

CENTRALIZATION AND UNIFORMIZATION. SPORT AND LEISURE IN THE BUCHAREST GERMAN DAILY „NEUER WEG” IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1960s

Ioana Florea*


Abstract: *Following the onset of the communist regime in Romania and the „denazification” process that the Germans in Romania underwent because of their involvement in the politics of the German Ethnic Group in Romania (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien) during the Second World War, the German Anti-Fascist Committee of the Romanian People’s Republic (Deutsches Antifaschistisches Komitee der Rumänischen Volksrepublik) was founded and its official newspaper, the centralized daily „Neuer Weg”, was created in 1949 as the sole newspaper in German language in the whole country. The present article analyses the sports coverage and the leisure columns within this newspaper, concentrating on the second half of the 1960s that politically constituted a somewhat positive evolution after the post-war harsh totalitarian era. From a sporting perspective, this period was characterized by an upswing that led to outstanding international performances by Romanian athletes. The sporting coverage in „Neuer Weg” is analysed by means of a series of case studies on the reporting of those international competitions where some of these performances were achieved. The identitarian and discursive shift that the Germans in Romania were bound to undergo in order to become „worthy” citizens of the socialist Romania was visible also in the sporting coverage in German language, where expressions such as „our team” or „our players” no longer referred to German teams and athletes in Romania (as it was the case in the interwar period) but to Romanian ones, since all German clubs and associations in Romania had been dissolved in the post-war years and the German athletes in Romania were bound to integrate in Romanian clubs and in the Romanian sports movement as a whole.*

Keywords: „Neuer Weg”, sports coverage, leisure columns, handball, tennis, football, cycling.

Introduction

The Bucharest German daily newspaper „Neuer Weg” (literal translation: New Pathway) was the subject of a series of scientific papers¹. These works concentrated

* PhD, Researcher at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca; e-mail: ioana.florea@ubbcluj.ro;

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2133-9518>

¹ Meda Muncundorfeanu, *Die deutschsprachige Presse in Rumänien während der kommunistischen Zeit. Fallstudie: die Zeitung „Neuer Weg”*, Mittweida, 2015; Annett Müller, *Abschied in Raten. Vom „Neuen Weg” zur „Allgemeinen Deutschen Zeitung für Rumänien”*, Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Hermannstadt/Sibiu, 2002; [further: Annett Müller, *Abschied in Raten. ...*] and Egon Schuster, *Vom Huldigungstelegramm zur Information. Die deutschsprachige Minderheitenzeitung „Neuer Weg” vor und nach dem Umsturz in Rumänien. Eine vergleichende Inhaltsanalyse*, Brockmeyer, Bochum, 1992, as well as a number of scientific papers.

on the political, economic and social sections of the newspaper and devoted a reduced space to the sports and leisure sections. For example, Eduard Eisenburger mentioned these categories in two paragraphs² and Annett Müller in a few sentences³.

From a political perspective, the period examined in the present paper corresponds to the Nicolae Ceaușescu's rise to power in 1965, up to the „Cultural Revolution”, which, following the Chinese example, was initiated in July 1971 and led to an economic decay and to an even more repressive communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s. For Romania this period was characterized by an economic growth and the rise of the living standard, accompanied by a certain, but still limited, loosening of the dictatorial grip. But this positive evolution is to be regarded in comparison to the harsh post-war years, nevertheless constituting a totalitarian period, and represents the „transition of communist Romania from a milder form of socialism to one of the most regressive regimes” [author's translation]⁴.

Ceaușescu's initial reforms to consolidate his power were also noticeable in the press. The German „minority”⁵ press in Romania at this time was somewhat more protected than the Romanian-language press; it was subject to strict censorship, but the top leaders of the communist regime had no direct contact with this press as they had with the Romanian-language one. In this sense, the statement of Hans Frank, long-time editor at „Neuer Weg”, recorded in an interview with Annett Müller, should be mentioned: „1968 to 1974 were the best years of the newspaper”⁶.

In this somewhat better period of the communist regime (that lasted from the Second World War up to December 1989), some outstanding sporting results were achieved, such as within the Olympic Games, international handball competitions and the Davis Cup in tennis. Moreover, the only presence of the Romanian football national team at the World Championships in the whole communist period was achieved in this period, in 1970. From a sporting point of view, the present paper analyses these from the Romanian perspective most important international events of the time, as presented in the daily newspaper „Neuer Weg”, the only central source of sports information in German language in Romania, since no specialised newspapers existed in this language. The primary sources for the present paper are therefore constituted by the collection of „Neuer Weg”, years 16–23, Nr. 4563–7046, from 1964–1971.

² Eduard Eisenburger, *Die Bedeutung der Tageszeitung „Neuer Weg” als Wegbereiter und Aufbauhelfer*, in vol. *Die Zeit in der Zeitung. Beiträge zur rumäniendeutschen politischen Publizistik*, Eduard Eisenburger, Michael Kroner (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1977, p. 190–209, here p. 204–205. [further: Eduard Eisenburger, *Die Bedeutung...*]

³ Annett Müller, *Abschied in Raten...*, p. 75.

⁴ See here the periodization of the communist regime in Romania in Cosmin Popa, *Regimul comunist în România*, in vol. *Istoria României. Compendiu*, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan (eds.), Institutul Cultural Român, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 617–675, here p. 618.

⁵ The German population in Romania was referred to during the communist period as the „German minority”. The present paper uses the politically neutral terms „Germans in Romania” or „German population in Romania”.

⁶ Annett Müller, *Abschied in Raten...*, p. 217. At the time of the interview, in 1997, Hans Frank was deputy editor-in-chief, head of the sports department, head of service and publishing director.

The paper presents the English translation of the German names of newspapers, column titles, political organizations, etc. The original German names and terms are added in brackets. The official Romanian names are indicated when relevant.

During the Second World War, all political, economic, social and cultural aspects regarding the Germans in Romania were taken over and assumed by the extreme right-wing totalitarian German Ethnic Group in Romania (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien*), that functioned under the direct patronage of Nazi Germany. After the end of the Second World War and the „victory” of communism, the „denazification” constituted the main issue of the communist regime concerning the Germans in Romania. In this sense, the German Anti-Fascist Committee of the Romanian People’s Republic (*Deutsches Antifaschistisches Komitee der Rumänischen Volksrepublik*) was founded in 1948 in Bucharest and its official newspaper, the centralized daily „Neuer Weg”, was created in 1949. The „new pathway” therefore represented the new direction which the „Romanian Germans” (*Rumäniendeutschen*)⁷ had to follow, namely turning away from the National Socialist ideas of Hitler’s Germany and participating in the „edification of socialism”.

The daily „Neuer Weg” was coordinated by the Press Department of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and controlled by the Censorship Board. As a national daily newspaper, it addressed the entire German population in Romania. In the 1960s it reached a circulation of up to 70,000 copies per day, with a German-speaking population of officially 382,595 people (according to the census of March 15, 1966), so that, as Eduard Eisenburger points out, its readers included practically every German-speaking family in Romania⁸.

The editorial team was based in Bucharest, with representations in eleven cities in Romania. The newspaper was edited throughout the entire period of the communist regime: from 1949 up to 1953 as the official newspaper of the German Anti-Fascist Committee of the Romanian People’s Republic (*Organ des Deutschen Antifaschistischen Komitees der Rumänischen Volksrepublik*) and between 1953 and 1968 as the official newspaper of the People’s Councils of the Romanian People’s Republic (*Organ der Volksräte der Rumänischen Volksrepublik*). From 1968 onwards it had the subtitle Political Daily Newspaper (*Politische Tageszeitung*).

A number of regional German newspapers were also edited in the communist period such as „Volkszeitung” (literal translation Popular Newspaper) from 1957 and

⁷ The term *Rumäniendeutschen* („Romanian Germans”) was coined by the communist regime and constituted an artificial construct. Historically, the Germans in Romania never constituted a uniform entity, they were made up of distinct groups, with individual historic evolution and identities, such as the Transylvanian Saxons, the Banat Swabians, the Sathmar Swabians, the Bucovina Germans, the Bessarabia Germans, the Dobrogea Germans, the Germans in the Romanian Old Kingdom (Moldova and Wallachia), etc. The term *Rumäniendeutschen* expresses the uniformization and centralization political measures of the totalitarian communist regime, in order for it to create a homogenous German population group in Romania, that might therefore be easier controlled and subjugated.

⁸ Eduard Eisenburger, *Die Bedeutung...*, p. 190–209, here p. 207.

„Karpatenrundschau” (literal translation Karpathian Overview) from 1968, both in Braşov/*Kronstadt*, „Neue Banater Zeitung” (New Banat Newspaper) in Timişoara from 1968 and „Hermannstädter Zeitung” (Sibiu Newspaper) from 1968, which was renamed „Die Woche” (The Week) from 1971⁹. Many of the journalists who worked at these newspapers had started at „Neuer Weg”, a newspaper which, according to Eisenburger, may be regarded as a real „German-speaking apprentice school for journalists”¹⁰.

The Structure of „Neuer Weg” in the Second Half of the 1960s. The Position of the Sport and Leisure Sections within the Newspaper

„Neuer Weg” was printed in large format and had six editions per week, Tuesday to Sunday, usually on 4 pages, occasionally on 6 or 8. The first pages were dedicated to the sections information/commentary, economy/society, foreign policy/abroad. After communist party conferences or on special political occasions, Ceauşescu’s translated statements took up to 3–4 pages, sometimes the entire edition.

The last page was usually reserved for sports and leisure activities. Sometimes sporting news also appeared on the front page, especially in the case of the Olympic Games or special victories by Romanian teams or individual athletes. These reports were then presented in detail on the second or last page, in the sports section.

The last page contained the following categories, depending on the day of the week: *For the Woman (Für die Frau)*, with fashion, cosmetics, health advise etc., appeared Tuesdays or Wednesdays; *Being Young Today/For the Youth (Jung sein heute/Für die Jugend)* presented music, movies, study opportunities, success stories as examples for the young, appeared Thursdays; *Science and Technology (Wissenschaft und Technik)* could be found Wednesdays or Thursdays; *Current Events in Pictures (Aktualität im Bild)* was a selection of pictures from special events, with comments, appeared Fridays; *Traveling and Relaxation (Reise und Erholung)* included presentations of touristic destinations in Romania, appeared Fridays; *For Pioneers and School Students (Für Pioniere und Schüler)* with games, sports, school reports, career tips, ideas for spending the holidays, excursions, readers’ letters in the permanent column *Hello, the mail is here (Hallo, die Post ist da)*, crossword puzzles, animal care, essays of school students etc., could be found

⁹ Alfred Coulin, *Presse und Publizistik*, in vol. *Epoche der Entscheidungen. Die Siebenbürger Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Oskar Schuster (ed.), Köln, Wien, Böhlau, 1984, p. 323–332, here p. 331; Elena Dunăreanu, Mircea Avram, *Presa sibiană în limba germană (1778–1970)*, Sibiu, Biblioteca Astra, 1971; Alexander Krischan, *Deutsche Periodische Literatur des Banats. Zeitungen, Zeitschriften. Kalender. 1777–1971*, München, Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerkes, 1987.

¹⁰ Eduard Eisenburger, *Die Bedeutung...*, p. 190–209, here, p. 206.

Saturdays or Sundays; *For Entertainment (Zur Unterhaltung)* appeared Fridays and *For the Weekend (Zum Wochenende)* was printed on Sundays and included ideas for vacations, news on film and theater, humour, the series *Thinking and Guessing (Denken und Raten)* of crossword puzzles, caricatures, the column *Kuriosa* with humorous news from abroad, etc.

These columns shared the last page with the sports section and with the serialized novel. If one of the columns took up the entire last page, then the sports section was moved on one of the inner pages of the newspaper. In addition, from the 1950s onwards, the supplement *Culture and Life (Kultur und Leben)* and from 1968 the children's supplement *Rocket Post (Raketenpost)* appeared in smaller format, together with the Friday edition.

The editorial team published an annual calendar and from 1970, the travel guide *Come with us (Komm mit)*. The calendar was usually published in November for the following year, with the aim of „carrying on a tradition while still offering something new and completely different every time” and was „welcomed as a joyful event every year”¹¹. The calendar for the year 1967 for example was printed in 40,000 copies. „Neuer Weg” reported, that the general opinion of the readers, expressed in their letters to the editorial office, was that „This book is of a high level, this book is indispensable”¹².

Leisure activities related to sport, such as hunting, fishing, hiking and mountaineering or orientation competitions were often present in „Neuer Weg”. Under the title *What does the hunting country Romania have to offer? (Was bietet das Jagdland Rumänien?)* a conversation conducted by Heinrich Lauer with Dr. Ludwig Rudescu, „corresponding member of the academy and chairman of the hunting council at the hunters' association”, was published on the cover of the edition from January 9th, 1965 of „Neuer Weg”. According to Dr. Rudescu, Romania was „one of the most attractive hunting areas in Europe”, especially the Danube Delta, but there two nature reserves were set up to preserve rare species. In keeping with the tone of the times, hunting was intended to bring many benefits, from increasing meat exports to „heightening of the love for the country” through love of wildlife and landscape¹³.

Even if the German Transylvanian Carpathian Association (*Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein*), one of the biggest alpinistic associations in South-east Europe, together with its numerous sections was dissolved and all its assets, including its mountain chalets, were expropriated in 1945¹⁴, the tradition of hiking and mountaineering remained alive among the Germans in Romania¹⁵. Articles on hiking

¹¹ „Neuer Weg”, No. 6082 /November 21st, 1968, p. 1.

¹² Idem, No. 5502/January 10th, 1967, p. 1.

¹³ Idem, No. 4880/January 9th, 1965, p. 1.

¹⁴ Marcel Șofariu, *SKV. 140 de ani de drumeție*, Brașov, Editura Foton, 2020, p. 33–34.

¹⁵ *Der Bergtourismus in Siebenbürgen/Rumänien 1945-1990. Eine Dokumentation über den Bergtourismus in Siebenbürgen nach der rechtswidrigen Auflösung und Enteignung des Siebenbürgischen Karpatenvereins (SKV) im Juni 1945*, Manfred Kravatzky (ed.), edited in the name of

and mountaineering were present in the sports section of „Neuer Weg” in both winter and summer, offering advice for excursionists, tips on equipment and accessories, as well as descriptions of places and mountain trails. The hiking trips with school children also constituted a continuation of the long-standing German tradition in Romania, since the second half of the 19th century, and reports from such outings were published in „Neuer Weg”.

Ice skating opportunities for sports lovers were regularly presented in winter, such as reports on the creation of the artificial ice-skating rink in Bucharest’s Floreasca neighbourhood in 1964. Paul Scheinost and Franz Heinz mostly reported on fishing and Gheorghe Cilba reported on touristic orientation competitions. Moreover, advice on fitness, mostly gymnastics exercises, especially for women, could be found in „Neuer Weg”.

As for popular sport (*Massensport*), the newspaper reported on events such as the Banat Winter Spartakiad. The Spartakiad was a precursor of *Daciada*, that was established later, at the end of the 1970s. *Daciada* was a popular mass sporting event in communist Romania, held every other year, with a strong ideological component and encompassing all sports. It was abolished after 1989.

The newspaper was also sold abroad through the public foreign trade company Cartimex, which exported newspapers and magazines abroad. „Neuer Weg” was distributed in countries such as Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Democratic Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, Canada, and the United States of America. Advertisements for subscriptions were printed in the newspaper (for example in No. 5498/January 5th, 1967, on the last page). So the audience of the daily „Neuer Weg” was not only made up of Germans in Romania, but also of emigrants of German ethnic origin from Romania.

A Short Overview of the Historical Development of the German Sports Press in Romania. Constrained Focus and Discourse Shift in the Communist Period

The introductory phase, in which no specialized periodicals, in the true sense of the word, were published, but yearbooks and annual reports of the associations, lasted from the beginning of the Gymnastics association activity in the second half of the 19th century until the First World War. Following the example of Germany, a

the Section Carpathians of the German Alpine Club (Sektion Karpaten des Deutschen Alpenvereins), Heidelberg, 2011; Manfred Kravatzky, Reinhold Kraus, Marcel Șofariu, *140 Jahre SKV und seine Nachfolgevereine. Bergbegeisterung. Eine Dokumentation über die Tätigkeit des Siebenbürgischen Karpatenvereins SKV 1880–1945, seine Rolle im Bergtourismus in Siebenbürgen/Rumänien und seine Nachfolgevereine*, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, Honterus-Verlag, 2021.

gymnastics movement developed within the German population especially in Transylvania, but also in Banat, in Bucovina and in the Romanian Old Kingdom (provinces that would make up Greater Romania after the First World War), in the 19th century, in which many gymnastics associations took part. Mountaineering associations also emerged, based on the example from Germany and Austria, and they edited their own yearbooks and yearly reports¹⁶.

The development of the German-speaking sports press in Romania came as a natural consequence of the spread of the gymnastics movement and later of the modern sports among the Germans in Romania. Modern ball sports such as football, handball, tennis, rugby, etc. came from Great Britain, especially via Austria-Hungary, from the pre-war period, but especially in interwar period and were quickly adopted by the German population in Romania. It was in Banat where a competitive modern sports (especially football) movement first developed, in the pre-war period, in connection with the advancing industrialization and with the creation of sports clubs and associations. In the areas inhabited by Transylvanian Saxons and by Bucovina Germans, the sports movement only developed institutionally after the First World War. As a result, a new specialized press emerged, consisting of weekly newspapers and magazines. General daily newspapers also regularly reported on sporting events. The range of this sports press was rather regional and it mostly focused on the sporting activities of the German-speaking population. The Transylvanian Saxons, the Banat Germans and the Bucovina Germans constituted separate identitarian groups, a characteristic that was noticeable also in their sports movement and specialized press. The development of a pan-German identity among the Germans in Romania was still in its early stages, even from sporting perspective. The interwar period constituted the evolutionary peak for the German sports press in Romania, when economic development, combined with the freedom of speech and the liberty to use the German language in an official capacity (a novum for the Banat Germans, for example) led to the founding of numerous sports newspapers and magazines in Romania, such as „Sportblatt” (1920), „Sport” (1920), „Sportblatt”, a supplement of „Deutsche Tagespost” (1924), „Sport-Rundschau” (1926) and „Sport. Wochenblatt für allgemeinen Sport” (1928) in Sibiu (*Hermannstadt*) in Transylvania, „Sport Blatt”(1920), „Sportblatt”, a supplement of the „Czernowitzer Deutsche Tagespost” (1924) and „Neues Czernowitzer Sportblatt” (1930) in Chernivtsi (Czernowitz) in Bucovina, „Sportblatt”, a supplement of „Bukarester Deutsche Tagespost” (1924) in

¹⁶ Ioana Florea, *Der Anfang eines Massenphänomens. Die deutschsprachige Sportpresse in Siebenbürgen in der Zwischenkriegszeit (1920–1928)*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2016 [further: *Der Anfang eines Massenphänomens ...*]; Idem, *Presa sportivă de limbă germană*, in vol. *Limbă și cultură germană în România (1918–1933). Realități postimperiale, discurs public și câmpuri culturale*, Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Rudolf Gräf (ed.), vol. II, Iași, Edit. Polirom, 2023, p. 391–396 [further: *Presa sportivă de limbă germană ...*]; Idem, *Sprachrohre einer kleinen Gemeinschaft: die Periodika des Bukarester Turnvereins und dessen Beziehungen zur Bukarester deutschen Presse*, „Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde”, vol. 66/2023, București, Editura Academiei Române, p. 115–125.

Bucharest, as well as „Sportmontag” (1934), „Sport-Anzeiger” (1934) in Timișoara (Temeswar) in Banat, etc.¹⁷.

After the Second World War, the communist regime introduced measures of restructuring, uniformization and semantic standardizations in the German press in Romania. No regional newspapers could be established in the first decade after the war. A specialized German sports press never emerged in Romania again. The only pieces of sport coverage in German language could be found in „Neuer Weg”. With the creation of a central newspaper for the „Romanian Germans”, the communist regime aimed to uniformize the heterogenic German population groups in Romania. As German sports associations were dissolved and the organization of German community sporting events was forbidden, the German athletes were forced to integrate even more into the Romanian sports movement and German sport fans had therefore to shift their focus to the Romanian competitions, in an attempt of denationalization by the communist regime, to which sport was also subjected. The discourse of the now centralized sports coverage also changed. The focus shifted accordingly, to the Romanian sports movement. Expressions such as „we”, „our athletes” etc. which previously mostly referred to „we Transylvanian Saxons” or „we Banat Germans” or „we Bucovina Germans” became „we Romanian citizens” and phrases such as „our team” now referred to a Romanian team, since German associations and clubs no longer existed.

The Representation of Sport in „Neuer Weg”

The sports section of „Neuer Weg” was a collection of reports about Romanian sport in general, written in German. Regional competitions such as the Banat and Brașov football and handball regional championships, with a significant German participation, were covered regularly, based on the high interest of the readers. Special achievements of German athletes in Romania, such as the handball players, were also highlighted. But overall, the sports section also had to adapt to the ethnic unification requirements of the communist regime. Likewise, there were no real opinion articles in the sports section, real problems were never addressed, discussions or arguments were never initiated, as it had been usual the case in the free German sports press in Romania in the interwar period.

During the communist era, all athletes had to have a permanent employment (the athletes were often featured in the press with their „main job”, such as Lia Manoliu, electrical engineer, Ivan Pațaichin, fisherman, Viorica Viscopoleanu, drawing teacher, Mihaela Peneș, sports student etc.) and therefore only practice sport

¹⁷ Ioana Florea, *Der Anfang eines Massenphänomens ...; Die Banater-deutsche Sportpresse 1934/35. Ein Intermezzo in der Presse Rumäniens der Zwischenkriegszeit*, vol 12, in the series *New Researches on East Central and South East European History*, Berlin, Peter Lang, 2022; Ioana Florea, *Presa sportivă de limbă germană ...*, p. 391–396.

as amateurs, a fact that actually did not correspond to reality. Top athletes were practically all professionals, so sport was their main activity and unofficial ways were found for them to be paid for their activity, especially in the form of bonuses that consisted not only in money but also in form of permits for acquiring television sets or cars. The communist ideology did not allow any „deviations” such as sports professionalism, so that depending on the orientation of the club, athletes were given (pseudo) employment. The athletes of „departmental clubs” such as Steaua and Dinamo were employed within the Ministry of Defense or within the Ministry of the Interior, athletes of clubs affiliated with industry plants were fictionally hired in the factories, etc.

Reports of sports competitions usually appeared in the newspaper the following day. The only exception represented competitions that ended late in the evening, after the editorial deadline. These appeared in the newspaper the day after that.

When it came to national sporting events, the newspaper worked with direct and indirect sources of information. It was reported both on site and based on contributions from press agencies, mostly the Romanian national press agency Agerpres.

Among the most important editors who worked in the central sports department in Bucharest during this time were Gerhard Simonis, Hans Frank and Hugo Zein. Several correspondents were responsible for regional reporting: Nikolaus Berwanger, Walter Jass and Peter Zervesz from Timișoara, Hans Barth, Hans Schuller and Daniel Winkler from Brașov, Alexander Kindermann and Oskar Bock from Sibiu, Hans Zultner from Sighișoara (*Schässburg*), Hans Polder from Lugoj (*Lugosch*), Valentin Lazăr from Făgăraș (*Fogarasch*), Michael Laabling from Reșița (*Reschitz*), Erwin Fehérváry from Cluj-Napoca (*Klausenburg*), Ernst Zikeli from Bistrița (*Bistritz*), among others. The editors sometimes signed with their full name, in other cases only with an abbreviation.

In contrast to the current sports press, in which the editors are specialized in certain sports and, in the case of the most popular one, football, are even responsible for specific clubs, in the 1960s and '70s the editors responsible for sports reported on all sports.

The editorial team mostly obtained information about international sporting events from the press in Germany. According to Hans Frank, the entire German press could be found in the editorial office, not only from the Democratic Republic of Germany, but also from the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and Switzerland¹⁸. In some cases, articles were taken from the German press, such as from the „Kicker Sportmagazin” or „Sport Echo”¹⁹. Foreign newspapers and press agencies were also quoted. At important sporting events, such as the men’s handball world championship in 1964 and 1967, the newspaper sent a special reporter, in this case Gerhard Simonis.

¹⁸ Interview von Hans Frank, in Annett Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹⁹ For example, in “Neuer Weg”, No. 6326/September 3rd, 1969, p. 6; No. 6498/March 26th, 1970, p. 6; No. 5510/January 19th, 1967, p. 6.

Reports from international journalists were also included, such as in the case of the 1967 handball world championship, when Mihály Kocsis from Budapest and Klaus Pohlenz from Berlin wrote for the sports section of the „Neuer Weg”, for example in No. 5498 from January 4th, 1967. Reports from insiders such as coaches or association secretaries could also be found in the sports section from time to time.

The newspaper focused on the information function of the press. The journalistic genres were adapted to a press focused on information and consisted of news, reports, interviews, etc. The style was generally objective, the language simple but specialized.

The entertainment function of the sports press was in its early stages of development in the respective period, humorous short reports appeared in the sports section, within the column *Kuriosa*. Reports from the private lives of famous athletes or other well-known sports personalities, which today attract the largest readership, appeared very rarely in „Neuer Weg”'s sports section. As previously indicated, there were no opinion articles. Cautious short comments on topics such as television broadcasts or viewership decline cannot be considered opinion articles.

The sports section of „Neuer Weg” consisted of national and international reports. What differentiated the newspaper from other publications of the same type were the short reports about sporting events in German-speaking regions in Romania. As previously indicated, the regional reporters mostly wrote about local football and handball championships, where Germans were involved. The reports were printed as short pieces of news and results lists.

The remaining national reports were divided into permanent subheadings: *Football A-League*, *Football B-League*, *C-League reports (C-Liga meldet)*, *Indoor (small-field) handball women (Kleinfeldhandball Frauen)*²⁰, *Indoor (small-field) handball men (Kleinfeldhandball Männer)*, *NW motor column* or *Across the championships (Quer durch die Meisterschaften)*. In addition to the most popular sports for the Germans in Romania of the time, which from this classification point to football and handball, the sports section provided comprehensive coverage of other sports, such as rugby, basketball, boxing, tennis, volleyball, athletics, rowing, figure skating, ice hockey, swimming (including water polo), gymnastics, table tennis, cycling, equestrian sports, chess, bowling, fencing, shooting, etc.

²⁰ The specification that the column was about indoor small-field handball was due to the fact that at the time, two versions of handball existed. The large field handball, played on a football field with 11 players, was introduced in Romania at the beginning of the 1920s by Transylvanian Saxon sport and gymnastics teachers, who got acquainted with the game while studying in Germany. Large field handball was the most popular version of the sport played in Romania during the interwar period. The version currently played, indoor or small field handball, with 7 players, has its origin in the Nordic game of handball, as well as in the Czechoslovak version, *hazena*, which appeared at the end of the 19th century. The first indoor handball game, with 7 players, took place in Romania in the second half of the 1930s. This version quickly became very popular, overtaking the large field version, the latter gradually ceasing to exist in the 1950s–1960s. Steiner, Johann: *Handball-Geschichte(n). Siebenbürger Sachsen und Banater Schwaben ebnet Rumänien den Weg zum Gewinn von sieben Weltmeistertiteln*, București, Edit. ADZ, 2003, p. 14, 24.

The newspaper's most comprehensive sports section appeared on Tuesdays. Reports from various competitions that were held over the weekend appeared under the title *Sport from Sunday (Sport vom Sonntag)*, when most of the games of the national championships were held.

International competitions without Romanian participation were summarized in the *Games and Tournaments* subsection, which consisted of short reports. The largest international sporting events with Romanian participation are examined in the next chapter, by means of case studies. Subsections such as *All kinds of sports (Sportallerlei)* or *Football news* reported of both internal and international competitions, as did the subsection *On snow and ice/Winter sports*. The sports section also offered tips for *Pronosport*, a Romanian traditional form of sports betting.

The pictures in the sport section were either provided by newspaper photographers or came from press agencies. Sport editors also took pictures themselves if they didn't have a photographer with them. Pictures taken from televised transmissions were also occasionally printed.

Case Studies: The Biggest International Sporting Events in „Neuer Weg”

The representation of sport in „Neuer Weg” is further analysed by means of a series of short case studies on the coverage of some of the most important international sporting events of the time, such as the Olympic Games, Men's Handball World Championships, Football World Championships and the Davis Cup finals in tennis. Other sports where Romanian athletes achieved exceptional results, such as gymnastics, are not presented in this paper, because those performances were registered either before or after the time frame set for the analysis. Romanian top performances in rowing, athletics and fencing are presented in connection with the Olympic Games.

Until 1992, the **winter and summer Olympic Games** were held in the same year. Since then, winter and summer Olympics take place alternatively, two years apart from one another. The present case study analyses the coverage of the summer and winter Olympic Games in 1964 and 1968 in „Neuer Weg”.

Before the games started, the newspaper usually published a preview, with topics such as the history of the Olympic Games (*Olympic Chronicle* by Gerhard Simonis), analysis on the Romanian athletes' chances to win medals, introduction of the most important opponents, news from the Olympic village, explanations of the scoring systems of the Olympic winter sports disciplines (January 1964), etc. In 1964 an Olympic Sport Express competition was organized by the newspaper, the winners were determined by means of a draw, with prizes such as tickets to the Olympic Games, cars, motorcycles, television sets, refrigerators, etc.²¹.

²¹ „Neuer Weg”, No. 4960/May 31st, 1964, p. 2.

During the competition, reports from the Olympics were printed on the front page of the newspaper every day, with the coverage continuing in the sports section. There were mostly reports from the Romanian Agerpres, but also from foreign press agencies. The general news were presented in the column *Olympics of all sorts* (*Olympisches Allerlei*). Gerhard Simonis and Hans Frank wrote feature articles in 1968 under the heading *Our Olympic Commentary*. The sporting results were presented in the column *Rolls of honour* (*Ehrentafeln*).

On January 13th, 1968 „Neuer Weg” reported of Romania’s first and, to date, only medal at the Winter Olympics, when Ion Panțuru and Nicolae Neagoe won the bronze medal in the two-man bobsleigh. The feature was printed on the front page, together with a photo of the podium, with the headline: *Romania’s First Olympic Medal. Panțuru and Neagoe Bring Home the Bronze Medal (Rumäniens erste olympische Medaille. Panțuru und Neagoe bringen Bronzemedaille heim)*²².

The outstanding performances of the Romanian athletes at the Summer Olympics in 1964 and 1968 were presented on the front page, with photos and headlines such as *Gold Medal for Iolanda (Goldmedaille für Iolanda)*²³ (Iolanda Balaș, high jump), *Gold and Silver for Romania. Viorica Viscopoleanu and Mihaela Penes with Medals (Gold und Silber für Rumänien. Viorica Viscopoleanu und Mihaela Penes mit Medaillen)*²⁴ (athletics and javelin), *Second Gold Medal for Romania. Ionel Drâmbă Parried the World Elite (Zweite Goldmedaille für Rumänien. Ionel Drâmbă parierte Weltelite)*²⁵ (foil-fencing), *Third Gold medal for Romania. Lia Manoliu on the Winner’s Podium (Dritte Goldmedaille für Rumänien. Lia Manoliu auf dem Siegerpodest)*²⁶ (discus throwing), *The Gold Medal was in the Two-Man Canoe. Ivan Pațaichin and Serghei Covaliov Became Olympic Champions. Gold, Silver and Bronze for Romanian Canoeists (Die Goldene lag im Zweier-Canadier. Ivan Pațaichin und Serghei Covaliov wurden Olympia-Sieger. Gold, Silber und Bronze für rumänische Kanuten)*²⁷ etc.

After the end of the Winter Olympics in Grenoble in February 1968, Georg Hromadka praised the public TV station *Televiziunea Română – TVR* (the sole TV station in the country) in his article *Bravo for TV (Ein Bravo für TV)* for the „sixty hours of live broadcast” and for the „series of filmed reports” aired on the occasion of the Winter Games in Grenoble: „This time the TV station has managed to keep its countless friends, the viewers all over the country, up to date with the big events on snow and ice”²⁸. Similar to „Neuer Weg”, the public TV station TVR also experienced its best years from the whole communist period in the 1960s–1970s, with somewhat reasonable sports broadcasting time for that period, unlike the 1980s, when

²² Idem, No. 5940/January 13th, 1968, p. 1.

²³ Idem, No. 4807/October 16th, 1964, p. 1.

²⁴ Idem, No. 6051/October 16th, 1968, p. 1.

²⁵ Idem, No. 6053/October 18th, 1968, p. 1.

²⁶ Idem, No. 6055/October 20th, 1968, p. 1.

²⁷ Idem, No. 6061/October 27th, 1968, p. 1.

²⁸ Idem, No. 5646/February 20th, 1968, p. 1.

the whole sports broadcasting on TV was reduced to approximately 10–15 football games a year and a few World and European championships, such as gymnastics, athletics, figure skating. The Radio sports broadcast made up for the almost nonexisting TV sports broadcast in the 1980s.

The **men’s handball world championships** were especially popular among Romanian sports fans due to the outstanding performances of the national team. Handball was very beloved among the German population in Romania, so that „Neuer Weg” had even more reasons to devote an extended coverage to these competitions.

Since handball originated in Germany after the First World War, it was only natural that the ethnic Germans were the ones to introduce the game in Romania. The Transylvanian Saxon gymnastics and sport associations were the first to put together handball teams, that went on to dominate the game in Romania in the interwar period. Transylvanian Saxon players (especially the ones from Sibiu) made up almost entirely the Romanian men’s (large-field) handball team that successfully participated at the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936²⁹. This tradition went on in the post-war period, when ethnic German players such as Hansi Schmidt, Hans Moser, Michael Redl, Josef Jakob, Werner Stockl, Otto Tellmann, Rudi Jost, Roland Gunnesch etc. made a decisive contribution to the numerous international victories of the Romanian men’s national team in the 1960s and 1970s. In this period the Romanian men’s national team dominated the sport, winning four of the total of six editions of the world championships, in 1961, 1964, 1970 and 1974, as well as the bronze medals in 1967. The Romanian women’s national team also achieved notable performances in that period, winning the world title in 1962 and finishing in the top 4 in 1971, 1973 and 1975. As mentioned before, indoor (small-field) handball gained precedence over the originally played large-field outdoor game, so that from the 1960s only this version of handball was played³⁰.

Because handball was very popular among the Germans in Romania, „Neuer Weg” made efforts to get actively involved in the game and therefore organized the NW Handball Cup (*NW-Handballpokal*) in the 1950s, which, according to Eduard Eisenburger, „definitely helped in the selection of the best handball players”³¹.

The present paper uses for the case study three men’s handball world championship editions, the ones in Czechoslovakia in 1964, in Sweden in 1967 and in France in 1970. Gerhard Simonis was a special correspondent at the 1964 and 1967 editions. His comprehensive reports made the front page of the newspaper, with a continuation in the sports section, next to the permanent subsection „Handball World Championship splinters” (*Handball-WM-Splitter*). In addition to Gerhard Simonis, the association secretary Lucian Grigorescu also reported from Sweden in 1967.

²⁹ Ioana Florea, *Studii de caz: gimnastică, alpinism și altele*, în vol. *Limbă și cultură germană în România (1918–1933). Realități postimperiale, discurs public și câmpuri culturale*, Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Rudolf Gräf (ed.), vol. II, Iași, Edit. Polirom, 2023, p. 386–391, here 390–391.

³⁰ Johann Steiner, *op. cit.*, p. 14, 24.

³¹ Eduard Eisenburger, *Die Bedeutung...*, p. 190–209, here p. 204–205.

The enthusiasm over the performance of the Romanian national team at the 1964 World Championship is best seen in the reports sent by special envoy Gerhard Simonis, initially after the victory over the Soviet Union in the preliminary round: „Dramatic up to the Final Whistle. Anxious Minutes in Pardubice / 16:14 Victory against the Soviet Union. It’s done! Taking a deep breath, we rose from our seats. The last 60 minutes of play had cost strength and nerves. Not only our boys, whose arms did not shoot out in the air as usual after the final whistle, because of excitement and tiredness, but also every single spectator in the very cold Pardubice ice stadium, where the thermometer wouldn’t climb above 8 degrees, despite the efforts of the organizers. [...]”³².

After qualifying for the final, Simonis wrote in his feature story *We are in the final* enthusiastically: „We can’t believe it yet! Our boys were big; they couldn’t have been bigger that day. They struck their best blade yet. Winning against the favorites [Czechoslovakia, author’s note] in their own stadium – this is an achievement. Even before the game, our boys seemed transformed. We had never seen them so optimistic and they believed in victory. That was crucial. [...]”³³.

And finally, celebrating Romania’s World Cup triumph, the newspaper published a team photo on the front page with the headline *The World Champion*. In his frontpage feature *Crown of Handball*, Georg Hromadka described the victory as „a triumph of the best, most balanced, most consistent, most technically skilled, fastest, most determined and most thoroughly prepared team”³⁴.

During the 1967 World Championship, Hugo Zein made a cautious appeal for television broadcasts of the Romanian team’s games under the headline *Poor listener-fan! (Armer Hörer-Drucker!)*, beside a caricature showing three anxious fans shaking beside a radio station: „It’s hard to watch a game on the screen because you’re excited and nervous. But at least you see something, but if you only hear and have to imagine everything with more or less imagination, then that’s hard. Our brave listener-fans have been through this three times [the Romanian team’s first three games from that edition, author’s note], and they will certainly will be there again on Thursday, when they will perhaps also literally get to see something. After the three alternating baths [one draw and two victories, author’s note], they really deserve it”³⁵.

Such a veiled critical hint to the communist government, that oversaw the television program and therefore also the live sporting broadcast, constituted a great risk for the respective journalist, in the time of a totalitarian regime. The television program was reduced to a few hours a day, in the afternoon-evening (on weekends also a few hours in the morning-noon) and sporting broadcast was respectively scarce. For the current reader, it may be difficult to imagine, that such great performances by Romanian athletes could only partially be seen on television, at the mercy of the communist government.

³² „Neuer Weg”, No. 4619/March 7th, 1964, p. 3.

³³ Idem, No. 4625/March 14th, 1964, p. 1.

³⁴ Idem, No. 4627/March 17th, 1964, p. 1.

³⁵ Idem, No. 5510/January 19th, 1967, p. 6.

The Romanian men's handball national team finally won the bronze medal at the 1967 World Championship, a throw-back from the precedent edition when it had won the gold medals. Nevertheless, this performance was also welcomed on the front page of „Neuer Weg”, with a feature by Gerhard Simonis with the slightly disappointed title *We Gave Gold for Bronze (Gold gaben wir für Bronze)*³⁶.

The gold medal of the Romanian national team at the 1970 World Championship was also celebrated on the front page with the headline *Welcome the World Champion. Romania's Handball Team Won its 3rd World Champion's Title (Empfangt den Weltmeister. Rumäniens Handballmannschaft errang in Paris ihren 3. WM-Titel)*. Portrait photos of all national team players were printed in the sports section, as was usual when a Romanian team won major victories. The headlines in the sports section on the last page emphasized the Romanian dominance of World handball: „Our National Team Won its Third World Champion's Title after a Mammoth-Final”, „Romania's Reputation as a Leading Handball Nation Confirmed at the Most Balanced World Championships' Edition of all Times”³⁷.

The **Football World Championships** were further major events with wide public audience, that „Neuer Weg” covered. The present case study presents „Neuer Weg”'s coverage of the editions in England in 1966 and in Mexico 1970, to show the difference between the coverage of an edition when the Romanian team participated and one when it didn't. In 1966, Romania did not qualify for the World Cup. Before the start of the tournament, the count-down daily subsection „... Days until the first whistle” (*Noch ... Tage bis Anpfiff*) constituted a preview. After the start of the competition, news were printed in the sports section on the back page of the paper and reports were published as part of the permanent sub-section „World Cup Splinters”. The most interesting games from this edition were broadcast on television in Romania (the TV listings were printed in „Neuer Weg”), so simple „1-0 coverage” (a term used in Germany for a coverage that presented only the score and very briefly a few game details) was no longer sufficient. Because of the emergence of live television broadcast, the press was in the process of shifting its perspective from the literal coverage of sports, to backstage details and background facts, a development that spawned behind-the-scenes reporting and led to the rise of tabloid journalism.

„Neuer Weg”'s coverage of the 1970 World Cup in Mexico was considerably extensive, as the public interest was bigger, since Romania qualified for the tournament after more than 30 years of absence. Romania had taken part in the first three World Cup editions: Uruguay 1930, Italy 1934 and France 1938. But until 1970, the Romanian national team couldn't qualify for the competition. „Neuer Weg”'s coverage of the World Championship was announced by „The great NW Mexico contest” (*Das große NW Mexiko-Preisausschreiben*). There were a few questions to be answered, with the possibility of winning a television set, two footballs with the

³⁶ Idem, No. 5514/January 24th, 1967, p. 1, 6.

³⁷ Idem, No. 6485/March 10th, 1970, p. 1, 6.

autographs of the national team players and a bicycle³⁸. The preview began two months in advance and included the count-down daily subsection „... Days until Mexico” (*Noch ... Tage bis Mexiko*), that consisted of news about the Romanian national team and other participating teams, as well as other reports from Mexico. The traditional subsection „World Cup Splinters” (*WM Splitter*) returned after the start of the tournament, while other subsections included „Five Minutes After the Game” and „From other World Cup Stadiums”. Hans Frank signed most of the reports, that focused on the games in Romania’s group during the first phase of the competition, a group referred to as the „lion’s den” because of the strength of Romania’s opponents. On the first day of the tournament, the sport section on the last page introduced the Romanian national team with portrait pictures and a small presentation of each player³⁹.

The only time a World Cup report made the front page was when the Romanian national team celebrated a 2–1 victory over Czechoslovakia in the group stages. The article with the heading *Golden Goals in Mexico* praised the two goal scorers, Alexandru Neagu and Florea Dumitrache, and was accompanied by their portrait photos. A comprehensive report with the headline *Romanian Success in the Lion’s Den from Guadalajara* (*Rumänischer Erfolg in der Höhle des Löwen von Guadalajara*) was printed in the sports section on the last page of the newspaper⁴⁰.

The World Cup represented a good advertising opportunity, in this case for the Venus television sets, with the headline *Who will be world champion? The answer to this question – on the screen of the television set Venus* (*Wer wird Fußballweltmeister? Die Antwort auf dieser Frage – auf dem Bildschirm des Fernsehgerätes Venus*)⁴¹.

In addition to the match reports, entertaining short articles with pictures, such as about Pelé and his female admirers⁴² or about „the mascot” of the Peruvian team, the daughter of the national team coach⁴³, brought some colour to the sports section.

The **Tennis Davis-Cup Finals** constituted major sporting events in Romania at the end of the 1960s – beginning of the 1970s because of the outstanding performances of the Romanian Davis-Cup team led by Ilie Năstase and Ion Țiriac. Romania reached the final of the Davis Cup in 1969, 1971 and 1972. Up to 1971, the final stage was known as challenge round, since the cup holder played against a challenger who had come out of several qualifying phases. From 1972 the challenge system was dropped.

Although the USA won the trophy every time, this performance by the two best male Romanian tennis players of all time represents a high point of Romanian tennis, a true „Romanian tennis miracle” (*rumänisches Tenniswunder*) of the time, since, as Hans

³⁸ Idem, No. 6510/April 9th, 1970, p. 6.

³⁹ Idem, No. 6553/May 31st, 1970, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Idem, No. 6561/June 9th, 1970, p. 1, 6.

⁴¹ For example, in „Neuer Weg”, No. 6557/June 5th, 1970; No. 6559/June 7th, 1970, p. 4.

⁴² „Neuer Weg”, No. 6570/June 20th, 1970, p. 6

⁴³ Idem, No. 6557/June 5th, 1970, p. 6.

Frank pointed out in „Neuer Weg”, there were significantly fewer tennis players registered at Romanian clubs in comparison to other countries and there was a considerable smaller number of tennis courts available. The sporting value of the Davis Cup trophy, the „Salad Bowl” – a name that the trophy owed to its shape, was compared in the newspaper with that of the Jules Rimet Cup – the Football World Cup trophy at that time. The Davis Cup competition was said to have developed „over the years into an (unofficial) tennis world championship”, as it was put in „Neuer Weg”⁴⁴.

The reports from the Davis Cup finals, mostly drawn up by Hans Frank for the sports section of „Neuer Weg”, described not only the course of the game but also the atmosphere around the tennis court. The column usually also included information from the history of the competition as well as quotations from the international press.

Hans Frank reported on the first Romanian presence in a Davis-Cup final (then challenge-round) in 1969 in „Neuer Weg” with the headlines: *Năstase and Țiriac Before the Final Verdict. Romania for the First Time in the Challenge Round. The 58th Winner of the Davis Cup will be Decided in Cleveland* (*Năstase und Țiriac vor der Entscheidung. Rumänien zum erstenmal in der Herausforderungsrunde. In Cleveland geht es um den 58. Gewinner des Davis Cups*)⁴⁵, *The Salad Bowl Remains Overseas. Țiriac and Năstase Couldn't Withstand the Nervous Strain – The Doubles Match Was Also Lost* (*Salatschüssel bleibt in Übersee. Țiriac und Năstase hielten der nervlichen Belastung nicht stand – auch das Doppel ging verloren*)⁴⁶.

The final case study presents a local international competition, **the Cycling Tour Scânteia** (*die Scânteia Radrundfahrt* in German, *Cursa Scânteii*, the Romanian official name), that had a special significance for the press. Probably inspired by the French and Italian sports papers „L'Auto Velo” (the current „L'Équipe”) and „Gazzetta dello Sport”, who initiated the famous cycling competitions *Tour de France* and *Giro d'Italia* at the beginning of the 20th century to boost their circulation⁴⁷, several Romanian newspapers organized in the communist period the Romanian cycling competition, named after the leading organizer, the daily „Scânteia” (the Spark), the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania. The newspapers awarded the yellow jersey to the winner and several prizes to the first placed cyclists. The German daily „Neuer Weg” was usually among the organizers and also offered a prize.

The present paper uses for the case study the 18th edition of the Cycling Tour Scânteia from 1965, which reporter Gerhard Simonis named „the most interesting

⁴⁴ Idem, No. 6974 /October 8th, 1971, p. 5.

⁴⁵ Idem, No. 6340/September 19th, 1969, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Idem, No. 6343/September 23rd, 1969, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ioana Florea, *Sports in Specialized and General Information Press. Historical Development and Patterns of Sports Coverage*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Series Ephemerides”, year LVI, Nr. 2/2011, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, p. 63–87.

cycling tour to date that took place on our country's roads"⁴⁸. Simonis reported by telephone from the cycling tour that took place between September 27th and October 3rd, 1965 and consisted of seven legs, with the start in Baia Mare and the finish in Bucharest on the Stadium „23 August” (on the route Baia Mare – Cluj – Oradea – Timișoara – Reșița – Herculane – Orșova - Turnu Severin – Craiova – Călimănești – Râmnicu Vâlcea – Bucharest) and marked the end of the Romanian cycling season. Since the Tour of Romania (official name *Turul Ciclist al României*) was not organized in 1962-1965, the Cycling Tour Scânteia had a special significance. Cyclists from nine countries (Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Democrat Republic of Germany, Poland, Soviet Union and Romania) took part in the tour, from Romania 34 athletes lined up at the start. The daily „Neuer Weg” emphasized the performances of the German ethnic cyclists within the competition throughout the years, such as Walter Ziegler, Gerhard Mayerbüchler and Richard Klein. The winner of every leg of the tour was awarded a prize by one of the organizers, daily newspapers and enterprises. The winner of the third leg was awarded the Special Prize „Neuer Weg” (*Sonderpreis des Neuen Weg*)⁴⁹. The race was won by an Italian cyclist, Campigli, followed by Gawliczek from Poland and the Romanian Dumitrescu⁵⁰.

Conclusions

The totalitarian communist regime in Romania affected all its citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin. In the post-war years, the Germans in Romania had to endure the process of „denazification” in addition to the general oppression of the dictatorship. But once this process was considered completed and the Germans regained their civil rights, their situation was similar to the rest of the population living in a totalitarian regime. The German press in Romania (namely the sole central German newspaper in Romania, „Neuer Weg” and a few regional newspapers) had no special status, no supplementary restrictions were placed upon it, the censorship that restricted the freedom of speech of all publications in Romania oversaw the daily „Neuer Weg” as well.

The newspaper expressed the new image attributed to the Germans in Romania by the communist regime: the elimination of all differences between the several regional German population groups (such as the Transylvanian Saxons, the Banat Germans, the Sathmar Swabians, the Bucharest Germans) and the creation of a unified „Romanian-German” identity. The measures of centralization and uniformization were meant to enable a more efficient control over the Germans in

⁴⁸ „Neuer Weg”, No. 5110/October 5th, 1965, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Idem, No. 5099/September 22nd, 1965, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Idem, No. 5110/October 5th, 1965, p. 4.

Romania. On the other hand, the newspaper created the framework for a nationwide cultural exchange in German language, an aspect that the different German population groups had not benefited from before. The political and cultural centralization initiated by the German Ethnic Group in Romania during the Second World War was perceived by the most Germans as a totalitarian measure and it did not really take effect, so that the real uniformization and unification of the German population groups in Romania was only accomplished by the communist regime.

For the German sports coverage in Romania, this new direction also represented a change on several levels. The character of the sports coverage changed from a regional perspective and distribution range in the interwar period, to a centralized overview and a national distribution. Moreover, the focus shifted from the German gymnastics and sports movement during the interwar period to the Romanian sports movement, as the numerous German gymnastics and sports associations and the federations with their numerous competitions were dissolved. Small-range competitions, such as the Banat and Braşov football and handball regional championships, where many German athletes were involved, could not make up for the comprehensive competitions of the Germans in the interwar period, as were the ones organized by the Federation of German Gymnastics and Sports Associations in Romania (*Verband der deutschen Turn- und Sportvereine in Rumänien*).

Regarding the divided loyalty that had historically characterized the German population groups in Romania, on the one hand the political loyalty to the host country (Austro-Hungary, Romania) and on the other hand the mostly cultural and identitarian sense of belonging to the German-speaking area in Western Europe, the onset of the communist regime in Romania caused a break with any western European ties and influences, so that the Germans in Romania were expected to only be loyal to Romania. Any form of loyalty to Western Europe was strictly forbidden. A similar evolution occurred also on the sporting level, where the German sportsmen and women were bound to integrate in Romanian sports clubs and federations in order for them to be able to continue their activity. The question of a divided loyalty and a parallel affiliation to the German sports federations in Romania, as it was the case in the interwar period, was no longer actual, since all German clubs and federations had been dissolved.

The daily „Neuer Weg” not only accompanied sport, but also tried to actively participate in in sporting life, within the limits imposed by the communist regime, by (co-)organizing competitions, such as the NW Handball Cup or the Cycling Tour Scânteia. The newspaper also awarded prizes for special achievements at some sports competitions, such as the NW Cups or the NW Special Prizes.

The range of sports covered was very extensive; the newspaper reported on practically all sports, at various levels of competition. Lower league competitions were also covered. The equality of sports and the prevalence of the information function are two characteristics of the sports press of the 1960s, that distinguish it

from the current one. Nowadays, the sports press focuses on the most popular sports, that is, sports with the largest readership and aims not only to inform but also to entertain readers.

From a rich and complex German gymnastics and sports movement in the interwar period, that represented the focus of a specialized sports press in German language, the communist regime created a centralized, biased, ideologically tainted and subject to censorship sports coverage within the sole central German-language newspaper in Romania, „Neuer Weg” and destroyed the German sporting identity. This newly created type of coverage constituted a chronicle of the Romanian sport in German language, with very few accents on German sporting traditions, such as handball. On some occasions, the sports writers at „Neuer Weg” could indulge in writing about German sportsmen and women in Romania but only when these achieved notable performances for Romania.