

Piotr PIĘTA

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland

Marek Mazurkiewicz, *Spór o pamięć. Polityczne następstwa powojennych wysiedleń Niemców w pozimnowojennych relacjach polsko-niemieckich i czesko-niemieckich*, Opole 2015, pp. 283

The subject of displacement after the Second World War was very popular in public debate and research. Especially in countries which experienced this issue deeply like Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Despite the collapse of the Cold War international order, it is still a problematic issue for these countries. The main issue is that politicians, journalists and also scientists have completely different opinions about key components of displacement case after or during the Second World War. Usually, their way of thinking is strongly connected with their nationality and subjective reason of state. Therefore a lot of publications which are devoted to issue of displacement during the Second World War are rather a kind of justification or exculpation than a reliable approach to this issue. In this regard the book of Marek Mazurkiewicz entitled *Spór o pamięć. Polityczne następstwa powojennych wysiedleń Niemców w pozimnowojennych relacjach polsko-niemieckich i czesko-niemieckich* is interesting and valuable

attempt of presentation of the complex issue of displacement.

An important part of book is the extensive analysis of terminology and definitions of such concepts as “expulsion”, “expelled”, “displacement”, “displaced” and their equivalents in German and Czech language and other specific or characteristic concepts in each country. The author described in detail the international context of the appearance of the above mentioned concepts in Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. An undeniable value of the reviewed book is the fact, that Marek Mazurkiewicz used a lot of different kind of scientific sources. The author analyzed detailed international legal documents, national acts, correspondence between governments, press, publications of associations especially in Germany, and scientific publications from Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic.

The book of Marek Mazurkiewicz is also an example of competently connection

of a few different scientific approaches. On the one hand historical perspective is useful to indicate a lot of factors which influenced the evolution of debate about displacement after the Second World War. The most important fact is that each of the presented countries belonged to different part of the Cold War order. Therefore, as the author rightly pointed out, we could observe free debate on this issue only in Federal Republic of Germany which was part of the so called Western Bloc during the Cold War Era. In the Polish People's Republic and Czechoslovakia these issue became the an important part of debate after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. For nearly fifty years this issue occasionally appeared only in politicians' speeches and scientific publications which were strongly connected with ideology. Marek Mazurkiewicz presented also an international relations between the politicians and diplomats which allow to investigate the official historical strategy of each country and their changes.

However most the interesting perspective seems to be the sociological outlook on the dispute about memory (Mazurkiewicz, 2015, p. 130). This chapter describes processes of ideologization and mythologisation of the flight and expulsion ("uczciezka i wypędzenie") in western Germany. As a result of these processes, Poles and Czechs were presented as negative figures and main perpetrators of the displacements. A stereotypical way of thinking caused that Poles and Czechs were also regarded as the enemy responsible for the flight and expulsion of the German people. False stereotypes and history were especially introduced when a new generation appeared at the beginning of the fifties. The author described in detail the way that politicians involved societies in dispute. As Marek Mazurkiewicz rightly pointed out, it is

useful to legitimize particular interests of politicians and their expansionist aspirations (Mazurkiewicz, 2015, p. 143).

The main advantage of the reviewed book is that it is based on extensive sources. Moreover the researcher used many different approaches to perform a complex analysis of the researched issue. However, it seems that the reviewed book should also contain more extensive analysis of the attitude toward displacement in Slovakia. On the one hand the author takes into account that for decades Germany was divided into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and he analyzed both countries separately. After the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the symbolic end of the Cold War, we could observe the reunification of Germany. Thereafter Germany was analyzed as one country. In a certain way the case of Czechoslovakia is similar to Germany. During the Cold War Czechoslovakia consisted of two countries. The Czech Republic and Slovakia were created in 1993 after the peaceful dissolution. However after that fact the author concentrates mainly on the attitude of Czechs towards displacement. Probably the scale of displacement of Slovaks by Germans was incomparable to the case of Czechs. In fact the author leaves this matter unexplained. It seems that this issue should be clarified.

Despite these remarks, the reviewed book is a reliable analysis of the displacement issue in Poland, Germany, and the Czechoslovakia during the Second World War. Extensive sources and various methods confirm that it is an important and meaningful scientific publication. The book may be also helpful in particular to the researchers interested in the issue of displacement during the Second World War as a good example of reliable analysis.