

Anna MAZURKIEWICZ (ed.)

East Central European Migrations During the Cold War

A Handbook, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg 2019

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Here we have a unique handbook and guide to European migration which is a substantial survey of the major migration streams in the context of the political history of the Cold War. It covers the time span between the final months of the Second World War and the final months of the Communist rule, and was written by an international team of renowned scholars, including Agata Domachowska (writing a chapter on Albania); Pauli Heikkilä (on the Baltic states); Detelina Dineva (Bulgaria); Michael Cude and Ellen Paul (Czechoslovakia); Bethany Kicks (Germany); Katalin Kádár Lynn (Hungary); Slawomir Lukasiewicz (Poland); Beatrice Scutaru (Romania); Anna Fin (Ukraine); Alexey Antoshin (USSR); and Brigitte Le Normand (Yugoslavia).

This 465-page-long volume starts with an Introduction by the editor, prof. Anna Mazurkiewicz who in her not too long but fundamental intro (pp. 1–8) makes two very important (I would even say: ground-breaking) points. Her first major point is on the terminology of migration; and the second one is on the terminology over the geographical area included in the title of the book, i.e. the diverse territory

between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Seas.

Regarding the migration, the launchpad for the reader is surely the fact that the “*distinctive characteristics of migration patterns [during the Cold War period] have resulted from the local regimes policies*” (p. 1), in other words from the restrictive measures that all Communist-type regimes put in operation commencing with the late 1940s.

Anna Mazurkiewicz’s Introduction shows us the fantastic richness and complexity of the phenomenon, when people or items or thoughts (or any of their combination) move from point A to point B. Movement of peoples would be a very casual issue if it did not concern countries where grave restrictions of movement used to be in practice. It seems that it is possible to outline certain migration patterns that are relevant regarding all, or almost all, East Central European countries, such as limitations imposed on the freedom of movement of citizens, periodical refugee waves, state organized resettlement actions or campaigns and so forth. The editor rightly points out onto the international aspects of migration, listing (i) the inland policies

of the Communist regimes, and (ii) the response of the Free World to the migrant problem; and (iii) of course the political exiles activities abroad and on international forums.

Departing from 'migration' as the most general term, the Introduction gives us a substantial list of terminology, sorting out some basic knowledge ('immigration' = inward migration; 'emmigration' = outward migration [p. 80]), and both on the *trigger factors* of the migration, such as political situation or labour purposes, as well as on the *typology* of migration, including: political exiles; escapees; refugees; émigrés; displaced persons; orchestrated and spontaneous deportation; evacuations; transfers; population exchanges; expulsions; peoples expelled or returned, resettled, or repatriated. (pp. 5–6). The lengths and variety of this list does not only correspond with the complex nature of the migrations perfectly, but it also helps to promote a more precise understanding of the cobweb of problems around them.

The authors of such a transnational research topic had rightly discovered that before diving into the migration itself, the terminological problem of Eastern Europe had to be sorted out. "*Does Eastern Europe, consisting of Soviet satellites, suffice to describe the diverse territory between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea?*" asks the editor. *In the one hand, "in the bipolar world of the Cold War, the best description could be Eastern Europe. [...] This term is a by-product of the East–West divide, an ahistorical look at the area of diverse cultural heritage"* Yes, Eastern Europe represented the

artificial character of the bloc created in Europe by Moscow and was commonly used at the time by Western diplomats, politicians, and journalists. What more, "Eastern Europe" has been in use for a long time, and many Western scholars have been actively used it in the last decades too. There was probably only one particular group, the *political exiles* who throughout their political activities included word 'Central' in their self-identification.

I certainly read some chapters of the book a bit more carefully than others. In the Czechoslovak chapter I discovered that from 1948 to 1989 roughly 3.5% of the population, in total some 550,000 people left Czechoslovakia (expelled Germans and Hungarians are not included in this figure). It is also interesting to see the different stages of exiles leaving the country (p. 102) as well as their role in exile organizations (e.g. Radio Free Europe). Michael Cude and Ellen Paul even mention, however briefly, the rather less known National Committee of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia. (p. 120).

I was amazed to discover that out of the roughly half million Cold War era Czech and Slovak émigrés, only a small percentage were involved in any anti-Communist movement. Even if we cannot read explicitly about the emigration regulations of the Western countries (and thus neither about their changing trends), one can find a lot on the changing interest of the Western societies in émigrés (p. 105). In contrary to some accepted views,

“most Western countries were initially hesitant to accept émigrés, requiring refugees to prove an ability to find employment quickly, usually based on education or a trade skill” (p. 106). In fact, they overwhelmingly turned their energies to the family or social integration or professional success in their new homes.

And this reinforces my impression that this book lacks a chapter on the immigration policies of the most significant Western countries (the USA, Canada, Australia and some Western European countries, such as Austria, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland); or at least a basic chronology of the major legal migration regulations which would help to contextualize Cold War migration. Yes, here and there are explicit references to the “changes in US immigration laws” etc. (p. 101) but the most determining features of Cold War immigration policies of the free world have been left in dimness throughout the book.

Yet, between the lines we can discover that Western countries’ immigration laws were rarely adjusted to the general trends of the Cold War. I find it quite remarkable that immigration laws were adjusted on the first place to accepting countries’ needs; secondly the immigration situation in the world; and the general political trends (e.g. political thaw) was a factor only on the third place. Briefly, Western countries’ immigration in general was driven by other factors (population, job, humanitarian etc. considerations) than the main political driving forces of the Cold War (p. 107).

Any reviewer would certainly understand the limited scope of a professional literature of such a brave and cutting-edge work. As to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, many renowned experts from the field are referred to indeed, such as Francis D. Raška and Prokop Tomek from Czechia or Slavomír Michálek from Slovakia. But I feel sorry not to see any works by prof. Jan Rychlík who produced fundamental works on Czechoslovak passport policies (Cestování do ciziny... 2007, Devizové přísliby a cestování do zahraničí... 2012) or by Dušan Segeš (who has written on the Czechoslovak Desk of the BBC), or a major work by Péter Bencsik (A magyar úti okmányok története 1867–1945, 2003) and so forth.

I was also keen on reading the Bulgarian chapter more carefully because I regard this country as the most typical case of the East Central European migrations. First, because beyond its ‘regular’ political exiles, Bulgaria was in a peculiar case to have Greek political émigrés (even if Bulgaria rejected most of them and sent them to the People’s Republic of Macedonia) (p. 81). Further, it is worth mentioning Bulgaria for its 32,000 Jews leaving for Israel, and also its rather harsh treatment of some half a million Bulgarian Turks, and their violent expulsion (‘migration’) in several waves during the whole period of the Cold War (pp. 82–83).

The Bulgarian case, nevertheless, shows us the weaknesses of the book, i.e. the lack of other forms of migration than East Central European po-

litical exiles. Knowing the editor's earlier professional interest, it is quite understandable that the "*emphasis in this volume was placed on emigration from the home country and further on*" (p. 1). What the Introduction does not stress, however, is that it does not really deal with other forms of migration than political exiles. To be fair, Detelina Dineva quotes Anna Kratseva's typology on ethnic, refugee and labour migration (p. 78), and she even points out that labour migration from Bulgaria was 'limited but encouraged'.

At least two major forms of migration have almost completely been omitted from the book: the *labour migration* and *tourism* – as two significant driving forces that triggered mass move of peoples across state borders, political regimes, even continents. Since the book contains a rich Bibliography and a very well-done Index, we can easily discover that there are some mentions of Vietnamese and Cuban migrants – but in general, not much was written on these forms of migration in this book. I think that both should have been discussed since both are showcases of the fact that Western

countries' immigration in general was driven by other factors than the main political driving forces of the Cold War. With some further research into labour, tourism, etc., we could have discovered that in the cases of Czechoslovak doctors or Polish engineers it was not a rarity to criss-cross state borders to Sweden or to France, as well as the Iron Curtain was open for some American tourist agencies which did regular trips to the Bulgarian coastline resorts. Of course, it would not have been possible to survey all possible forms of migration, for instance to draw up any common pattern on post-marriage migration (p. 81) on East Central European level. Labour migration and migration for fun (what tourism is per se), however, are forms of migration, where there are numerous sources at hand, and their careful research would have presented *a more human face of the Cold War*, a form of migration far away from the high policy – and yet, not less valid, not less interesting, even not less typical than political émigrés.

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