

## **The Germans in Dobrudscha (Part 12)**

The book listed below, containing 248 pages of information, is being translated chapter by chapter and posted as each chapter is completed. Part 1 gives you a summary of each of the 15 chapters in the “Contents” section. The words in the [square brackets] are those of the translator and are not found in the original text.

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24 July, 2017

### **The Germans in Dobrudscha**

**along with a contribution  
to the history of the German  
migration in Eastern Europe**

**by  
Paul Traeger**

**With 73 illustrations in the text and tables  
Stuttgart 1922  
Foreign and Home Publishing Company  
(*Ausland und Heimat Verlags=Aktiengesellschaft*)**

## 12.

### School, Church and Sect Systems

Of the Schwabian emigrants who moved to Prussia at the end of the 18th century, almost everyone could read, most of them could write.<sup>1</sup> They had acquired a modest education in the South German homeland, and thus also a certain understanding for the importance of the school. They proved this in their Russian settlements in an amazing manner. Already in the 1830s, it is reported that there was hardly a German village in the whole of the Tsarist Empire that does not have at least one school maintained at the expense of the community.<sup>2</sup>

Even after the emigration to Dobrudscha, the colonists, despite their modest, abandoned situation in their settlements, soon took care of a school, as was already stated in detail. Of course, the concept of school cannot be combined with high expectations. The small villages, separated from the rest of the world, were not able to take on larger expenses. The next thing was not to think about calling professional teachers. One of the colonists had to take the office of the schoolmaster and filled it as best as he could. It was not an alluring position. According to a record of Colonel von Malinowsky, the teacher in Atmagea, in 1863, received annually from each farmer 2 *Maß* of grain and 3 *piasters* [estimate 1 piaster=US\$4] for each child of school age; the one in Ciucurova got one *Maß* of wheat and 2½ *piasters* from each family, as well as 4 *piasters* for each of the 14-16 school children.<sup>3</sup> However, since he had to do without payments from 8 poor ones, his annual income amounted to a total of 255 *piasters*. The teacher was a little better off at Kataloi. He received 25 from every farm and 3½ *piaster* for every school child. As soon as the colonies were economically strong, they were also mindful of attracting real teachers from Russia, Transylvania, Switzerland, and Germany. For the most part, the salaries of these were paid in kind. So teacher Louis Horn, in Atmagea, a brother from Rauhes House [an industrial institution for poor boys near Hamburg, Germany], besides an annual cash amount of 200 *frank*, received from each farm 2 *Maß* of wheat, 2 *Maß* of potatoes, ½ *oka* of butter and ½ *oka* of bacon, plus a piece of land with 5 *Maß* of seed and 3 wagons (*Fuhren*).

But even the professional teachers could hardly make the school business a satisfactory one despite their best intentions. They were faced with irregular limited attendance, in most cases in itself only during the winter months from November to Easter, and also the lack of teaching materials. During the summer, instruction took place only on Sunday in most villages. “What the children have learned in the winter gets lost again in the summer.”<sup>4</sup>

From the beginning of the 1880s, not all over at the same time, Romanian state teachers were pressed upon the German colonies; Atmagea in 1884, Cogealac already earlier. Left to the German teachers were only the teaching of German and religion, and they were limited to one or two hours daily. Of course, the German school houses were also confiscated by the Romanian teachers. Later, however, in most larger villages, Romanian schools have been built, all in the

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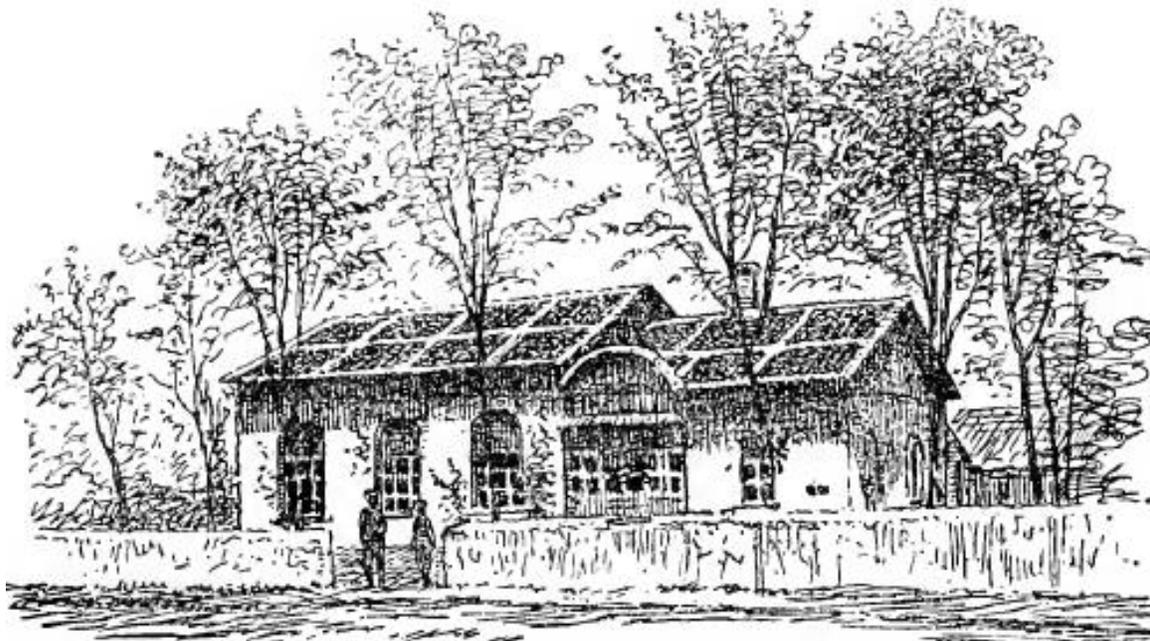
<sup>1</sup> Beheim=Schwarzbach, Friedrich der Große, S. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Historisch=Statistische Bemerkungen in: Annalen der Erd-, Völker- und Staatenkunde 1839, S. 179.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *Maß* = 10 *Oka*. 1 *Oka* = 2¼ *Pfund*.

<sup>4</sup> Bericht des Lehrers Louis Horn in: Müller, John. Paul, die Deutschen Schulen im Auslande, ihre Geschichte und Statistik. Breslau 1885. S. 86.

same style as our picture of the school of Sarighiol shows. So the municipalities were forced to maintain Romanian teachers. It was not always possible in some of the poorer colonies to also cover the cost of a German one. But even some bigger ones have abandoned their German school, like Caramurat since 1902, or they were temporarily without German lessons, such as Kataloi and Culelia. So it is completely absent in the small settlements of Ortachioi, Mangalia, Sofular, Techirghiol and Palaz Mare; and in Klein-Mangeapunar, the children grew up without any lessons. In general, however, the farmers held stubbornly onto their German school and did not shy away from the sacrifice of the support of a German teacher. Such folks were always existing in Cogealac, Tariverde, Cogeala, Fachria, Cobadin, Sarighiol, Alacap, and various colonies, despite the limitation which the challenge brought to bear, having brought a schoolmaster from Germany; so also Atmagea, Ciucurova, Horoslar, Mamuzlu, and Neue-Weingärten. In the Catholic communities of Malcoci, Tulcea, Caramurat, and Culelia, the priest took it upon himself to teach the youth in their mother tongue. So that the attendance of the German school will not be neglected, the ecclesiastical orders of the Constantsa Parish maintains the provision that a child from the organized parish will only be allowed to be confirmed if it has



**Romanian School Building**

attended the German school regularly for at least 2 years, a certificate from the teacher must be submitted to that fact.<sup>5</sup> And according to the statute of the Atmagea Parish, staying away from school is a reason for expulsion from the community.<sup>6</sup>

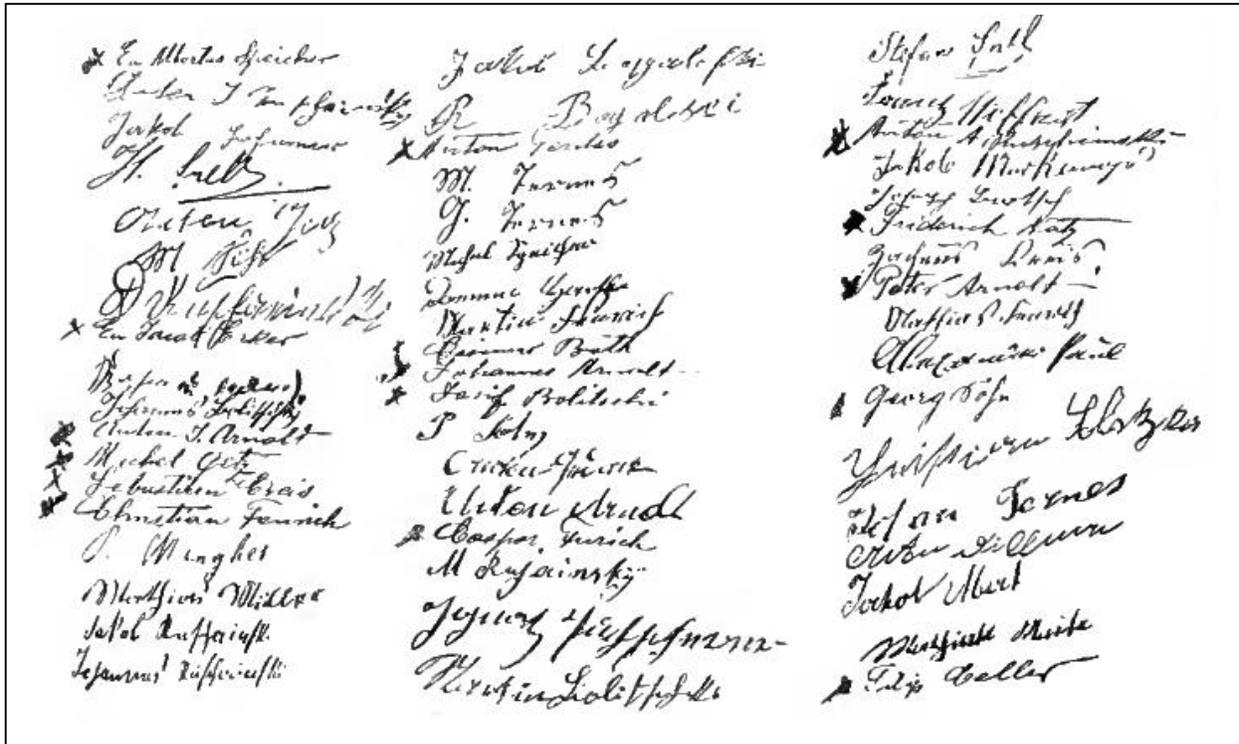
No one will be surprised by the fact that in the forced restriction and the absence of almost all the tools of the German instruction only very modest successes could be achieved. According to Schmidt, "A guarantee in some reading, the knowledge of some biblical stories, the catechism,

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<sup>5</sup> Kirchliche Ordnungen im Kirchspiel Constanza, II, § 6.

<sup>6</sup> Statut des deutschen evang. Kirchenspiels Atmagea, gedruckt Bukarest 1907, II, § 7.

some passages and hymns is the regrettable modest result of the German school.”<sup>7</sup> As an old man told me from his own time in school, one was only able to learn to read, but not to write when taught by the teacher who was a farmer. Today, the art of writing is known almost without exception in all colonists. How far they have come may be illustrated by the pictorial reproduction of the signatures of the farmers of a village in a community document.



**Signatures on a Village Document**

How sad when it comes to knowing the grammatical rules of our language and correct spelling. The transcripts of folk songs, which I obtained from boys and girls in different villages are sometimes hardly understandable. As an example, here are a few lines that come from a young woman about twenty years old, who overall made a very clever and lively impression:

*Du Dorr du brichst Dein Schwur der Dreie  
 Du liebtest mich schon lange zeit nicht mehr.  
 Habe nuhr Getuld es drift sich eintzt die Reie,  
 Dann Schlägt mein Hertz vor lauter Muhrt und Schwert.*

You fool, you are breaking your vow of faithfulness  
 You have not loved me already for a long time.  
 Just be patient for you will repent  
 Then my heart will pound because of [grumbling and oaths – speculation].

*In der Blüte meiner Schenste Johre  
 Gab ich mich zum Obfer für dich hin.*

<sup>7</sup> Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande, I, S. 609.

*Du Raubest mir die Unschuld sambt der Dugent,  
Schbot und Haß was hekstentz mein gewin.*

At the height of my best years  
I gave myself as an offering to you.  
You stole my innocence as well as my chastity,  
Ridicule and hate was what I received.

Higher claims are sufficient only in the German school in Constantza. Even here, the beginning was a very humble one. It was first in 1892 that Pastor Jancke started to gather the German children for instruction in the room of a private home. Through an endowment by Mrs. Sophie Luther, the owner of the well-known Lutheran brewery in Bucharest, the Lutheran community was given the means to build its own, spacious schoolhouse, which was completed in 1901. The school, under the leadership of the pastor, developed into a four-class elementary school with the advancement to a first-class secondary school up to the outbreak of war. For the Romanian subjects, it was the state curriculum; for the Germans, something like a German elementary school. However, the instructions were predominantly such that the character was preserved as a German educational institution. Of the 246 hours of instruction offered weekly, 175 were in the German language, 71 in non-German. By the year 1915-16, the number of students grew to 207. Of these, 7 were Reich Germans, 24 Austrian or Hungarian, 8 Turks, 4 Bulgarians, 124 Romanians, 12 Greeks, 1 from Holland, and 27 without nationality given. According to the students, it was a rather mixed school, and the numbers also showed that the youth of the German farmer colonies were only weakly represented. The school in Constantza was the only one to receive support from the Reich School Fund; at first 4,000 *Mark* annually, since 1912, 4,200 *Mark*.

It has already been mentioned about the deep inner churchly tendency of the German colonists, the development of the parishes in earlier time and about the construction of the prayer houses in the individual villages. The German settlers have never experienced difficulties in the exercise of their confession. In Article 3 of the *Colonization Regulations for Turkey*, they were granted “the free exercise of their religion without discrimination.” The same article has this to say about the construction of churches: “If there are enough churches of their rite in the localities that they are instructed by the government to settle, that is where they will conduct their prayers. Those who establish themselves in new localities will be given the permission to build the necessary churches after a petition to the government to that effect.”

The first combined organization of the Lutheran congregations had its center in Atmagea. They joined the Prussian Provincial Church in 1858 and received their pastor from the Supreme Church Council in Berlin. The current Enactment Document was adopted in 1907. Currently, the congregations at Atmagea, Ciucurova, Kataloi, Cogealac, Tariverde and the preaching station at Ortachioi belong to the Atmagea Parish.

The congregation of Constantza-Anadolchioi was founded in 1883, which was first served by Galatz, later by Atmagea, until it received its own pastor in 1892. The Constantza Parish includes Cobadin, Cogeala, Fachria, Mamuzlu, Sarighiol, and the preaching stations of Alacap, Horoslar, Neue-Weingärten, and Sofular. The 1908 accepted ordinances are applicable, without

discrimination, for a prayer house and preaching stations to all communities in ecclesiastically organized areas, that is, places where a number of German Lutheran families are found, who desire a regular ecclesiastical supply and make possible the preparation of an available space. The management of the mutual matters is carried out by a General Management Board (*Generalvorstand*) in which the local rural municipalities each send 2 representatives. In all ecclesiastical relations, in other words, in terms of doctrine and religious order and constitution, the parishes are subject to the leadership and supervision of the Lutheran Supreme Church Council in Berlin, which is also given the right to call a pastor. Some stately churches are located in Constantsa, Atmagea, Ciucurova, Cogealac, and Cogeala; more or less spacious prayer houses, usually with an addition to or free-standing wooden bell tower in Kataloi, Cobadin, Sarighiol, Mamuzlu and Fachria. And where such structures are absent, the worship service is held in one of the homes.

The large circuit of the parishes and the long distances makes it so that the pastor is only able to come to some congregations a few times a year. In his place, the teacher or a farmer takes charge of conducting the Sunday devotion. According to the church ordinance, in case of the illness of a child not yet baptized, the teacher or any confirmed Lutheran Christian can also administer baptism, which is later confirmed by the clergy.

The absence of their own pastor in most villages and the irregularity of ecclesiastical care has led to the formation and propagation of special groups and sects among the Lutheran farmers. However, the ground for this, at least among the Swabian colonists, was already prepared back in the homeland. Many of them had left Germany only because of their separatist tendency. As separatists of various kinds, some were drawn to Russia in "brotherly harmony." According to Gustav Rümelin, the widespread appearance of pietism is to be considered among the most remarkable characteristics of the Württemberg folk life. For characteristic small sects inside and outside the church, the Old Württemberg country has become a fertile ground up to the more recent time.<sup>8</sup> The natural tendency for meditation (*Gruebeln*) and brooding (*Spintisieren*), the passionate search for the pure truth of faith, led to the emergence of the Brotherhoods, which are also present in Dobrudscha, in all Lutheran communities, who seek to find the right meaning of the scripture teachings in their common discussion meetings, which are usually held three times weekly.

But these "Prayer Brethren" (*Betbrüder*) or "Hour Brethren" (*Stundenbrüder*) have at least not been dismissed (*losgelöst*) by their congregation and also participate in the common services of worship. At times, effectual sects have become dangerous for the unity and peace of the German farmers. In the first place, the Baptists had deployed a passionate publicity for their meditations and found many adherents in the colonies. Their headquarters was and still is in Kataloi today. At the end of the 1860s, there were only three or four Lutheran families, and even now are still in the minority. The spread of the Baptist movement in the older settlements is revealed in a report from the year 1892 in the church records of Atmagea. At that time there were in Atmagea 294 Lutherans and 95 Baptists, in Ciucurova 241 and 107, in Tariverde 425 and 31, in Ortachioi 115 and 56, in Kataloi 56 Lutherans, about 200 Baptists and 60 unassociated persons (*Wilde*), who belonged to no fellowship. These divisions have often led to open hostilities in some colonies. In the last decade, a large number of Baptists emigrated to America; however, you can still find

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<sup>8</sup> Rümelin, Gustav, Reden und Aufsätze. 3 Folge, Freiburg i. Br. 1894, Seit 386.

some in most of the communities, but only in small numbers; so, in Atmagea 3 families, in Cicuruova about 15, in Cogealac 12, in Tariverde 6, in Cogeala 6, and in Sarighiol 4.

Of lesser significance are the Adventists or Sabbath-Day folks (*Sabbataner*) who, in place of Sunday, keep the Saturday holy and also do not recognize the high festivals such as Easter, Pentecost, etc. They are represented most strongly in Neuen-Weingärten, where they have their own prayer house. There are also a few families in Sarighiol.

The Catholic colonies have also been better cared for earlier when it comes to ecclesiastical matters and as to the number of their clergy. As mentioned, Tulcea and Malcoci already had a priest in 1847. Caramurat and Culelia also had their own clergyman. Mangeapunar was supplied by Constanta. During the Turkish times, the Catholic parishes were subject to the Bishop of Nikopoli; since 1883, subject to the Bukarest archdiocese. For years, the office of the archdiocese has been occupied by the Benedictine Raymund Metzhammer, who was born in Erzingen and has made himself known through the scientific research of Dobrudscha. Beautiful, massive churches are located in Tulcea, Malcoci, Caramurat, Culelia and Mangeapunar, and a small, very humble prayer house in Techirghiol. Similar to the Brethren Societies in the Lutheran parishes, there are also the "Maria Brotherhoods" in the Catholic communities which still conduct special devotions for themselves.

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