

# The Memory of Gáspár Bíró. Minority Politics, National Politics, and the State

## Book Review

*Fábián Gyula – Jakab Albert Zsolt: Bíró Gáspár emlékkönyv. Kisebbségi identitás és önrendelkezés a globalizmusban, Nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet – MTA TK Kisebbségkutató Intézet, Kolozsvár, 2015*

(Fábián Gyula – Jakab Albert Zsolt: Bíró Gáspár Memorandum-Book. Minority Identity and Self-Determination in the Age of Globalism)

Gáspár Bíró, Transylvanian-born jurist and political scientist, Professor of Law at Department of the Eötvös Lóránd University. In the 1990s, he became a member of the ad hoc committee on human rights of the UN and between 1992 and 1998 on behalf of this committee he was the rapporteur on Sudan. In the 2000s, he becomes a member of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities twice, being its vice-president between 1998 and 2004. Although not writing and publishing much, there is no question that Gáspár Bíró was one of the prominent Hungarian experts on minority rights and the state. He died tragically at the age of 56.

The book presented in this review is a memorial to his memory, a homage to his work, written mostly by scholars who work in similar fields and who knew him personally (colleagues, PhD students, research partners, etc.) and even considered to be his friend. Furthermore, to underline its symbolic nature, it was published through a joint collaboration of two prestigious institutes in minority studies, the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities from Cluj-Napoca and the Hungarian Academy of Science Institute for Minority Studies from Budapest.

In concordance with these abovementioned objectives, the book does not have any thematic structure or focus. It is more a Tower of Babel of articles, where the editors included a wide variety of topics, from essayistic writings on one week's events of Hungarian national policies (*József Bálint-Pataki: Egy hét magyarságpolitikai írásaiból (február 19–25.)* / One week of Hungarian Politics (February 19–25)) through minority politics (*Barna Bodó: Kisebbségi civil társadalom* / Minority Civil Society, *Réka Horváth: Le représentation de la minorité hongroise de Roumanie entre 1990–2004* / The Representation of

the Hungarian Minority in Romania between 1990 and 2004, Márton Tonk – Tünde Székely: *Hungarian Minority and Minority Higher Education System in Romania*, Gyula Fábíán: *Kisebbségi nyelvű felsőoktatás a nemzetközi gyakorlatban* / Legal Higher Education in the Language of National Minorities in the International Practice), minority rights (*Levente Salat: The Chances of Ethnic Autonomy in Romania – between Theory and Practice*, Erzsébet Szalayné Sándor: *Nemzetközi jog a kisebbségvédelem szolgálatában – hard law, soft law és egy kis gyakorlat* / International Law in the Service of the Protection of Minorities – Hard Law, Soft Law, and Some Practice, Gruber Ines: *Die Rechte der Minderheiten im Völkerrecht unter Europarecht* / Minority Rights in International and European Law), language rights (Miklós Bakk: *Nyelvi jogok, nyelvi rezsim és a demokrácia modelljei* / Linguistic Rights, Linguistic Regime and the Models of Democracy), or international relations (Zoé Adrienn Király: *Stabilitás vs. biztonsági kihívás. Afganisztán: a kisebbségek országa* / Stability vs. Security Challenges: Afghanistan, the Country of Minorities, Anna Ujvári: *A 2014-es izraeli-gázai konfliktusban felmerült háborús bűnökkel kapcsolatos vádokról és a konfliktus kommunikációjáról* / On the Accusations of War Crimes in the 2014 Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and its Communication) to legal theory (*A nemzetközi jog és alkotmányjog kölcsönhatásának folyamatai (avagy az alkotmányjog nemzetköziesítése és a nemzetközi jog alkotmányosodása)* / Interaction Processes between International Law and Constitutional Law (or the Internationalization of Constitutional Law and the Constitutionalization of International Law), pieces on the legal analysis of victimology (Bodea Radu: *Considerații teoretice privind victimologia* / Theoretical Considerations of Victimology, László Nánási: *A kisebbségeket védő büntető jogalkotás Magyarországon 1877–2012* / Legislation Protecting Minorities in the Field of Criminal Justice in Hungary, 1878–2012) or on classic Roman law (Tamás Nótári: *Adalékok a bellum iustum ideológiájához és a hadüzenet szimbolikájához az ókori Rómában* / Some Remarks on the Ideology of the Bellum Iustum and the Symbolism of war Declarations in Ancient Rome). Also, in a similar logic, the articles were written in several languages, in function of the author's nationality or choice. Most of the articles are in Hungarian, but there are studies in Romanian, German, French, and English as well. Although many of the studies are interesting, the reading is made difficult by the fact that the articles are not organized in thematic structure but in alphabetical order by the authors' names.

Most of the studies are original contributions written exclusively to this volume – some articles appeared elsewhere, or were written a long time ago. Beyond their professional contribution, some authors also have a few personal words on the memory Gáspár Bíró.

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All in all, the book is an impressive muster for the memory of a great scholar, however, not necessarily one that will be read from the beginning to the end by everyone. As the studies presented in this book cover a wide thematic area, most of us will look only at excerpts, will read only some of the articles, which are close to the research or interest of each and every one of us.

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