



# East Central Europe in Exile

VOLUME 1

## Transatlantic Migrations

Edited by  
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## INTRODUCTION

The idea of analysing east central European transatlantic migrations by assembling scholars from both sending and receiving countries followed from discussions in the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Gdańsk, Poland. While researching American attitudes towards Poland in terms of the complex fate of the post-World War II exiles, we found that from the American perspective the countries between Germany and Russia remained to a large extent a *terra incognita*, dominated by the Soviets who flagrantly violated the international wartime agreements. The American government therefore considered the *area*, not a particular country, to be a single problem called: "eastern Europe." Despite the obvious differences in the east central European wartime experience, there were many similarities in its historical encounters with foreign domination and struggles for freedom that paved the way for interethnic cooperation. While examining the Cold War émigré activities, we learned that there was much more to the story of east central Europe in exile than just the practical goal of lobbying western governments for liberation of the region. We found patterns in political leaders' biographies, forms of political alignments in exile, acculturation problems and divisions between the exiles and "ethnics", as well as many layers of regional cooperation (political internationals, federalist organizations). Establishing cooperation with scholars from other central European countries and the U.S. in order to see a broader picture seemed indispensable.

With the help of the Visegrad Fund Project Partners—Slavomír Michálek, the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Francis Raška (Charles University in Prague), Magdolna Báráth (the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security in Budapest)—we decided to organize a conference at the University of Gdańsk, Poland.

The response to our Call for Papers was truly impressive. Scholars from as many as thirteen countries came to Gdańsk to discuss east central European emigration from the perspective of their disciplines: history, sociology, political science, and literature. The four-day conference: "East Central Europe in Exile: Patterns of Transatlantic Migrations" took place at the Faculty of History at the University of Gdansk from 31 May to 3 June 2012.

The financial support necessary for the organization of this project was provided by the Visegrad Fund (which fosters academic, cultural and scientific cooperation among the four Visegrad countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia); the two consecutive Deans of the Faculty of History of the University of Gdańsk—Professor Zbigniew Opacki and Professor Wiesław Długokęcki (devoted to the advancement of the International Graduate Studies Programme in History at the University of Gdańsk); the City of Gdynia (the founder of the Emigration Museum); and the Port of Gdansk Authority S.A. (which supports the cultural and scientific growth of the thousand-year-old city thriving on the Baltic coast). This publication was made possible by the said institutions as well as by the support received from the Pro-rector for Scientific Affairs of the University of Gdańsk—Professor Grzegorz Węgrzyn.

Furthermore, in our effort to foster international collaboration, we enjoyed the support of many cultural and research institutions, for example: the Balassi Institute-Hungarian Cultural Institute in Warsaw, devoted to promotion of the Hungarian heritage and cooperation between Hungary and Poland in the arts and sciences; the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, which develops archives and promotes interdisciplinary research on international migration; and the above-mentioned Emigration Museum in Gdynia, which in its scientific and cultural activities transposes the problem of emigration to explore universal experiences of life-changing travels. Moreover, we had the privilege of receiving invaluable assistance from the Museum of the City of Gdynia, the Gdańsk History Museum, and the University of Gdańsk History Graduate Student Association. The Honorary Patronage of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk, the Ambassador of Hungary in Warsaw, and the Voivode of the Province of Pomerania were extended over this event.

Special mention must be made of the participation of the Polish American Historical Association (PAHA), the foremost academic association based in the United States devoted to the study and advancement of the history and culture of Polish immigrants in America and their descendants and the Polish diaspora elsewhere in the world. PAHA chose to hold its annual midyear meeting in Gdansk in conjunction with the conference, and numerous PAHA members made presentations and attended sessions.

The conference theme offered an inspiring common ground for studying the history of east central Europe. Poverty, wars, political persecution and intolerance recurrent in the turbulent past of Europe's heartland pushed millions of east Europeans overseas. To examine the nature of their transatlantic migration is to obliterate the classical migration typologies

(political / economic, forced / voluntary, temporary / permanent) and analyse the movement of people simultaneously seeking bread and freedom. The conference sessions thus revolved around issues relating to the causes of transatlantic migration, the emigrants' travel and adaptation experiences, assimilation and acculturation processes, the political activities of the émigrés, as well as east central European cultural and artistic manifestations in the Americas.

It must be acknowledged, however, that it's not the first time that such an initiative has been taken. In 1980 a conference of Croatian, Polish, and Hungarian, Slovene and Slovak scholars on north, central, and southern European overseas emigration was held in Bratislava. It ended with a call for a continuation of cooperation. Two more meetings were held: in Kraków (1981), and in Budapest (1984). The latter resulted in the publication of papers on the great peasant transatlantic migration: *Overseas Migration from East-Central and Southeastern Europe 1880–1940* (ed. Julianna Puskás, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990). This important collection of “eastern European” essays—constituting the first step in fostering the regional approach and cooperation—necessarily focused mostly on theoretical approaches, i.e. methodology, historiography, models, and generalizations. The volume ends with a call for the continuation of exchanges, and announces an ensuing meeting in Yugoslavia. However, in the post-Communist reality, and most importantly, in light of the wars in Yugoslavia, it had by 1991 become impossible.

Yet another inspiring international perspective on transatlantic migrations was offered by the participants of the Eighth International Economic History Congress in Budapest, which took place in 1982 (Ira A. Glazier and Luigi De Rosa, eds., *Migration across Time and Nations. Population mobility in historical contexts* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986)). A collection of twenty-two essays dealing primarily with the problems of analysis of migration processes offers a relevant reference point (see section: “The Migration Movements to the United States and Argentina”). A more recent, modern approach signalling new research questions resulted from a year-long colloquium, “Anatomy of Exile”, and the two conferences held in conjunction with it (Peter I. Rose, ed., *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005)). It discusses both the experience of the refugees, but also the problems of adjustments, as well as their cultural impact on the host country.

In the 1990s and 2000s, with the new research opportunities available in east central Europe, including the opening of the Communist archives, many more conferences and seminars devoted to the study of transatlantic



population movements were organized on both continents. Evidently, the focus of east central European migration research has shifted towards the study of the political emigration, also in a transnational context. Among the many scholarly initiatives at the turn of the century, one finds sessions and panels devoted to issues similar to those discussed in this volume. For example, during the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, which took place in Warsaw in 1995, scholars addressed the issue of the Communist policy towards the east central European émigrés and ethnic diasporas after the Second World War, emphasizing the need for a comparative perspective (see Adam Walaszek's article in the "Przegląd Polonijny" (no. 2, 1996)).

Furthermore, at a round table session during the Eighteenth International Congress of Historical Sciences (27 August–3 September 1995, Montreal 1995) the scholars from six states (Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, and Slovenia, the U.S. and Canada) discussed the transatlantic determinants of the east European struggles for freedom. The discussions, chaired by M. Mark Stolarik (the University of Ottawa, Canada), revolved around the impact of the émigré groups on the creation or resurrection of the states in east central Europe in the twentieth century. A complementary perspective was offered during a 2001 session: "Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak Political Emigration and the Origins of the Cold War", held at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Washington, D.C. (see the articles by Piotr Stefan Wandycz, István Deák and Igor Lukes in the "Polish Review" (no. 47, 2002)).

Recently, growing attention has been devoted to the study of interethnic cooperation and to the observation of the patterns of east central European transatlantic migrations. In 2008, Ieva Zake (*Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) organized a seminar devoted to the study of anti-communism among the various ethnics in the U.S. Two years later, an edited volume devoted to the study of the intelligence uses of the exiles entitled: *Secret weapon or the victims of the Cold War? Central and Eastern European political émigrés* was published in Poland (Lublin: IPN, 2010). It was the result of an international conference organized in Lublin by Sławomir Łukasiewicz, who managed to gather esteemed researchers of political emigration from the east central Europe.

Our volumes, undoubtedly inspired by the above-mentioned collections, are different in scope, character, and offer less specialized, but broader and more complementary perspectives: east central European and American. They are not theoretical studies; they do not examine contemporary migration trends. Neither one repeats the largely quantitative studies on



continental and overseas emigration from east central Europe. Furthermore, neither tries to juxtapose east central European experience with that of other nations of the region, say Russia or Germany. It is not the sole fact of a life in exile, but the east central European heritage in transatlantic transition is the essential thread in both volumes.

However, just like our predecessors, we share the conviction that international cooperation of the scholars of various disciplines, who work on east central European overseas migration, should continue. Moreover, we believe it to be of the utmost importance to publish our findings in English, which obviously has become the new *lingua franca*, thus allowing for the extended exchange of ideas and results of research. The list of contributors to our post-conference volumes is a vital sign that the seeds of effective international cooperation are already sprouting.

The two post-conference volumes, published under the same heading: *East Central Europe in Exile*, contain a collection of chapters written by both esteemed, and well-known scholars, as well as young, aspiring researchers whose work brings a fresh, innovative approach to the study of migration. The volumes are not interdisciplinary in their character. Rather, they are multi-disciplinary in that each academic field retains its own methodology and unique vantage point. While some of the texts are based on thorough archival research, some synthesize the current state of research, whereas others—more impressionistic in character—offer inspiration, pointing the reader to new sources and approaches in studying migration.

Altogether, there are thirty-eight chapters in both volumes focusing on the east central European émigré experience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The very same experience which led to the formation of east central Europe in exile—a powerful ethnic conglomerate of people pushed out of the region by poverty, war, persecution, who maintained their transatlantic links in a variety of forms.

The first volume, *Transatlantic Migrations*, focuses on the reasons for emigration from the lands of east central Europe; from the Baltic to the Adriatic, the intercontinental journey, as well as on the initial adaptation and assimilation processes. It consists of twenty chapters written by scholars from eight different countries, organized into four parts.

The first part may be considered a broad introduction to the two volume series. Based on captivating individual stories presented against historical background, the authors demonstrate reasons for emigration from eastern Europe, look into its changing character, examine the nature of the preserved transatlantic links, and touch upon adaptation processes. Jože Pirjevec opens the section with a broad introduction to the changing

nature of south-eastern emigration overseas. The theme of exile ties and activities carried out on behalf of the old country is further expanded in the chapter by Agata Biernat. In the next chapter Harriet Napierkowski describes how international conflicts uproot people from the moving, personal perspective of a single displaced family, which is representative of thousands more in the aftermath of the Second World War. It is followed by an examination of the post-war and anti-communist emigration routes, which in the case of north-eastern Europe often led through Sweden. Arnold Kłonczyński describes both the factors pushing the Poles to leave their homelands, as well as the reasons for their subsequent departure from Sweden to America. The next chapter, by Slavomír Michálek describes the successful attempts to organize help for the cold war refugees—mostly from Czechoslovakia—in the second half of the twentieth century. Béla Nóvé's chapter presents the dramatic plight of underage Hungarians escaping the country during and after the Hungarian Revolution. The first part of the volume concludes with Maja Trochimczyk's study of Polish émigré musicians. The author examines the reasons for their migration overseas, their careers in the adopted homeland, and their new, negotiated identities—émigré, ethnic, or American—thus indicating the essential elements of "Polishness".

In the second part of the first volume, the reader will discover the various aspects of the transatlantic passage from the departure ports, types of vessels, conditions aboard to the difficulties involved in getting to America. Interestingly, the five contributors, from four different countries, describe the intercontinental crossing from different places and perspectives. Taken together, this helps the reader to visualize the various aspects of the international migratory network combining east central Europe with the Americas. This part opens with an examination of the emigrant traffic via the south-eastern European ports. Aleksej Kalc's article focuses on the significance of Trieste, whereas Istvan Kornel Vida's chapter mostly deals with Rijeka (Fiume). While the first one focuses on the volume and economic significance of the passenger traffic, the latter examines the humanitarian side of the transatlantic voyage. Two articles dealing with north-eastern European ports—Gdańsk and Gdynia—complement this perspective. Again, however, both authors adopt quite a different approach. Whereas Oskar Myszor's detailed study presents the volume of emigrant traffic through the Polish port of Gdynia, Jan Daniuk tells the story of the German emigration from the Free City of Danzig to Brazil. The difficulties faced by the settlers in the Brazilian jungle are further juxtaposed with the care east central European immigrants received in North America. Anne M. Gurnack offers a glimpse of how New York

coped with the health-care needs of the scores of immigrants arriving in America via Ellis Island, and what medical services were available to them around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The third part, "Putting Roots Down", focuses on processes of adaptation and acculturation. M. B. B. Biskupski's article opens the discussion by posing questions on the nature of the transatlantic connection to the "old country". The author observes changes in political consciousness and clearly demonstrates the detachment from the "ancestral Fatherland". Mary Patrice Erdmans looks into the phenomena of "Polishness" in Connecticut over the course of a hundred and forty years. This broad perspective is then confronted with detailed studies of immigrant communities in other parts of the United States. Dorota Prasałowicz's article looks at the complex relations between the Poles and Germans in Milwaukee at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As both above-mentioned authors emphasize the central role of the parish in the ethnic community, their perspectives are complemented by Daniel Černý's case study of the struggle for the preservation of identity by a group of Slovak immigrants, the members of the Slovak Greek Catholic Church in Canada.

The last part of the volume examines immigrant paths towards integration. The authors discuss the east Europeans' entry into various labour markets (mostly in low-skilled jobs) as well as immigrant social mobility and career patterns. Pien Versteegh examines education and the career patterns of the Polish workers in Pennsylvania and compares it with that of the American workers. The American experience is then contrasted with an examination of various perspectives of the social mobility of the Polish immigrants in Europe. Brian McCook presents a detailed study of the education patterns in Great Britain during and after the Second World War. Silvia Dapía's chapter characterizes the socio-political reasons behind Argentina's decision to encourage immigration from east central Europe in the late twentieth century. The volume closes with an article by Małgorzata Patok, who looks into the contemporary relevance of the Polish immigrant stereotype in the West and examines the role it plays in ameliorating integration strategies.

Undoubtedly, this compilation fosters the reader's understanding of the transnational processes affecting the east central European migrants. It proves that patterns in the east central European transatlantic migration are easily discernible, and that seeing our history within the regional context is therefore crucial.

The second volume is slightly different in scope, for it focuses on the aspect of negotiating new identities acquired in the adopted homeland. The



authors contributing to the: *Transatlantic Identities* focus on the preservation of the east central European identity, maintenance of the contacts with the "old country", and activities pursued on behalf of, and for the sake of the abandoned homeland. The first part of the volume opens with a study of east central European cultural activities in the U.S. and the importance of ethnic heritage in the artistic and literary creations. Thomas J. Napierkowski talks about the presence of the exile experience in Polish-American literature. In her chapter, Jelena Šesnić supports his perspective, which discusses Croatian literature as a transculturated discourse. The literary portrayal of immigrants based on semi-autobiographical fiction is focus of in the article by Grażyna J. Kozaczka. It examines the negotiated, or constructed, immigrant identity. Then, Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, using emigrant and exile written exchanges within their communities, looks into the internal development of the Polish political diaspora by analysing the informal communication networks within it. The Czech perspective on intra-diasporic exchanges is then offered by Francis Raška, who describes the debates involving the Czechoslovak intellectual elites. This section of the book closes with Piotr Koprowski's examination of the thoughts on the east central European intellectual identity formulated by a Polish Catholic philosopher during his transatlantic travels.

East central European émigré attitudes towards other ethnic minorities are discussed in the second part of this volume. This section opens with a study of Polish cooperation with other ethnic groups before the American Civil War, written by James S. Pula. It is followed by Piotr Derengowski's article on the Polish opinions about slavery in the Civil War era. Stephen M. Leahy further expands this perspective in his article discussing the relationship between the Polish-Americans and African Americans during this era. Sociologist Ieva Zake's article, concluding this section, offers a comprehensive, synthesizing approach to the problem of the nature of ethnic prejudice.

The third part of the volume focuses on the political manifestations of the émigré overseas. Particular attention is directed towards interethnic cooperation among the east central European exiles during the Cold War. The section opens with Martin Nekola's article, which focuses on political leadership of the Czech and Slovak exiles. Anna Siwik and Arkadiusz Indraszczyk discuss the interethnic cooperation of the east central European exiles based on their political views, the socialist and agrarian respectively. Anna Mazurkiewicz talks about the united exiles efforts to garner the attention of the United Nations for the cause of liberation of east central Europe. Pauli Heikkilä closes this section of the volume



describing the multi-ethnic Assembly of the Captive European Nations as a U.S. based exile organization of noticeable importance in Europe. The last four articles therefore combine east central European exile political activities on both sides of the Atlantic.

The last part of the second volume is devoted to an examination of the link between the Cold War exiles and the intelligence services—both American and Communist—thus exemplifying another transatlantic link. Katalin Kádár Lynn discusses the cooperation of the Hungarian leader—Tibor Eckhardt and Grombach organization, or “the Pond”. Magdolna Báráth supplements this perspective by describing Communist attempts to severely inhibit emigration from Hungary after the revolution of 1956. In keeping with the chronological sequence, the Hungarian case is supported by Patryk Pleskot’s study of the Polish intelligence service’s surveillance of the Polish diaspora in the 1980s.

Taken together, these eighteen essays present the reader with a panorama of émigré co-operation and conflict in exile. The scholars from eight different countries thus present the results of their most recent research in the field of interethnic interactions of the émigrés which—had it not been for the Gdańsk meeting—would otherwise only appear as part of their national historiographies.

While each of the volumes can function independently, they serve the purpose of presenting diversified and multinational perspectives best when read together. This publication was prepared for readers interested in European, as well as American, history (political, cultural, and economic). Furthermore, as the two-volume set offers diversified perspectives, cutting across disciplines and national borders, it may serve as a background for exciting discussions in academic courses and as an enjoyable inspiration to further research on both sides of the Atlantic.

On behalf of the organizing committee, we would like to thank all of the conference participants, partners and sponsors. We would also like to express gratitude to Ewa Barczyk (Director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries) and to Daniel Necas (Research Archivist at the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota) whose personal efforts were instrumental in helping us locate and obtain copies and permissions to use the photographs on the covers. It ought to be recorded that the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee library, represented at the conference by Director Barczyk, houses the Roman Kwasniewski Photographic Collection, an extensive treasure trove of visual images of the Polish neighbourhood of Milwaukee in its heyday, the early decades of the 20th century. Last but not least, our thanks go to Peter Simon for his assistance in correcting the texts for both volumes.

We hope that the volumes that resulted from our discussions at the University of Gdańsk constitute an important step in the direction of closer international cooperation as well as a clear indication of the critical need for transnational research.

—Anna Mazurkiewicz, Mieczysław Nurek

