



RHGT, Vol. XIV, Issues 27-28, pp. 103-104

BOOK REVIEW

UN VEAC FRĂMÂNTAT. GERMANII DIN ROMÂNIA DUPĂ 1918 (A CONVULSIVE CENTURY. THE GERMANS IN ROMANIA AFTER 1918)

Ottmar TRAȘCĂ, Remus Gabriel ANGHEL, coord., 2018, Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale/The Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, Cluj Napoca, Romania, Reference, Index, 461 pages

Ioan Sebastian JUCU

Geographies of minorities have always been in the spotlight of different scholars of various academic fields. As studies of ethnic minorities have been at the intersection of different academic fields, inter-disciplinary approaches were often used in such studies. The present volume, focused on the Germans in Romania, is addressed to both the academic and the lay audiences interested in the histories and geographies of this fascinating ethnic group of east European Germans.

The book includes a series of studies authored by historians and sociologists. It argues for a multi-disciplinary approach to analyzing the history of the German minority in Romania, a minority that cannot not be understood without the intimate knowledge of the German ways of life there. Consequently, studies in this volume are based on inter- and multi- disciplinary topics, echoing the history of this ethnic community, displaying the complexity of the history of German minority in different national and international contexts and paying attention to different local and regional communities.

Through its distinctive chapters, the book traces the complete history of the Germans in Romania in the last century, unfolding their turbulent life and their accomplishments in the social, cultural and economic domains. Even though these studies are about the last century, Germans have been historically perceived as one of the most important ethnic communities in the territories of the present-day Romania. Settled in Transylvania more than eight centuries ago, Transylvanian Saxons were highly appreciated and regarded as a particularly important community having a key role in the social, economic and cultural development, regionally and nationally. This state of affairs was strongly internalized by them and the majority until their mass



migration back to the places of origin of their forefathers. On the other hand, in spite of their cultural traits with specific norms and particular ways of life, there were times when Germans were less understood and less known or eventually unfamiliar to other minorities or different groups of people to whom they were in direct contact.

Starting with 1918, when Romania enlarged its territory and incorporated large German communities, the history of the Romanian Germans has been tumultuous. This is revealed in the chapters of this book, tracing key moments of the Germans' history in Romania. In recent years, the specialized literature in the field has been framed by different attempts to recover the specific life of the Romanian German communities. These efforts (realized by a number of historians and scholars with different social and humanities backgrounds) are fully justified within the development of social and humanities research after 1989, particularly in the field of ethnic studies.

The topics addressed within the book are noteworthy and contribute to a more elaborate and comprehensive knowledge about the Romanian Germans. The book starts with an introduction, setting the scene of the Germans both in the international context and in Romania. The introduction also unveils the most relevant cultural traits of this minority. Alongside the difficult periods, the book analyzes different historical periods of time, including the socialist period. The complex investigation of the history of Germans begins with a comprehensive chapter on German minority between 1918 and 1933. This part of the book further illustrates the political history of the German minority between 1933 and 1940. It also thoroughly discuss the period 1940-1944, including the war participation and the evolution of the German minority in the era of Andreas Schmidt leadership.

Post-war discrimination of Germans, deportation and deprivation with all their associated consequences were felt hard by Germans in Romania and generated dramatic changes on community life. All these changes that were encountered throughout the earlier stage of Romanian communism are revealed in the section focusing on the period from 1945 to 1960. Besides these, the book also contains an in-depth research on the religious life and religious institutions of the Lutheran Germans.

Migration processes are presented in the following section where readers can also understand both their causes and consequences for German communities. Along the socialist and post-communist mobility, the final chapter unveils the post-communist processes of ethnic mobilization among Germans, associated with cultural and identity assertion that was rearticulated in the contexts of Romania's accession to the EU and rapprochement to the European culture.

The book represents a valuable work demonstrating the inter- and multicultural reality of people and specific communities. It is addressed to all those interested in the issues of ethnic minorities, the cultural values of German communities and their history in a continuously changing world considering various cultural, economic and political systems.
