

From the Editors

The focus of this 58th issue of ‘Zeszyty Łużyckie’ is on selected Bulgarian minorities – ethnic, religious, ideological, and linguistic – profiled according to their interaction with the communist regime during the period of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria (1944–1989). The definition of “Bulgarian” here refers both to minorities living in Bulgaria and those abroad who identify as Bulgarian. During the historical era discussed, the communist authorities pursued a policy of assimilation applied to minorities, aimed at eliminating cultural and ethnic differences in the society at large. Part of this policy consisted, for instance, in an obligatory changing of names for members of the Turkish minority, restrictions placed on the Catholic community, and forced settlement and urbanization of the Romani ethnic groups and their lifestyle, among others.

By studying the specific situation of various minorities in the People’s Republic of Bulgaria respectively – the Roma, Turkish, and Catholic minority, the intelligentsia (here framed as an ideological minority), and Bulgarians in Yugoslavia – the articles in the 58th issue of ‘Zeszyty Łużyckie’ provide insight into how these minorities functioned *per se* as well as in the context of the dominant political discourse of the time in the Eastern Bloc countries. The six studies comprised in the present issue discuss the strategies and methods through which minorities define themselves and are defined within the framework of conditions and rules imposed by the majority and/or a totalitarian reality. The authors analyze – be it directly or not – the “visibility” of Bulgarian minorities in the communist era, as well as their attempts to escape the public view. Therefore those simultaneously visible and relegated from the visual field are predominantly the Roma, as discussed in articles by Plamen Dojnov (the Roma poet Usin Kerim) and Wojciech Józwiak (Roma characters in Bulgarian cinematography), as well as in Moris Fadel’s essay analyzing the presence and image of *Gypsies* in Jordan Radichkov’s writing.

The linguistic studies presented in articles authored by Andreana Eftimova (on the methods of communist propaganda aimed at the Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria) and Julia Mazurkiewicz-Sułkowska (on the ideological image of exiled intellectuals in the People’s Republic of Bulgaria), as well as a historiographic work by Momchil Metodiev (on festivities

observed by Bulgarian Catholics) reveal aspects of complex and painstaking ‘negotiation’ processes of legal, political, and cultural legitimacy for Bulgarian minorities. The position of the Bulgarian language in a minority situation in Serbia, as discussed in Ivana Davitkov’s article, also testifies to such tensions. In this broad perspective, although the policy towards minorities in countries under direct or indirect influence of the USSR can be seen as uniform in general terms (i.e., based on the USSR model), the inherent differences in the respective cases are of interest. In other words, the legally and politically implemented model based on the Soviet Union as the ultimate reference and aimed at uniformity, could not prevent specific solutions and outcomes from varying depending on the internal situation in each country¹.

The regular Sorabian section of the journal features a text by Zdzisław Kłós dedicated to the Lusatian paths in the life and work of the Slovenian painter Ante Trstenjak (1894–1970).

This issue closes with an *In Memoriam* dedicated to the late Professor Krzysztof Wrocławski who passed away in 2022: an homage to his life and work as well as his output and insights for both ‘Zeszyty Łużyckie’ and the Slavic studies community.”

Iliana Genew–Puhalewa

¹ We would like to thank Professor Robert Kulmiński who provided us with inspiration.