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Educational contexts of migration. The case of East Prussia / Warmia and Mazury in 1945

Streszczenie: W 1945 roku zakończyła się II wojna światowa, w wyniku której miliony osób zmuszone zostały do migracji. Procesy te były bardzo wyraźne na obszarze Prus Wschodnich, terytorium Niemiec, które przypadło Polsce i ZSRR. Z obszaru tego uciekali Niemcy, a ich gospodarstwa zasiedlano Polakami zarówno z centralnej Polski, jak i Kresów Wschodnich, które po wojnie przypadły Związkowi Radzieckiemu. Artykuł przedstawia prezentację problemu powojennych migracji w edukacji szkolnej, muzealnej i nieformalnej zarówno na terenie Niemiec, jak i Polski. Analizie poddano podręczniki i zeszyty edukacyjne, które w Niemczech dość często zajmują się tą tematyką. Następnie przeanalizowano wystawy muzealne dotyczące migracji z Prus Wschodnich i z Kresów Wschodnich. Tu także większe zainteresowanie widzimy po stronie niemieckiej. Na koniec wskazano strony internetowe poświęcone migracjom, jako formę edukacji nieformalnej. W tym wypadku zarówno Polacy, jak i Niemcy wykazują się sporą aktywnością.

Słowa kluczowe: Prusy Wschodnie, Warmia i Mazury, powojenne migracje, edukacja szkolna, muzealna, nieformalna

Introduction

Until 1945, East Prussia formed a national and ethnical conglomerate as a part of the German state. World War II resulted in a previously unprecedented movement of population, comparable to the Migration Period in the sixth century. East Prussia was divided after the war between Poland and the Soviet Union. Following the break-up of the USSR in 1991, these areas nowadays belong to three states: Poland (Warmia and Mazury Province), Lithuania (Klaipėda Region) and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast).

Thus, the German heritage remained outside the borders of Germany, treated by the new settlers as foreign¹.

In the last twenty years, the historiography of the Prussian lands has increasingly emphasized the multicultural aspect of this region, although previously, in Germany and later in the three countries that acquired the territory of East Prussia after World War II, this area was presented from a national and ethnocentric perspective². The contemporary research takes into account almost all inhabitants of these lands: Prussians, Germans, Warmians, Mazurians, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews and Russians as well as smaller religious and ethnic groups, such as Protestants from Salzburg or Lemkos from Ukraine. Some of these groups have been living here for hundreds of years, while others migrated in stages from the Middle Ages to modern times.

This text is the effect of many years of interest in the problems of education and regional awareness among students of the Warmia and Mazury area. In 2019, it was followed by a reflection on a museum presentation devoted to migrations in both Poland and Germany. This paper is an attempt to show comparisons in Polish and German attitudes towards education and presentation of the subject of flight/deportations/resettlements from/to East Prussia after World War II. It was written as a result of the author's research stay in Germany, co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund (Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development), implemented under the project titled Development Programme for the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (POWR.03.05.00–00-Z310/17).

The main focus of the paper is placed on the first months of 1945 when the German population was fleeing the Red Army in panic. In the further part of the article, I deal with resettlements taking place in the following months, when they became more organized and also included Poles from the Eastern Borderlands, forced to leave their former (Polish) lands in the territory of later Soviet republics of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. After an initial historical outline, I analyse school education, mainly in the context of post-war migration issues covered in Polish and German textbooks. The text provides only

¹ I. Lewandowska, *Palaces of the Prussian aristocracy in the social reality of the Polish People's Republic. The case of Sztynort 1945–1989*, in: *Between Oblivion and the New order. From research on relationships among memory cultures in former East Prussia after World War Two. Studies and sketches*, ed. K. Narojczyk, Olsztyn 2014, p. 71–84; eadem, *Oswajanie poniemieckiej przestrzeni nazewniczej na Warmii i Mazurach po II wojnie światowej*, in: *Nazwa dokumentem przeszłości regionu*, ed. J. Nowosielska-Sobel, G. Strauchold, W. Kucharski, Wrocław 2010, p. 35–64; eadem, *Młodzież wobec zabytków Warmii i Mazur w okresie Polski Ludowej*, in: *Dzieci, młodzież i studenci na Ziemiach Zachodnich po II wojnie światowej*, ed. W. Kucharski, G. Strauchold, Wrocław-Warszawa 2012, p. 97–114.

² J. Hackmann, *Pommern, Westpreußen und Ostpreußen in der deutschen und polnischen Historiographie nach 1945*, in: *Doświadczenia przeszłości. Niemcy w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w historiografii po 1945 roku /Erfahrungen der Vergangenheit. Deutsche in Ostmitteleuropa in der Historiographie nach 1945*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, W. Matwiejczyk, E. Mühle, Lublin-Marburg 2000, p. 77–79; A. Nikžentaitis, *Ostpreußen in der litauischen Geschichtsschreibung*, in: *Baltisch-deutsche Sprachen- und Kulturkontakte in Nord-Ostpreußen. Methoden ihrer Erforschung*, ed. J. D. Range, Essen 2002, p. 161.

examples of certain theses since I analysed them in detail together with Stephanie Zloch while working on 700 Polish, German, Russian and Lithuanian textbooks³. To compare museum education, I took into account two German centres dedicated to East Prussia: the East Prussia Cultural Centre, with its archive and museum in Ellingen (Bavaria), and the East Prussian State Museum with the Baltic German collection in Lüneburg (Lower Saxony), and on the Polish side, the Museum of Warmia and Mazury with its branches in Olsztyn, Lidzbark Warmiński, Morąg, Reszel, Szczytno, Mrągowo and the Folk Culture Museum in Węgorzewo. In the last part of the paper, I discuss selected websites presenting the subject of migration from/to East Prussia, considered as informal education.

Resettlement and migration in the light of the research literature

The research literature provides inconsistent data concerning the number of people who were killed or died during the flight in winter 1945. In 1939, East Prussia, including the administrative district of Kwidzyń and the Klaipėda County, had a population of about 2,490,000. Out of these, about 75% attempted to escape the approaching Red Army; however, not all succeeded⁴. Most of the refugees crossed the Baltic Sea by ship or crossed the Oder by train. Tens of thousands drowned on torpedoed ships. It should be emphasized that this was the largest maritime evacuation in the German history. Until recently, German literature reported that 2 million people were killed, yet now the figures are more balanced. Andreas Kossert, a German historian, reports that about 500,000 people died as a result of escape, evacuation and expulsion, while the Polish sociologist Andrzej Sakson quotes the number of 150,000 and 511,000, depending on which factors and time brackets are taken into account⁵. When the fighting ceased, over 500,000 East Prussians remained under the Soviet rule. Following the decisions made by the Allies at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the Germans were expelled to the west of the Oder-Neisse line. Even before the final decisions of the Big Three, in the summer

³ S. Zloch, *Doświadczenia migracji*, w: *Ziemia pruskie w podręcznikach Polski, Niemiec, Litwy i Rosji*, ed. I. Lewandowska, S. Zloch, Olsztyn 2013, p. 176–205, eadem, *Migration*, in: *Das „Pruzenland“ als geteilte Erinnerungsregion Konstruktion und Repräsentation eines europäischen Geschichtsraums in Deutschland, Polen, Litauen und Russland seit 1900*, ed. S. Zloch, I. Lewandowska, Braunschweig 2014, p. 173–204.

⁴ *Flucht, Vertreibung, Integration*, ed. Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn 2006; A. Kossert, *Kalte Heimat. Die Geschichte des deutschen Vertreibens nach 1945*, München 2008; *Flüchtling und Vertreibung. Europa zwischen 1939 und 1948*, ed. A. Surminski, (several editions) Hamburg 2003–2012; *Die Erinnerung an Flucht und Vertreibung. Ein Handbuch der Medien und Praktiken*, ed. S. Scholz, M. Röger, B. Niven, Paderborn 2015.

⁵ A. Sakson, *Od Kłajpedy do Olsztyna. Współczesny mieszkańcy byłych Prus Wschodnich: Kraj Kłajpedzki, Obwód Kaliningradzki, Warmia i Mazury*, Poznań 2011, p. 111; G. Hryciuk, M. Ruchniewicz, B. Szaynok, A. Zbikowski, *Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki 1930–1959. Atlas ziem Polski*, Warszawa 2008, passim; *Umsiedlungen, Vertreibungen und Fluchtbewegungen 1939–1959. Atlas zur Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas*, ed. G. Hryciuk, W. Sienkiewicz, Bonn-Warszawa 2012, passim.

of 1945, the first wave of uncontrolled expulsions broke out, especially from the eastern German territories occupied by the Red Army. Further expulsions were carried out according to the plan, from October 1945 to the end of 1947⁶.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the two lands had to cope with the largest influx of refugees in relation to the native population: Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony. The latter includes the administrative district of Lüneburg, where the majority of the population fleeing from East Prussia arrived. An important task was to raise public awareness through continuous education. Thus, educational brochures on the integration problems in a particular federal state were published both at the central level and in relevant federal states⁷. In Lüneburg, the number of refugees increased by 78% in 1946 compared to 1939 and led to the idea of creating the East Prussian State Museum in this town.

The main reasons why people from East Prussia settled in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein were geographical and cultural similarities to the region of origin. The ancestors of the resettlers who founded the Prussian state in the 13th century came mainly from Lower Saxony, and most East Prussians spoke the Lower German dialect. The similarities to the Baltic Sea landscape and the familiar North German brick architecture provided certain ease to those lost in a strange country far from home.

Similar factors were considered for displacements of the Eastern Borderland population to Poland. Migrations took place latitudinally, i.e. people from the Vilnius region were resettled to Olsztyn and the region of today's Warmia and Mazury Province, and from Ukraine to Wrocław and Lower Silesia. By the end of 1948, about 330,000 inhabitants from central Poland and over 115,000 displaced people from the eastern territories, at that time referred to as repatriates, came to Warmia and Mazury. This number should be increased by the forced resettlement of over 55,000 Ukrainians as part of the "Vistula" operation, as well as representatives of smaller groups: Belarusians, Lithuanians and Romany people⁸.

School education

Despite a relatively large number of research works relating to the population resettlement after World War II, this issue is not covered in the current Polish core curric-

⁶ *Deuschalndtreffen der Ostpreussen. Ostpreussen lebt. Landsmannschaft Ostpreussen 1948–1998*, Hamburg 1998, p. 24.

⁷ *Umsiedlung, Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen als internationales Problem. Zur Geschichte eines europäischen Irrwegs*, (edition for Baden-Württemberg), ed. M. Beer, Stuttgart 2002; (edition for Niedersachsen), Stuttgart 2005; S. Schwinger, S. Liebig, D. Grupp, *Ihr und Wir. Integration der Heimatvertrebenen in Baden-Württemberg*, Stuttgart 2010; S. Barth, *Flucht und Vertreibung. Deutschland am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, Frankfurt/Main 2016.

⁸ S. Żyromski, *Procesy migracyjne w województwie olsztyńskim w latach 1945–1949*, Olsztyn 1971; W. Gieszczyński, *Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny w osadnictwie na Warmii i Mazurach (1945–1950)*, Olsztyn 1999; A. Sakson, *Stosunki narodowościowe na Warmii i Mazurach 1945–1997*, Poznań 1998.

ulum for primary or secondary schools. The core curriculum of general education for a 4-year general secondary school and 5-year technical secondary school, in the section: “The world after World War II. The Beginning of the Cold War” states that “the student is able to describe the effects of World War II, specifying its political, social, economic and cultural consequences”⁹. The notion of migration is not mentioned; therefore the introduction of this issue depends on textbook authors and teachers. It seems that the problem can be discussed in more detail in the section devoted to Poland: “The process of taking power by communists in Poland (1944–1948)”. It states that the student “is able to describe demographic, economic and cultural losses, to indicate changes to the borders of the Polish state after World War II” and “to assess the socio-economic consequences of changes to the borders of the Polish state”¹⁰.

The topic of migration emerges in history books available today, but during the period of People’s Poland, students did not learn about it at all. The quoted excerpts from the Potsdam Declaration were limited to presenting the Allied policy towards Germany and state and territorial changes. Thus, the Prussian lands were included in their southern part, along with Warmia and Mazury, to the “Regained Lands” of Poland, and in their northern part, they were defined as the Kaliningrad Oblast – however, without taking into account the fate of its population, neither the Germans living here until 1945, nor the new settlers who arrived there after World War II.

After the political breakthrough in the 1990s, the topic of escapes, expulsions and deportations suddenly appeared in Polish textbooks, becoming one of the most frequently elaborated topics of contemporary history almost overnight. The proposals for interpretations and the narrations are very different. Some of the textbooks continue to assign the main decision-making powers to the Potsdam Declaration. According to them, by the decision of the Great Three, the German population was displaced to the west¹¹. However, most authors of the Polish textbooks go beyond just mentioning the Potsdam Declaration. More attention is paid to escapes and evacuations as the first phase of the migration movement, which in terms of numbers made its most important phase since it concerned about 4 million Germans, while according to the resolutions of the Potsdam Declaration of 1945–1946, only 2.5 million Germans migrated¹². Most textbooks focus on the role of the Red Army, overlooking the policy of the Nazi authorities responsible for delayed and

⁹ Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego dla 4-letniego liceum ogólnokształcącego i 5-letniego technikum, Dziennik Ustaw RP 2018, poz. 467, s. 131; <http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2018000046701.pdf> (dostęp 28.02.2020).

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 133.

¹¹ R. Tusiewicz, *Historia 4. Polska współczesna 1944–1989. Podręcznik dla klasy IV liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Warszawa 1993, p. 45; K. Starczewska et al., *Świat współczesny. Od wybuchu II wojny światowej*, Klasa III, t. 2, ed. 5, Warszawa 2007, p. 63.

¹² A. Radziwiłł, W. Roszkowski, *Historia 1945–1990. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich*, ed. 2, Warszawa 1994, p. 65; M. Gładysz, *Historia III. Podręcznik dla klasy trzeciej liceum i technikum. Zakres podstawowy i rozszerzony. Czasy współczesne*, Gdańsk 2004, p. 79.

chaotic evacuations¹³. They also include quite drastic descriptions: “Soviet troops, entering German lands, committed mass murders and rapes on civilians, completely destroying some of the cities (e.g. Gdańsk, Wrocław, Berlin and Königsberg). Terrified Germans fled in panic to the west”¹⁴. The authors of newer textbooks more frequently refer to oppressions and offences against the German population, drawing attention to the disastrous transport conditions and attacks from Poles and local authorities¹⁵. In the narrative, it is not the revenge for the suffering experienced during World War II that prevails, but the creation of ethnic-national homogeneity.

Not much attention is devoted to people displaced from the Eastern Borderlands. One of the textbooks, under the heading “Where is the homeland?” provides the following explanation: “Millions of Poles were forced to abandon their family homes and native land in the Eastern Borderlands and settle down in the western lands (sometimes this process is misleadingly called ‘repatriation’ – return to the homeland)”¹⁶, while in some other place it can be read that in the Recovered Territories, “communities were formed of people uprooted from their former small homelands”¹⁷. The textbooks also provide information on other population groups forcefully transferred to the Recovered Territories: disarmed soldiers, forced labourers returning from the German Reich or inhabitants of overpopulated areas of central Poland who moved here after the war for the hope of better living conditions¹⁸. In Warmia and Mazury, a separate group consisted of Ukrainians and Lemkos, forcibly displaced from Podkarpacie in 1947 as a result of the “Vistula” operation¹⁹.

The 2012 regional textbook presents the issue of forced resettlements in the Warmia and Mazury region in a broader sense, with a separate lesson devoted to this subject²⁰. Apart from the author’s narration, the book features numerous illustrations with extensive captions concerning the migration of the Polish and Ukrainian German population; the timeline, which marks the beginning of the expulsion of Germans from Warmia and Mazury; a pie chart showing the national composition of the Warmia and Mazury population

¹³ J. Pilikowski, *Historia 1939–1990. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich*, Kraków 1996, p. 107; W. Mędrzecki, R. Szuchta, *U źródeł współczesności. Dzieje nowożytne i najnowsze. Historia 3. Podręcznik gimnazjum*, ed. 5, Warszawa 2007, p. 346.

¹⁴ J. Choińska-Mika, P. Skibiński, P. Szlanta, K. Zielińska, *Historia. Poznać, zrozumieć*, t. 3: *Podręcznik dla liceum i technikum, zakres podstawowy*, Warszawa 2009, p. 151.

¹⁵ J. Wendt, *Historia III. Podręcznik*, Gdańsk 2000, p. 170; L. Chmiel, B. Jagiełło, A. Syta, *Historia. Klasa 3 gimnazjum. Podręcznik*, Warszawa 2002, p. 261.

¹⁶ G. Kucharczyk, P. Milcarek, M. Robak, *Przez tysiąclecia i wieki. Cywilizacje XIX i XX wieku, kl. 3. Podręcznik*, ed. 4, Warszawa 2007, p. 264–265.

¹⁷ M. Gładysz, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁸ Ibidem; L. Chmiel, B. Jagiełło, A. Syta, op. cit., p. 263; M. Sobaś, G. Szymanowski, *Historia ludzi. 3 klasa gimnazjum. Od traktatu wersalskiego do okrągłego stołu*, Kraków 2001, p. 192.

¹⁹ W. Mędrzecki, R. Szuchta, op. cit., p. 348; L. Chmiel, B. Jagiełło, A. Syta, op. cit., p. 261.

²⁰ *Dziedzictwo ziem pruskich. Dzieje i kultura Warmii i Mazur. Podręcznik dla młodzieży*, ed. I. Lewandowska, Olsztyn 2012, p. 308–315.

after the resettlement period; and questions to students concerning the main directions of population movements after World War II.

National Polish and German textbooks include very few photographs depicting the course of the migration, without a precise location of the events. One of the pictures shows the expulsion of the German population, carrying heavy luggage, in the urban setting, on foot, probably on the way to the nearest station. This picture gives an idea of more or less orderly, accepted resettlement, taking place without military supervision or violent misconduct of new settlers²¹. Another photo shows a convoy with a horse-drawn cart, but this time it shows groups of Polish settlers heading in the direction, according to the caption, of the former German territories²². However, when it comes to cartographic materials on post-war migration, Polish textbooks put more emphasis on their European dimension. Although individual textbooks include historical maps, showing only the fate of Polish migrants during and after World War II²³, the majority of them include Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians and other population groups, and visualize their route using arrows and information about the year of the event²⁴.

In German textbooks, the description of cruel Russians and German victims who feared for their own lives, especially women, children and the elderly, is very typical for the early 1950s: “The Russians soon arrived in East Prussia, Silesia and Pomerania. Terrible fear overcame the population. During the cold winter, they fled in long columns to the west. A small part of their belongings was loaded on carriages pulled by horses and oxen. Children and the elderly were sitting right on top. There were traffic jams in the streets and columns of refugees often fell right into the middle of the fighting in retreat”²⁵. For many years, all attention was focused exclusively on the German population. Since the 1970s, the textbooks have been trying to re-interpret the subject, taking into account its various aspects. One of them classifies escapes, expulsions and displacements as “European population migrations between 1939 and 1952”, which also included evacuations ordered by the Nazis during the Air War, deportations of forced labourers and resettlements of German national groups from the Baltic States and southern Europe. At this point, the text of the course book turns out to be only a concise enumeration, “squeezed” between the source passages. As regards the language aspect, the choice was made to

²¹ L. Chmiel, B. Jagiello, A. Syta, op. cit., p. 261.

²² M. Jastrzębska, J. Żurawski, *Historia 3. Podręcznik dla klasy trzeciej gimnazjum*, Wrocław 2001, p. 159.

²³ G. Kucharczyk, P. Milcarek, M. Robak, op. cit., p. 265; J. Wendt, op. cit., p. 170.

²⁴ J. Choińska-Mika, P. Skibiński, P. Szlanta, K. Zielińska, op. cit., p. 279; W. Mędrzecki, R. Szuchta, op. cit., p. 347; G. Wojciechowski, *Historia. Podręcznik dla gimnazjum. Razem przez wieki. Zrozumieć przeszłość III*, ed. 6, Warszawa 2006, p. 170.

²⁵ H.-G. Fernis, H. Deissler, *Grundzüge der Geschichte*, vol. 4: *Vom Wiener Kongress bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. 5, Frankfurt/Main-Berlin-Bonn 1953, p. 143–144.

remain as factual and neutral as possible²⁶. Other textbooks from the 1970s put more emphasis on migration-related “inhumane suffering”²⁷ of the German population associated with migration, but now attention also has been paid to the “shift of Poland’s borders to the West”, highlighting this topic with special cartographic presentations²⁸.

Although the 1990s textbook for secondary schools (Gymnasium) in Bavaria vaguely described how “millions of Poles and Germans were forced to leave their homeland as a result of resettlement operations during World War II”, the presentation focused exclusively on the fate of the German population. The cruelty of the flight, expulsions and displacements was emphasized, providing relatively high numbers of victims known from academic and journalistic discourse. According to these figures, “about 18 million Germans lost their homeland” and more than “2 million died on their way to the West”²⁹. In terms of illustrations, the contemporary textbooks go back to images presenting the columns of refugees on carts pulled by horses, women and children, but this time the captions frequently contain more accurate information on the place of the event³⁰. Thus, the period of flights and so-called wild expulsions becomes again the focus of attention.

Historical maps, on the other hand, show an increasing diversity and precision. As early as in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century, the maps focused on the presentation of flights, expulsions and displacements of the German population, symbolized by arrows with figures that showed the direction from the eastern territories towards the Allied-occupied German zone³¹. The situation is different in the latest textbooks, where the maps also take into account the forced migration of Poles, Balts and other ethnic groups, using figures and arrows – with the latter presenting the movement from different directions, e.g. from west to east. In this way, students are presented with a complex and dynamic image of Central and Eastern Europe, which has little to do with the “iron curtain” functioning in social awareness for many years.

In the 21st century, many German lands issue special booklets devoted to flights and expulsions in the last months of World War II. They contain the author’s text, source texts, recorded memoirs of history witnesses, original photographs and maps. In addition, these

²⁶ *Fragen an die Geschichte. Geschichtliches Arbeitsbuch für Sekundarstufe I*, t. 4: *Die Welt im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. H. D. Schmid, Frankfurt/Main 1978, p. 153. In the new edition from 1999, the graphics contain more information than the author’s text, Berlin 1999, p. 178.

²⁷ H. H. Deissler, H. Krieger, A. Makatsch, *Grundzüge der Geschichte*, t. 4: *Von 1890 bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. 4, Frankfurt/Main-Berlin-München 1972, p. 252–253; *Menschen in ihrer Zeit*, t. 4: *In unserer Zeit*, ed. F.J. Lucas et al., Stuttgart 1970, p. 125–126.

²⁸ H.H. Deissler, H. Krieger, A. Makatsch, op. cit., p. 252–253.

²⁹ *Wege durch die Geschichte, Geschichtsbuch Gymnasium Bayern*, red. F. Hofmeier, t. 5, Berlin 1992, p. 11.

³⁰ D. Burkard et al., *Zeitreise 3, Ausgabe B*, Stuttgart-Leipzig 2006, p. 247.

³¹ *Wege durch...*, vol. 5, s. 11; *Das waren Zeiten 4. Das 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. D. Brückner, H. Focke, Bamberg 2002, p. 149.

books contain questions for students, which force them to think and deduce, to reflect upon the fate of their ancestors and the consequences of World War II³². Additionally, the German Historical Museum in Berlin in 2005 opened a rather controversial exhibition on the expulsions. A special educational booklet was published for teachers to prepare their students to visit the exhibition and to discuss the displayed exhibits with them³³. It must be admitted that Germans know how to handle the education of the youth, and it is a pity that no similar initiative has been taken in Poland so far.

Museum education

In Germany, there are two centres presenting the heritage of East Prussia – the East Prussia Cultural Centre with its archive and museum in Ellingen (Bavaria) and the East Prussian Museum with its collection of Baltic Germans in Lüneburg (Lower Saxony). The first centre aims at archiving the collections of associations and individuals who emigrated from the former German territories of Prussia after 1945 and prepares, based on these collections, mainly temporary and travelling exhibitions. They are presented not only in Germany but also in Poland, Russia and Lithuania. Thus, they contribute to the popularization of East-Prussian themes among the new inhabitants of these areas – today’s Warmia and Mazury (Poland), Kaliningrad Oblast (Russia) and Klaipėda Region (Lithuania). Based on the materials collected in the archives of the East Prussia Cultural Centre, almost 200 temporary and cabinet exhibitions and nearly 50 travelling exhibitions were organized from 1982–2019. Every few years, exhibitions are held on migration issues that are still of interest to visitors. For a long time, the leading questions prevailing in literature and exhibitions were: “Who migrates?” “Where to?” and “Why?” An exhibition organized in 1995, titled “Flight and expulsion from East Prussia”, was an attempt to answer these questions. However, the question “What happens after migration?” has been attracting particular attention only in recent years. In general, the topic of migration is very popular in Germany. Publications are issued, academic discussions are held, and many exhibitions refer to the fate of the displaced. The importance of migration in scientific debates and their reflection in museology can be seen in the entire issue of the 2010 journal of “Museumkunde. Migration” (No. 75). In 2002, the East Prussia Cultural Centre organized an exhibition titled “They came to Bavaria... Integration of refugees and expellees in Bavaria after 1945”, and in 2013: “They came. Integration of expellees

³² *Umsiedlung, Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen als internationales Problem. Zur Geschichte eines europäischen Irrwegs. Das Thema im Unterricht*, ed. M. Beer et al., Stuttgart 2002, 2005, 2009; *Flucht und Vertreibung. Handreichung für den Unterricht*, ed. K. Schlenker, R. Schmülling, Düsseldorf 2010; S. Barth, *Flucht und Vertreibung. Deutschland am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Geschichtsunterricht Praktisch*, Wiesbaden 2016.

³³ *Flucht, Vertreibung, Integration, Heimat*, ed. Deutschen Historischen Museum, Berlin 2006.

in Germany”. Both concerned the fate of the displaced population in their new place of residence, their problems and difficulties in adaptation. In 2018, museum workers went even further, since they presented a completely neglected topic related to the difficult and uncertain time of the post-war flights and expulsions titled “Wolf children – orphans between East Prussia and Lithuania”, which aroused strong emotions among visitors³⁴.

The second centre, the East Prussian Museum in Lüneburg, mainly organises permanent exhibitions³⁵. One of them is a very emotional exhibition devoted to expulsions and migration, both with regard to Germans from East Prussia in winter 1945 and Baltic Germans from 1939 to 1945. The exhibition concerning the escape from East Prussia in 1945 shows an original horse-drawn cart covered with a canvas and a family walking by. We see a man, a woman and a child with bundles, walking on a snow-covered sheet of ice with their backs turned to the viewer. In the background, there is a photo covering the entire wall, depicting other people crossing the Vistula Lagoon. This part also features a transparent wall, on which a hologram image is displayed – accounts by witnesses of history who were children at the time. Several minutes long statements can be confronted with the artefacts presented in the cabinet, such as photographs and personal objects belonging to those people, e.g. a cup of Elimar Labusch from Giżycko or a spoon of Christy Möller from Mrągowo. A spacious sofa situated nearby is equipped with headphones, where you can listen to the accounts of other people who experienced the fate of refugees and expellees. They include statements by the witness of the Königsberg history, of the Wilhelm Gustloff fate, people wandering around after the flight, referred to as “wolf children” or a modern refugee from Africa. Their relationships are sometimes very drastic; hence the exhibition organizers warn that children under 16 should not listen to it. A further part of the exhibition is devoted to war refugees who settled in the Lüneburg area. It includes a reconstruction of the chamber occupied by refugees upon their arrival to Lower Saxony, and also an account of several witnesses (from Giżycko, Mrągowo and Riga) who talk about their first experiences of their integration in the new place. In addition, the exhibition presents letters, souvenirs, ration cards and photographs. During my research stay at this museum, I saw elderly people repeatedly looking at exhibits and listening to the memories of refugees on headphones. The museum offers excellent conditions for such activities because panels with eyewitness’ accounts are located next to comfortable sofas, where you can listen to sometimes drastic memories in silence and on your own. The exhibition also offers museum lessons for older youth, who are yet too young to know these issues from stories told in their families.

³⁴ Archives of the Center of East Prussia Culture in Ellingen/Bay, documents and materials, karton: wystawy.

³⁵ Research during an internship in Lüneburg.

Unfortunately, as regards the area of today's Warmia and Mazury, the museum themes did not use to take into account (and still rarely take into account) the issue of the post-World War II migration³⁶. So far, only one temporary exhibition has been organized in the Museum of Warmia and Mazury, as the result of a project financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which has been implemented since 2008, titled "Poles from the Eastern Borderlands in Warmia and Mazury. Diffusion of cultural heritage as a basis for understanding the present day region"³⁷. The idea was to create a collection documenting the life and fate of the present-day inhabitants of the Warmia and Mazury region having their roots in the East, i.e. those who were displaced from the territories of the present-day Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. As part of the project, memories of the expellees from the Vilnius region arriving in the areas of north-eastern Poland after World War II were collected, as well as documents, photographs and other valuable source materials donated by them to the museum. Despite the interesting subject matter, the exhibition was developed in a traditional way. The role of the contemporary museum is based on a "new museology" that meets the needs of the local community. It should also promote active involvement – a form of dialogue – between the viewer, the community and the exhibition curators. Unfortunately, these requirements are not met in the Warmia and Mazury museums³⁸. For several years, the exhibition on the Borderlanders has been hosted by the museum's branches in other cities in Warmia and Mazury, but nowadays it has been removed. You cannot listen to the interviews online, and other materials are only available on-site in the museum in Olsztyn. Although a guidebook was developed for the exhibition, a set of museum lessons was not prepared, so its educational impact was low.

A new initiative was taken by the Historical Museum in Elk, established in 2012, which organized the Oral History Archive, collecting and sharing online recordings of the city inhabitants. Many of them concern, in fragments, the time of migration from/to Elk in 1945. These recordings provide the basis to conduct a museum lesson, titled "The beginnings of Polish Elk". The instruction for teachers explains: "Classes include the time when German Lyck became Polish Elk. The agreements made in Yalta and Potsdam contributed to the movement of peoples. The pre-war inhabitants of Elk who did not escape from the Red Army, were forcibly expelled over time. The city was populated by Poles

³⁶ I. Lewandowska, *Historia i kultura regionu w działalności edukacyjnej Muzeum Warmii i Mazur w okresie powojennym*, w: *Muzea i archiwa w edukacji historycznej. IV Toruńskie Spotkania Dydaktyczne*, ed. S. Roszak i M. Strzelecka, Toruń 2007, p. 95–104; eadem, *Polityka wystawiennicza Muzeum Warmii i Mazur w latach 1945–1989. Przyczynek do edukacji historycznej na pograniczu kulturowym*, in: *Nauczanie historii jako powrót do źródeł*, ed. G. Pańko, J. Wojdon, Olsztyn 2010, p. 271–292.

³⁷ K. Raińska, *Polacy z Kresów Wschodnich na Warmii i Mazurach: wprowadzenie do wystawy = Poles from the Eastern Borderlands in Warmia and Mazury: introduction to the exhibition*, Olsztyn 2011.

³⁸ C. Smith, *Post-Modernising the Museum: The Ration Shed*, "Historical Encounters" 2014, vol. 1, nr 1, p. 32–49; <http://www.hej.hermes-history.net/index.php/HEJ/article/view/31> (dostęp 28.02.2020).

coming from the Eastern Borderlands, Central Poland and the area of today's Podlasie. The classes will use recorded recollections of those who first came to the town, archived under the innovative project 'Post-war Elk in the eyes of its inhabitants', carried out by the Museum for Elk Association. Recordings played during the classes can be found in the Oral History Archive of the Historical Museum in Elk"³⁹.

Informal education

Apart from school education (very formalised) and museum education (almost unused on the Polish side), informal education plays an important role. It is mainly used by adults who are interested in the history, the region or their family roots. These include the popularization activities of associations, websites and accounts of history witnesses recorded in the Oral History Archives.

In West Germany, after World War II, the refugees from East Prussia, forced by their internal need, started to organize themselves at a local level as early as 1948. A year later, a legal organisation "Landmannschaft Ostpreußen eV" [East Prussian Compatriots' Association] was founded in Hamburg, which exists to this day). Initially, the organisation focused on humanitarian, cultural and organisational issues, while West German cities and districts took over the care and patronage of the refugees and expellees in their home communities. Thus, the memory of the expulsions was maintained and nurtured. The situation changed after 1953 when the German government adopted the Federal Law on Refugees and Expellees. In its Article 96, the act considered the maintenance, preservation and transfer of the cultural heritage of the German resettlement areas to be a national obligation. This heritage was a common element of the German culture and intellectual life and, according to the legislator, should be appreciated, preserved and passed on to the next generation by all Germans (not only by the displaced persons)⁴⁰. This was a "milestone" in shaping the awareness of the entire German nation, including the youth. The educational context of migrations from former East Prussia made up an important element of the German cultural heritage. For this purpose, commemorative meetings were organized, information brochures were published and the fate of individual families was documented.

Since the 1990s, similar activities have been carried out by associations of the German minority in Warmia and Mazury. Before that time, such organizations did not exist, since in Poland – a country of uniform nationality, according to the government propaganda – German associations were not allowed to operate. However, the educational impact of these organisations is not very high. They focused on their members and their

³⁹ https://muzeum.elk.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/oferta-edu_DL_10_ver4.pdf (dostęp 28.02.2020).

⁴⁰ *Deportation, Flucht und Vertreibung. Ein Rückblick nach 40 Jahren*, München 1987, p. 27.

families, they did not cooperate with schools, and despite holding open meetings, they were not visited by young people. The author herself had the opportunity to give several lectures for the German minority in the region, but there were no young people among the listeners. A similar situation can be observed in the Borderland associations. Despite the intense activity undertaken in Warmia and Mazury by the Society of Friends of Vilnius and the Vilnius Land in Olsztyn and Mrągowo, and the Society for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Old and Present Day Borderlands Ojcowizna in Węgorzewo, their activities are usually part of adult education. On the other hand, the Museum of Folk Culture in Węgorzewo has been organizing the “Our History...” competition for 22 years⁴¹. The rules of the competition include the following statements: “The turbulent twentieth century complicated the fate of nations, families and individuals. The world and the neighbourhood were repeatedly shaken by wars, natural disasters and migrations of whole communities. In this terrible world, there were also moments of peace, people loved each other, had children, created art, and simply died. Now we will attempt to reconstruct the history of families and individuals – from the crumbs of memory, photographs, letters, diaries, objects taken on their way to create a new home”⁴².

For today’s young generation, it is more interesting to be able to surf the Internet and find knowledge online. They actually can find interesting portals and projects concerning migration from/to East Prussia (Warmia and Mazury). One of them is a project carried out by the Centre for Education and Cultural Initiatives in Olsztyn in 2009, entitled “The Last Warmians and Mazurians”. The project resulted in collecting 100 audio/video interviews, fragments of which are available online. They also include topics concerning the great flight to Germany in 1945 and cooperation with new settlers from the Vilnius region⁴³. Audio accounts of history witnesses who came to Warmia and Mazury in 1945 can be listened to on the website of the Historical Museum in Elk⁴⁴. Unfortunately, there is no information on how these recordings are used in school education.

As regards Germany, the internet portal devoted to East Prussia, which contains current information, but also films, archival photographs, articles from internet newspapers on the subject of Prussia, East Prussia television, and a section dedicated to youth, works very well⁴⁵. Interested readers can find here something for themselves. There are also numerous archives of oral history in which, with the use of a search engine, it is possible to find people migrating from East Prussia after World War II.

⁴¹ K. Jarosz, *Życie codzienne pierwszych powojennych osadników na Mazurach na podstawie prac nadesłanych na konkurs „Losy nasze”*, „Studia Angerburgica”, 2002, vol. 7, p. 74–82.

⁴² http://www.muzeum-wegorzewo.pl/fileadmin/oferta/Konkurs_losy_nasze/Losy_nasze_22_PL_2019-2020.pdf (dostęp 28.02.2020).

⁴³ <http://www.ceik.eu/ostatni-warmiacy-i-mazurzy.html> (dostęp 28.02.2020).

⁴⁴ <https://muzeum.elk.pl/historia/przybycie-do-elku/> (dostęp 28.02.2020).

⁴⁵ <https://www.ostpreussen.de> (dostęp 28.02.2020).

Conclusions

School education is constrained by multiple restrictions, mainly time constraints, which prevent a broader and more in-depth explanation of the migration processes, not only those taking place after World War II. In classes with an extended history programme (as well as with more hours allocated for this programme), this issue can be analysed in more detail. Yet everything depends on the aware teacher, who should feel the need to explain that migration is a process that has been going on since the beginning of history and will never stop. People will always move, but it is important that they do so of their own free will, without any compulsion, whether economic or political. Showing the migration processes of the population of a given country or continent is certainly interesting for students, as it often concerns their families, or will concern them in future. The subject “History and Society” for secondary schools, including the topic “Familiarity and Strangeness”, in which the issues of population movements and related economic, social and cultural problems could be addressed, implemented in Poland in 2008–2019, was a good solution. Unfortunately, this subject was eliminated in the new curriculum reform. Today, the issue of migration can be covered in extracurricular activities, circles of interest and additional work with gifted students.

Unfortunately, as far as museum education is concerned, the Polish side is very much behind the German museum activities. In Warmia and Mazury, but also in other parts of Poland, the role of museums in shaping social awareness, especially in the field of migration issues, is not appreciated. The National Museum of the Eastern Borderlands has not been established yet. Individual initiatives are of little help, since nationwide solutions, supported by full state funding are needed here, as is the case in Germany.

On the other hand, the comparison of non-formal education is much better. The gap in Polish education and museology has been filled in quite well by websites and social media (e.g. Facebook). These websites are also used by students who very often prepare materials for educational activities or school projects. However, it is important that informed teachers can properly assess and verify these materials.

In conclusion, I would like to express my conviction that, especially in Poland, there is a need to organize cyclical workshops addressed to teachers and devoted to migration issues. Only well-educated teachers who are sensitive to human suffering, but also know how to reliably evaluate historical facts, will be able to introduce their students to the difficult world of migration.

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Educational contexts of migration. The case of East Prussia / Warmia and Mazury in 1945

Summary: Millions of people were forced to emigrate when World War II came to an end in 1945. Migration processes were particularly pronounced in East Prussia, the German territory that was partitioned between Poland and the USSR after the war. Germans fled from East Prussia, and their farms were settled by newcomers from central Poland and the Eastern Borderlands that had been ceded to the Soviet Union. This article discusses the narrative surrounding the wave of post-war migration in Polish and German academia, museums and informal education. An analysis of textbooks and academic scripts revealed that this topic has received broad coverage in the German educational system. Museum

exhibitions focusing on emigration from East Prussia and the Eastern Borderlands were also examined, and the results of the analysis indicate that German museums displayed a greater interest in the topic. In the last step, websites dedicated to migration issues were compared as a form of informal education. The comparison revealed a similar number of websites as well as similar levels of activity in Polish and German websites.

Keywords: East Prussia, Warmia and Mazury, post-war migration, school and museum education, informal education