

Drd. Kommer Erika (Babeş-Bolyai Tudományegyetem, Kolozsvár):
The *Neue Banater Zeitung* of Timișoara under the editorship of Nikolaus Bergwanger
(With special regard to the student pages)

After eight years of the foundation of the German central newspaper *Neuer Weg* in Bucharest in 1949 the leaders of the Socialist Republic of Romania decided to stipple the “emancipated” Romanian media life with further German regional newspapers. So, in 1957 the *Karpatenrundschau in Braşov*, *Die Wahrheit* in Timișoara was founded.¹

Considering communism as a given crisis, that has hampered the rights of the individual, the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press, we can say that the *Neue Banater Zeitung* was able to show an improvement during the most difficult social circumstances, the proceeds of which – the preservation of the culture, the traditions and the identity of the Banat Swabians and of the Germans in Romania generally- still can be evaluated as an outstanding performance.

Nikolaus Bergwanger *NBZ*-editor's work (1969-1984) is an excellent example of how the crisis can be endowed with value-adding role. In my thesis I would like to reflect mainly to the wide variety of student pages that appeared under the editorship of Bergwanger.

Bergwanger was a real journalist who made a stand for his staff and the principles of his community even in the most distressed years.² During his time the format and the spirit of the newspaper had been changed.³ The 34-year-old journalist had come from the editorial staff of the *Neuer Weg* in Timișoara and despite his dynamism had been a controversial personality among the readers because of his political activity.⁴ Thanks to his political functions he was able to make out of the *NBZ* - to a certain extent – a readable and valuable newspaper, not only a paper of the party.

With the shift to a smaller format Bergwanger was ahead of his time. He might have considered this change as a key to survival⁵ and history proved him right.

Although Bergwanger's unconcealed aim was to increase the readership, taking into account the numerous new, mostly cultural supplements, it can not be said about the changed *Neue Banater Zeitung* that professionally or in its content have been degraded due to its smaller format.

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- 1 Geier, Luzian: *Die „Neue Banater Zeitung“ Aspekte der Berichterstattung und der kulturelle Auftrag* = Engel, Walter / Tonă, Walter (Hrsg.): *Banater Stadtkultur. Temeswar – das kulturelle Zentrum der Banater Deutschen (II). Zweite Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts Beiträge der 47. Kulturtagung in Sindelfingen – 19./20. November 2011*, Stuttgart, Landsmannschaft der Banater Schwaben, 2012, 84.
 - 2 Geier, Luzian: *Dem Zwang der Parteipolitik ausgeliefert?! Für die Gemeinschaft etwas bewegen: Das Wirken von Nikolaus Bergwanger als Chefredakteur der „Neuen Banater Zeitung“ 1969-1984*, 2007, 1-2. (unpublished)
 - 3 Since 1th of November 1969.
 - 4 Schneider, Eduard: *Literatur und Literaturreflexion in der rumäniendeutschen Presse der Nachkriegszeit. Die Neue Banater Zeitung (Temeswar) und ihr Beitrag zur Förderung der literarischen Nachwuchsgeneration (1969-1975)* = Miladinović Zalaznik, Mira / Motzan, Peter / Sienerth, Stefan (Hrsg.): *Benachrichtigen und vermitteln. Deutschsprachige Presse und Literatur in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, München, IKGS Verlag, 2007, 318-319.
 - 5 Neville Brody, see: Bucher, 514.

Bergwanger has created the "Pipatsch" dialectical supplement, the "NBZ-Kulturbote" cultural supplement, several local special pages (for Arad, Lugoș, Jimbolia, Sînnicolau Mare), the new sport section that was loved and appreciated not only among the German-speaking readership but also among other readers from the whole country and many student pages.

The supplement of the university students was named *Universitas*, the students of the Nikolaus Lenau high school in Timișoara had their *Lenau-Schüler-Stimmen*, the *Jugendtribüne* addressed high school students from Arad, Sînnicolau Mare, Lugoș, Jimbolia and Reșița monthly from 26th of October 1972.

Several pages were dedicated to high schools from Banat under the heading „Wir über uns”. The editorial board of these pages included students and NBZ journalists. On the part of the NBZ usually Rosl Fink⁶ was the responsible editor of these pages, the *Jugendtribüne* was lead by Franz Thomas Schleich.⁷

Giving the lie to the socio-political context of the time, the NBZ assured generous publishing opportunities to young writers, and so helped by the development of the literary group Aktionsgruppe Banat. It published for example the works of the future Nobel laureate Herta Müller.

This versatility helped the *NBZ* to stand out among the local papers in Romania and to turn into "regional newspaper" - in 1972 numbering about 15,000 readers.⁸

Bergwanger and its newspaper endeavored to represent the interests of the community and raise awareness of the readers of the importance of the homeland in an era in which the other events and decisions at country level amplified the sense of alienation and rootlessness.⁹

The *Neue Banater Zeitung* forged virtue of the crisis. For its long-term success is no better proof than the fact that it is still readable and it is a reliable document of an era and a landscape, it is an authentic cultural, economic and political reflection of a community that has already been broken up.¹⁰

6 Rosl Fink német-román szakon végzett a Temesvári Egyetemen 1966-ban. Két év Jánosföldön való némettanítás után a *Neue Banater Zeitung*hoz szerződött, ahol a nyolcvanas évek elejéig ifjúsági és oktatási problémákkal foglalkozott. Ma Németországban él. Lásd: „Rosl Fink“- címszó = Dr. Petri, Anton Peter: *Biographisches Lexikon des Banater Deutschtums*, Marquartstein, Th. Breit Druck+Verlag GmbH., 1992.

7 Franz Thomas Schleich német szakon végzett Temesváron, 1972-től a *Neue Banater Zeitung* munkatársa. 1983 óta Németországban él, saját kiadója az „Edition Schleich”. Lásd: „Franz Thomas Schleich”-címszó = Dr. Petri, Anton Peter: *Biographisches Lexikon des Banater Deutschtums*, Marquartstein, Th. Breit Druck+Verlag GmbH., 1992.

8 Liebhard, Franz: *Dreitausend = NBZ*, 1972. 02.01.

9 Geier (2007), 3. (unpublished)

10 Geier (2007), 3. (unpublished)