

Story: Lost Blood

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[Translator's Note: The author of this article, not identified but associated with Bessarabian documents related to the Resettlement of 1940, reveals a concern about people of German heritage losing that heritage by becoming disassociated with other Germans.]

[Begin Translation]

Lost Blood

On my travels through neighboring areas of my homeland, I often bumped into fellow-countrymen whom I recognized as such by the external features. Torn out of their home communities, they live like lost people and completely abandoned. They have forgotten their German homeland, the German character traits most often completely obliterated.

Little Antoni with her large light gray eyes and long blonde braids. There she stood before me with an already old, withered face, a bent figure wrapped in a Moldavian traditional costume, half frightened, half....

About 30 years ago, there was this playmate girl of mine with whom I was in love, in the small homeland colony of Naslawitscha [Khotin District, in northern most area of Bessarabia] which is now completely disbanded. She was the daughter of not so poor colonist Adam Gross, who later emigrated to Brazil with other families. She was a small, pretty girl and attended a small German school with me. She was proud at the time, that little Antoni. She could sing the most beautiful German songs and dance the most beautiful German folks dances. Like a miracle, I discovered her here in a unfamiliar Moldavian village. A Romanian colleague had invited me to a forest festival (*Waldfest*). During the festival, I came to know that there was also an exceptional woman living in his community. So I went on the search and found my old, dear female playmate.

Ah, little Antoni! She told me her sad story. Since most Germans emigrated from Naslawitscha, she moved around with the Russian youth and fell in love with a young Russian. The Russian was a man of means. Her father tolerated it and she married the stranger. However, the marriage proved to be an unhappy one. The Russian did a lot of drinking. His beautiful farm gradually wandered over to a Jew who was the schnapps distiller. She lost her husband in the World War and she remained a widow up till now with two daughters. Soon after the war, her parents emigrated to Brazil. They did not want to have anything more to do with her. Then an opportunity arose and she married a second time, to a Moldavian man. Although he was a poor farmer, still he loves her and she is quite satisfied with her present life.

Poor, little Antoni!

“Do you have any children from your second marriage?” I asked her after a long time of silence. “O yes, look over there in the yard!”

Truly. I saw five half naked children in the yard, blond and dark mixed together, running around in the high grass. “Do your children also speak German?” “Certainly not!” Antoni replied. “They do not understand a word. My oldest daughters speaks German fairly well. One was even confirmed and is a Lutheran. She wanted it to be like that. She wanted to remain German. As for the other, she wanted to be Russian and belongs to the Orthodox Church.” “And where are they at this time?” “Both are here and married to Moldavian farmers, and things are going fairly good for them. The German one always insisted on having a German husband and I had my difficult times with the child. Where was I going to find a young German man for her?”

“The Russian child has already forgotten her German language, the Lutheran one not yet. On the contrary, she speaks only German with her two children and even taught her husband to speak some of her mother tongue.”

“But tell me once, Antoni, do you not have an inner longing to be around German people, or for a German Church?” I pressed her further. “In the beginning, yes, in the odd moment I thought like that, but eventually I got used to it and now it seems to me as if things could not be any different. As I set eyes on you, I was shocked. It seemed to me as if you came out of a completely different world, one which I was once a part of and which, as if guilty of a sin, I abandoned. You have come to me from my abandoned Paradise. My God, how wonderful it was back then!” She was silent and seemed to be engrossed in the memories of her youth.

Poor, little Antoni! What things must she already have had to go through? “Is it not possible for you to get together with any German people?” I said as I interrupted the frightening silence. “A German shoemaker lives here in the village. His German wife died and he took as his wife a Moldavian widow with children. But he is not allowed to speak German because his wife forbids it. His children from the first wife have already forgotten their mother tongue.” “Do you not get together with him and have some small talk in German?” “Oh no! Very, very seldom. His wife would not approve of it, and I would be inviting the people to make fun of me and call me a “*Neutoika*”. For that reason, I gave up the idea completely. And in addition, the shoemaker is in the tavern a lot, drinking, and is even worse than a simple “Moldavian”. “Does it annoy you then when someone calls you a German?” “There are those who make fun of me with that, and say it often, and I am then truly ashamed in this place that I am a German.” “But Antonia, that ought to be an honor for you and you ought to bring up your children, in spite of it, in everything that is German.” At that, Antoni is shaking her beautiful graying head and replies, “That is impossible. When the wolves are gathered, a person has to howl. Yes, my Lutheran daughter, she accomplished that. She is at odds with the whole village and is not afraid of the mockery hurled at her. They call her the “blond *Kannallie*” [maybe from French *cannelle*=cinnamon, due to darker skin]. But that makes no difference to her. She once pounded away on the shoemaker because he refused to speak German with her.

So, do you not have a German hymnal and prayer book in the house?" I asked her further. "No, my parents never gave me one. As they were preparing to move to Brazil, with tears I begged them that they might leave the Bible for me, but their reply to me was that I am now a Russian and have no need for it. I have an old song book which my Lutheran child took from me and reads and sings out of it, which makes the Moldavians want to explode in anger. There was a time when the *Vope* wanted to take it away from her, but she glared in his eyes and he left her alone." "But Antoni, if I were to bring you a Bible and beautiful German books, would that please you?" She looked at me somewhat embarrassed and said, "Yes, but I do not know whether my husband would put up with it." "Just try it Antoni! I will be seeing you again real soon and then will also meet with your "Lutherans". I will not forsake you. What little Germanness you have should not get lost." "I am thinking," was her simple reply. Poor, little Antoni!

My Romanian colleague arrived and took me back to the school festival (*Schulfest*). But little Antoni, along with her Lutheran daughter and her drunken shoemaker lay heavily on my heart and made for melancholy thoughts.

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And there are many in our northern neighboring county who have lost a fragment of their German ethnicity. There are only a few who have easily and unsuspectingly forgotten their ethnicity and language. Most, with their life's blood, hang on to their German character and think back with deep sadness on what has been lost. There are not only the plain ordinary people, but also those with higher education who have either lost their German character, or simply deny their German ancestry. It is very difficult to bring all back into the sacred ring of our great people, almost impossible. It is lost German blood. Our great people, people without space, bleed all over the world from a thousand wounds. In every corner of the earth a drop of sacred blood is lost one after the other. The people do not see it, but they hear it. Some power goes out and gets lost with every drop of blood.

[End of Translation]