

The book is aimed at a public that is familiar with specific terms and scientific knowledge but the style of the author facilitates the reading and thus it is at the reach of the average person interested in the Ku Klux Klan.

As the book is well documented, it manages to place its subject at the rightful place in the American society, laying a proper emphasis not only on the basic triggers of its existence, but also on the echoes and sequels it can provoke. Perhaps its greatest quality is, in this reviewer's view, the prediction capacity of the proposed theory and thus its applicability in social sciences. We are witnessing events all around the world that raise awareness on the fact that inherent changes will lead to power devaluation which, at its turn, may have serious consequences that we should be well prepared against.

**Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds.), *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (City: Publishing House, 2009).**

Ana Dinescu  
University of Bucharest

More than six decades after the end of the Second World War it is hard to imagine the political, social, and human landscapes of Europe in the aftermath of hostilities. In reconstructing this recent past, we can rely on a large bibliography regarding the events from the Western part of the continent. But for what concerns the territory to the east of the Iron Curtain, the appropriate and single case-study documentation remains problematic and thus, topics such as the political, economic and social effects of the first year of the Cold War reconfigurations are still insufficiently explored. It is, for example, the everyday life of the displaced person or the consequences of displacement on the identity reconfiguration of ethnic minorities.

*Warlands* concerns the "profound political, social and economic upheavals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in the

immediate aftermath of the World War II" (p.1). After the choice for democratic institutions, made by most of these countries shortly after the end of the Cold War, some of the documents became available to researchers, but not all and not easily. Many were ideological interpretations of the past at stake which could be challenged by the direct access to such documents. Hence, the protection policies of some former communist states imposed restrictive legislation seriously limiting the access of researchers to source material. Such a situation seriously impeded academic freedom and, in many respects, the quality and quantity of the studies regarding the beginnings of the communist regimes. The explanation of this self-defensive attitude is that the critical analysis of the historical myths might jeopardize the basis of some current national representations.

Following WWII, large masses of people were on the move - refugees, survivors, orphans, deported and displaced persons - as a result of territorial changes. All studies included in this book are organised around the following themes: the exercise of power (including from the point of view of sharing and organising the knowledge), experiences of displacement, the transnational connections and memory and commemoration of displacement. The subjects are broad, but a detailed exploration of these themes is relatively limited by the specialized character of the articles included. Instead of exhaustively covering the topics addressed the studies offer various suggestions and possible lines of further development. This is both the strong point as well as the weak point of the book. By discussing very detailed topics, the specialized researcher might be provided with useful information and possible new perspectives. For those only interested in the issues regarding the first years of the Cold War, however, the volume is a collection of various pieces of a puzzle lacking the joints to fit them together.

The studies are structured around four main parts: Transit (national experiences and internal interventions in postwar displaced persons camps), Return (Soviet postwar resettlement practices and population management), Border Crossings (state practices of displacement and national reconstruction) and The

Politics of Memory (the long-term perspectives on displacement). The ways in which these topics are explained are unbalanced and do not cover extensively either the whole geographical territories of former communist Europe nor the problematic addressed. One of the most serious methodological problems is represented by the limits set by the informational resources: the information is too disparate and strictly limited to some very specialized cases without making obvious the broader picture. Without this panoramic view we are not able to make an evaluation of the period. The details could be misleading, creating an effect similar to visual illusion: a fragment is projected as the frame, obscuring the other unexplored aspects of the research.

Tomas Balkelis outlines the general context of these studies: "At the end of the Second World War refugees were everywhere: on the roads and streets, in cellars, bomb shelters, train stations and army barracks" (p. 25). The issue of the refugees provides the thread of the book. Their fate is followed during the various policies of pressures and propaganda they were exposed to (pp. 48-67) as well as their problematic social reinsertion (pp. 89-117, pp. 117-140).

Another category of refugees – the members of the Armenian and Estonian exile – are scrutinized following the relations with their homelands (pp. 231-255). This topic embodies huge research potential for the whole former communist area, particularly given the post-Cold War relations between different representatives of the countries at various levels of the exile and local communities. Another reality of the period was the problem of territorial changes, population displacement and transfers. The cases of Poland and Ukraine offer a deep understanding of the difficulties of the reconciliation and pacification process, as well as the problems faced by the ideas of regional cooperation (pp. 165--229).

The reader can follow directly the migration trajectories with the aid of maps of Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Republics of the USSR, Poland, Soviet Armenia and the Caucasus included at the beginning of the volume. Tables and Figures provide a very

small part of the data concerning the amplitude of the phenomenon analysed. The sources of the studies are as varying as the register of voices: direct testimonies of survivors, their published memoirs or information included in documents in state archives. The theoretical and qualitative approaches are alternating with testimonies and, where possible, statistical information opening interest for further analysis and comparative studies as well as stressing the need for more openness of the files regarding this period.

What this collection of studies intends to bring as new for those interested in Central and Eastern Europe is not only a highlighting of a different repertoire of topics and geographical and temporal redefinitions, but also new approaches. These are based on historical delineations, geopolitical, economical or legal frameworks (p. 15). The literature in the area is burgeoning and dedicated studies have been published. But, what might be needed now is to try and create, starting from a multiplicity of voices sharing their experiences, a comprehensive framework of another level of understanding the issue. Other possible areas recommended for supplementary attention are, according to Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (p. 266), "how displaced persons were depicted in newsreel reports, feature films, literature and other media; how and in which genres migrants and exiles themselves articulated their own experiences in the years after the war".

The book is a valuable resource for both communist, refugee and migration issues scholars and offers valuable suggestions for continuing the work of filling the knowledge gap still persisting in many areas regarding the beginning of post-war Europe.