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# Social Engineering in Central and South-East Europe in the Twentieth Century Reconsidered

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# Editorial Preface

The book is the result of the National Science Centre's project entitled 'Social engineering. Projects of nation-state building and their representation in historiography and historical memory: Croatia, Germany, Poland and Ukraine in the twentieth century'[1]. The project was conducted at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). The aim of the participants in the project, developed jointly by the Department of German Studies and the Department of History of Eastern Territories, was to provide a broad perspective on nation-building processes in Central Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to determine the place of projects on population policy (social engineering) in these processes. The authors also analyse the role of the memory of these projects in developing nation states in this region of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century and contemporary times.

The subjects analysed cover a broad spectrum of issues related to the emergence of modern states, demography, eugenics, racial hygiene, statistics, geography and specific policies – from supporting

the birth of preferred groups to genocide. The book concerns both the development of modern societies and the problems of nationalism, racial ideology and the idea of 'the body of the nation'.

The whole region under analysis was under the rule of dynastic or religious (or at least non-national) empires of the Habsburgs, Romanovs, Ottomans and the Hohenzollerns until 1918. Though the Hohenzollern empire combined the features of dynastic and nation states, it began to evolve quickly toward a nation state from the late nineteenth century. The collapse of multinational empires was followed by the rise of nation states, whose authorities struggled to establish borders and made efforts to unite societies within these borders, including by means of ethnic cleansing. These states had different histories in the twentieth century. While the Greeks, Romanians and Bulgarians formed their states in the nineteenth century, Poles and Finns regained their independence after the First World War. Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians created their states, then lost them for decades and eventually regained sovereignty. In turn, the Croats and Ukrainians remained within multinational states, which were transformed several times in the twentieth century, and created their own states as late as 1991. Extreme nationalist tendencies and totalitarian movements were much stronger in the latter two countries in the 1930s and 1940s than in the others.

The first aim of our research is to describe and compare selected aspects of the projects of social engineering that were carried out by nationalist, fascist and communist movements and states in the 1930s and 1940s, using the examples of Croatia, Germany, Poland and Ukraine. Our particular subject of interest is the population policy and ideologies of totalitarian movements in the context of their state-
-building and military activity in the 1930s and 1940s. We describe the processes that occurred in all these countries along with their

specific conditions. Why were totalitarian movements so dynamic in Germany and Croatia, but did not develop in Poland (just like the eugenics movement)? What was the extent of totalitarian movements in Ukraine and to what extent were they affected by external models, such as fascist Italy, the Third Reich and the Soviet Union? The chapter by Piotr Madajczyk contains the most general considerations in this section of the book. The author discusses the relationship between ethnopolitics and biopolitics in Central Europe and tries to set it in a more global context. In the next chapter, Grzegorz Motyka analyses crimes committed in Volhynia to determine the term that best describes their nature. Wanda Jarząbek makes a similar attempt in relation to the German policy in the occupied Polish territories between 1939 and 1945.

The nation-building processes that took place during the Second World War involved massive crimes committed against ethnic minorities by nationalist movements (NDH – Independent State of Croatia, UPA – Ukrainian Insurgent Army). These crimes were committed under the ideological and organizational impact of the population policy pursued by the Third Reich, but on the basis of sovereign decisions taken by the leaders of these movements, independently of the German authorities. Why did these radical projects to build modern national communities ultimately 'win'? Genocide is an important element of these considerations.

Genocide is discussed in several chapters, but it must be emphasized that the meaning of this term is not the same in each. Perhaps this is because the discussion about genocide in Poland is in its early stages and widely accepted findings have not yet been determined. Wanda Jarząbek refers primarily to the legal definition of genocide developed by the United Nations (UN), but she also takes account of other aspects, showing how this term was used or omitted

in scientific and non-scientific discussions in post-war times. Piotr Madajczyk refers to genocide as a scientific category that is fervently discussed by researchers in the twenty-first century. According to the author, the definition developed by the UN Convention in 1948 is less important than the concept of Raphael Lemkin, who saw genocide as a process involving not only political, but also social, cultural, religious, moral, economic and biological factors (e.g. limiting the number of births and increasing mortality); physical extermination is only one of these factors. The UN definition does not include the genocide of class enemies and uses a very general term 'in part' in relation to the extermination of various groups of people. Some researchers are in favour of extending the definition of 'genocide' to include all forms of destruction of human groups, regardless of how they are defined by the perpetrators. Madajczyk challenges the view that genocide must be the result of coordinated action and intent[2]. In his considerations, the author refers to the division into genocide and ethnocide – the first aims at the destruction of a community, while the second aims at the destruction of a community as a group and the assimilation of its members. In turn, Grzegorz Motyka states that 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide' should be perceived as partially complementary rather than mutually exclusive terms. In his view, 'the anti-Polish operation' was both 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide' and he therefore proposes to use the term 'genocidal ethnic cleansing' or 'ethnic cleansing that meets the definition of genocide'.

The second objective of our research is to analyse and compare ways of preserving the memory of the aforementioned events and the role that this has been playing in relations between Central European countries, both in the period of communist rule and today. It should

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[2] See P. Madajczyk, "Polskie problemy z genocydem Rafała Lemkina", *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2016, No. 1, pp. 3–13.

be noted that these four countries/nations were deeply affected by the projects of social engineering not only during the Second World War but also under the rule of the communist authorities – especially from the end of the Second World War to the early 1950s.

How did the memory of these phenomena, also perpetuated in cemeteries, influence the course of the nation-building processes in part of Europe being analysed in the second half of the twentieth century? How does it affect their contemporary public lives and relations with other countries? How have individual countries been presenting the ideologies that were implemented in order to entirely transform social reality between the 1930s and 1950s after 1991? How have they been defining the victim, the hero, the perpetrator and the witness in relation to their national histories from that period? Here it is necessary to compare the modern national historical narratives that prevail in the countries studied and determine how they relate to the historical narratives in today's Europe. To this end, a 'map' of memorials has been created to determine how they have been affected by the memory of nationalism and communism. This section of the book begins with the chapter by Mariusz Zajączkowski, who shows how the relations between the Soviet authorities (the partisans) and the Ukrainian national movement affected the post-war memory. Tomasz Stryjek analyses the place of the projects of social engineering implemented between 1941 and 1945 in the politics of memory in Croatia after 1991. Joanna Szymoniczek uses the example of Second World War German war cemeteries in Poland to discuss the controversy around the memory of the graves of foreign soldiers.

The state of historiography in the four countries is very diverse. Many studies of German researchers can be a model for historians from East-Central Europe, especially in terms of methodology. However, the German model of working through or struggling

to overcome history (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) cannot be directly applied to another country due to their different histories. Polish and German researchers have been involved in lively scientific debate for many years, even though they sometimes claim that the state of knowledge about historical research in the other country is far from perfect. After 1999 and the democratization of the country that began after the death of Franjo Tuđman, Croatia became an area of interest to the representatives of German humanities and social sciences. They have been exploring the war that took place on the territory of Croatia and the country's participation in the war in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s. Much more remains to be considered with regard to Ukraine. It is very important for Ukrainian historians to compare the history of Ukraine and the Croatian projects of social engineering, as well as to explore the contemporary memory of these as many similarities can be found there. We hope that our project will contribute to this comparative study.

Due to the current state of research, it was not possible to make a comprehensive comparison of each of the studied aspects in all four countries (national movements, states) and other Central European countries within this project. Regardless of this collection of studies, the project has become the basis for three monographs, which will be published soon. Two of these are historical papers. The first is Grzegorz Motyka's comparative approach to events in the history of Ukraine and Croatia during the Second World War, entitled *Wołyń '43. Ludobójcza czystka: fakty, analogie, polityka historyczna* [Volhynia '43. Genocidal Cleansing: Facts, Analogies, Historical Policy] (Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2016). In the second monograph, Piotr Madajczyk attempts to show the relationship between biopolitics and ethnopolitics in Central Europe from the broad perspective of the first half of the twentieth century. The third monograph, by Tomasz Stryjek,

is a political science paper, concerning the relationship between politics and the memory of the Second World War and communist rule. Particular attention is paid to the more contemporary projects of social engineering and the resulting massive loss of life in three East-Central European countries: Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine after they gained independence in 1991.