



**Zsuzsa Gerner and László Kupa (Eds.):
Minderheitendasein in Mittel- und Osteuropa –
interdisziplinär betrachtet**

Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2011

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This pithy book is a selection of lectures of an interdisciplinary conference series that has focused on ethnic and minority issues, and has been organised yearly since 2004. The organiser of the series is the *Minority Research Group* of Pécs (Hungary), accordingly, the Southern-Transdanubial town gives place to the conferences. The town that is also labeled as ‘the gate of Balkan’ was the European Capital of Culture in 2010, and a minority research group already worked on its prestigious university between the two World Wars. By the above, it is not surprising that Pécs is more and more becoming the organiser of research on the topic, and luckily not only in Hungary, but in far wider frames, that in the present instance means Central and Eastern Europe.

The book is typified by broad territorial frames as well as variegation of content: among the authors we can find anthropologists, demographers, geographers, sociologists and historians, as well. Studies with various topics are arranged in four main units in the book. The thematic unit entitled *Religion and ethnic groups in Central Europe* can be regarded as an introduction, as only two studies are placed there. The first study by Márta Font introduces the even nowadays not troublefree connection system of ‘settlement–integration–tolerance’ in medieval Hungary. The overview is founded on significant technical literature, and clairvoyantly raises events and processes significant on long distance. The study by Andrea Kriszt covers a completely different topic and territorial unit: the always gripping topic of religion–language–identity is approached by introducing epitaphs of Germans of Baranya (Southern Transdanube, Hungary).

The next thematic unit is attached to one of the issues of recent Europe coming more and more into prominence, where four studies deal with autonomous pursuits in Central Europe. Elisabeth Sándor-Szalay gives an overview on

legal frames of language usage in her study. She introduces how legalisation of language usage developed along with increasing nationalism, especially from the Eighteenth Century. After the theoretical introduction, the main part of the study is a practical example, the analysis of the Slovak Language Act, in connection to the legal protection of languages in the European Union.

In her short overview, Márta Fazekas tries 'to come round' what chances for autonomy Serbia and southern Slovakia has. Out of the two alternatives mentioned in the title of the essay, prospect or illusion – even in the author's opinion – the latter has greater chance, despite some positive developments of recent years. The next study touches upon even 'hotter' ground, where authors (Norbert Pap and Andor Végh) investigate the ethnic-geographic background of Eastern Macedonian Albans' autonomous pursuit. This ethnic group belongs to the few successful ones in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, i.e. it could significantly improve its political position. However, in the authors' opinion, this successful story is not over yet, further sequel is probable in the neighbourhood of Kosovo. Petra Englender-Virth elaborated a much more peaceful topic: she overviewed a specific aspect of German self-governments in Hungary, namely the issue of cultural autonomy, and in this context she touched upon bankrolling issues of minority groups.

The studies of the third thematic unit introduce certain aspects of ethnic migratory processes. Similarly to the topic of the previous unit, the history of Central Europe has allowed several painful events and processes in this field, as well. The study of Gerhard Seewann deals with the relocation of Germans after World War II, in two approaches. Out of antecedents, he summarises the British point of view by bills of the contemporary state department, then he confers similar and distinct elements of relocational conceptions of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian governments. The next study focuses on a current ethnic conflict: Ádám Németh investigates the 'Russian issue' in the Baltics after the formation of the three independent countries. The study, rich in data, well-illustrated by charts and maps, describes in a subtle way the process of the imperial majority becoming marginal minority.

Irén Gábrity Molnár investigates the migratory processes in Vojvodina (Serbia) after World War II. She introduces the main migratory waves in the course of which mainly Serbian population settled down in the territory, then she specifies reasons for emigration of the Hungarian population. In the second part of the study, by empirical researches, she introduces the types and effects of migration concerning Vojvodina. Then, the migratory processes occurring in the so called Vendvidék (Hungary), an area of only 94 square kilometres and seven villages are introduced in the study by Katalin Munda Hírnök. The analysis of different types of migration clasps primarily the second half of the twentieth century, still, there can be found some data on earlier times, too.

In the study by Tímea Tibori, results of a survey based on a questionnaire made in the Hungarian part of the Zemplén region can be read. Unfortunately, it is not clear-cut whom the three-hundred-member-sample belongs to: we can assume by the topic of the first two introductory pages that Roma people were asked about how they are related to different social and ethnic groups. Investigational results are rather interesting; the most popular ones were Hungarian co-ethnics from the neighbouring countries of Hungary, followed by successful entrepreneurs, then by Germans. Drug users, skinheads and drinkers are the least popular. Results are presented in twenty diagrams, yet at last we have a lack: if Roma people were asked in the survey, why are Hungarians living in Hungary out of the sixteen investigated groups?

In the study by Julianna Bodó, significant results of a survey from 2009 are introduced, in which opinions on value-selection of employees migrating from Szekler land (Transylvania/Romania) to foreign countries were revealed. An important statement of the study is that, as a consequence of migration, the national and foreign values are getting near, that is, getting difficult to draw a line between the two worlds.

The last unit is composed of the most studies, and it focuses on issues of interethnic conflicts. In the opening study, Richard Reutner irradiates the historical background of language conflicts in the Habsburg Monarchy; that type of conflict appears again and again in modern Central Europe.

László Szentirmai and József Tóth describe ethnic changes occurred in towns of the Carpathian Basin between 1880 and 2000. Conclusions drawn in the study are familiar, they are almost stereotypes: changes in power basically influenced ethnic structures of towns, and beyond the borders of Hungary, the Hungarian majority lasted in only those small and middle towns that are surrounded by Hungarian localities. Several studies had been written on this topic earlier; their results were confirmed by the present are. In the next paper, István Bibó's Trianon conception and its changes are arrestingly introduced by László Kupa. As it is written, Bibó regarded the right for autonomy of nations as a realisation of democratic values, accordingly, in his opinion, Trianon – unlike the contemporary public perception – is not a problem itself, but it is in the view of detachment of a large Hungarian population. Bibó criticised both the Horthy regime that was unable to break away from the illusion of the historic Hungary, and the Czechoslovakia of Masaryk and Beneš, the regime that was considered to be democratic in the area, but it still tried to suppress and later draw off its minorities. An important statement is that Bibó's relation to Trianon and to Hungarians outside Hungary's borders did not change essentially later either, all long he refused to use double standards.

The study by József Kugler introduces the post-1945 Hungarian–Czechoslovakian conflict and the population exchange that is a well-elaborated topic by nowadays. He draws the balance of the population exchange, and also

reviews its still lasting effects. He mainly focuses on the Hungarian population here, and the population exchange is only examined from those Slovaks' point of view, who stayed in Hungary.

The study *Effects of migrations after World War II on local communities of Southern Transdanube* was written by Zoltán Dövényi and Gábor Szalai. Forced migrations (the escape of Bukovin Szeklers, relocations of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia and Germans from Hungary) are well-known one by one, however, in this study they are systemised, thus connections become understandable. The study is further modulated by touching the local level, where we can get an insight of everyday conflicts and problems. This part could have been made pithier by quotations from interviews, which could confirm some statements (e.g. p. 216: "It took a long time for Germans to understand that Hungarians from Slovakia had not come voluntarily").

The Germans living in Hungary are in the focus of the next study. German penal servitude after World War II is represented in the mirror of a German woman's correspondence. Contents of letters and woes Germans were hit by are delineated with full particulars in the casework by Gerner Zsuzsanna.

The post-Second World War conflict is followed by a conflict of political transformation. Ethnic background of Yugoslavic wars, the order of magnitude of victims and refugees of the war is overviewed in the study by Zoltán Hajdú. A much more general conflict, discrimination and international self-governmental cooperation against discrimination, is discussed in the last study written by Laura Kovács. The fight against discrimination and racism as well as the parts of self-governments in this fight are introduced here.

On the whole, the conference book is a collection of rather heterogeneous studies. Some studies introduce familiar research topics, while other studies are real novelties. The real value of the volume can be found in its versatile approach to the topic, and in the fact that it promotes thinking of and over the diversified topic.