Witold Gieszczyński

HUMAN MIGRATION ON THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER EAST PRUSSIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Following the ratification of treaties to partition Poland dated 5 August 1772, the Royal Prussia with Warmia (*Germ. Ermland*), excluding Gdańsk and Toruń, and the Noteć District (*Germ. Netzedistrikt)* with Bydgoszcz were annexed by the Kingdom of Prussia[1]. Under a decree of 31 January 1773, the kingdom of Frederic II was expanded to include "West Prussia" *(Germ. Westpreussen)* as well as an administrative unit referred to as the "East Prussia province" *(Germ. Provinz Ostpreussen)*, comprising Warmia, a region in pre-partition Poland, and Royal Prussia, a fiefdom of the Crown of Poland in 1525–1657[2]. Beginning with the unification of Germany in 1871, East Prussia became a part of the Reich. In 1829, both provinces were formally united into a single "province of Prussia", but the former division into two provinces of "West Prussia" and "East Prussia" was restored already in 1878[3].

After the World War I, in an attempt to resolve the Polish-German dispute over the territories in Warmia, Mazury and Powiśle, the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919 ordered a poll in Prussia. On 11 July 1920, the majority of the local constituents chose to be a part of East

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[1] S. Salmonowicz, *Prusy. Dzieje państwa i społeczeństwa*, Warszawa 2004, p. 212; Ch. Clark, *Prusy. Powstanie i upadek 1600–1947*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 220–221; *Prusy w okresie monarchii absolutnej (1701–1806)*, ed. B. Wachowiak, Poznań 2010, pp. 38–341; W. Czapliński, A. Galos, W. Korta, *Historia Niemiec,* Wrocław 2010, pp. 349–350.

[2] H. Boockmann, *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas. Ostpreussen und Westpreussen*, Berlin 1995, p. 320.

[3] E. Korc, *Zmiany administracyjno-terytorialne na obszarze byłych Prus Wschodnich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem terenu województwa olsztyńskiego*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie" (hereinafter: KMW), 1997, No. 1, pp. 3–22.

Prussia[4]. Ultimately, the eastern part of West Prussia was ceded to the German province of East Prussia, while the district of Działdowo *(Germ. Soldau)* was annexed to Poland together with the Klaipeda Region *(Germ. Memelland)*. Initially placed under the administrative rule of the League of Nations, the Klaipeda Region was taken over by Lithuania in January 1923[5]. On 22 March 1939, the Klaipeda Region was annexed by Nazi Germany and reintegrated into the Reich[6]. On the eve of World War II, East Prussia had a population of 2,488,000, of whom 372,000 resided in Królewiec *(Germ. Königsberg)*, the capital city of the province[7]. The province of East Prussia was divided into four administrative districts: Królewiec, Gąbin, West Prussia and Olsztyn, and each district was further subdivided into counties[8]. The majority of East Prussians were Protestants (84%) and Roman Catholics (14.1%), while the remaining religious congregations accounted for only 1.6% of the local population[9]. In addition to Germans, the territory had been long colonized by the Warmians and Masurians, as well as the Poles, Lithuanians, Jews and members of other nationalities who contributed to the multi-ethnic character of East Prussia[10].

Owing to its geo-political location, East Prussia was an ethnic tinderbox and a potential conflict hot spot for Poland since the beginning of its existence. After the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, any attempts at establishing national security had to include a postulate to eliminate the East Prussian enclave after the end of World War II[11]. Already in November 1939, General Władysław Sikorski's government postulated the need to establish safe borders for Poland and put an end to German rule in East Prussia[12]. In a circular letter of 19 February 1940 addressed to Polish

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[4] See: W. Wrzesiński, *Polska–Prusy Wschodnie. Plebiscyty na Warmii i Mazurach oraz na Powiślu w 1920 roku*, Olsztyn 2010; *Plebiscyty na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu w 1920 roku. Wybór źródeł*, ed. P. Stawecki, W. Wrzesiński, Olsztyn 1986; *Plebiscyty jako metoda rozwiązywania konfliktów międzynarodowych. W 90. rocznicę plebiscytów na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu*, pod red. S. Achremczyka, Olsztyn 2010.

[5] P. Łossowski, *Kłajpeda kontra Memel. Problem Kłajpedy w latach 1918–1939–1945*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 37–53; Z. Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, Vilnius 2004, p. 256; P. Mast, *Ostpreussen und Westpreussen und die Deutschen aus Litauen*, München 2001, p. 178.

[6] P. Łossowski, op. cit., pp. 172–193; Z.Kiaupa, op. cit., p. 269.

[7] G. Hermanowski, *Ostpreussen Lexikon... für alle, die Ostpreussen lieben*, Würzburg 2001, pp. 165–166.

[8] S. Srokowski, *Prusy Wschodnie. Studium geograficzne, gospodarcze i społeczne*, Gdańsk–Bydgoszcz–Toruń 1945, pp. 117–118.

[9] See: *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1914*, Berlin 1914, p. 9.

[10] See: A. Kossert, *Prusy Wschodnie. Historia i mit*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 152–163; R. Traba, *"Wschodniopruskość". Tożsamość regionalna i narodowa w kulturze politycznej Niemiec*, Olsztyn 2007, passim; A. Sakson, *Stosunki narodowościowe na Warmii i Mazurach 1945–1997*, Poznań 1998, p. 11.

[11] W. Wrzesiński, *Prusy Wschodnie w polskiej myśli politycznej 1864–1945*, Olsztyn 1994, p. 336.

[12] Ibid., pp. 337–338.

diplomatic outposts, August Zaleski, the foreign affairs minister, argued that the incorporation of East Prussia into Poland was one of the key objectives of the war[13]. Polish politicians made the most of every opportunity to raise this postulate during diplomatic talks with the Allies[14]. The majority of Polish political groups also supported the concept of incorporating East Prussia into Polish territory. They backed their claims with strategic and historical arguments, citing economic, populational and nationalist interests. In this situation, Polish settlement in post-war East Prussia became a pressing problem that was duly addressed by the Polish Underground State[15]. Polish ethnic territories were the first to be covered by the future resettlement plan. The northern parts of the province with mostly German inhabitants were to be addressed in successive stages of the scheme with the aim of expelling the German population[16].

Yet the fate of the East Prussian problem was *decided* mostly by political strategy. During the Teheran Conference (28 November – 1 December 1943), the big three Allied leaders (the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom) decided to divide East Prussia. At the request of Stalin who demanded that the Soviet Union be given the use of a warm water port on the Baltic, the northern part of the East Prussian province with Königsberg was to be annexed to the USSR, and the remaining territories – to Poland[17]. The Soviets demanded 10,110 km^2 of East Prussia's combined territory of 36,992 km^2, and the requested area had a population of 994,000[18]. The final agreement establishing the Polish-Soviet border was signed on 27 July 1944 by the Soviet government and the Moscow-based Polish Committee of National Liberation. Under the agreement, the "northern part of East Prussia with the city of and port of Königsberg would be ceded to the Soviet Union, while the remaining East Prussian territories (...) would be incorporated into Poland"[19]. At the Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945), the Allies confirmed their position on the partitioning of East Prussia,

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[13] *W stronę Odry i Bałtyku. Wybór źródeł (1795–1950)*, ed. W. Wrzesiński, vol. 3: *O Odrę, Nysę Łużycką i Bałtyk (1939–1945)*, ed. Z. Dymarski, Z. Derwiński, Wrocław–Warszawa 1990, p. 12.

[14] W. Wrzesiński, *Przyczynki do problemu wschodniopruskiego w czasie II wojny światowej*, KMW, 1965, No. 1, pp. 93-; id., *Prusy Wschodnie a bezpieczeństwo europejskie. Stanowisko Francji, USA, Wielkiej Brytanii, ZSRS i Polski wobec przyszłości Prus Wschodnich 1939–1945*, KMW, 1996, No. 2, pp. 163–179.

[15] G. Górski, *Prusy Wschodnie w koncepcjach ZWZ-AK*, KMW, 1989, No. 1–4, p. 116; W. Grabowski, *Delegatura Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraj*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 63–64; M. Ney-Krwawicz, *Komenda Główna Armii Krajowej 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1990, p. 48.

[16] W. Wrzesiński, *Prusy Wschodnie w polskiej myśli politycznej...*, pp. 394–427.

[17] *Teheran–Jałta–Poczdam. Dokumenty konferencji szefów rządów wielkich mocarstw*, Warszawa 1970, pp. 86–87.

[18] W. Wrzesiński, *O przyszłość państwową Królewca w latach II wojny światowej*, KMW, 1992, No. 3–4, pp. 331–336.

[19] *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich*, vol. 8, Warszawa 1974, doc. 76, pp. 158–159.

as previously agreed in Teheran[20]. In a statement of 13 February 1945, the Polish government-in-exile in London objected against the Yalta resolutions, claiming that all decisions had been made without Poland's involvement or authorization[21] . The division of East Prussia was finally decided by point IX of the Potsdam Agreement of 2 August 1945 in which the Allies upheld their previous position on the matter[22].

In mid October 1944, the Soviet army entered East Prussia, occupying the borderland territories in the district of Gąbin, including the southern part of the Klaipeda Region[23]. By the end of 1944, half a million people had been evacuated from East Prussia to Germany[24]. The bitterly cold winter of 1944/1945 was a time of "complete and ultimate *nemesis*"[25]. Another Red Army offensive began in January 1945 with the aim of penetrating East Prussia. In the north-eastern parts of East Prussia, the main thrust of the offensive was conducted by the 3rd Belarusian Front on 13 January 1945. A day later, the armed forces were joined by the 2nd Belarusian Front in the south. The Red Army offensive forced East Prussians to flee from the advancing front line[26]. Hunger, freezing temperatures and exhaustion contributed to a high number of casualties in the German population[27]. Continuing the offensive in a series of fierce battles, the Soviet Army occupied Olsztyn (*Germ. Allenstein*) on 22 January 1945, Elbląg *(Germ. Elbing)* on 10 February 1945, Braniewo *(Germ. Braunsberg)* on 20 March 1945, Königsberg on 9 April 1945, and the town and port of Pilawa *(Germ. Pillau)* on 25 April 1945[28]. Already in January 1945, Hitler ordered that Klaipeda *(Germ. Memel)* be evacuated by sea[29]. Military action in East Prussia continued, and it ceased only after the war[30].

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[20] *Teheran–Jałta–Poczdam...*, p. 169.

[21] *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945*, vol. 5, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk––Łódź 1991, doc. 1423, pp. 275–277.

[22] *Teheran–Jałta–Poczdam...*, p. 476.

[23] T. Gajownik, J. Maroń, *Utracony bastion. (Prusy Wschodnie w latach 1918–1945)*, in: *Wielkie wojny w Prusach. Działania militarne między Wisłą a Niemnem na przestrzeni wieków*, ed. W. Gieszczyński, N. Kasparek, Olsztyn 2010, pp. 271–274; Ch. Bellamy, *Wojna absolutna. Związek Sowiecki w II wojnie światowej*, Warszawa 2010, p. 726.

[24] B. Nitschke, *Wysiedlenie ludności niemieckiej z Polski w latach 1945–1949*, Zielona Góra 1999, pp. 50–52.

[25] N. Davies, *Europa,* Kraków 1998, p. 1110.

[26] See: H. Schön, *Flucht aus Ostpreussen 1945. Die Menschenjagd der Roten Armee*, Kiel 2001; A. Seaton, *Wojna totalna. Wehrmacht przeciw Armii Czerwonej 1941–1945*, Kraków 2010, p. 704.

[27] See: N. Davies, *Europa walczy 1939-1945. Nie takie proste zwycięstwo,* Kraków 2008, pp. 453-455. In consequence of torpedo attacks launched by the Soviet submarines, thousands of refugees from East Prussia died during evacuation by sea, including on board of M.S. Wilhelm Gustloff on 30 January 1945, M.S. General von Steuben which was sunk on 10 February 1945, and M.S. Goya on 16 April 1945.

[28] See: I. Denny, *Upadek twierdzy Hitlera. Bitwa o Królewiec*, Warszawa 2008.

[29] M. Gilbert, *Druga wojna światowa*, Poznań 2000, p. 754.

[30] W. Wróblewski, *Przebieg operacji wschodniopruskiej*, in: *Działania militarne w Prusach Wschodnich*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 331–342.

The part of East Prussia conquered by the Soviet Union was placed under the rule of Soviet military administration, and the first Red Army command posts were set up in the area already in January 1945[31]. This was a highly dramatic period in the region's history because the Soviets treated East Prussia as conquered enemy territory. Thousands of East Prussians were deported to distant parts of the USSR. The Red Army plundered everything that had any value, including livestock, farming products, railway tracks, rolling stock, cars, factory equipment, even household goods and objects of daily use[32]. The evacuation effort wrought massive destruction on houses and farms that had survived the military offensive[33]. East Prussia, the most eastward part of the Third Reich, was invaded by the Red Army which was motivated by a desire for revenge, and the local population became victim to the most atrocious crime perpetrated by the victors[34]. Königsberg, the capital city of East Prussia, was most heavily affected by the Red Army's brutality[35].

The fighting had not yet ceased, when the first attempts at establishing Polish rule were made in the southern part of East Prussia. On 3 February 1945, the Office of Polish Republic's Plenipotentiary to East Prussia was established on the initiative of Białystok voivod Jerzy Sztachelski. The office was headed by Henryk Olejniczak[36] with the main aim of developing a local administration network and helping Polish expatriates to settle in East Prussia. On 14 March 1945, the Council of Ministers decreed a provisional split of former German territories annexed by Poland after the war. East Prussia was one of the created administrative districts, headed by Jerzy Sztachelski, a representative of the Polish government. On 30 March 1945, Sztachelski was replaced by colonel Jakub Prawin, and East Prussia, the 4th administrative district, was renamed to the Masurian District with its seat in Olsztyn. Initially, the Masurian District spanned the area of 27,000 km^2, covering the counties of Bartoszyce, Braniewo, Darkiejmy, Elbląg, Ełk,

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[31] A. Magierska, *Ziemie zachodnie i północne w 1945 roku. Kształtowanie się polityki integracyjnej państwa polskiego*, Warszawa 1978, p. 21.

[32] See: J. Gancewski, W. Gieszczyński, *Gewalttaten, Zerstörungen und Verwüstungen von Hab und Gut durch die Rote Armee im ehemaligen Ostpreussen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, "Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung", No. 56/1, Marburg 2007, pp. 115–129.

[33] Archives of New Records in Warsaw (hereinafter: AAN), Ministry of Public Administration (hereinafter: MAP), Ref. No. 2460, doc. 17–18. Report of the Polish Government's Representative to Colonel Jakub Prawin's 3rd Belarusian Front for the Council of Ministers, dated 23 March 1945; *Okręg Mazurski w raportach Jakuba Prawina. Wybór dokumentów. 1945 rok*, ed. T. Baryła, Olsztyn 1996, doc. 15, pp. 53–55; ibid., doc. 9, pp. 41–43; ibid., doc. 22, pp. 66–71.

[34] M. Dönhoff, *Nazwy, których nikt już nie wymienia*, Olsztyn 2001, p. 12.

[35] J. Jasiński, *Historia Królewca. Szkice z XIII–XX stulecia*, Olsztyn 1994, pp. 265–267; W. Galcow, *Obwód kaliningradzki w latach 1945–1991. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, kultura*, KMW, 1996, No. 2, p. 206.

[36] *Okręg Mazurski w raportach Jakuba Prawina...*, doc. 13, pp. 50–51; ibid., doc. 14, pp. 51–52.

Gierdawy, Giżycko, Gołdap, Iława, Kętrzyn, Lidzbark, Malbork, Morąg, Mrągowo, Nidzica, Oleck, Olsztyn, Ostróda, Pasłęk, Pisk, Reszel, Susz, Szczytno, Sztum, Świętomiejsce and Węgorzewo[37]. Under a resolution of 7 July 1945, the Polish government modified the administrative borders of the Masurian District by shifting the counties of Elbląg, Kwidzyn, Malbork and Sztum to the Gdańsk voivodeship, and the countries of Ełk, Gołdap and Oleck – to the Białystok voivodeship[38].

The Polish-Soviet border determined by the agreement of 16 August 1945 was a separate issue. Pursuant to article 3 of the agreement, the section of the border "adjacent to the Baltic Sea shall run eastward along the line from a point on the eastern coast of the Gdańsk Bay, north of the town of Bransberg – Goldap"[39]. The provisions of the agreement did not give this section of the Polish-Soviet border's its final shape which was defined more than ten years later[40]. Owing to the absence of a precise geographical demarcation line separating the two countries, the Soviets made an arbitrary decision to move the border from several to more than ten kilometers to Poland's disadvantage[41]. This situation enforced a number of changes in the administrative division of the Masurian District. The Polish section of Świętomiejsce county was incorporated into Braniewo county, and a part of Darkjemy county was annexed to Węgorzewo county. After the elimination of Gierdawy county in November 1945, an agency of Gierdawy was created in Skandawa, but it was subsequently incorporated into Kętrzyn county.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers of 29 May 1946 abolished the Masurian District, replacing it with the Olsztyn voivodeship comprising 18 counties: Bartoszyce, Braniewo, Giżycko, Iława, Kętrzyn, Lidzbark, Morąg, Mrągowo, Nidzica, Olsztyn, Ostróda, Pasłęk, Pisz, Reszel, Susz, Szczytno, Węgorzewo and the Olsztyn urban county[42]. The new administrative division of the region of Warmia and Mazury survived four years. Under a resolution of 28 June 1950, the Olsztyn voivodeship was expanded to incorporate Nowe

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[37] E. Korc, op. cit., p. 15.

[38] State Archives in Olsztyn (hereinafter: APO), Office of the Polish Government's Representative for the Masurian District (hereinafter: UPR), Ref. No. 390/57. Excerpt from a Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 7 July 1945.

[39] *Dokumenty i materiały...*, doc. 314, pp. 580–581.

[40] Journal of Laws, People's Republic of Poland, 1958, No. 37, item 166. Agreement of 5 March 1957 on mapping the State boundary in the part adjacent to the Baltic Sea.

[41] APO, UPR, Ref. No. 390/59., doc. 25–27. A Letter from the Polish Government's Representative for the Masurian District to the Ministry of the Recovered Territories, dated 10 January 1946; *Okręg Mazurski w raportach Jakuba Prawina...*, doc. 35, pp. 142–144; ibid., doc. 37, pp. 156–157; ibid., doc. 39, pp. 160–167, ibid., doc. 40, pp. 172–173.

[42] Official Journal of the Ministry of the Recovered Territories, 1946, No. 6, item 72. Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland of 29 May 1946; Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland (hereinafter: Dz. U. RP), 1946, No. 28, item 177. Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland of 29 May 1946 on the provisional administrative system in the Recovered Territories.

Miasto county from the Bydgoszcz voivodeship and Działdowo county from the Warsaw voivodeship[43].

Despite a steadily growing number of Polish settlers in the first months after the war, Germans accounted for the majority of Masurian District's population[44]. A vast part of East Prussia's civilian population fled in the fall of 1944 and the winter of 1945 during the advance of the Russian Army. The Polish authorities forced the remaining inhabitants to participate in public works programs for which they were not paid, but only received small allowances of basic goods. This group of inhabitants was subsequently included in the food ration scheme which led to massive hunger and casualties among the Germans[45]. With time, the Polish authorities began to deport Germans from the cities to work in the rural areas of the Masurian District. In the mid 1945, a "voluntary" evacuation campaign was initiated, and Germans were allowed to migrate to the Allied occupied zones based on individual passes. The campaign reached a high point in the period between August and October 1945[46]. A compulsory resettlement scheme was to begin shortly. An estimated 25,000 to 60,000 Germans left or were expelled from the Masurian District to the territories west to the Oder line by the end of 1945[47].

Article XIII of the Potsdam Agreement of 2 August 1945 ordered the resettlement of the Germans living in Poland to the Allied occupation zones in Germany. The provisions of this article applied to practically all residents of German nationality. The evacuation began with the unemployed and persons who were believed to pose a political threat. The next phase of the expulsion campaign witnessed the resettlement of Germans from rural farms that had been already occupied by Poles as well as unqualified factory workers[48].

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[43] Dz. U. RP, 1950, No. 28, item 255. Act amending the administrative division of the State.

[44] AAN, Ministry of the Recovered Territories (hereinafter: MZO), Ref. No. 1666. According to data of 25 July 1945, there were 142 312 ethnic Germans in the Masurian District, accounting for 57.5% of the district's total population. Poles became the predominant ethnic group only as of September 1945.

[45] APO, Voivodeship Office in Olsztyn (hereinafter: UW), Ref. No. 391/266, doc. 27. Report on the Olsztyn Voivodeship Office's Social and Political Activities for the period from 1 March to 30 September 1946.

[46] APO, UPR, Ref No. 390/71, doc. 12. Confidential instructions for the Polish Government's Representative for the Masurian District, Colonel J. Prawin, of 22 June 1945; *Warmiacy i Mazurzy w PRL. Wybór dokumentów. Rok 1945*; ed. T. Baryła, Olsztyn 1994, doc. 31, p. 43; APO, Olsztyn City Board, Ref. No.. 411/111, doc. 98–101. Circular letter No. 172 from the the Polish Government's Representative for the Masurian District, Colonel J. Prawin, of 1 October 1945.

[47] S. Żyromski, *Procesy migracyjne w województwie olsztyńskim w latach 1945–1949*, Olsztyn 1971, p. 24; A. Magierska, op. cit., p. 130; *Warmia i Mazury w PRL. Wybór dokumentów. Rok 1945...*, p. VII.

[48] *Wysiedlenie Niemców z województwa olsztyńskiego po II wojnie światowej (wybór dokumentów archiwalnych z lat 1945–1948)*, ed. W. Gieszczyński, "Echa Przeszłości", 2000, No. 1, pp. 195–220; *Niemcy w Polsce 1945–1950. Wybór dokumentów*, ed. W. Borodziej, H. Lemberg, vol. 1, Warszawa 2000.

According to estimates, on 14 February 1946, the Masurian District was inhabited by 98,466 Germans who accounted for 28% of the local population[49]. Several months later, the Polish authorities began to evacuate Germans from the Olsztyn voivodeship. The first transport left for Germany on 14 August 1946[50]. The campaign continued in the following years. According to official data, a total of 65,398 Germans were expelled from the Olsztyn voivodeship between 1946 and 1948[51]. Not all East Prussians who had been citizens of the Reich before the war were forced to leave. In consequence of the "nationality verification" campaign, 103,122 Warmians and Masurians who acquired Polish citizenship after the war were granted residence in the Olsztyn voivodeship[52].

Deserted German homes and farms were occupied by Polish settlers. Most of them resettled from central Poland and the eastern territories that were ceded to the Soviet Union after the war[53]. The first wave of settlement included Polish workers who had been deported by the Germans to forced labor camps in East Prussia in 1939–1945[54]. After the war, some of them decided to stay and start a new life in East Prussia.

Although the inhabitants of areas particularly devastated during the war were offered priority in the resettlement scheme, Poles who had been living in the eastern territories for generations were reluctant to move. Yet due to political decisions, they settled in the Masurian District in an "atmosphere of clear group coercion"[55]. In most cases, the resettlement to Warmia and Mazury included the residents of Vilnius and Nowogród regions and, less frequently, Polesie and Volyn. The resettlement scheme, carried out by the National Repatriation Office, reached its peak in 1945–1948[56]. During

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[49] *Powszechny sumaryczny spis ludności z 14 II 1946 r.*, "Statystyka Polski", 1947, series D, vol. 1, p. XVI.

[50] APO, UW, Ref. No. 391/268., doc. 150. A letter from the Olsztyn Voivod to MZO concerning the resettlement of German inhabitants.

[51] *Wysiedlenie Niemców z województwa olsztyńskiego...*, p. 196.

[52] See: L. Belzyt, *Między Polską a Niemcami. Weryfikacja narodowościowa i jej następstwa na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu w latach 1945–1950*, Toruń 1996; A. Sakson, *Stosunki narodowościowe...*, pp. 80–106.

[53] See: J. Czerniakiewicz, *Repatriacja ludności polskiej z ZSRR 1944–1948*, Warszawa 1987; S. Ciesielski, *Przesiedlenie ludności polskiej z kresów wschodnich do Polski 1944–1947*, Warszawa 1999.

[54] In 1939–1945, Germans hired around 300,000 forced laborers in East Prussia, of whom around 200,000 were Poles. See: *Ostpreussen. Wspomnienia Polaków wywiezionych na roboty przymusowe do Prus Wschodnich w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa 2010, p. 6.

[55] See: W. Wrzesiński, *Dziedzictwo a tożsamość. Prusy Wschodnie–Warmia i Mazury–Olsztyńskie*, KMW, 1997, No. 1, pp. 43–44.

[56] See: S. Banasiak, *Działalność osadnicza Państwowego Urzędu Repatriacyjnego na Ziemiach Odzyskanych w latach 1945–1947*, Poznań 1963; W. Gieszczyński, *Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny w osadnictwie na Warmii i Mazurach (1945–1950)*, Olsztyn 1999; D. Sula, *Działalność przesiedleńczo-repatriacyjna Państwowego Urzędu Repatriacyjnego w latach 1944–1951*, Lublin 2002.

that time, 234,794 people from central Poland and 65,313 former inhabitants of the eastern territories were resettled to rural areas in the Olsztyn voivodeship[57]. Urban areas witnessed the resettlement of 95,194 people from central Poland and 50,031 from the eastern territories[58]. In 1947, 55,448 Ukrainians were coerced into moving to the Olsztyn voivodeship from southeastern Poland as part of the "Vistula" campaign initiated by the Polish authorities[59]. Initially, the Polish expatriates were reluctant or even hostile towards the Ukrainians on account of the massive crimes committed by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists – the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Volyn and East Galicia during the war. According to a population census of 1950, the Olsztyn voivodeship had a total population of 610,173, including 184,212 in the cities and 425,961 in rural areas[60].

The northern part of East Prussia became an official province of the Soviet Union as the Kenigsbergskaya Special Military Zone under the command of General Kuzma Galitskii. The territory was divided into 15 regions plus Königsberg, an autonomous administrative unit[61]. Under a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR of 7 April 1946, the Soviet enclave in East Prussia became the Kenigsbergskaya Oblast, an official province of the USSR[62]. On 4 July 1946, the city of Königsberg was renamed to Kaliningrad[63], and the Kenigsbergskaya Oblast – to the Kaliningrad Oblast[64]. On 4 September 1946, the district's administrative system was replaced with 14 regions: Bagrationovsky, Chernyakhovsky, Gvardeysky, Guryevsky, Gusevsky, Krasnoznamensky, Ladushkinsky, Nesterovsky, Ozyorsky, Pravdinsky, Primorsky, Polessky, Slavsky and Sovetsky, as well as the city of Kaliningrad[65].

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[57] APO, Voivodship Committee of the Polish Workers' Party in Olsztyn (hereinafter: KW PPR), Ref. No. 1073/173. Polish population in the eastern and northern territories as on 31 December 1948.

[58] Ibid.

[59] APO, UW, Ref. No.. 391/272. Ukrainians resettled during the "Vistula" campaign to the Olsztyn voivodeship in 1947. See: *Akcja "Wisła". Dokumenty*, ed. E. Misiło, Warszawa 1993; W. Gieszczyński, *Osadnictwo ludności ukraińskiej na terenie województwa olsztyńskiego w ramach akcji "Wisła" (w świetle dokumentów urzędowych)*, Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Olsztynie. Prace Historyczne, 1997, vol. I, pp. 125–134.

[60] *Narodowy spis powszechny z 3 XII 1950 r.*, Warszawa 1952.

[61] W. Galcow, op. cit, p. 204.

[62] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają. Pierwsze lata Obwodu Kaliningradzkiego we wspomnieniach i dokumentach*. Ed. J.W. Kostjaszow, Olsztyn 2000, doc. II, p. 263.

[63] Königsberg was renamed to Kaliningrad in honor of Soviet communist activist Mikhail Kalinin who died on 3 June 1946. In 1919–1938, Kalinin presided over the Central Executive Committee, and in 1938–1946, he was the Chairman of the Supreme Council.

[64] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, doc. V, p. 274.

[65] Ibid., doc. IX, p. 285; cf. W. Galcow, op. cit., p. 204. The Kaliningrad Oblast was given a new administrative system under the agreement of 25 July 1947. Kaliningrad was divided into four districts: Baltic, Lenningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad, and the number of regions in the Kaliningrad Oblast was increased to 17.

Although the majority of East Prussia's inhabitants had evacuated before the winter of 1945, ethnic Germans initially represented the majority of Kenigsbergskaya Oblast's population[66]. Women, children, the elderly and the disabled accounted for 70% of the population, while those capable of work were employed in industrial plants and farms. Most Germans worked 12-hour days, and in return, they were entitled to food rations amounting to 400 g of bread and 600 g of potatoes, while those not employed received even smaller allowances. Food shortages and dire living conditions contributed to high mortality rates among the German population[67]. The citizens of Königsberg suffered particular hardship, and according to Soviet documents, dying people were found practically everywhere: in health clinics, at homes, even in city streets[68]. According to the Civil Affairs Office, 1933 deaths were registered in October 1945 alone[69]. In addition to hunger, appalling sanitary conditions contributed to the spread of contagious diseases, in particular typhoid which, according to the local authorities, had reached a pandemic stage. According to official data, the death toll from contagious diseases reached more than 20,000 between September 1945 and April 1946[70]. Despite that threat, the Soviet administration was initially keen on keeping the locals who were a source of cheap labor, as Germans accounted for nearly half of the workers at sovkhoz farms and factories[71]. For this reason, the first plans to expel Germans from the Kaliningrad Oblast were developed only at the beginning of 1947 with the aim of resettling 3,390 people. Under a decree of 11 October 1947, the Soviet government decided to resettle the German inhabitants of the Kaliningrad Oblast to the Allied occupied zone in Germany[72]. The authorities had initially planned to expel 30,000 Germans by the end of 1947, but the deportation scheme reached its peak in 1947–1948. According to Yuri Kostyashov's estimates, a total of 102,494 people had been deported to the Soviet occupied zone in Germany in 1947–1952[73].

During this mass evacuation scheme, the Soviet authorities made simultaneous efforts to colonize the Kaliningrad Oblast. The first settlers were the Red Army soldiers whose task was to disarm the region, clear it of mines and tear down the ruins. The following group of newcomers consisted of demobilized soldiers participating in military action in East Prussia. 12,000 of

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[66] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, p. 193. As at 1 September 1945, the Soviet authorities registered 129,614 persons in the entire district, including 68,014 in Königsberg; cf. A. Kossert, op. cit., p. 308. According to German sources, on 1 September 1945, the parts of East Prussia annexed to the Soviet Union after the war were inhabited by 174,125 Germans, including 84,651 in Königsberg.

[67] W. Galcow, op. cit., p. 205.

[68] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, doc. XI, pp. 288–289.

[69] Ibid., p. 203.

[70] Ibid., doc. X, p. 287; W. Galcow, op. cit., p. 205.

[71] W. Galcow, op. cit., p. 206.

[72] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, doc. XIII, pp. 292–293. A secret ordinance of the Soviet internal affairs minister, General Siergei Kruglov, No. 001067 dated 14 October 1947, supplemented the government's resolution of 11 October 1947.

[73] Ibid., p. 18; W. Galcow, op. cit., pp. 206–207.

kolkhoz families from other regions of the USSR were moved to rural areas on a "voluntary basis". By 1950, 46,000 families had been resettled to farms in the Kaliningrad Oblast[74]. Attempts were also made to further the region's development by bringing in groups of resettlers whose task was to revive Kaliningrad's war-torn economy that now catered mainly to the needs of the arms industry[75]. Engineers, teachers, doctors and other specialists were moved to the Kaliningrad Oblast as part of compulsory resettlement schemes launched by the communist party. Other social groups accounted for expatriates who had been prisoners of compulsory labor camps in Germany during the war as well as former political prisoners and exiles who decided to settle down in the Kaliningrad Oblast[76]. The expatriates were offered various incentives, such as free transportation, including livestock and personal belongings up to 2 tons per family, resettlement benefits amounting to 1,000 rubles per head of the family and 300 rubles per every family member, a house in the country or an apartment in the city as well as financial grants for purchasing livestock. The resettlers were exempted from liability for unpaid taxes, they were also exempted from income tax and compulsory deliveries to the state over a period of three years[77]. According to Olga Stepanova, the resettlement process could be divided into three principal stages: 1 – spring of 1945–1946, 2 – summer of 1946-December 1946, 3 – 1947–1950 when the Kaliningrad Oblast's population topped 400,000[78]. Most of the citizens had been resettled from Russia (70%), Belarus (11.1%) and the Ukraine (7%), while the former inhabitants of other regions of the USSR, including the four Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR) of Chuvash, Mordovian, Mari and Tatar, accounted for 11.9% of the local population[79]. Due to its strategic importance in the Baltic Sea region, the Kaliningrad Oblast was one of the most heavily militarized regions with Soviet troops stationing in the area.

When the Red Army entered Klaipeda in January 1945, the city was damaged and nearly completely deserted[80]. After the war, the city and the entire Klaipeda Region were annexed to the Lithuanian SSR, a part of the Soviet Union. The region was divided into three administrative units: Klaipeda, Šilokarčiama and Pogieg[81]. New settlers began to arrive in Klaipeda already in the first months of 1945, initially spontaneously and later as part

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[74] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, doc. VI, pp. 275–281; O. Stiepanova, *Zasiedlenie obwodu kalingradzkiego w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej*, KMW, 1996, No. 2, p. 195.

[75] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, doc. IV, pp. 267–273. Resolution of the Soviet Council of Ministers No. 1298 of 21 June 1946.

[76] O. Stiepanova, op. cit., p. 194.

[77] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, pp. 28–30, doc. IV, pp. 267–273, doc. VI, pp. 275–281.

[78] See: O. Stiepanova, op. cit., pp. 193–196; W. Galcow, op. cit., p. 208.

[79] *Przesiedleńcy opowiadają...*, p. 20; O. Stiepanova, op. cit., pp. 195–197.

[80] P. Łossowski, op. cit., p. 212.

[81] A. Sakson, *Kraj Kłajpedzki. Zmiany ludnościowe 1945–1950*, "Przegląd Zachodni", 2007, No. 3, p. 107.

of organized resettlement schemes. Most of them were the Lithuanians and Russians, but the Ukrainians, Belarusians and Poles were also a part of resettler groups. The region's former Lithuanian and German inhabitants began to return to Klaipeda. According to Soviet estimates, as on 1 January 1946, the Klaipeda Region had 55,000 inhabitants, which accounted for less than 10% of the region's population in 1939[82].

On 23 March 1946, the Lithuanian SSR adopted a decree to colonize the Klaipeda Region. Despite initial plans to resettle 13,000 families to the area, only 5,300 families had taken residence in the region, mostly in rural areas. The population of Klaipeda city increased from 6,000 in late 1945 to 51,000 in 1947. The local community suffered from food and fuel shortages[83]. A large Russian population and Lithuania's annexation by the USSR contributed to the rapid Sovietization of the Klaipeda Region.

The Red Army's offensive in the winter of 1945 put an end to German rule in East Prussia. While military action was still in progress, the big three Allies decided on the fate of East Prussia whose north-eastern part was ceded to the Soviet Union, and the rest was annexed to Poland. Political change spurred massive human migration in the area. A vast number of East Prussia's inhabitants evacuated to the Reich in the fall of 1944 or fled from the advancing Red Army in the winter of 1945. In the light of the Potsdam Agreement of 2 August 1945, the remaining citizens were to be expelled to the Allied occupied zones in Germany. According to estimates, East Prussia had lost nearly 95% of its pre-war inhabitants[84]. This has led to dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of the region's population. After the war, a very small fraction of ethnic Germans remained in East Prussia which was colonized by the Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians and other national groups who settled in the region voluntarily or under coercion, weaving a new social fabric of East Prussia. This historical region is marked by significant diversity in terms of culture, nationality and traditions[85]. Today, the former East Prussian territories are part of three sovereign states: the Republic of Poland (Warmia and Mazury), the Russian Federation (Kaliningrad Oblast) and the Republic of Lithuania (Klaipeda Region). The area is also intersected by the border between Russia and the European Union. Although East Prussia is no longer marked on the map, for many people who reside on this territory, it is their homeland and still very much alive[86].

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[82] Ibid., pp. 122–123; P. Łossowski, op. cit., p. 212; A. Kossert, op. cit., p. 336.

[83] A. Sakson, *Kraj Kłajpedzki...*, pp. 110–111.

[84] Ibid., p. 109.

[85] A. Sakson, *Stosunki narodowościowe...*, pp. 11–14, 381–395.

[86] See: J. Jasiński, *Polska wobec dziedzictwa historycznego Prus Wschodnich po 1945 roku*, in: *Między Prusami a Polską. Rozprawy i szkice z dziejów Warmii i Mazur w XVIII–XX wieku*, Olsztyn 2003, pp. 136–167; S. Kargopołow, *Obwód kaliningradzki na obszarze byłych Prus Wschodnich*, "Borussia", No. 10/1995, p. 81; A. Sakson, *Od Kłajpedy do Olsztyna. Współcześni mieszkańcy byłych Prus Wschodnich: Kraj Kłajpedzki, Obwód Kaliningradzki, Warmia i Mazury*, Poznań 2011.