

The Forgotten Genocide

Report by Hans Kopp

The making of the DVD

It is quite interesting how the DVD the “The Forgotten Genocide” was conceived by Ann Morrison at the St. Louis Community College, who became a member of the Schuhplattler Group at the German Cultural Society (Deutscher Kulturverein) in St. Louis where she learned about the demise of Donauschwaben during the postwar years in Communist Yugoslavia while talking to several survivors of the atrocities.

Ann became an adult student at the St. Louis Community College Meramec and more and more interested in the mass expulsion of the German from Eastern European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia, the former Russian countries such as Ukraine, White Russia, Moldavia and Russia itself, but since most of the members of the German Cultural Society in St. Louis are Donauschwaben and many from Yugoslavia she focused first on the Donauschwaben, however she felt that all Germans from the East and South East of Europe should be included.

Ann went on a mission at the Meramec Community College, questioned students, but she also knew that there were no available literature or other information’s within the school system on the subject and began to wonder? Is this “Genocide” committed on the Germans forgotten? She then approached one professor in an English class about her ideas and had four students Michael, Sarah, Alex and Lillian, who wanted to help her with the idea of creating a documentary about the demise of the Donauschwaben “The Forgotten Genocide” and on the Germans from the East and South East of Europe. Now her efforts to create this documentary became a reality.

: She conducted three interviews at the German Cultural Society and was determined to keep going with the interviews by herself through the summer. When she was called back to school, by Donna Halsband, she was offered an independent study class by her, to keep working on the documentary. Ann contacted Alfred De Zayas who worked with her diligently since April of 2009. Although Ann invited him to travel to St. Louis for the conference, he was not able to attend because of a prior commitment to attend a “Humanities Conference” in Spain.

Next she needed material, pictures and documents about the “Genocide” and most of all she thought more interviews were needed from survivors telling their stories. This would be important to tell the story of the Donauschwaben. Ann also solicited and collected pictures from many people in Europe, from the USA and Canada, which laid the foundation for an interesting documentary.

Among many others, she found my book in 2009, “The Last Generation forgotten and left to Die” and studied it page by page and gave it to other students and faculty members to read. Some of them wondering if this all actually did happen and if it did happen why don’t they know about it. When Ann and I did get in contact with each other, I promised her to send pictures from my archives, to complete the illustrations of “The Forgotten Genocide”.

Ann had a difficult task at hand, arranging the interviews, documentations and pictures. She now had all the pieces of the puzzle and could begin, to put the pieces of the puzzle together, so they would fit and could present the story she wanted to tell about “The Forgotten Genocide”.

To fast forward this now, when this was all done she needed to secure speakers for the opening presentation. The idea of an art gallery came up after she had asked for memorial photos

to be sent to her. They were going to be displayed in a class room until the time the project escalated and became to large. Fortunately the art gallery at the Community College Meramec, in St. Louis had an open weekend the day of the conference, which was to be held during February 25-27, 2010.

Elisabeth Walter and Hans Weiss also offered their paintings for the exhibit and everything seemed to fall in place with all other materials, pictures and artifacts she received, enough to create a respectable art exhibit worth presenting.

The library at Meramec will have now a permanent collection of books on the subject as so many generous folks donated including many author from the USA and around the world.

The International Conference at Meramec

On Genocide of the Germans from Eastern and South Eastern Europe during the post war years of WWII.

Thursday the 25th of March: The first speaker was Elisabeth Walter, Art teacher, survivor and author of “Barefoot in the Rubble. She movingly recalled her personal experiences and internment as a child in Yugoslavia.

Next to speak was Joseph Simon, survivor, librarian and historian of Donauschwaben history. He displayed a model of the “Ulmer Schachtel” which sparked great interest.

The next speaker was Eberhard Fuhr, M.B.A. University of Wisconsin, Historical researcher on American Internment Facilities and survivor of internment of Germans in the USA. He spoke of his personal experiences and the experiences of his family. During the time of the interment, the Fuhr family lost their house and personal possession, as well as, all the pictures and other artifact of the family. See his report.

Dr. Tom Sunic Ph. D., who travelled from Croatia, shared his experiences as a member of a Croatian family which was persecuted during WWII and as member of the Croatian representative of his district in the Croatian Parliament. He also spoke on the crimes which were committed against the ethnic Germans during the years after WWII. He also pointed out that geography did not favor the Germans, who were spread out throughout Europe.

The Germans lived in Europe without specific borders as we know today. More chairs had to be brought in as the audience of students out-grew the facilities. This concluded the presentations on the first day.

Friday the 26th of March: The first speaker on the second day was Dr. Andreas Wesslerle Ph.D., Professor of History and Political Science of the Universities of Munich and Wisconsin. He addressed the History of Ethnic Germans. In his opening he cited several historic facts of the influence of the Germans in today’s Czech Republic, such as laying out the plans for Prague with a central ring or square, as can be found typically in the German cities of the time from Marburg, Lübeck to Transylvania. He stressed the various predicaments the German civilians did experience in Poland, the Czech- and Slovak Republics during their mass expulsion

Dr. Rudolf Peuschel, Research Scientist NOAA at NASA, author “The Czechoslovakian Nation: spoke on the subject of the Ethnic Cleansing controversy surrounding Erika Steinbach in Germany. Erika Steinbach, the leader of “Bund der Vertriebenen” in Germany experienced a variety of opposition by the German Government, which he believes to be submissive to the Polish pressures. He also spoke about the vengeance of the Poles, Czechs, of distorted historic documentations, on the Memorial in Berlin, the one sided atrocity documentations of the Germans. He stressed the need for more research to be done on the German victims, the

intellectual rape, of the 1,000,000 slave laborer and POW's and the Oder-Neisse Line. He also pointed out that the Poland had the first concentration camps for Jews. See his report.

The next speaker, Lt. Colonel Dr. Brian Landry, Ph.D. an assistant professor of Leadership and Ethics, US Air Force Command and Staff College, spoke on the "Psychological Aspects" of the camp Survivors. I was quite surprised, the same time delighted and flabbergasted, when my name appeared on the overhead screen as one of his personal inspirations, as well as, resources he uses for his presentation at the Staff College. He went on to thank me personally and expressed his delight to meet me in person and saying that my book is like the bible of Donauschwaben resources, seen from psychological aspects. He spoke of "Resilience", "Vision of Self" and "Transcendence". He spoke of the needs of the extreme condition the Donauschwaben were under, the resilience of the children, the value system, and responsibility the women over freedom and love. He cited an example; many grandmothers gave the food to their grandchildren, although they knew that they would sacrifice their own life in doing so. He spoke about the extreme conditions in the camps, lice, rats, lack of hygiene and having to sleep on straw on the floor. He ended by saying; **"Their bodies may be broken, but their Spirit is not"**.

Next was Dr. Kern Schemm, lawyer, U.S. Diplomat, Human Rights Activist, Vice President of the German World Alliance. He touched briefly on past history, the closing of German schools and institutions of the Germans in Eastern and southeastern Europe (**and on this continent**). Restricted cultural activities like music and theater in many parts where Germans existed even in lesser known regions such as Lothringen, the Sudetenland and South Tyrol. He also pointed out that the Poles massacred 5,000 Germans which gave the Germans cause to act. In the USA 30,000 Germans were encamped during the war. He also pointed out when between 15 and 16 million Germans were expelled of whom 2,500,000 died, while the press was silent. The Benes Decrees in the Czech Republic and the AVNOJ Decrees in Serbia have not been abolished and are still in force. See his report.

The next speaker was the survivor Adam Martini of Bukin, whose family fled toward the West under the protection of the German Army during September of 1944. Once they had arrived in Austria after months of criss-crossing Hungary, Bohemia and Silesia, on horse-drawn wagons and railroad, they became aware that trains were loaded with people returning to Yugoslavia. Although warned against returning, they opted to board the train and returned home where, to their surprise they were interned in labor and death camps. Here several members of the family perished and the remainder finally escaped to Hungary and from there to freedom in the West again.

Extremely interesting was the presentation of Dr. James Mayfield's, a political scientist at the "Institute for Research of Expelled Germans" in California. He discussed the plight of the "Volga German Republic" settled during the time of "Katharina the Great" of Russia 1762-1796. The Republic was a thriving autonomous community of 3,000,000 Germans who disappeared in the Russian gulags. Stalin, who condemned all Germans as criminals, banned the German language, their way of life and deported them to Kazakhstan. Among them 52% died on the trains, 900,000 prior to their deportation from their home and 300,000 after. 17% of the Moslem Tartars died in the gulags as well. The Russians petition now to have Russian Germans return to Russia and resettle there once more again. Some actually decided to return there.

Dr. Karen Karbiener, Ph.D., Professor, New York University, 2009-2010 a Fulbright Fellow, University of Novi Sad, 2009-2010 Kluge Fellow, Library of Congress, Washington,

D.C. experienced travel delays and did not arrive in time to speak, but gave me the report she would have presented. See her report.

The final presentation was made by Dr. Wilhelmine Schnichels, (MA, MA) Dozentin für Geschichte, Zeitgeschichte in Englisch und Deutsch, Donauschwäbische Kulturstiftung München. Dr. Schnichels travelled from Germany for this special occasion. She briefly expanded on the refugee laws, recited the definition of „Genocide“ and in her statement reiterated that ethnic cleansing is not the same as genocide.

She believes what the Donauschwaben experienced is **“Genocide”** according to the definition promulgated by the United Nations in Brussels. The definition states; that any nationality group as a whole, to its entirety is being targeted to willful destruction by any other nationality group. See her report.

These presentations were followed by a panel discussion and the closing of the Conference. At 6 pm we attended a lively reception prior to the private screening of “The Forgotten Genocide”. At the conclusion of the showing, Ann Morrison was given a standing ovation with thunderous applause.

Finally the Guests were invited on Saturday to tour the Anheuser-Bush Brewery, followed by a short tour to the Gateway Arch to the West. In the evening we were welcomed by President John Pappert to a Banquet at the German Cultural Society in St. Louis. Ann Morrison, also delivered greetings from Dr. Alfred deZayas following an address by Dr. Kearn Shemm, Dr. Tom Sunic, Dr. Wilhelmine Schnichels. Joseph Apt, representing the Donauschwaben-USA, delivered greetings from its president Robert Filippi. Dr. Paul P. Pai, Ed. D., President of the Community College of Meramec, praised the enormous task accomplished by Ann Morrison and her group of Students, who created this wonderful documentary for everyone to see, cherish and appreciate.

In our “Thank You” we need to mention the performance by the Youth dance group from the German Cultural Society during the reception prior to the private screening on Friday. We also like to extend our thank you to John Pappert of the German Cultural Society and their members for their hospitality on Saturday evening serving a wonderful meal and the entertainment by the Kindergruppe, we also thank the Spitzbuben for their entertainment.

In conclusion of my report, allow me to thank Ann Morrison, her fellow students, the faculty staff among them, Claudia Jean Potts and her friend Norm Greene for providing the transportation to and from event to event. Last but certainly not least, our appreciation is extended to President Dr. Paul Pai, as well as the Community College Meramec of St. Louis, in the name of all the Donauschwaben throughout the world, for offering their resources and making them available for this exceptional event:

“The Forgotten Genocide” the “Demise of the Donauschwaben” during the “Post War Years of WWII in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1945”.

