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Ethnic and Class Identity Formation within the Germans of Hungary

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Abstract

This report focuses on the reasons why the three largest German-speaking minority groups in Hungary, reacted so radically different to the partitioning of the Hungarian Kingdom following the end of World War One. When Hungary was partitioned, the Zipsers who were now under Czechoslovak administration wanted to become part of Hungary again, the Saxons who were part of Romania celebrated their divorce from Hungary, and the Schwabs were unhappy with being in Hungary. The Germans who were out wanted back in, others who were out were celebrating their exit, and those Germans who remained in Hungary wanted out. What explains such vastly different reactions? Why is one German group patriotic, while the other two disillusioned with the Hungarian state? How different were these German groups? In studying the different reactions of these three different German-speaking groups, this essay will evidence that a strong correlation exists between the class position of each group and the type of ethno-national identity they develop. Or in other words, class plays a profound influence in ethno-identity formation.