities located near the rivers Alt (Aluta) and Kokel (Târnavă). His refreshed memories reveal a subculture that has successfully preserved its customs and traditions throughout the ordeals of World War II and the subsequent Communist takeover. Compared with the sufferings the German population endured in the urban settings, the damage inflicted on rural communities proved to be of limited and temporary nature. The forced collectivization of land deprived the villagers of family property cultivated for centuries but also strengthened the mutual support among them.

In the daily life of the residents, directives of the incompetent agricultural apparatchiks of Bucharest are either routinely sabotaged or construed in ways beneficial to production. While the portraits of party leaders are dutifully displayed on the walls of the administrative offices, the local Lutheran pastor is still accepted as the primary person of authority. Reciting Psalm 23, containing the lines "Der Herr ist mein Hirte, mir wird nichts mangeln" "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," (277) while performing daily errands shows the villagers' unchanged faith in providence. The detailed narration of the last days of an elderly resident demonstrates the continuance of folkloristic traditions and indigenous spirituality. The meticulousness shown by the dying person upon inspecting his own coffin provides a striking example of the conscientious workmanship peculiar to ethnic Germans of Eastern Europe and also gives a taste of Schlattner's sense of black humor. The parlor, in which the deceased lies on a bier, is decorated with embroideries containing classic quotations, such as "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" 'A Mighty Fortress is our God' and "Hier stirbt der Deutsche nicht, darauf vertraut" 'The German does not die here, of that be sure' (277),

which confirm the villagers' unshakeable ethnic pride and belief in eternity. While the inhabitants of the peasant community refrain from opposing, let alone provoking, the political regime, they do not hesitate to offer hide to an anti-communist partisan of Romanian ethnicity.

Not surprisingly, the local residents do not fully understand or appreciate the enthusiasm shown by the young reporter on his journey of discovery. The literary readings held in the evenings and the subsequent discussions reveal a proverbial difference between the mindsets of the quixotic explorer and the down-to-earth villagers:

The tenor of my readings was as follows: For us Saxons the next 800 years had begun. However, I was forced to confirm in the discussion afterward that the people were interested less in the next centuries than they were in the next couple of days and whether or not it would rain, or whether the party was going to summon them to work on Sunday, or whether one could finally go to church with a quiet conscience.⁸

Overall, the episode gives an insightful description of an enclave that makes every effort to optimize its living conditions amidst the governmental policies of centralization and industrialization. In contrast to the urban Saxon middle class exhausted by expropriations and political purges, the residents of rural areas display a considerable reserve of vitality and promise of long-term perseverance. The narrator's refreshed memories reveal a subculture that has successfully preserved its customs and traditions throughout the ordeals of World War II and the subsequent Communist takeover.

Throughout the novel, the narrator receives much-needed mentorship from pastors of his Lutheran Church. With growing concern, elderly clergymen, including Pastor Alfred Wortmann, follow the narrator's efforts to reconcile Christian altruism and Communist lip-service to social justice. They seek to spare their young friend the disillusionment Wortmann himself had experienced in this regard. With arguments borrowed from Stoic philosophy, Wortmann encourages the narrator to develop an autonomous personality isolated as much as possible from political events. According to the senior pastor, as a recently released political convict who is being denied the opportunity to complete his university degree, the narrator has no chance to effect immediate change in Romanian society. Yet as a clergyman with decades of experience in various political regimes, Wortmann predicts that the "Pharaoh of Bucharest" will change his mind before very long and approve the release of all those victimized in the political trials and purges (532). Trading the often tumultuous, yet stimulating and exotic multicultural Transylvanian environment and its venerable Saxon tradition for residence in a different country is not a worthwhile undertaking: "Nicht fliehen, hin-

schauen.” ‘Do not flee, look closely’ (527).

As a result of his upbringing and student years and the mentoring received from senior friends such as Pastor Wortmann, the narrator maintains a broad horizon and a keen interest in all ethnic groups of Transylvania. Citizens of Roma identity receive particular attention in his reflections and memories. The German villagers maintain relations of peaceful coexistence with the nearby Gypsy settlements, and, thus, convey a sense of solidarity between Transylvania’s ethnic minorities. In the narrator’s portrayal, the Roma population has developed independent ways of life that far surpass the advances in autonomy arduously achieved by their Saxon neighbors. Enchanted first by the nonchalant and frugal ways of managing daily business in the Roma communities, the young urban intellectual gradually explores the structure and hierarchy employed in these neighborhoods. Their state of seclusion, maintained with the experience of several centuries spent on the periphery of society, has successfully spared them the harms of centralized economic policies in the Stalinist era. Anecdotal evidence of their mobility (across the Iron Curtain, if necessary) is provided by a leader with the title *Bulibascha*, who decides not to wait for the procrastinated reply to his passport application submitted for attending a reunion in France. When finally summoned to the *Securitate* to receive his travel document several months after, he dryly and sarcastically answers, “Danke, ich bin schon zurück.” ‘Thank you, I am already back’ (278).

The narrator tends toward overly optimistic descriptions and chooses not to address the many problems arising from poverty and high unemployment. Despite its idealized quality, however, his reportage attests to the limits of governmental control in rural ethnic subcultures. German know-how combined with Roma ingeniousness, the latter achieved with very modest financial resources, prove to be complementary qualities for providing valuable services to the Transylvanian community at large. Memories of an episode involving a favor rendered by the narrator’s mother to a Roma family and the subsequent enthusiastic declaration of thankfulness and solidarity in return provide yet another favorable view of ethnic diversity in Transylvania:

Gypsies and Saxons had quite a lot in common, as artisans and tradesmen, merchants and vendors. It was incomprehensible that Herr Hitler deported the Gypsies from the Reich, even though they spoke perfect German and as peddlers brought everything into the house of their valued customers. The wages of the world is ingratitude!⁹

Noting their high level of education in general and their traditionally strong command of German in particular, Schlattner has followed the fate of Transylvania’s Jews with special interest and concern. In his capacity as pas-

tor, he still recalls with deep sorrow the loss of 250,000 persons from among the Jewish population of greater Romania. In *Rote Handschube*, communication with Jewish characters is limited, but not irrelevant to the development of the narrator. Descriptions of the suffering that Jewish families endured in the forties “night by night, and not less at daytime” help him to put the anguish of the Saxon community in perspective (568). A major of Jewish ethnicity named Aron Blau obtains the detainee’s confidence with his education, debating skills, broad basis in the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and familiarity with German language, culture, and philosophy. During the lengthy interviews, Blau acts not simply like a “good cop,” but in fact like an elderly friend and mentor. Blau is interested not only in obtaining political information, but also in the future of the young detainee after jail time. The prisoner feels significantly more comfortable in conversations with Blau, whom he calls “my major” (347), than he does during the harsh interrogations conducted by other officers. Possibly under the influence of the Stockholm-syndrome, he is less alert when answering questions and divulging information. As Christoph Klein observes, the captive is at first impressed by Blau’s wit, to the extent of ignoring the evil sides of his personality and building an idealized image of his interrogator (34). Yet the civilized tone which the major initially uses during the conversations increasingly turns to an accusatory rhetoric with reminders of the alleged Saxon traditions of self-isolation and elitism (127). As an experienced manipulator, he successfully confuses the prisoner by paying his respect to German culture on the one hand, and by burdening his conscience as a member of the once wealthy upper middle class on the other hand.

Immediately after an unexpected demotion ordered by the party (ironically, Blau is no longer in charge of catching enemies of the state, but instead rodents plaguing the city of Kronstadt [Braşov]), he rapidly dissociates himself from the Communist ideology for which he passionately fought as a major in the secret police. At an encounter shortly after the narrator’s release, Blau sanctimoniously encourages his former captive to remain loyal to Transylvania, while he himself finds a way to defect to Israel. The narrator interprets Blau’s sudden departure not only as a break with Socialism, but also as an act of disloyalty toward Romania. He decides to counter the former major’s escape by remaining a loyal citizen of Romania, rather than seeking his fortunes in West Germany. The ex-major’s advice appears to have inspired the phrasing that Pastor Schlattner uses to justify his continuance in the village of Roşia (Rothberg). Cited earlier, it bears repeating in the context of Blau’s hypocrisy: “Man verlasse den Ort des Leidens nicht, sondern wirke dahin, daß [sic] das Leiden den Ort verläßt [sic]” “One does not leave the place of suffering, rather one works inside it, so that the suffering leaves the

place' (545).

Blau's impulsive, yet not quite principled character is in contrast to that of a fellow prisoner of Jewish ethnicity. Ironically, a major wave of arrests of politically unreliable individuals of diverse ethnic affiliation, completed on Romania's national holiday in August 1958, creates a microcosm of society behind bars and fosters inter-ethnic communication. Among these detainees is a Jewish antiquarian named Apfelbach, who serves as a catalyst among ethnic groups by conversing with every captive in his native language. Apfelbach's composure, stoic personality, and sense of humor offer an example of endurance to all prisoners, most of whom gladly accept his call for common prayer sessions (438, 441). Private conversations conducted in German with the narrator, along with a number of jokes shared in that language, help him survive the hardship experienced in jail and accentuate the similarities between two minorities that are traditionally envied, and, at times, mocked for their commitment to education.

While Blau and Apfelbach do not qualify as representatives of an entire ethnicity, their portrayal suffers from a degree of schematization. In East Central Europe, Jewish intellectuals have been repeatedly accused of serving Communist regimes as fellow travelers, and Blau's bright, yet misleading personality does little to dispel such generalizations. Furthermore, rigorous critics might well find fault with Apfelbach's stereotypical appearance as the Jewish businessman with quick wit and superb skills of communication. Nevertheless, both characters serve important functions by providing intellectual stimulation to the captive.

Schlattner's familiarity with the Hungarian aristocratic and peasant classes is not fully reflected in *Rote Handschube*. Deprived of their possessions and privileges, members of the Magyar nobility endure their state of impoverishment with dignity, and their broad education (including the command of nearly all world languages) still earns the respect of the local population. Hungarian aristocrats spared imprisonment or deportation construct their own autonomous niches, in which they maintain the finest manners in daily communication, address each other by their old titles, spend their days indulging in memories of their glorious past, and ignore the regime's existence as much as possible. Outlandish characters among their number add a unique color to the Transylvanian rainbow and even enjoy a degree of carnival license. This portrayal, rendered with antiquated features and an almost panoptic quality, reaches its culmination in the following description of a funeral procession in Kronstadt (Braşov). The episode in question, allegedly recollected from the Stalinist fifties, certainly warrants recognition for its surrealistic effects, but, given the strict control that the party exerted over daily life in the cities, both its historical accuracy and its likelihood are doubtful:

The funeral guests had appeared wearing their aristocratic garb. The gaping populace thought a film was being shot. The train made a detour through the center city. Militiamen saluted. The funeral procession paused in quiet meditation before the Palais Apori, where the party now resided. The members of the party were at the windows, lifting their workers' caps. The priest read a mass.¹⁰

While such narratives might offer an exotic charm for the delight Western European readers not acquainted with Transylvania, they do no service to the historic achievements of the Transylvanian-Hungarian nobility, ranging from maintaining a balance of power between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires for centuries to founding a considerable number of cultural and educational institutions. Moreover, Schlattner fails to recognize the affinity traditionally shown by Hungarians for the German language and culture. Recognizing Hungarian participation in many of the reforms and innovations carried out by the Saxons would have offered a sense of the fruitful cooperation between the two Transylvanian groups in question. Examples include the founding of the Unitarian Church by Franz David, alias Ferenc Dávid, and the dissemination of book printing by Caspar Helth, alias Gáspár Heltai.

The image of Hungarians in *Rote Handschube* is modified by an imprisoned Roman Catholic priest named Vasvári, who offers solace to the narrator and reminds him of the transitory nature of political regimes. With due respect for the narrator's idealistic belief in social progress in Romania, Vasvári urges him to differentiate between social order constructed by man and harmony on a greater, universal scale, which is governed by God's love. He illustrates this fundamental difference through the theological categories of a *coram mundo* relation, an approach focused on transient earthly matters, and a *coram deo* relation, i.e. living and working in the presence of God and solely for God's glory (*Rote Handschube* 449, Christoph Klein 35). According to the priest's prediction, reaching the state of *coram deo* will require a long process of healing and development and eventually will result in a call by God. He thereby alludes to Schlattner's mid-life vocational choice to become a pastor.

Additionally, Vasvári lends significant theological support to the narrator's hopes for ethnic harmony by introducing the Christian teaching of *Apokatastasis*, which promises an ultimate reconciliation between opposing forces and eventual deliverance for everyone. Formulated in Acts 3:21 and also by Christian teachers such as Origen, this idea conveys the hope of restoration of the original state of bliss and salvation for individuals to all nations and peoples. As a region that for centuries has survived warfare in a conflict zone between East and West, Transylvania certainly qualifies as an

example for restoration of the original divine order in a dimension beyond this world. The deliberations of Monsignor Vasvári on this topic demonstrate the power of Christian love over atheism and once more confirm the international spirit of Schlattner's novel:

Apokastastasis! . . . The ultimate goal in the plan for salvation is the return of all things back to the love of God, the restoration of the world to its paradisiac condition through the conversion and ennoblement of all peoples, human beings and creatures.¹¹

In the narrator's view, the major religious and linguistic differences between Romanians and Saxons have not prevented them from developing relations of mutual respect. As alarming as the ethnic slurs sound in jail, they are not echoed by the general Romanian population outside the prison walls. Moreover, as some of the Romanian agents of the *Securitate* privately admit, working for that organization is a burdensome duty (comparable to bearing a cross) that yields neither a sense of pleasure or honor (384). In the search for common ground between the two peoples, the narrator repeatedly points at economic cooperation in territories with mixed population, as exemplified by the collaboration between Saxon woolen cloth weavers and Romanian sheep farmers for the benefit of the entire Transylvanian region (154). In rural and also urban Romanian communities, orderliness and skills of organization traditionally attributed to the Germans and also to the local Saxons are held in very high regard as a counterbalance to the culture of mismanagement instituted by the Soviet occupying forces and their local accomplices.

While at the university, friendships and dating relationships with female students inspire the narrator, as a principled young academic, to become a more tranquil person. However, even as his Romanian friends respect the narrator's sense of duty and traditional Saxon loyalty, they are astonished by his belief in the government's commitment to creating equality and social justice. They help the narrator overcome his naïveté. Following the termination of a relationship with Annemarie Schönmond, a manipulative person obsessed with control,¹² the narrator develops a connection with a student named Ruxanda Stoica. In that friendship, he familiarizes himself with the mindset and some of the concerns of the Transylvanian Romanian middle class. More specifically, in a number of historical and political conversations, he learns about the mixed feelings that his Romanian fellow citizens nurture regarding the political and financial benefits of the union with their mother nation in 1919. As the result of various circumstances in domestic and international politics (including two authoritarian regimes and a world war), the union failed to improve the living conditions of Transylvania's ethnic groups. By calling Transylvania their home region

(as opposed to greater Romania), and by nurturing nostalgic sentiments about the times prior to World War I, many in the Romanian intelligentsia, including parts of the student population, do not differ significantly from their German or Hungarian compatriots (180).

In a critical state of confusion and insecurity following his release, the narrator visits the Romanian Eastern Orthodox convent Baritmeu (sic) at Transylvania's southeastern border and receives much-needed guidance for his future (580). Like Pastor Wortmann and Monsignor Vasvári, the Mother Superior of the convent is well aware of the narrator's dilemmas as member of a minority, as a Christian, and as a young professional eager to contribute to building a modern, industrialized Romania. She encourages her guest to stand aloof from any public engagement, trust divine providence, and seek a gradual renewal first by returning to his family. She tells him:

In his boundless goodness, the Lord God restores everything, just as it was intended in the original paradise. He restores everything to the center of His heart, cleansed of defacement by sin. Even those in the world who are distant from God will be part of a future conversion.¹³

The advice from the Mother Superior offers no immediate release from the tribulations the narrator has to suffer, but it does render hope for a gradual regeneration in the years to come. Encouraged by his visit to the convent, he makes a renewed attempt to seek acceptance by his family. He attempts to end his state of isolation by restoring old friendships and initiating new ones. The novel ends with a call to start a new life, made by the narrator's sister Elke: “. . . . die Mama wartet. Es ist Zeit” ‘Mama is waiting. It is time’ (602). The guidance received from representatives of the Saxon Lutheran, the Hungarian Roman Catholic, and the Romanian Eastern Orthodox Churches may convey the impression of redundancy, yet it reveals the common ground for Transylvania's diverse denominations and also confirms the superiority of Christianity to shallow atheistic indoctrination. As Christoph Klein observes, the interlocations with the spiritual mentors concerning the promise of a personal and religious renewal are episodes with key significance, but so far they have been overlooked by Schlattner's critics (38).

III. Prospects of Ethnic Harmony in Transylvania

The consolation and mentoring that the narrator receives from members of various ethnic groups provide an effective counterbalance to the physical and verbal abuse suffered in prison. During his incarceration and after his release, the narrator shows no spectacular intellectual growth in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*. Yet as a character suffering from feel-

ings of uselessness and inclined to egocentrism and depression, he would have experienced deterioration beyond repair without the support received during and even after his imprisonment. Memories of visits to various ethnic enclaves, communication with companions in misery, and wanderings after his release not only expose him and the readers to the rich ethnic diversity in Transylvania, but also help him maintain his self-esteem as a member of a minority facing hardship. In short, the *Securitate* managed to break his resistance but was not able to break his spirit as a Transylvanian.

During his visits in enclaves of various ethnicities, the narrator discovers impressive degrees of rural autonomy that are unusual under a Stalinist regime. The episodes and impressions of daily life in various Transylvanian subcultures represented in *Rote Handschube* might not withstand rigorous socio-historical scrutiny, but they demonstrate that temporary political regimes cannot subjugate the timeless human virtues of regional pride and dignity. By identifying characteristics of open-mindedness in the Saxon population and by pointing at traits of creativity and ingenuity in the Gypsy ethnicity, Schlattner's protagonist challenges long-existing stereotypes pertaining to the ethnic groups of East Central Europe. On the other hand, readers well-versed in Transylvanian history might be dismayed by the occasional generalization and sensationalism in the portrayal of the region's ethnicities, including the Hungarians and the Jews.

When assessing the possibilities of collaboration among the Transylvanian groups, the protagonist uses primarily positive historical and contemporary examples of coexistence and places little emphasis on the ethnic conflicts that have haunted the region over the centuries, ranging from the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1948 to World Wars I and II. While he has no doubt about the willingness and ability of the ethnic groups to survive as individual entities, he falls short of expecting or predicting the rise of a shared Transylvanian identity in the near future. Yet as a steadfast optimist, he believes that no political regime is able to divide and conquer ethnicities in the long run. Upon finishing the novel, the reader is left with an indelible message: rivalries and animosities among the area's nationalities are not beyond repair. The recollections involving various ethnic groups offer the promise of a continuing peaceful coexistence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Intended originally as a gesture of reconciliation, *Rote Handschube* developed into an exploration of a unique multi-ethnic conglomeration which is for the most part unfamiliar to the Western European or American audience. Through his narrator, Schlattner creates an optimistic alternative to the dystopian scenario provided by an oppressive regime. This brighter future applies to the Saxons in particular and to Transylvania's multi-ethnic soci-

ety in general. Schlattner cites the intercultural campus environment at the university in Cluj (Klausenburg) and the Saxon-Romanian trade partnership; however, including a few more specific cases of collaborations among ethnicities would have further strengthened his case. As mentioned above, one area offering such opportunities is the rich history of German-Hungarian relations since the Middle Ages, in Transylvania and beyond.

While the narrator was not able to convince his closed-minded captors of the benefits of ethnic and national diversity, his hopes of maintaining a multinational environment have been for the most part fulfilled. Helped by the energy and the will to subsist that Schlattner praises, the multi-ethnic conglomeration survived not only the late fifties, but also the nationalistic policies of the late Ceaușescu-era in the seventies and eighties. Well over five decades after the persecutions of the late fifties, and despite the mass emigration in 1990, the remaining Saxons comprise a highly productive intellectual community with the continuing support of their Lutheran Church. Similarly, the Jewish population maintains a vibrant cultural life in Romania, including Transylvania, and the Hungarians still constitute one of the largest ethnic minorities of Europe. By narrating the geopolitical intricacies, inter-ethnic relations and ideological conflicts of the mid-twentieth century, Eginald Schlattner provides an exceptionally valuable educational reading in Eastern European history. As a response to policies of intolerance, *Rote Handschuhe* conveys a message of tolerance and hope that is not only of regional, but also of universal relevance. In light of rising regionalism as well as new emphasis on international cooperation, and in consideration of current mass migration, Europe of the twenty-first century could well learn from the traditions and setbacks of a multi-ethnic cohabitation that has existed in Transylvania for several centuries.

Notes

¹ The original German titles appear in the text, in citations and bibliographical references. At this writing, English translations have not been published. English renderings of Schlattner's titles would be: *Der geköpfte Hahn* (1998) "The Beheaded Rooster"; *Rote Handschuhe* (2001) "Red Gloves"; and *Das Klavier im Nebel* (2005) "The Piano in the Fog." The quote that serves as the title of this article "Nicht fliehen, hinschauen" translates as "Do Not Flee, Look Closely." All translations into English are by David Caldwell.

² ... er hätte also die Möglichkeit gehabt, mich an den Galgen zu bringen, sozusagen. Bei mir hat er alle wirklich gefährlichen Sachen nicht verraten. Er hat einiges vorgebracht, was in keiner Weise wirklich belastend war. In meinem Fall hat er sich so benommen, wie man es von ihm hätte erwarten können ("Podiumsdiskussion" 115).

³So wird, um dies vorwegzunehmen, die angestrebte Rechtfertigung sozusagen zielgenau verfehlt. Sie verkommt mit und trotz entsprechendem Aufwand zu einem Lamento statt zu einer wahrhaftigen Beichte. Es ist ein Lamento darüber, was alle seine verdammten Opfer ... seinem anonymen, aber eher geschwätzigen als erzählerischen Ego angetan haben. Denn eins mögen wir ihm doch bitte glauben: Nicht um andere (Übeltäter) und deren zerstörtes Leben geht es, nein allein um sein Ego. (Scherg)

⁴Bist du kein Proletarier oder Kommunist, und das sind die wenigsten [Sachsen], dann bist du ein Bourgeois, Mittelständler oder Kleinbürger, ein Reaktionär also und als solcher entweder Nationalist oder Kosmopolit, mit den Steigerungen Faschist, Hitlerist und Imperialist. (242)

⁵Ich sitze mit angezogenen Beinen ... in der Zelle.... In der Stille bemerke ich, daß [sic] sich die Sinne voll Begierde der Erinnerungen bemächtigen, die aufdringlich zur Stelle sind: Jeder Schritt und jede Geste spuckt das Gedächtnis aus, und Gedanken, jemals gedacht, ohnehin. Gerade jetzt, wo ich wünsche, keine Biographie zu haben. (23)

⁶“Übrigens hat die Sächsische Nationsuniversität in Hermannstadt für die Rumänen auf dem Königsboden bereits im April 1848 die Gleichberechtigung mit uns Sachsen ausgesprochen. Und die Leibeigenschaft aufgehoben. Und strebt Ihre neue Ordnung, Herr Major, nicht das Nämliche an? Gleichberechtigung aller, ohne Unterschied, verankert in der Verfassung.” ... Ich bin so erregt, daß [sic] ich am Tischchen zu rütteln beginne. Tränen treten mir in die Augen. (126)

⁷Alle Schulkameraden und Schülerinnen waren willkommen, ohne Unterschied der sozialen Herkunft und der Volkszugehörigkeit, der Rasse und der Religion, wie das heute klar und deutlich in der Verfassung heißt. (368)

⁸Tenor meiner Lesungen: Für uns Sachsen hätten heute und hier die nächsten achthundert Jahre begonnen. Wobei ich im Gespräch danach feststellen mußte, daß [sic] die Leute nicht so sehr an den nächsten Jahrhunderten interessiert waren als daran, ob es in den nächsten paar Tagen regnen werde und ob die Partei sie auch an diesem Sonntag zur Arbeit aufbieten würde oder ob man endlich einmal ruhigen Gewissens in die Kirche gehen könne. (273)

⁹Zigeuner und Sachsen hätten als Handwerker und Gewerbetreibende, als Händler und Kaufleute vieles gemeinsam. Unverständlich sei, daß [sic] Herr Hitler die Zigeuner aus dem Reich ausgewiesen habe, obschon sie perfekt deutsch sprächen und als Hausierer den geschätzten Kunden alles ins Haus lieferten. Undank sei der Welten Lohn! (373)

¹⁰Die Trauergäste waren in der prunkvollen Aristokratentracht angetreten. Das gaffende Volk meinte, ein Film würde gedreht. Der Zug machte

einen Umweg über die Innenstadt. Die Milizionäre salutierten. Vor dem Palais Apori, wo nun die Partei residierte, verweilte das Trauergefolge in stiller Andacht. Die Partei lag in den Fenstern und lüpfte die Arbeiterkappen. Der Priester las eine Messe. (516)

¹¹Apokatastasis! ... Das letzte Ziel im Heilsplan ist die Rückführung aller Dinge in die Liebe Gottes, die Wiederherstellung der Welt in ihren paradiesischen Zustand durch die Bekehrung und Beseligung aller Völker, Menschen und Geschöpfe. (441)

¹²According to Elisabeth Siegmund, the character of Annemarie Schönmund nearly occasioned a lawsuit against the author, due to the apparent similarity between this figure and Annemarie Siegmund, a student who was once close to Schlattner.

¹³In seiner grenzenlosen Güte stellt der Herrgott alles wieder her, so wie es im paradiesischen Anbeginn gemeint war. Alles bringt er wieder in die Mitte seines Herzens, geläutert von der Entstellung durch Sünde. Auch die auf Erden Gottfernen werden teilhaftig einer zukünftigen Bekehrung. (585)

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