

UNWILLING IMMIGRANTS: TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXILES DURING THE COLD WAR

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While many definitions of “political exile” exist across disciplines, they tend to focus on three areas: the social and psychological experience of exiles before leaving their homeland, the causes, motivations, means of departure, and the adjustment, assimilation of exiles in the country of asylum. None of these address the question of what the exiles actually do abroad politically in an attempt to return to their home country. My research begins where these assumptions stop. In my paper I define a political exile as a person compelled to leave his homeland whose material and psychological status is a dynamic one. Furthermore, a political exile wishes to contribute to the host society, share his assets (knowledge, skills) in exchange for support of his cause. A political exile is engaged in a collective project usually originating in the homeland which is realized in the host country, unwaveringly determined to return. “Unwilling” to fully assimilate, a political exile claims legitimacy in representing his compatriots abroad while adaptation and integration with the host society are in progress. I propose that the legacy of the political exile activities in the West during the Cold War be considered in the context in which they were created: being influenced by transnational and multiethnic spaces. Formed, pressed and spelled out in the conditions that are multifaceted, rather than simply transmitted from the pre-Soviet traditions, or resulting from the contacts with the “captive” compatriots.

Keywords: East Central European Exiles, Cold War, political exiles, transnational identities

Much has been written about the post-World War II emigration from East Central Europe. While it is possible to describe almost any migration stream from the region during the Cold War as being politically motivated, studies of exile

political and cultural elites have thus far dominated the national historiographies¹. This is not to say that prosopography of displaced persons, groups of migrants that followed major political crises or movements of ethnic minorities is absent. Neither can we complain that the numbers of migrants, the migration streams, or countries' migration policies are unknown. Fewer texts, however, discuss the processes of Cold War era political migrants' adaptation, their integration and assimilation within the host societies. Among the many complex issues involved, in this essay I shall focus on East Central European exile elites, the "unwilling immigrants," to examine the transnational traits in their identities formed after departure from their respective homelands.

While conducting research pertaining to the groups of East Central European politicians who had left their homelands in the wake of the Communist takeover I found numerous demonstrations of their unwillingness to assimilate within the host society at large. The individuals I studied often rejected naturalization while successfully adapting to the new countries by organizing their daily lives as if they were to be permanent and conducting political activities within the system of the host country – all a clear indication of integration in progress, yet not complete. The encountered testimonies and examined actions inspired questions on exiles' complex identities formed in the countries of settlement.

The idea to write this text was born during one of the interviews I had for my book on the multiethnic organization consisting of the political exiles – the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN)². Asking a question on the immigration to the U.S. I heard: "I am not an immigrant. I am political exile"³. This came from a person, who had already spent most of her life living in the United States. The interview took place almost exactly sixty years after her final departure from the homeland. When I asked another interviewee – a 1956 refugee who returned to Hungary after 1989 – about the ACEN, he said it was: "a kind of a parliament, regional parliament of these countries..."⁴. Interviews with Americans who worked with the East Central Europeans reinforced the notion of the exile suspension between the two worlds. Oftentimes they were

¹ For an overview of literature on this topic please see: A. Mazurkiewicz, 'Emigracja polityczna z krajów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w relacjach międzynarodowych czasu zimnej wojny – stan badań i projekt syntezy,' [in print] *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2015, IPN.

² A. Mazurkiewicz, "Join, or Die' —The Road to Cooperation Among East European Exiled Political Leaders in the United States, 1949–1954,' *Polish American Studies* Vol. 69, No. 2 (2012), pp. 5–43.

³ Interview with Zofia Korbońska, Washington, D.C., December 2007.

⁴ Interview with János Horváth (Budapest), 29 September 2010.

referred to as “partners”⁵ – neither immigrants, nor ethnics. Neither really “us” – Westerners with true agency in the political sphere, definitely not with “them” – politicians of Eastern Bloc. Therefore, in order to examine the transnational identities of the Cold War political exiles questions of legitimacy, representation, loyalty and citizenship should be discussed.

Above mentioned themes have been quite well addressed by Yossi Shain in his 1989 book: *The Frontier of Loyalty. Political Exiles in the age of a nation state*⁶ and I shall refer to some of the key arguments proposed 25 years ago as I describe the peculiar situation related to the post-World War II exiles from East Central Europe.

To begin with, it must be emphasized that studying Cold War era exiles from East Central Europe poses series of challenges. Political scientists would pay attention to the fact that the exile political activity does not really fit with the relations between the governments and political opposition. Instead it cuts across the domains of national and international politics. Therefore finding a theoretical framework for this kind of study already poses a problem⁷. A recent study on the political parties in exile by Sławomir Łukasiewicz further explains the issue; in the absence of parliamentary elections the exiles cannot validate the legitimacy of their actions in any credible way other than holding on to their pre-departure mandates⁸. For a scholar studying ethnic groups in the U.S., the relationship between the political exiles and older diaspora must be addressed but also inter- and intra-exile organizational relations must be analyzed. A historian of East Central Europe must also consider home regimes’ responses to the challenge that political exiles represent which is still a developing field in historical research. These are vast fields to work on, and yet, for a Cold War historian the most important aspect will most likely remain that of an impact of the exile political activities.

⁵ Interviews with: John F. Leich (Canaan, CT) 15 October 2007; Ralph Walter (Berlin) 5 X 2007.

⁶ Y. Shain, *The Frontier of Loyalty. Political Exiles in the age of a nation state*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown 1989. The book’s recent edition: University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 2005.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

⁸ S. Łukasiewicz, Conference Paper: ‘Political Parties and Party Politics in Exile: Supplement to the Political History of the Cold War’, Vienna, 23–26 April 2014.

WHO IS A POLITICAL EXILE?

Paul Tabori, a Hungarian émigré in his book *Anatomy of Exile* offered few etymological and legal definitions only to conclude that they represented just one side of the semantic problem. As he tried to apply historical, psychological, and ideological aspects he came up with a definition which he then (as he wrote) “consulted with several hundred exiles and international experts”⁹. It read: “An exile is a person compelled to leave or remain outside his country of origin on account of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion; a person who considers his life in exile temporary (even though it may last a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit – but unable or unwilling to do so as long as the factors that made him an exile persist”. As an alternative, Tabori cited a more concise definition by a well-known exile: Jan Masaryk who said: “I want to go home”¹⁰.

While the latter definition probably wouldn’t be unusual among many migrants – not only political exiles – due to nostalgia, adaptation problems etc. the former one may be used as a corner stone for further elaboration. To Tabori’s longer definition a different short sentence proposed in 1989 by Yossi Shain should be added: “No exiles should be regarded as political unless they participate in exile politics”¹¹. More recently, Idesbad Goddeeris suggested a practical approach, often used by political scientists, which reads: “Exiles are defined as refugees or immigrants engaging themselves in opposition politics against their homeland”¹².

After examining available literature Shain shared the following observation: While many definitions exist across disciplines, they tend to focus on three areas:

- the social and psychological experience of exiles before leaving their homeland,
- the causes, motivations, means of departure,
- the adjustment, assimilation of exiles in the country of asylum.

“None of them” – wrote Shain – “addressed the question of what the exiles actually do abroad politically in an attempt to return to their home country. So, how to define those who engage in political activity designed to end their exile,

⁹ P. Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile: A semantic and historical study*, George G. Harrap, London 1972, pp. 26–27.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 26–27.

¹¹ Y. Shain, *The Frontier...*, p. 14.

¹² I. Goddeeris, ‘The Temptation of Legitimacy: Exile Politics from a Comparative Perspective,’ *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 16, Issue 3 (2007), pp. 395–405.

those who seek victory over their opponents so as to reverse and/or advance history?”¹³

In order to address this question Danièle Joly’s typology of refugees may be helpful.¹⁴ According to Joy, there were two types based on their activities:

- Odyssean refugees: who nurtured a collective project in the land of origin and took it with them in the land of exile; and
- Rubicon refugees: who did not partake in a collective project oriented toward the homeland or who have forsaken it.

In 2012, a sociologist Ieva Zake picked up this typology in an article: “Experience of political exile and the nature of ethnic prejudice” where she irrefutably branded the East Central European Cold War exiles: Odyssean. Although in her text the word “exile” is used to describe populations that had been made to flee their homes and seek havens in other countries for primarily political reasons, she does not ascribe political activism as being part of the definition. She does however identify old country’s traits in this group’s behavior, attitudes and socio-political agenda in the host country¹⁵.

Based on the aforementioned works, as well as on my own research of a particular group of East Central European politicians who settled in the United States, a definition of a political exile can be proposed.

An exile is a person:

- who was compelled to leave his homeland
- it’s material and psychological status is a dynamic one
- willing to contribute to the host society, share his assets (knowledge, skills) in exchange for support of his cause
- engaged in a collective project originating in the homeland – realized in the host country
- determined to return
- “unwilling” to fully assimilate, while in fact adaptation, integration is in progress
- claims legitimacy in representing his compatriots.

The question that rises from the definition above is however imminent: Where did they derive the right to represent their compatriots behind the Iron Curtain? To paraphrase Shain; How did they explain their historical, legal, or

¹³ Y. Shain, *The Frontier...*, pp. 8–13.

¹⁴ D. Joly, ‘Odyssean and Rubicon Refugees: Toward a Typology of Refugees in the Land of Exile,’ *International Migration*, Vol. 40, no. 6 (2002), pp. 3–23.

¹⁵ I. Zake, ‘Experience of political exile and the nature of ethnic prejudice’, in A. Mazurkiewicz, ed, *East Central Europe in Exile*, Vol. 2: *Transatlantic Identities*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne 2013, pp. 147–165.

moral rights while arguing for the de-legitimization of the home regime as non-representative?¹⁶ After all, the exiles who were removed from the domestic political arena from which they could attract potential loyalists, were especially vulnerable to charges of “national disloyalty” and as such in desperate need to reaffirm it.

CLAIM FOR LEGITIMACY

Shain describes the phenomena using Albert Hirschman scheme (*Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, 1970): either exit, or voice. Shain writes: “the home regime maintains that “exit” from the national soil, especially when followed by “voice” against the existing authorities in the state, is an expression for national “disloyalty”. Exiles contest this view, maintaining that their “exit” was not an alternative to internal “voice” (opposition) against the regime, but indeed as sine qua non for the exercise of “voice”¹⁷. I find this very true in the argumentation used by the organization I study, the ACEN which referred to itself: “the voice of the captive nations”¹⁸.

The East Central European exile opposition groups during the Cold War did play a significant symbolic and propagandistic role in shaping the character of “national loyalty”. However, when we try to bridge the concept of “national loyalty” with legitimacy we may agree with Goddeeris that: “Legitimacy apparently does not stimulate the success of exile politics; worse still, it seems to counteract it. [...] Exiles who did not claim any legitimacy, dropping the heritage of the past and integrating into the structure of the host country, seem to have played a more crucial role” – he argues. “Unfortunately, a lot of exiles were tempted by legitimacy. They did not accept history, and continued to consider themselves as the only representatives of their nation. [...] They thought their most important task was to safeguard continuity, to conserve the former institutions and organizations in order to re-import them afterwards to the home country.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Y. Shain, *The Frontier...*, p. 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁸ A. Mazurkiewicz, *Assembly of Captive European Nations: “The Voice of the Silenced Peoples,”* in I. Zake, ed, *Anti-Communist Minorities: The Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees in the United States*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009, pp. 167–185.

¹⁹ I. Goddeeris, “Exiles’ Strategies for Lobbying in International Organizations: Eastern European Participation in the Nouvelles Equipes Internationales,” *European Review of History-Revue europeenne d’Histoire*, Vol. 11 (3) (2004), pp. 383–400.

Furthermore, a link between legitimacy and relations among the different exile groups must be established. A former Free Europe Committee's employee who actually worked with the exile groups in the U.S. wrote: "A political exile is a *sui generis* condition, with its attendant frustrations, problems and discouragements. In the absence of an electoral mandate, the political exile can only emphasize his differences with fellow exiles; and he begins to see victory in terms of favors or concessions he has extracted from the protecting power.²⁰" Shain calls it: *Politics of schism*. Claiming legitimacy – understood as remaining true to old electorate – became the schism. The schism however, helped preserving political identity in exile. It became an inseparable part of the exile identity despite the fact that the conditions in the country of settlement favored unity, joint actions, common lobbying efforts. While the claim for legitimacy derived from the pre-departure period made political compromises – with the host government, or with fellow exiles – less likely (thus hampering the lobbying efforts), loyalty to the *ancien régime* became no longer relevant due to the withering away of the old socio-political order. In such desperate set of circumstances, yet one more problem must be identified – the lack of real power of the exiles.

EXILE IMPACT

While sometimes the exiles may be in fact significantly instrumental in initiating and advocating events (Charles de Gaulle, Ruhollah Khomeini) thus far the East Central European Cold War political exiles were "largely written off, their actions reduced to marginality, inconsequentiality, or total dependence on circumstance"²¹. Obviously, the odds of them achieving a political success, or of conducting a successful political-diplomatic action in general – given the presence of Soviet troops in Europe and the sole fact of the existence of two blocs solid frozen by the possession of nuclear weapons – were severely limited. However, as Adam Walaszek writes in his *Migracje Europejczyków 1650–1914* in reference to previous centuries: "although the political exiles were often unable to achieve their goals, the international situation taking precedence over their activities, and despite the fact that many of them never returned home, this

²⁰ J.F. Leich, 'Great Expectations: The National Councils in Exile 1950–1960,' *Polish Review*, Vol. 35 (1990), pp. 183–196.

²¹ S.A. Garrett, 'Eastern European Ethnic Groups and American Foreign Policy,' *Political Science Quarterly* (1978), Vol. 93 (2), pp. 301–323; Ch. McC. Mathias Jr., 'Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy,' *Foreign Affairs* 59, No 5 (1981), pp. 975–998; Shain, *The Frontier...*

does not mean that their operations were useless and futile. For it was in the state of political exile where they developed their ideas freely”²². It was in the peculiar state of exile during the Cold War that they cultivated and developed political ideas, published their literary works, wrote uncensored histories of their homelands that eventually reached their country of origin with – possibly – even more powerful force than had they been written in a country with no censorship, no restrictions on the freedom of speech, freedom of conscience.

Referring to the post-World War II cohort, Ewa Morawska mentions some crucial aspects of the exile impact, other than the sole fact of preservation of the best-educated East Central European intelligentsia, cultural elites in the West. Among them:

- Popularization of the East European history, literature and art;
- Undermining of the home country’s regime monopoly of ideas and information (but with a side note on the visible resentment (caused by forcible exit) resulting in reproduction of national myths, and martyrology in the struggle for freedom and democracy against evil forces of oppression;
- Impact on domestic politics (both in the home and host country) and international relations “by challenging the former’s domestic and international legitimacy, by supporting the domestic political opposition and contesting the regimes’ attempts to suppress it, by exposing human rights violations in their home countries, and by making available uncensored information there”²³

Both Ewa Morawska, and Krzysztof Dybciak, who attempted a comparison of the great European migrations of the 20th century, did credit the East Central European exiles with helping to “erode authoritarian regimes in their homeland.”²⁴ Shain explains that the overall impact of these diasporic efforts on the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe was accumulative rather than direct, though²⁵. While long-term legacies of their activities in exile are yet to be assessed, with

²² A. Walaszek, *Migracje Europejczyków 1650–1914*, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków 2007, p. 126.

²³ E. Morawska, ‘Intended and Unintended Consequences of Forced Migrations: A Neglected Aspect of East Europe’s Twentieth Century History,’ *International Migration Review* Vol. 34, No 4 (Winter 2000), pp. 1049–1087.

²⁴ K. Dybciak, ‘Próba porównania wielkich emigracji europejskich XX wieku’ in V. Wejs-Milewska, E. Rogalewska, red., *Powrześnie emigracja niepodległościowa na mapie kultury nie tylko polskiej: Paryż–Londyn–Monachium–Nowy Jork*, IPN, Trans-Humana, Białystok 2009, p. 14, 28.

²⁵ Y. Shain, ‘Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy,’ *Political Science Quarterly* 109/5 (1994/95), pp. 811–42.

each year more studies are published on the exile impact on preservation and development of political thought, continuation of the national culture outside of the Soviet-dominated zone, as well as on how the exiles strove to retain East Central Europe on the mental map of the West, projecting it as an inseparable part of European cultural heritage.

With this in mind, we must consider that the context of their activities is broader than just the home country – country of settlement axis. For forty years during the Cold War the East Central European exiles in the U.S. enjoyed financial and political support from similar sources: host governments, state-private networks, or bank deposits made by the pre-war regimes in the West. They were united by a common, easily identifiable enemy, shared condition and status. Well aware of these circumstances, fearing lack of efficiency, ridden by schism the exiles developed a new form of action, and for that matter – self-identification: transnationalism.

In order to be heard, to receive political and financial support, in the face of political and economic integration of two ideologically and militarily hostile blocs, the exiles chose to embrace a new, regional identity. In the case of the ACEN I am examining a direct political action resulting from a joint, supra-national effort, thus leaving issues of national loyalty/legitimacy aside. In the case of political exiles from the region the transnational dimension does not only relate to the separation between East Central Europe and USA, but it also includes cooperation, crossing the national lines, between the political exiles from different countries.

TRANSNATIONALISM

Yet again, trying to describe the transnational identities of the cold war East Central European exiles poses a number of challenges. In 2012 Donna Gabaccia published a book called: *Foreign Relations. American Immigration in Global Perspective* which opens with the following statement: “Diplomatic historians had been deeply engaged for 15 years in developing a new field called international history, which focuses on the international relations created by both state and nongovernmental actors, while immigration historians had for a decade increasingly imagined themselves writing transnational histories, which focus on how migrants conduct lives in two or more countries.”²⁶

²⁶ D. Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2012, p. ix.

According to Grzegorz Babiński transnationalism – a consequence of globalization – is a cultural phenomenon related to the persistence of the modern national and ethnic identities despite migration²⁷. In the same issue of the *Przegląd Polonijny* Dorota Przaszałowicz explains that while this phenomena is at least two centuries old, recent applying of transnationalism to the migration studies is one way to contextualize the experience of migrants do live in two (sometimes more) social and cultural spaces²⁸. Recently Ewa Morawska added that the definition of transnationalism encompasses: “cross border spaces of back-and-forth flow of goods, ideas, and practices which join individuals, groups, and institutions in different nation states that engage in these interactions”²⁹. Taken together the above mentioned definitions set the stage for analysis of the post-World War II political exiles from East Central Europe.

Despite the fact of their physical separation, inability to travel to the homeland, or maintain regular correspondence – in the pre-Internet era, being “disconnected” – these groups could be described as a byproduct of a global struggle, their lives encompassing more than just one social, political and cultural space. I base this claim on arguments of their maintenance of political action on behalf of their homeland, on their claims of legitimacy, as well as on acknowledgements of the importance and long-lasting legacy of their actions – by their countrymen as well as by contemporary scholars.

On the other hand, we need to distinguish between their transnational (transatlantic) identities and actions carried out on a multiethnic basis. A term recently used by Michael Lejman in regards to the Harkis in France comes handy. The author discussed a phenomenon he had borrowed from Paul Silverstein called: transpolitics.³⁰ He writes that immigrants from a given region are portrayed homogenously, as “North Africans” or Muslims, rather than as Tunisians, Algerians etc. unless that specificity is politically convenient. Meanwhile immigrants themselves operate within and across these categories based on both their sense of cultural identity and ability to exercise their own

²⁷ G. Babiński, ‘Transnacionalizm...i co z tego wynika dla badań najnowszej polskiej emigracji,’ *Przegląd Polonijny* Vol. 33, No 2 (2007), pp. 115–130.

²⁸ D. Przaszałowicz, ‘Dawne i nowe migracje, dawne i nowe konceptualizacje w badaniach migracyjnych,’ *Przegląd Polonijny* Vol. 33, No 2 (2007), pp. 19–40.

²⁹ E. Morawska, ‘The Impact of Past and Present Immigrants’ transnational Engagements on their Home-Country Localities: Exploring an Underinvestigated Aspect of the Transnationalism-Migration Relationship,’ *Studia Migracyjne-Przegląd Polonijny* Vol. 39, No 1 (2013), pp. 7–31.

³⁰ M. Lejman, ‘Unrequited Loyalty: The Harkis in Postcolonial France,’ *Studia Historica Gednanensia* 5 (2013), pp. 250–267. See P. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2004, p. 5.

agency. In response to political and social pressures, immigrants may emphasize a specific or broad-based identity and have proven more than capable of navigating the increasingly complex categories of European national and supra-national governance.³¹ Again, such was the understanding among the exiles who entered organizations like the ACEN. However, in a broader context, one may want to ask: other than practical push for efficient political action – discussed above – was there anything that the exile East Central European communities in the U.S. shared – was there a common, transnational space?

Summarizing common traits found in the volume on ethnic anti-Communism in the U.S. she had edited, Zake reached the following conclusions in regards to the exiles from the Communist-dominated areas:

1. exiles asserted loyalty to their host country [...] took advantage of its pluralistic political institutions;
2. they gained their legitimacy through associations with established forms of American anti-Communism rather than becoming a part of “ethnic anti-Communism”;
3. émigré anti-Communism was both a product of exile experience and a deliberate attempt to preserve the political battles from the lost homeland and therefore their actions were characterized by passionate internal conflicts;
4. all of them were exposed to repatriation campaigns, espionage;
5. they are much more likely to reject their adopted American and reassert their separate ethnic identity than any other immigrant group³².

It should be added that these characteristics were shared not only by the East Central Europeans but other groups of anti-communist exiles as well (Cubans, Laotians, etc.). What is missing from the list above is the devotion to continue political action in exile and the hope of ultimate return “home” after freedom would be reinstated.

Interestingly the notion of return often found realization in the form of actual returns, or the choices of burial sites, and returns of remains of the exiles after 1989. Adam Walaszek in *Migracje Europejczyków*, and Anna Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann in her book on Polish post-war DPs (which is even called: *The Exile Mission*) write that the Polish tradition of freedom fighters, believing in their ultimate return originates as far back as XVIII century³³. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann

³¹ M. Lejman, ‘Unrequited Loyalty...,’ p. 263.

³² I. Zake, *Anti-Communist Minorities...*, pp. 254–258.

³³ A. Walaszek, *Migracje Europejczyków...*, p. 126; A. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission. The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939–1956*, Ohio University Press, Athens 2004, p. 2.

describes the Polish exile mission as “an unwritten set of beliefs, goals and responsibilities of Polish emigrants, which placed patriotic work for Poland at the center of their duties toward the homeland”³⁴. I dare to say that during the Cold War it was by all means quite typical: for East Central Europeans, but also for Asians (Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Laotian, for Cubans). Moreover, it was a shared identity. Not only between the Poles and Hungarians – as the stereotype goes, but also Eastern European and Asian exile groups. For many of these nationals their struggles were also a continuation of old traditions of fighting the foreign domination. What they also shared were the questions of legitimacy, loss of status/class, disillusionment, and dependence on foreign support in their political actions.

WHY DID THE ECE COLD WAR EXILES REMAIN “UNWILLING IMMIGRANTS”?

In order to address this question I will use Brian McCook’s thesis of conflict being essential in fully entering the host society³⁵. McCook’s dissertation is an opportune study of immigrant inclusion and recognition within a context of transition from peasant to urban environment at the turn of the 19 to 20th century. This study offers an important lesson that the path towards successful integration includes economic, political and cultural immigrant participation in the public sphere. Only through a shared cultural community in which both the immigrants become similar to the host society, and the native populations undergo changes prompted by immigration, the borders of integration are removed.

McCook argues that the integration was conditioned on Poles engaging in social conflicts within the boundaries of civil society. In his interpretation the conflict resolution was a path to integration. In other words, immigrants had to be politically active in order to be able to negotiate their contact with native population on their terms. Furthermore, the chances for integration increased with the immigrant opportunities to become economic stakeholders (ownership of homes, small businesses, and financial investments in mutual-aid societies, banks, newspapers, even the parishes). One of the key observations found in this volume is that “ethnicization aided the adaptation”. Initially faced with discrimination and isolation, the immigrants turned inwards creating their ethnic

³⁴ A. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission...*, p. 2.

³⁵ B. McCook, *The Borders of Integration: Polish Migrants in Germany and the United States, 1870–1924*, Ohio University Press, Athens, OH 2011.

organizations thus providing the immigrants with stability and means to become active in the public sphere. The transnational social sphere and the pluralistic identity that they created further paved the way towards defining of the ethnic minority's social role and place.

However, in the Cold War era the conflict (action) shifted to a different, international zone, and – in the case of the ACEN – “ethnicization” meant the maintenance of one's own national affiliation (not the diaspora), loyalty vested in a distant land rather than with, or within an ethnic community. The conflict within the host society was absent. It's formative role was pushed across the Atlantic. So, a peculiar form of integration appeared.

Already in the mid-1950s the East Central European exiles realized that their return home was not imminent, and that they won't be returning to take power anytime soon (as was the initial planning of 1948–1949). Consequently, their engagement took two paths: planning for the post-liberation period (future federation, regional cooperation, integration with the West, etc.) or focusing on the current political events (public commentaries and publications, intelligence reports, policy recommendations) striving to keep East Central Europe on the agenda of international relations. The latter prevailed.

Moreover, the mountain of material prepared and published to this day continues to be examined. Less so by the interested public, politicians, or educators in the U.S. or Western Europe, more so by the historians in the East Central European countries who are eager to fill in the gap in the recent dichotomist history of their countries; in other words: bring the exile heritage back home, integrating their legacy with the national historiographies rather than with the history of ethnic diaspora. Thus, the exile unwillingness to assimilate with the country of settlement ultimately prevailed and today seems to have been successfully integrated with the “national” historical narrative. Despite physical condition of living in two spaces, scholars refrain from calling exiled political leaders hyphenated Americans, Germans, Frenchmen... . By rejecting their “ethnicization” within the diaspora, which opinion I share, scholars tend however to overlook the transnational identity that characterized their actions.

I propose that the legacy of the political exiles in the West during the Cold War be considered in the context in which they operated: being influenced by certain transpolitical, transnational, multiethnic spaces. Their ideas were formed, pressed and spelled out in the conditions that are multifaceted, rather than simply transmitted from the pre-Soviet traditions, or resulting from the contacts with the “captive” compatriots.