Poland, a Country of Refuge? Revisiting the Historiography on Patterns of Migration

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ABSTRACT

Rather than regarding Poland as a shelter for refugees, academic scholars have generally imagined the country as one that produced refugee flows. Even though most Poles believe their nation to be hospitable and tolerant, and to have long provided religious minorities with a safe retreat, historians have not reflected with much sophistication on the accommodation of refugees in more recent Polish history. This essay not only offers a critical overview of the existing literature, but above all considers the causes and consequences of the low visibility of refugees in the historiography of the Polish lands. Among the paradigms that narrowed scholarly perspectives were those of Polish hospitality, victimhood, and the ostensible "at-homeness" of Polish-identified migrants (and refugees) to Poland, which mitigated their disadvantages in the eyes of historians and thus reduced reflection on their refugee condition.

Central to the understanding of refugeeism in the literature has been the crossing of national borders by migrants, their cultural alienation, and exile status. This national methodological framing of the term "refugee" leaves a lot of room for questioning the semantic boundaries of the term and considering alternative conceptualisations of the different movements of internally displaced persons in Poland. Placing the individual experience of forced displacement at the center of the research can help to correct for nationalist perceptions of migration patterns and foster a more critical analysis of Poland's history as a country of asylum.

KEYWORDS: Poland, refugees, historiography, migration

Declaration on Possible Conflicts of Interest
The author has declared that no conflicts of interest exist.

Funding Statement
This article was written as a part of the ERC Consolidator project "Unlikely Refuge? Refugees and Citizens in East-Central Europe in the 20th Century" under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement No 819461)).

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Poland, a Country of Refuge? Revisiting the Historiography on Patterns of Migration – ZfO / JECES 71/2022/4
(received 2022-01-28, accepted 2022-05-12)
DOI: 10.25627/202271411253 – eISSN 2701-0449, ISSN 0948-8294

Rather than a shelter for refugees, academic scholars have imagined Poland to be a country that has produced refugee flows.* This image of Poland changed only with the Russian war in Ukraine (2022) which prompted several million Ukrainians to cross the Polish border. The historiography largely confirms this former view, for it rarely identifies refugees in Polish lands. Even though most Poles believe their nation to be hospitable and tolerant,[1] and to have served for ages as a safe haven for religious minorities, historians have not reflected with much sophistication on the accommodation of refugees in more recent Polish history. The present essay provides a critical overview of the historical treatment of the topic of refugees in Poland in the twentieth century, identifying along the way some of the limitations of historical studies on refugees in Polish lands and the reasons why historians are somewhat uneasy about using the term "refugees" to refer to migrants on Polish territory.

In the first half of the century—which included two destructive global conflicts and their chaotic aftermaths—the regions which historians consider Polish territory[2] witnessed unparalleled forced migration. The literature, however, largely discounts this element of forced movement as a defining characteristic of refugeeism. In this essay, we will look at the presence of the term "refugee" in historical studies of the Polish lands and identify the paradigms that have determined its use or, more often, non-use. The decisive element to understanding these choices seems to rest in the definition of what makes one a "refugee"—whether the term applies exclusively to individuals who did not have Polish citizenship but sought refuge in Poland, or also to the many categories of internally displaced people. As with all terminology, how we use the category of "refugee" has various intellectual and political implications.

1 Paradigms

The experiences of most people forced to move across the Polish territory in the twentieth century elude the conventional semantics related to refugees (the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol) that inform many historians' understanding of migration. For the most part, historians of the region have implicitly understood refugees as people who crossed a national border in

* The author would like to thank the "Unlikely Refuge?" team as well as Dariusz Stola, Jerzy Kochanowski and Katarzyna Nowak. Włodzimierz Borodziej was particularly supportive of this text and I dedicate it to his memory.

1 Hospitality is one of the strongest Polish national myths (see the 2019 Exhibition "Polish Hospitality" in the Wrocław Contemporary Museum). A 2010 poll by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) and a 2017 poll by Kantar Public showed, respectively, that 51 % and 63 % of Poles believe hospitality is the most positive feature of Polish society. See Bogumiła Mateja-Jaworska, Marta Skowrońska (eds.): Gość w dom [Guest at Home], Poznań 2019, p. 1.

2 The historical changes in borders and statehood mean that it is difficult to define where and when a truly "Polish" response to refugees began and when or where it ended, if it did.

search of protection and shelter and thus found themselves in exile on the territory of a foreign country. This normative scheme, which ascribes primarily importance to the space and views state borders as the main criterion that defined refugee movement, limited reflection both on their refugee condition and on the local refugee regimes established to accommodate groups of "internal migrants" on Polish lands. It also contributed to the invisibility of refugees in Poland.

One of this essay's main arguments is that the ostensible "at-homeness" of those migrants identified as Polish mitigated their disadvantages in the eyes of historians and discouraged reflection on their refugee condition. It also directed attention and the choice of labels mostly toward the causes of forced movement, such as expulsion or repatriation. In the meantime, an alternative way to think about these migrants would be to call them "native refugees"—in other words, people prompted to move or flee their current places of residence who maintained a claim to Polish citizenship based on their place of birth. The same applies to a subset of that group, "national refugees"[3] (considered part of the nation, and not just entitled to citizenship), who were moving within, or into, the confines of Polish territory.

1.1 At-Homeness vs. Border Crossing and Exile

The lack of interest in "refugees" found in Polish historiography stems from the issue of state borders, the crossing of which was central to the granting of refugee label. This conceptual framework is reluctant to view native forced migrants (and especially their national subgroup) as refugees. Even though native refugees remained in Polish territory, borders were nevertheless relevant to their migration: flight, forced expulsions, deportations, displacements, and evacuations all followed the frequent changes of borders. "Civilized" diplomatic decisions played a role in some of those movements, but in nearly all cases they were the result of war, violence, and arbitrary political decisions about which the local populations forced to move were rarely consulted.[4] The importance of borders becomes evident when the migrations of the early twentieth century are compared with those of the second half of the century—under conditions of stabilized borders, the Polish state saw considerably fewer refugees, which contributed to the perception that it hosted nearly none.

In order to adequately address refugees in the history of Polish lands other "borders" have to be crossed—namely, the semantic ones which too narrowly define the word "refugee." Most historians working on Poland have failed to

3 "National refugees" is the term used by PAMELA BALLINGER: "National Refugees," Displaced Persons, and the Reconstruction of Italy, in: JESSICA REINISCH, ELIZABETH WHITE (eds.): The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944–9, London 2011, pp. 115–140.

4 Even when the people were consulted (as in the post-Versailles plebiscites), the migrations that resulted from the border changes the plebiscites legitimized can hardly be considered voluntary.

see that the definition of "refugee" should not depend only on the causes of flight, the crossing of borders, and the relation of those affected to the receiving state, but also how assistance and aid in the receiving country are negotiated and provided. Last but not least, the concept of refugee depends on how forced migration was experienced and felt by the migrants themselves.[5]

As will be seen in this paper, the predominance of the normative definition of "refugee" based on the foreignness and exiled status of the migrant has excluded many groups of forced migrants from being considered as refugees in Polish lands. This narrow interpretative scheme also imposes limits for more closely and productively analyzing these experiences of migration.

1.2 Victimhood, Tolerance, Hospitality

The problems raised by at-homeness and borders are compounded by several other paradigms of historical writing that have combined to create a quite rigid framework, one that shapes the character and limits the bounds of research into the phenomenon of refugeedom in Poland. First, the motif of Polish suffering places P o l i s h refugees at the forefront of discussion, rather than refugees i n Poland. The Poles are considered a nation of emigrants (as opposed to a nation of immigrants like the United States), and for good reason. In the long-standing history of Polish emigration caused by political upheaval, the repeated partitions of Polish territory, the turmoil of two World Wars, and the departure of Poles looking for work (*za chlebem*, literally, "for bread"), there is hardly any corner of the world where Poles have not sought, and found, shelter. Most of those scattered places have attracted sufficient academic attention. In the twentieth century, the combination of the keywords "Poland" and "refugees," whether in the realm of popular perceptions or academic research, was all but synonymous with Polish citizens seeking refuge in other countries.[6] In this spirit, in 2015, an impressive museum showcasing 200 years of Polish emigration opened in Gdynia, and it includes the theme of Polish refugeedom.

In the historical scholarship on Poland, the age in which the situation was reversed and foreigners sought refuge in Poland has been relegated to a distant past. In fact, such stories feature prominently in the historiography of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795), a political entity that Polish historians have tended to perceive as a "state without stakes"[7] (where heretics

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5 ROGER ZETTER: Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity, in: Journal of Refugee Studies 4 (1991), 1, pp. 39–52; GEORGIA COLE: Beyond Labelling: Rethinking the Role and Value of the Refugee "Label" through Semiotics, in: Journal of Refugee Studies 31 (2018), 1, pp. 1–21.

6 See the literature on the so-called Great Emigration of the nineteenth century, as well as earlier and later emigration waves that followed failed national uprisings. Also, emigration resulting from World War I, and even more so from World War II, as well as from the introduction and misconduct of the communist regime. See, for example, DARIUSZ STOLA: Kraj bez wyjścia [A Country with No Exit], Warszawa 2009.

7 JANUSZ TAZBIR: Kraj bez stosów, Warszawa 1967. English version: State without Stakes, New York 1972.

would be burned). This epithet refers to a significant period of time when the so-called Republic of Nobles guaranteed religious freedom even as intolerance in the rest of Europe was producing religious refugees *en masse* (particularly Jews and Protestants). This period of Polish history was an important catalyst in the development of Poles' self-image as a tolerant and hospitable nation that lived up to the slogan *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom*—which can be translated as: "The guest at home is God at home."

This self-image of a proverbially hospitable Poland, anchored in a narrative about Poland's multi-ethnic past is a motif that had been continuously instrumentalized in historical and political debates. The most important of these debates (and arguably the most important historiographical debate in post-1989 Poland) relates to the attitudes of Catholic Poles toward Jewish Poles during World War II. Those who have defended the Catholic Poles draw on the past to characterize them as generous hosts, open and sensitive toward the "strangers."[8] This narrative emphasizes Poles' unparalleled hospitality toward Jews living in the Polish lands, portraying Poland as a place where Jews have enjoyed shelter since the tenth century, when they began escaping from western Europe in regular waves. The parable of the "open gate" provided a smokescreen, and for a long time, deterred inquiry into the actual social and political attitudes toward Jewish "strangers" in need. Although not all historians have felt constrained by these metanarratives, and there are some examples of critical or empirical explorations of the subject, the paradigms of victimhood, tolerance, and hospitality have nonetheless strongly influenced the general scholarship on refugees in Poland.

1.3 Refugee Studies on Poland without Historical Perspective

As a result of the above paradigms, the field of refugee studies as it deals with Poland—despite recent dynamic growth—conspicuously lacks historical perspective and has remained fixated on developments since 1989. While this neglect of the more distant episodes of history are observable more generally and for other countries as well, this deficit is particularly noticeable in regard to Eastern Europe, and undeniable in the case of Poland.[9]

Beyond the "state without stakes" paradigm referring to medieval and early modern times, the reception of refugees in Poland has been a subject of several

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8 JERZY ROBERT NOWAK: Sto kłamstw J. T. Grossa o Jedwabnem i żydowskich sąsiadach [100 Lies by J. T. Gross about Jedwabne and the Jewish Neighbors], Warszawa 2001, p. 17; ANDRZEJ DUDA: [Foreword], in: Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady: Przywracanie pamięci / Poles Who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History, Warszawa 2016, pp. 5–6, here p. 5, https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/sites/default/files/sprawiedliwi_2016_cmyk_pcg10_p8183.pdf (2022-10-15).

9 PHILIPP MARFLEET: Refugees and History: Why We Must Address the Past, in: Refugee Survey Quarterly 26 (2007), 3, pp. 136–148; DAN STONE: Refugees Then and Now: Memory, History and Politics in the Long Twentieth Century: An Introduction, in: Patterns of Prejudice 52 (2018), 2–3, pp. 101–106.

disciplines outside history itself. Current events translate into trends in academic research, and the rich scholarship on Polish refugees abroad in the past may soon be dwarfed by studies on the present-day reception of refugees in Poland. Anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and legal scholars have produced a great body of academic work that deals, mostly critically, with Polish attitudes toward refugees.[10] Reflecting global scholarly trends, many of these works have addressed the socio-legal background in Poland as well as wider reasons for Eastern Europe's most recent response toward immigrants and refugees. Before Poland received refugees from Ukraine in 2022, these works were concerned primarily with cultural, political, and demographic reasons for Polish "refugeephobia." They often spoke of a crisis of values.[11] However, they did not explore the past in order to understand the present because they assume that Poland only started to deal seriously with refugees at the end of the Cold War.[12] They imply that there is no historical precedent for Polish attitudes and practice in accommodating newcomers prior to 1989 and fail to examine or analyze earlier historical material. In both Polish and international literature, one frequently encounters statements along these lines: "Publications on refugees in Poland began to appear in the early 1990s. This is when research on refugees started."[13] The introduction to one monograph claims, "Before 1989, virtually no refugees went to Eastern Europe."[14]

The topic of Poles' earlier experiences with refugees is missing from the long list proposed for research by scholars of refugeeism. This (mis)conception can be explained by the fact that forced migrants to, in, and through Poland often were not labeled as "refugees." In the Polish language—according to Dariusz Stola's careful accounting—there are no less than fourteen terms used to describe various types of forced migrants (plus another six terms for volun-

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10 See works by Justyna Hryniewicz, Jacek Jagielski, Sławomir Łodziński, Maciej Ząbek, Agnieszka Florczak. For example, JUSTYNA HRYNIEWICZ: Uchodźcy w Polsce: Teoria a rzeczywistość [Refugees in Poland: Theory and Reality], Toruń 2005.

11 ELŻBIETA M. GOZDZIAK, IZABELLA MAIN et al. (eds.): Europe and the Refugee Response: A Crisis of Values? New York 2020; KRZYSZTOF JASKUŁOWSKI: The Everyday Politics of Migration Crisis in Poland: Between Nationalism, Fear and Empathy, Cham 2019.

12 SŁAWOMIR ŁODZIŃSKI, MAREK SZONERT: "Niepolityczna polityka"? Kształtowanie się polityki migracyjnej w Polsce w latach 1989–2016 ["Non-political Policy"? The Formation of Migration Policy in Poland 1989–2016], in: Studia Migracyjne-Przegląd Polonijny 164 (2017), 2, pp. 33–66, here p. 50.

13 IZABELLA MAIN: Uchodźcy w nauce polskiej—stan badań i literatury, metodologia i etyka badań [Refugees in Polish Studies—State of Research and Literature, Methodology and Research Ethics], in: IZABELA CZERNIEJEWSKA, IZABELLA MAIN (eds.): Uchodźcy: Teoria i praktyka, Poznań 2008, pp. 21–33, here p. 24; Similar claims: KRYSTYNA IGLICKA: A Note on Rebirth of Migration Research in Poland after 1989, in: ANNA KICINGER, AGNIESZKA WEINAR (eds.): State of the Art of the Migration Research in Poland, Warsaw 2007 (CRM Working Papers, 26/84), pp. 12–17.

14 OXANA SHEVEL: Migration, Refugee Policy, and State Building in Postcommunist Europe, Cambridge 2011, p. 1.

tary ones).[15] The prevalence of these other labels will be evident from the review of the historical literature on refugees in the Polish lands, which starts below.

2 Trends in Historiography on Refugees in Polish Lands

2.1 Anonymous Refugees in Figures: Statelessness and World Wars

The research on World War I and World War II proves that, while historians did occasionally refer to "refugees" in Poland, their work—dominated by the paradigm "borders and exile" merged with "at-homeness"—often lacks analytical purchase. Empirical narratives frequently portray refugees as anonymous by-products of warfare and do not critically address their reception in Poland. In these accounts, refugees fall into misery and dependence, and are in need of care, but the aid is never sufficient, even though its impressive dimensions are aptly communicated by tabulated figures. The un-interpretative perspective partly stems from the absence of a Polish state—and accordingly state policies to analyze—at the very time when massive refugee movements took place. The Polish lands had been the site of continuous mass migration since the mid-nineteenth century. Usually accompanied by serious hardships, migration was connected to the comparatively late liberation of the peasant class, as well as processes of industrialization, urbanization, and people escaping poverty. This shifting landscape was additionally shaken by World War I, prior to the founding of the modern Polish state. Its future territory, divided between three great powers (Russia, Germany, and Austria), was one of the main theaters of the global conflict. The Polish lands were confronted with the Russian Revolution and later, after the war, with the return of displaced populations to their former homelands.

The unprecedented scale of human movement during and after World War I and the ensuing relief work has attracted the attention of international scholars. Both older studies and more recent ones address the general organization of social welfare and relief provided for internal refugees within what later became Poland, in territory still controlled by the empires. Sporadic literature describes the postwar activities of religious aid and relief associations such as the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Quaker Relief Organization, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and the Catholic Church. Historians have also gathered up factual material concerning the Central Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, RGO) from 1916 to 1921. The council was a Polish charitable organization with branches in a majority of Polish

[15] Dariusz Stola: Forced Migrations in Central European History, in: International Migration Review 26 (1992), 2, pp. 324–341, here p. 327.

towns. There were various other civic committees and cooperatives tasked with organizing shelter for displaced people.[16]

While World War I triggered the first massive refugee wave on Polish territory, World War II—in which the civilian population was explicitly targeted—posed even greater challenges to humanitarian relief efforts. With regard to this period too, historians have tended to focus on statelessness and violence-induced migration, as well as on relief activities. Refugee relief during this period mostly took the form of aid at the communal and private levels. Empirical work on World War II–era relief indirectly suggests that the assistance offered to refugees ran along religious, national, and class lines, as observed in studies describing the activities of the Polish Red Cross, Jewish organizations, local churches, and underground bodies.[17] Again, an important part of the conventional academic literature deals with institutional assistance provided by the reestablished RGO and its local councils. Publishing in communist-controlled Poland in 1985, Bogdan Kroll was not in a position to speak approvingly of wartime aid for refugees, which was organized, among others, by the aristocracy and the Catholic Church, acting with the consent of the German occupiers. Nevertheless, he produced a report—remarkable for the depth of its empirical documentation—on the RGO, which in its time managed to involve some 15,000 people in its operations.[18] The RGO provided both legal and clandestine assistance to displaced persons (DPs) and refugees. It is expected that the Jewish counterpart of the RGO, Jüdische Soziale Selbsthilfe, which was long considered controversial for its alleged collaboration with the Germans, will soon become an object of wider historical analysis.

The violent nature of the German occupation triggered the movement of refugees, which has been studied either in general works on population changes resulting from the war or in the histories of particular localities. These local histories tend to use the term "expellees" and to provide data and statistics about the forced removal of Polish citizens from, for example, Pomerania, the newly created province of Warthegau (affecting 400,000 people), the Zamość region (110,000), and other places. Historians working in the Instytut Zachodni in Poznań have researched expulsions and induced exoduses (people leaving under pressure, but without being removed by force) from the Wielkopolska region. Even though the sources frequently use the term "refugees," the litera-

16 Małgorzata Przeniosło, Marek Przeniosło: Rada Główna Opiekuńcza 1918–1921 [Central Welfare Council, 1918–1921], Kielce 2018.

17 Andrzej Pankowicz: Polski Czerwony Krzyż w Generalnej Guberni 1939–1945 [Polish Red Cross in the General Government, 1939–1945], Kraków 1985. Also works by Zdzisław Abramek and Małgorzata Krupecka (on the help to refugees provided by Catholic convents).

18 Bogdan Kroll: Rada Główna Opiekuńcza 1939–1945 [Central Welfare Council, 1939–1945], Warszawa 1985; Mieczysław Wszosek: Z dziejów Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej w Generalnej Guberni [History of the Central Welfare Council in the General Government], in: Studia Podlaskie 11 (2001), pp. 121–146.

ture does not dwell upon or much explore the "refugee condition" of the migrating people, nor does it examine their reception by the host society. Only occasionally does their transportation and their accommodation in refugee camps or private homes come into focus.[19]

The westbound refugee waves that resulted from the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland in 1939 have not yet received systematic attention. One exception is the escape of people to the west in 1943 when Ukrainian nationalists massacred Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia.[20] Calls for help published in the local newspapers show how dramatically the number of refugees crossing the Bug River rose. The RGO's archives in the district of Lublin and records of decisions made by the German authorities suggest that the local population of the districts of Lublin and Zamość succeeded, by private means, in housing more than 100,000 refugees from Volhynia, amid their own difficult situation of being subject to German exploitation and displacement.

Studies about refugees in Polish territory during World War II have focused primarily either on their numbers or on the violence that triggered their involuntary displacement.[21] The studies also describe statistical aspects of relief aid. The varied local responses and attitudes, as well as the individual motivations

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19 ANDRZEJ GĄSIOROWSKI: Wysiedlenia Polaków z Gdyni przez okupanta niemieckiego [Expulsions of Poles from Gdynia by the German Occupant], Gdynia 2006; ISABEL HEINEMANN: Generalny Plan Wschodni w praktyce? Wysiedlenia w powiecie zamojskim a narodowosocjalistyczne plany przesiedleńcze [The General Plan East in Practice? Expulsions in the Zamość District and National Socialist Resettlement Plans], in: JACEK WOŁOSZYN (ed.): Wysiedlenia jako narzędzie polityki ludnościowej w Europie XX wieku, Lublin 2015, pp. 135–144; JACEK KUBIAK, AGNIESZKA ŁUCZAK (eds.): Wypędzeni 1939–: Deportacje obywateli polskich z ziem wcielonych do III Rzeszy [Expellees 1939–: Deportations of Polish Citizens from Lands Incorporated into the Third Reich], Poznań 2015; MARIA RUTOWSKA: Obóz przesiedleńczy w Cerekwicy [Displacement Camp in Cerekwica], in: Zapiski Jarocińskie (2005), 1, pp. 28–52; MARIA RUTOWSKA: Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z Kraju Warty do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939–1941 [Expulsions of the Polish Population from Wartheland to the General Government, 1939–1941], Poznań 2003; MARIA RUTOWSKA, ZBIGNIEW MAZUR et al. (eds.): Historia i pamięć: Masowe przesiedlenia 1939—1945—1949 [History and Memory: Mass Displacements, 1939—1945—1949], Poznań 2009.

20 JANUSZ KŁAPEĆ: Uchodźcy z Wołynia na Lubelszczyźnie w latach 1943–1944 [Refugees from Volhynia in the Lublin Region in 1943–1944], in: EWA ŻURAWSKA, JERZY SPERKA (eds.): W cieniu tragedii wołyńskiej 1943 roku: Uchodźcy z Wołynia na Lubelszczyźnie w latach 1943–1944, Katowice 2015, pp. 187–196; LEON POPEK: Uchodźcy z Wołynia w latach 1943–1944 w świetle dokumentów przechowywanych w Archiwum Państwowym w Lublinie [Refugees from Volhynia in 1943–1944 in the Light of Documents Held in the State Archive in Lublin], in: Rocznik Historyczno-Archiwalny 10 (1995), pp. 175–185.

21 As in: ANNA ZAPALEC: Kresowiacy osiedleni w Krakowie w latach 1944–1950 [Borderlanders Settled in Kraków, 1944–1950], in: JERZY RAJMAN (ed.) Kraków: Studia z dziejów miasta, Kraków 2007, pp. 261–277.

of single refugees or helpers have rarely been addressed.[22] Future research on local asylum policies and informal aid may focus more on the reception of forced migrants, and their own perspectives and agency. Such an approach has the potential to connect this past experience with present-day forced migration. Recent works by Kazimierz Przybysz, Łukasz Nowacki, and historians from the Museum Dulag 121 on the attitude of the rural population of Poland toward the exodus of the inhabitants of Warsaw after the 1944 uprising was crushed by the Wehrmacht are an interesting exception.[23] 400,000 people were on the move at that time, and were accommodated in camps and private homes. It turns out that the encounter of those urban refugees with the rural population was a clash of cultures. This only proves that studies of the reception of native and national refugees in Poland are important because they probe the traditional hospitality paradigm. Hopefully, more such studies are on their way.

The literature looking at traditional refugees to Poland after the Bolshevik Revolution also challenges the hospitality paradigm. The authors treat the groups as a diaspora, but even from this perspective, one can discern the Polish hosts' rather cold attitude toward Ukrainian, Georgian, Jewish, and Russian refugees fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution and violence in Eastern Galicia.[24] Special attention has been given to Russian and Ukrainian emigration,[25] both

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22 Ryszard Dyliński, Marian Flejsierowicz et al. (eds.): Wysiedlenie i poniewierka, 1939–1945: Wspomnienia Polaków wysiedlonych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego [Displacement and Misery, 1939–1945: Memories of Poles Displaced by the Nazi Occupants], Poznań 1974; Lidia Zessin-Jurek: Uchodźstwo jako manifestacja wolności i oporu na przykładzie relacji polskich Żydów o jesieni 1939 roku [Refugeedom as a Manifestation of Freedom and Resistance on the Example of Accounts of Polish Jews about the Autumn of 1939], in: Alicja Bartuś (ed.): Pola Wolności, Oświęcim—Poznań 2020, pp. 39–58.

23 Kazimierz Przybysz: Krajobrazy poniewierki [Landscapes of Wandering], Warszawa 2017; Historians working at the Dulag 121 (Durchgangslager) Museum have been collecting testimonies on the subject of helping the expellees from Warsaw. See http://dulag121.pl/encyklopediaa/to-the-aid-of-the-expellees/?lang=en (2022-07-04).

24 Sergiusz Mikulicz: Prometeizm w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej [Prometheism in the Politics of the Second Polish Republic], Warszawa 1971; Marsha L. Rozenblit: Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I, Oxford 2001; Emilian Wiszka: Emigracja ukraińska w Polsce 1920–1939 [Ukrainian Emigration in Poland, 1920–1939], Toruń 2004; Alexander V. Prusin: Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920, Tuscaloosa 2005.

25 The international literature usually speaks of "Russian emigration" when in fact, from the perspective of the receiving states, one should rather refer to "immigration/immigrants from Russia." Grzegorz Mazur: Emigracja rosyjska w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym [Russian Emigration in Poland in the Interwar Period], in: Res Gestae. Czasopismo Historyczne 1 (2015), pp. 167–186; Witold Kołbuk: Mniejszość rosyjska w Polsce międzywojennej—zmarginalizowana społeczność [The Russian Minority in Interwar Poland—A Marginalized Community], in: Roczniki Humanistyczne KUL 51 (2003), 7, pp. 5–25; Bronisław Kodzis: Życie społeczne i kulturalne rosyjskiej diaspo-

nationalities being one of the few groups to which the term "emigration" is applied. Despite their often high social capital and privileged position (insofar as they were granted Polish passports and were even welcome in the Polish army), Russian refugees reported social discrimination throughout the whole interwar period. Their cold reception is explained by anti-Russian sentiment provoked by excesses in Russian rule over partitioned Poland (1795–1918), before the creation of the modern Polish state.

2.2 Non-Ethnic Poles, Their "Return Migration," and Nation-Building Processes

Russian refugees were received rather more coldly by Polish society than by the state, which was bound by international conventions. Nevertheless, historians have provided evidence that the interwar Polish state's reception of other "people on the move" might be more complicated than it appears at first glance. These groups have generally been omitted from the predominant historiographic scheme of refugeedom and instead analyzed using other terms. Generally, research on Poland's interwar migration policy is dominated by references to "return migration," or "re-emigration." The consensus among historians, represented by specialists in the field like Edward Kołodziej and Jerzy Łazor, is that the dire economic situation of the newly independent Polish state had a major influence on the largely anti-immigration—including refugee policy—tone of government policies. This impacted Poles wishing to return from the West as much as any others.[26] The guiding principle of policy-making, which remained valid for the whole interwar period, was to "facilitate emigration and limit return migration."[27]

The historiographic perspective that focuses on the Polish economy as an explanation for the rigid migration policy of post-1918 Poland is increasingly complemented by another view, which focuses on the nation-state's aspirations and its overall treatment of minorities. Let us note that the state, when it is there again, works like an enabler for critical research (as opposed to "stateless" circumstances). This approach also challenges the hospitality paradigm, because

ry w Polsce (1918–1939) [Social and Cultural Life of the Russian Diaspora in Poland (1918–1939)], in: Przegląd Humanistyczny (2003), 3, pp. 65–77.

26 ADAM WALASZEK: Reemigracja ze Stanów Zjednoczonych do Polski po I wojnie światowej [Re-emigration from the United States to Poland after World War I], Kraków 1983.

27 Speech by the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, Stefan Hubicki, cited in: EDWARD KOŁODZIEJ: Wychodźstwo zarobkowe z Polski 1918–1939 [Economic Emigration from Poland, 1918–1939], Warszawa 1982, p. 184; see also JERZY ŁAZOR: Polityka migracyjna II Rzeczypospolitej: Próba syntezy [Migration Policy of the Second Republic of Poland: An Attempted Synthesis], in: PAWEŁ GRATA (ed.): Od kwestii robotniczej do nowoczesnej kwestii socjalnej: Studia z polskiej polityki społecznej XX i XXI wieku, Rzeszów 2015, pp. 44–66. Poland's immigration measures are mentioned in a comparative perspective by: ALEKSANDAR R. MILETIĆ, Journey under Surveillance: The Overseas Emigration Policy of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Global Context, 1918–1928, Münster et al. 2012.

the reception of people coming to interwar Poland depended not only on their a) material wealth, but also b) ethnicity, c) cultural affinities, as perceived by the increasingly nationalist state, and d) physical condition.

This is evidenced in the studies of a "return migration" of the inhabitants of latter-day Poland's eastern borderlands, who had fled to Russia from German-controlled territory during World War I.[28] This phenomenon was given the special name *bieżeństwo*, adopted from Russian into Polish. *Bieżeńcy* escaped to the east and then sought to return home after the war.[29] The Polish word for "refugees" is *uchodźcy*, so here we are clearly dealing with a specific term. While *bieżeńcy* do appear sometimes in the context of other refugee movements, the term usually refers to those fleeing (Poland) to the east, not the other way round. The attempts of mostly Orthodox refugees to "return" to Poland are traced up to 1924.[30] A critical strand in the literature focuses on the cold wel-

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28 MIECZYSŁAW SZAWLESKI: Kwestia emigracji w Polsce [The Issue of Emigration in Poland], Warszawa 1927. The author presents statistics related to the return of DPs on the basis of data collected by the Office of POWs, Refugees, and Workers' Return (Państwowy Urząd do Spraw Powrotu Jeńców, Uchodźców i Robotników). Representatives of the Polish state encouraged Poles to delay their decision to return, in accordance with Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski's appeal: "The time has not yet come"; see also ELŻBIETA STAŃCZYK: Repatriacja ludności polskiej po I wojnie światowej [Repatriation of the Polish Population after World War I], in: Wiadomości Statystyczne 49 (2004), 9, pp. 60–67; DOROTA SULA: Powrót ludności polskiej z byłego Imperium Rosyjskiego w latach 1918–1937 [Return of the Polish Population from the Former Russian Empire in 1918–1937], Warszawa 2013.

29 One should add that *bieżeńcy* meant "refugees" when they were people wandering through Russia. It refers primarily to their previous experience and not to their status once inside the Polish state.

30 MAREK ORCIUCH: Obraz bieżeństwa w prasie międzywojennej i dzisiejszych mediach [The Image of the *bieżeństwo* in the Interwar Press and Today's Media], in: Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne (2016), 45, pp. 99–106; EUGENIUSZ MIRONOWICZ: Wielka tułaczka [The Great Wandering], Białystok 2018; PETER GATRELL: Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars: Armenia and Poland Compared, in: Contemporary European History 16 (2007), 4, pp. 511–527; MAREK MĄDZIK: Polskie Towarzystwo Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Rosji w latach I wojny światowej [Polish Society for Aid to War Victims in Russia during World War I], Lublin 2011; MARIUSZ KORZENIOWSKI: Refugees from Polish Territories in Russia during the First World War, in: PETER GATRELL, LIUBOV ZHVANKO (eds.): Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War, Manchester 2018, pp. 66–87; KATERYNA STADNIK: The Repatriation of Polish Citizens from Soviet Ukraine to Poland in 1921–2, in: NICK BARON, PETER GATRELL (eds.): Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in the Former Russian Empire, 1918–1924, London 2004, pp. 119–137; ŁUCJA KAPRALSKA: "Sybiraki": Siberian and Manchurian Returnees in Independent Poland, ibid., pp. 138–155; JERZY KUMANIECKI: Repatriacja Polaków po wojnie polsko-radzieckiej w latach 1921–24 [Repatriation of the Poles after the Polish-Soviet War in the Years 1921–24], in: Przegląd Wschodni 1 (1991), 1, pp. 133–146; ALICJA GŁAZ: Repatriacja ludności polskiej z terenu byłego imperium rosyjskiego w latach 1917–1924 [Repatriation of the Polish Population from the Former Russian Empire in 1917–1924], PhD Diss., Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2001.

come that the *bieżeńcy* received in Poland. There is a body of work that oscillates between history and memory studies—for example, a book by Agata Prymaka-Oniszk—that suggests that Poles should deal with how they have received their own (whom I call: "native") refugees in the past and integrated the members of Poland's minorities before they move on to analyze Poland's attitudes to the refugees of today.[31]

The above critical bid fits in the important historiographical perspective—measuring the significance of returning refugees in the process of nation- and state-building. In addition to *bieżeńcy*, there were refugees from Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia, Polish workers expelled from Germany trying to get to Poland. The Polish-Bolshevik conflict after World War I increased the size of Poland's displaced population and also aggravated the plight of refugees at the country's borders. The influx of *bieżeńcy* from the east continued after the Polish-Soviet Treaty of Riga was signed in 1921. Of the several million people who reentered Polish territory from the east, 37 percent spoke Polish; the rest spoke Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, or Yiddish.

Beyond any doubt, the returning refugees played a role in the crystallization of the idea of a Polish national community as variously imagined by key discourse producers in the newly independent Poland. Interwar Polish nationalists spread fear of infiltration by Russian Jews who were trying "to sneak into" Poland. Historians reveal that the political right produced inflated estimates of the numbers of Russian Jews to support their contention that "foreign" Jews should not be accepted in Poland. Many Jews lived with the threat of deportation for years to come. Jerzy Tomaszewski highlights the anti-Jewish and anti-Ukrainian/Belarusian bias of the nascent Polish state as expressed in its admission policies.[32] Among authors who have discussed the impact of "undesirables" on citizenship policy, Konrad Zieliński describes the discriminatory measures of the Polish state in accommodating returnees.[33] Those applying for admission were expected to show evidence not only of a Polish birthplace but

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31 AGATA PRYMAKA-ONISZK: Bieżeństwo 1915: Zapomniani uchodźcy [Bieżeństwo 1915: Forgotten Refugees], Wołowiec 2016; BARBARA GORALCZUK: Nadzieja aż po horyzont [Hope up to the Horizon], Białystok 2016; KATARZYNA SIERAKOWSKA: The Expulsions from the "Congress" Kingdom of Poland and Galicia as Seen from Personal Accounts (1914–1918), in: Actae Poloniae Historica (2016), 113, pp. 65–87; KATARZYNA SAWCZUK, ANNA KONDRATIUK et al. (eds.): Jestem, bo wrócili: Przywracanie pamięci w setną rocznicę bieżeństwa [I Am Here because They Came Back: Bringing Back the Memory on the 100th Anniversary of *bieżeństwo*], Białystok 2017. See also works by Marek Orciuch, Bożena Diemjaniuk, and Stanisław Czerep.

32 JERZY TOMASZEWSKI: Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów [The Commonwealth of Many Nations], Warszawa 1985.

33 KONRAD ZIELIŃSKI: Population Displacement and Citizenship in Poland, 1918–1924, in: BARON/GATRELL, Homelands, pp. 98–118; KONRAD ZIELIŃSKI: Kwestia obywatelstwa polskiego dla reemigrantów, repatriantów i uchodźców z Rosji w latach 1918–1922 [Polish Citizenship for Re-emigrants, Repatriates, and Refugees from Russia in the Years 1918–1922], in: Dzieje Najnowsze (2001), 4, pp. 23–36.

also of a spotless political and moral reputation and sufficient funds to live in Poland. Keely Stauter-Halsted has studied the return migration of Poles from North America as well as how refugees were filtered at the eastern borders of the new Polish state. She points at their importance in constructing a sense of a Polish "us" and non-Polish "them" and the role internment camps and denunciations by Polish citizens played in the othering of "foreign" people in the early months and years following Poland's independence.[34] Łukasz Mieszkowski has added yet another facet to our knowledge of the screening process at the borders, that of the impact of raging Spanish flu and typhus epidemics.[35]

For Jerzy Tomaszewski and Dariusz Matelski, the remarkably multi-ethnic character of the Polish Second Republic and its policies toward minorities (especially the treaty in which Poland promised the League of Nations to protect minority rights) are the key elements in the analysis of the refugee experience between 1918 and 1939.[36] The problem of refugees' right to citizenship was prominent in the last years of the interwar period and in dealing with the expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany, the so-called *Polenaktion*.[37] Tomaszewski examines the reaction of the Polish state and Jewish relief workers to the influx of 17,000 Jews expelled from Germany in the autumn of 1938. The Warsaw historian contends that the Polish government's failure to welcome Jewish refugees was no different than that of Great Britain, Belgium, France or Switzerland. However, Poland stripped away the rights of people who had effectively been Polish citizens and protected by Polish law.[38] In March 1938, the Polish Sejm, in anticipation of the arrival of Jewish refugees from Germany and the newly annexed Austria, passed a law on the revocation of citizenship

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34 KEELY STAUTER-HALSTED: Return Migration and Social Disruption in the Polish Second Republic: A Reassessment of Resettlement Regimes, in: WŁODZIMIERZ BORODZIEJ, JOACHIM VON PUTTKAMER (eds.): Immigrants and Foreigners in Central and Eastern Europe during the Twentieth Century, London 2020, pp. 33–52; KEELY STAUTER-HALSTED: Violence by Other Means: Denunciation and Belonging in Post-Imperial Poland, 1918–1923, in: Contemporary European History 30 (2021), 1, pp. 32–45.

35 ŁUKASZ MIESZKOWSKI: Największa: Pandemia hiszpanki u progu niepodległej Polski [The Greatest: The Spanish Flu Pandemic at the Threshold of Independent Poland], Warszawa 2020.

36 TOMASZEWSKI, Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów; DARIUSZ MATELSKI: Polityka Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej wobec mniejszości narodowych, optantów, emigrantów, reemigrantów i cudzoziemców [The Policy of the Second Polish Republic towards National Minorities, Optants, Emigrants, Re-emigrants, and Foreigners], in: ANITA ADAMCZYK, ANDRZEJ SAKSON u. a. (eds.): Polityczne i społeczne aspekty wielokulturowości: Migracje i mniejszości, Poznań 2016, pp. 151–168.

37 The German government expelled thousands of Jews saying they were Polish citizens. Several thousand of them—who had previously had their citizenship revoked by Poland—remained for many months on the Polish-German border in Zbąszyń.

38 JERZY TOMASZEWSKI: Auftakt zur Vernichtung: Die Vertreibung polnischer Juden aus Deutschland im Jahre 1938, Osnabrück 2002, p. 74. See also BONNIE HARRIS: From German Jews to Polish Refugees: Germany's "Polenaktion" and the Zbaszyn Deportations of October 1938, in: Kwartalnik Historii Żydów (2009), 2 (230), pp. 175–205.

rights. Its meaning and consequences have been studied by Michal Frankl.[39] Aside from the antisemitism at the root of this law, the Polish state's cold reaction was exacerbated by the fact that the German government did not allow the expelled Jews to take their assets with them to Poland. It would be worth comparing Poland's policies with respect to Jewish refugees with its policy toward non-Jewish refugees escaping from Hitler's regime—for example, Czechs and Slovaks who entered Poland across "the green border" after March 1939 and lived in transit camps.[40]

The situation of the *bieżeńcy* and the Jewish refugees from Germany, who were subjected to specific discriminatory measures, challenges the paradigm of Polish hospitality. A closer look at the literature dealing with non-ethnic Polish refugees during World War II shows similar results. Moreover, the same applies to migrants housed outside of Polish territory but subject to Polish decision-making. The earlier argument about the importance of the absence of a Polish state during the war may of course be contested by referring to the Polish government residing in exile in London (in France until June 1940) and its attitude toward refugees. Poland's émigré politicians' main concern was Polish refugees abroad rather than the refugees in the Polish lands. The criteria used to determine whether a person was recognized as a Polish refugee or not were of great importance. With few exceptions, research on attitudes of Polish diplomatic posts to the fate of non-Catholic Polish refugees has been conducted in non-Polish historiographical contexts, most notably in the framework of Jewish studies (especially the growing body of work on Jewish Poles who took refuge in the USSR).[41] One major controversy centers on the unequal treatment of Jews by Polish diplomatic posts,[42] by their fellow refugees, and by the so-called Anders' Army formed by Polish soldiers in the USSR, but also, for example,

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39 MICHAL FRANKL: Citizenship of No Man's Land? Jewish Refugee Relief in Zbąszyń and East-Central Europe, 1938–1939, in: S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 8 (2020), 2, pp. 37–49.

40 The two biggest camps were located in Bronowice and Baranowicze. HENRYK BATOWSKI: Agonia pokoju i początek wojny [The Agony of Peace and the Beginning of War], Poznań 1984, pp. 355–357.

41 For example: LIDIA ZESSIN-JUREK, KATHARINA FRIEDLA (eds.): Syberiada Żydów polskich: Losy uchodźców z Zagłady [The Siberian Odyssey of Polish Jews: The Fate of Refugees from the Holocaust], Warszawa 2020; ELIYANA R. ADLER: Survival on the Margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union, Cambridge 2020; BARBARA ENGELKING, JAN GRABOWSKI: Warszawscy Żydzi wydaleni ze Szwajcarii do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa: Studium przypadku [Warsaw Jews Expelled from Switzerland to the General Government: A Case Study], in: Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały 1 (2005), pp. 261–269.

42 PIOTR DŁUGOŁĘCKI (ed.): W obliczu Zagłady Rząd RP na uchodźstwie wobec Żydów 1939–1945 [In the Face of the Holocaust: The Government of the Republic of Poland in Exile towards the Jews, 1939–1945], Warszawa 2021.

in Hungary.[43] The relief provided by the Polish government in exile to Jewish refugees in some other places (Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Portugal, Switzerland) is the subject of a growing field of literature as well as Poland's historical policy.[44]

A particularly important body of scholarship concerns Jewish refugees fleeing ahead of the Wehrmacht in 1939. It ranges from the sections of a classic study by Michael Marrus, "The Unwanted," to texts examining the shelter that Jewish refugees took in eastern Poland occupied by the USSR.[45] Some historians have discussed Jewish refugees in the framework of studies of local history and Jewish aid organizations.[46] A monograph by Lea Prais deserves special attention here for its detailed and thorough examination of the organization of aid for Jewish refugees in Warsaw from the outbreak of the war until the summer of 1942.[47] Another topic addressed in the historiography deals with Jews fleeing physical extermination after the Germans entered the definitive phase of the genocide. To see Polish Jews only as refugees by no means does justice to the depth of their suffering, and historians are correct not to assign the status of "refugee" to them in their multifaceted analyses of Polish attitudes. Occasionally, however, the words "refuge" and "refugee" (naturally) do appear in this context—for example, in the subtitle of Barbara Engelking's poignant study from 2016.[48]

2.3 Ethnic Poles and Their "Repatriation": "Shall We Rejoin the Nation?"

The refrain of the Polish national anthem (1797) contains a stanza that speaks of returning to the native land and *złączym się z narodem* (rejoining the nation). The idealism of this "repatriation" leaves little room for the reality of the "refugee condition." Józef Wybicki wrote the anthem's lyrics when Poland was

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43 Lidia Zessin-Jurek, Ágnes Kelemen: Refugees Welcome to History and Memory: Polish (and Jewish) World War II Exiles in Hungary, in: Hungarian Studies Review 49 (2022), 1, pp. 62–92.

44 For example: Jan S. Ciechanowski: Portugalio, dziękujemy: Polscy uchodźcy cywilni i wojskowi na zachodnim krańcu Europy w latach 1940–45 [Portugal, Thank You: Polish Civilian and Military Refugees on the Western Edge of Europe, 1940–45], Warszawa 2015. After recognizing Henryk Sławik's role in saving several thousand Polish Jews in Hungary, a campaign has been underway in Poland since 2021 to inform the public about another diplomat, Aleksander Ładoś, and his help to Polish Jews in Switzerland.

45 Michael Marrus: The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, New York 1985; Ben-Cion Pinchuk: Jewish Refugees in Soviet Poland 1939–1941, in: Jewish Social Studies 40 (1978), 2, pp. 141–158.

46 Joanna Sliwa: JDC's Relief Efforts and the Holocaust in Rzeszów County, in: Thomas Kühne, Mary J. Rein (eds.): Agency and the Holocaust Essays in Honor of Debórah Dwork, Cham 2020, pp. 51–67.

47 Lea Prais: Displaced Persons at Home: Refugees in the Fabric of Jewish Life in Warsaw, September 1939–July 1942, Jerusalem 2015.

48 Barbara Engelking: Such a Beautiful Sunny Day ...: Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942–1945, Jerusalem 2016.

newly partitioned. Thereafter, the divided territory of Poland repeatedly saw populations flow between the partitions—for example, political refugees escaping nationalist repression in czarist Russia by fleeing to Austrian-controlled Galicia. Unlike Jewish refugees escaping pogroms and repression (such as the *Litvaks*), Polish political dissidents fleeing the czar were never recognized in the local historiography as a refugee group. Historians had a problem conceiving of national migrants as refugees if they were moving within the former borders of their native land. Such migrants were not suffering an "external" political exile (like the archetypical Polish emigrant) and were assumed to have been absorbed into the community of their co-nationals in a harmonious and trouble-free manner. They had no need to beg for any special accommodation or hospitality.

Against this background, the most intriguing theme in the research on refugees in Poland remains that of "return migration." In the interwar period, it concerned native refugees of various ethnicities who claimed a right to Polish citizenship based on their place of birth. Their belonging to the Polish nation was often contested, as indeed it was in the case of the *bieżeńcy* and Jews expelled from Germany. This explains why the term "return migration" was more often used to refer to multi-ethnic movements after World War I, and "repatriation" to refer to the movements after World War II. We understand that a return migrant or re-emigrant had first migrated and then sought to come back. Repatriation does not highlight the process of migrating, but rather emphasizes the connection of migrants with patria and their rejoining the nation.

Sometimes the term "repatriates" has likewise appeared, however, in the context of post–World War I movements, and the literature undoubtedly identifies at least one group as such: Returning native migrants included Polish landowners who owned property in the eastern parts of the pre-partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that were not restored to the Polish state after World War I. After the Russian Revolution, these landowners were considered class enemies in the Soviet Union. They had no choice but to leave their manor houses and flee to Poland (mainly to Wielkopolska and Polish Pomerania, which had been partially abandoned by their German inhabitants after the war). They were welcomed collectively as highly cultured individuals—in Polish creed—and had no difficulties in obtaining rights and assistance. Paradoxically, they themselves did not have the positive sense of a smooth "rejoining the nation." In fact, they later constituted the most vocal group of self-defined "refugees," longing after their lost homesteads to the east and never completely at home in Poland. Recently, Tomasz Łaszkiewicz has written a concise history of this refugee group, which was previously known only via its widely read ego-documents.[49] Aside from the Jews expelled from Germany in 1938, it was

[49] TOMASZ ŁASZKIEWICZ: Ziemiańscy egzulanci kresowi na Pomorzu po pierwszej wojnie światowej [Borderland Landowners as Exiles in Pomerania after World War I], in: Zapiski Historyczne 80 (2015), 3, pp. 257–271. For one testimony, see ZOFIA KOSSAK-SZCZUCKA: Pożoga: Wspomnienia z Wołynia 1917–1919 [Fire: Memories from Volhynia, 1917–1919], Kraków 1922.

the men and women from the eastern borderlands who, unlike most other incomers to Poland in the interwar period, had the greatest means and felt most compelled to describe their experience. Insofar as we have sources written by participants in these events, we can be sure to read in them about the state of being a refugee and its sorrows. Besides those testimonies, the historiography on refugees in interwar Poland relies predominantly on sources produced by the private organizations that provided refugees with aid, and some governmental, military, and border-crossing records.

"Rejoining the nation" is the grand motif of the research on migration in Poland after World War II, and has long featured there under the label of "repatriation." The term is linked to the national understanding of migration and—in Georgia Cole's view—usually acts as an axiom for the relationship between an individual and a singular place called "home."[50] "Repatriation" after World War II was different from the "return migration" after World War I because now the majority of migrants into new Poland were not only native (sharing a geographical place of origin), but also national—that is, identifiable members of the Polish nation or considered to be easily assimilable groups. National refugees are largely absent from historians' reflections on Polish attitudes toward refugees, because they did not come from the "real" outside. The fact that the phenomenon of internal refugeeism is largely unrecognized, and given a different weight than its external form, highlights the link and the tension between the individual's status as a citizen/national and as a refugee. The central problem researchers have in their treatment of the mass movements of people across Poland in the postwar period is a semantic one: how to define the numerous phenomena of forced migration? Studies of wartime Poland and the early postwar period largely apply labels other than that of "refugee," mainly referring to people on the move as expellees, settlers or resettlers, repatriates or repatriants, evacuees, expatriates, DPs, and so on.[51]

Terminological inconsistencies and a certain degree of conformism were unavoidable in postwar Polish historiography because scholars were obliged to employ only those terms officially sanctioned by the country's communist leadership. Later, most standard works focused on the 1939–1950 timeframe for the study of continuous, intensive—but also diverse—population changes in the Polish lands. The scholars' own choices, while rational, sometimes resulted in a loss of narrative subtlety. Piotr Eberhardt, a geographer and scholar of migration, has embraced the umbrella term "political migrations," which is arguably a benign term for the demographic changes caused by World War II and its aftermath, given that he explicitly includes the Holocaust in his analy-

50 COLE, p. 11.

51 Among the group of DPs, the literature deals with Jews attempting to leave Poland and waiting their turn at the borders in provisional DP camps, the activities of the Jewish relief organizations, and the transit of Soviet Jewish refugees through Poland. See, for example, GENNADY ESTRAIKH: Escape through Poland: Soviet Jewish Emigration in the 1950s, in: Jewish History 31 (2018), pp. 291–317.

sis.[52] Studies such as Eberhardt's analyze forced migrations in a broad way, examining the refugee situation of Polish Catholics and Jews alongside that of Ukrainians and Germans. Undoubtedly, an integrated approach and the long timespan of these works emphasize the violent results of both the Nazi and Stalinist systems, the thoroughness of the ethnic transformation of the population of Poland, and the scale of its victimization. The quantitative dominance of studies on forced migration during and after World War II would contribute to the victimhood paradigm, but this relationship remains implicit due to the historiographical legacies of the ambiguous interpretation of "repatriation" during the socialist era.

The authors of an impressive atlas of forced migration in the Polish lands between 1939 and 1959, Witold Sienkiewicz and Grzegorz Hryciuk, agree to distinguish between three terms—"deportation," "expulsion," and "flight"—and include all of these in the title of their publication.[53] None of those terms corresponds with "repatriation" when applied to the postwar resettlement of Polish nationals, although the atlas covers movements that have been described as such in the past. "Repatriation"—in addition to being the most benign, or even positive, term for population exchanges and their emotional costs—expressed the socialist preference for ethnicity over territorially defined citizenship and thus carried with it clear nationalist undertones. Prior to 1989, Polish historiography mostly adhered to this nomenclature and called forced migrants "repatriates." Alternatively, it spoke of "population exchanges" and "transfers."[54] Krystyna Kersten had already suggested in the 1960s that the discussion should be about "forced migration" rather than "repatriation."[55] She further distinguished between *wymuszony* (induced) and *przymusowy* (enforced) movements. Only after the fall of communism was the term "repatriation" broadly challenged on the grounds that many displaced people had not in fact been repatriated but rather were forced to leave their ancestral homes. The expulsion in 1945 adhered to the arbitrarily redrawn borders of the Polish state. With the addition of formerly German lands in the west, Poland was deprived of almost

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52 PIOTR EBERHARDT: Migracje polityczne na ziemiach polskich (1939–1950) [Political Migrations in Poland (1939–1950)], Poznań 2010.

53 WITOLD SIENKIEWICZ, GRZEGORZ HRYCIUK (eds.): Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939–1959: Atlas ziem Polski. Polacy, Żydzi, Niemcy, Ukraińcy [Deportations, Expulsions, and Flight, 1939–1959: Atlas of Polish Lands—Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians], Warszawa 2008.

54 KRYSTYNA KERSTEN: Repatriacja ludności polskiej po II wojnie światowej [Repatriation of the Polish Population after World War II], Wrocław 1974; JAN CZERNIAKIEWICZ: Repatriacja ludności polskiej z ZSRR [Repatriation of the Polish Population from the USSR], Warszawa 1987.

55 KRYSTYNA KERSTEN: Migracje powojenne w Polsce (Próba klasyfikacji) [Postwar Migrations in Poland (Attempt at Classification)], in: Polska Ludowa (1963), 2, pp. 3–26; Kersten elaborates on the differences between "deportation" (*deportacja*), "resettlement" (*przeniesienie*), "displacement" (*wysiedlenie*), and "expulsion" (*wypędzenie*).

a third of its prewar territory in the east.[56] After 1989, scholars vented previously accumulated dissatisfactions with the limitations on discourse that the communist regime had imposed. They also inevitably entered into a debate with German historians about the meaning of *Vertriebene* (expellees).

Mostly in the late 1990s, a multi-voice debate took place about the evacuation and removal of the German and Polish populations from the East, in response to the popularity of the topic in Germany.[57] Historians hastened to compare the conditions of German and Polish forced migrants. They were most interested in the moment when each of these groups moved west and joined their titular nations on new (for them) territory. In this context, Włodzimierz Borodziej (building on the work of Krystyna Kersten) offered a thorough deconstruction of the terms relevant to these population movements.[58] He analyzed the evolution of the terms used in the socialist literature aimed at political persuasion into those used in the literature that followed the liberalization of the 1990s. That is when the research went beyond the homogenization of "repatriates" into the nation or a dry recitation of events, and focused on the multiple connections between the fates of German, Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian wandering people. Today, we can see that the delicate process of peeling off the layers of politically charged designations that solidified in refugee-receiving societies during the Cold War has not yet been finished. Words such as *Vertriebene*—emphasizing German victimhood—and "repatriates"—camouflaging Polish victimhood—still carry explosive potential. Over the course of time, Polish discourse moved slightly closer to the German one rather than the other way around—that is, Poles began to recognize the importance of expulsion in their experience, while Germans have not tended as much to interpret theirs as repatriation (*Repatriierung*).

Notwithstanding these terminological developments, most historians refrain from applying the label of "refugee" to "repatriates" from the territories of pre-1939 eastern Poland, because they consider the "evacuation" as voluntary to some degree. Theoretically, people were free to select where they would live. Secondly, the movement of ethnic Poles within their country's new boundaries was a state-organized operation. Thirdly, and most importantly, even when

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56 KRYSTYNA KERSTEN: Forced Migration and the Transformation of Polish Society in the Postwar Period, in: PHILIPP THER, ANA SILJAK (eds.): Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, Lanham et al. 2001, pp. 75–86.

57 HUBERT ORŁOWSKI, ANDRZEJ SAKSON: Utracona ojczyzna: Przymusowe wysiedlenia, deportacje i przesiedlenia jako wspólne doświadczenie [The Lost Homeland: Forced Displacement, Deportation and Resettlement as a Common Experience], Poznań 1997; WŁODZIMIERZ BORODZIEJ, ARTUR HAJNICZ: Kompleks wypędzenia [The Expulsion Complex], Kraków 1998; PHILIPP THER: Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945–1956, Göttingen 1998, with a discussion of terms on pp. 91–105. The debate continued in later years.

58 WŁODZIMIERZ BORODZIEJ: Historiografia polska o "wypędzeniu" Niemców [Polish Historiography on the "Expulsion" of Germans], in: Studia i Materiały: Polska 1944/45–1989 2 (1996), pp. 249–269.

migrants crossed a border, they were joining their titular countrymen. These three factors play a crucial role in scholars' reluctance to use the term "refugee" in their analysis of Polish migration after World War II. They also explain why some of the recent literature still finds the term "repatriation" convenient—for example, the studies of sociologist Andrzej Sakson.[59] Nevertheless, Sakson distinguishes between individually planned escapes on the one hand and the coordinated transport of Polish people from the surrendered eastern territory to the so-called Regained Territories in the west on the other. He refers to the former as "wild migration," which imbues it with a refugee-like character. Konrad Zieliński sums up this dichotomy in an apt phrase: in the postwar period "Polish national reconstruction harnessed the spontaneous flight of refugees, as well as instigated its own coerced or semi-coerced displacements."[60] A closer look at the motivations of the "repatriates" themselves shows that the idea that the transfers were organized and orderly is more complicated than that. A growing group of authors rightly points out that, in opting for Polish citizenship, many migrants from the regions of Vilnius, Kobrin, and Lviv were escaping violence that took on various forms: class- and nationality-based Soviet repression and, in the months just after the war, ethnic cleansing by Ukrainian nationalists.

The all-encompassing and flexible term "repatriates" includes not only residents of prewar Polish territories that were seized by the Soviets, but also thousands of people returning from Siberian forced labor camps who had been deported during the war. Those people did not go back to their homes, which were now cut off from Poland, but were sent directly to the western territories. They were moved to their fatherland (*ojczyzna*) from the land of their fathers (*ojcowizna*).[61] Given the geographical aspect and coercive nature of this "repatriation," it seems fitting a new term should be proposed instead—such as "inpatriation." Scholars in this field have recently gravitated toward the use of terms like "evacuation," "expatriation," "resettlement," and "banishment" instead of "repatriation"[62]—but not "refugeedom," which reveals the limits of terminological deconstruction and reconstruction.

Scholarshave paid generous attention to the experiment of the western territories' resettlement, dubbing these absorptive lands the "post-Yalta Occident"[63]

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59 ANDRZEJ SAKSON: Cztery fale repatriacji Polaków ze Wschodu [Four Waves of Repatriation of Poles from the East], in: ADAMCZYK/SAKSON, pp. 205–224.

60 KONRAD ZIELIŃSKI: To Pacify, Populate and Polonise: Territorial Transformations and the Displacement of Ethnic Minorities in Communist Poland, 1944–49, in: PETER GATRELL, NICK BARON (eds.): Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50, Basingstoke 2009, pp. 188–209, here p. 188.

61 From a conversation with Grzegorz Hryciuk.

62 PIOTR EBERHARDT: Political Migrations in Poland 1939–1948, Warszawa 2006, p. 61.

63 JOANNA SZYDŁOWSKA: Narracje pojałtańskiego Okcydentu: Literatura polska wobec pogranicza na przykładzie Warmii i Mazur [Narratives of the Post-Yalta Occident: Polish Literature towards the Borderland Based on the Example of Warmia and Mazury], Olsztyn 2013.

or the "Polish Wild West" and thus implying their empty and colonizable nature. The still growing literature is too vast to be listed here. It has three major strands: One concerned with the organization of the displacement;[64] another which deals with the ethnic transformation of the originating and the receiving territories (e.g., Grzegorz Hryciuk, Kazimierz Żygulski);[65] and a third, the richest of all, centered on issues of identity that arose among the displaced people in their new homes.[66] The newly acquired western part of Poland welcomed settlers with a wide variety of cultures and wartime experiences. They included the *zabużanie* (people from beyond the Bug River), Holocaust survivors, and returnees from concentration camps and Siberia, all of whom were resettled far from their original, prewar homes.[67] The communist authorities in Poland also displaced national minorities from the southeast (Ukrainians, Lemkos) to the "regained part of Poland." Their experience is the topic of numerous studies of the events of the time themselves, including those by Grzegorz Motyka, Wiktor Poliszczuk, and Catherine Gousseff,[68] as well as of their traces in the memory of the evacuees. The formerly German territory also accepted 18,000 descendants of Polish colonists from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire who were fleeing persecution in Bosnia in 1946,[69] and refugees from Greece, who will be discussed below.

The refugee aspect of those postwar displacements is not discussed in the Polish literature, because of the paradigm of "at-homeness" mentioned above. Refugees are generally understood to be people in exile, not those who "rejoin their nationality group." It would be interesting to analyze how their situation was actually different from that of "typical refugees" in terms of how they arrived in Polish lands, and how they were treated and processed by the Polish state and emergency relief organizations. They were given personal identifica-

64 E.g.: SULA.

65 GRZEGORZ HRYCIUK: Przemiany narodowościowe i ludnościowe w Galicji Wschodniej i na Wołyniu w latach 1931–1948 [Nationality and Population Changes in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia in the Years 1931–1948], Toruń 2005. Earlier works by Stanisław Łach, Leszek Kosiński, Zygmunt Dulczewski, Kazimierz Żygulski.

66 Among authors dealing with transformation, identity, and memory in the "regained territories" are Halina Tumolska, Małgorzata Praczyk, Anna Magierska, Janusz Jasiński, Robert Traba, Kamila Kieba, Hanna Gosk, and Adam Makowski.

67 E.g.: BOŻENA SZAYNOK: Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945–1950 [The Jewish Population in Lower Silesia 1945–1950], Wrocław 2000; see also works by Achim Wörn, Elżbieta Hornowa, Ewa Waszkiewicz, Tomasz Jaworski.

68 CATHERINE GOUSSEFF: Evacuation versus Repatriation: The Polish-Ukrainian Population Exchange, 1944–6, in: REINISCH/WHITE, pp. 91–111; KAZIMIERZ PUDŁO: Łemkowie: Proces wrastania w środowisko Dolnego Śląska, 1947–1985 [Lemkos: The Process of Growing into the Community of Lower Silesia, 1947–1985], Wrocław 1987.

69 TOMASZ JACEK LIS: Z Bośni do Polski: Edycja źródłowa dokumentów dotyczących reemigracji Polaków z Bośni i Hercegowiny po II wojnie światowej [From Bosnia to Poland: Source Edition of Documents Concerning the Re-emigration of Poles from Bosnia and Herzegovina after World War II], Bolesławiec 2016.

tion documents, redistributed, and integrated in their new homes (in part, through specially designed programs meant to "productivize" the newcomers). Like many refugees, they felt mistrusted and uprooted, a topic of growing literature.[70] The borderlanders relocated from east to west experienced anxieties about both a thinly shaped state apparatus in the West and these regions' (as well as their own) true Polishness.[71] Sometimes, the opportunity for social advancement of the settlers in the west of Poland transpires in research.[72] The literature to date has not explored all the consequences of the postwar population transfers—DP's were also often easier for the authorities to control than long-term inhabitants. New loyalties (as well as disloyalties) could be fostered in them.[73]

Numerous studies discuss the practicalities and consequences of resettlement. Some are case studies of chosen localities such as Wrocław or Szczecin.[74] Authors have also analyzed particular groups of migrants, in some cases offering a fresh approach by comparing both the spaces they occupied[75] and different time periods. Some studies zoom in on post-migration identities, discourse, and memory among those who resettled in the western territories. A cohort of younger Polish scholars, among them Kinga Siewior, have offered sophisticated studies of the discursive domestication of the new space in the western part of today's Poland.[76] The persistence of identity problems among the inhabitants of the region who moved there after 1945 accounts for the popularity of this strand of research.

By and large, the historiography of the immediate postwar period still leaves ample room for further debate as to which terms should be used for Polish migrants into Poland. It is clear that authors dealing with population movements across the Polish lands do not position their research within the field of refugee

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70 Mirosław Maciorowski: Sami swoi i obcy: Reportaże. Z kresów na kresy. Prawdziwe historie wypędzonych [Our Own and Our Strangers: Reportages. From *kresy* to *kresy*—True Stories of the Displaced], Warszawa 2011; Jerzy Kochanowski: Gathering Poles into Poland: Forced Migration from Poland's Former Eastern Territories, in: Ther/Siljak, pp. 135–154, here p. 148.

71 Kathryn Ciancia: On Civilization's Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World, New York 2020, p. 232.

72 Beata Halicka: The Polish Wild West: Forced Migration and Cultural Appropriation in the Polish–German Borderlands, 1945–1948, London 2020.

73 Some references to the social consequences of those forced migrations (weakening of the social fabric and the rise of xenophobia) are made in Krystyna Kersten's work.

74 Gregor Thum: Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions, Princeton 2011; Jan Musekamp: Zwischen Stettin und Szczecin: Metamorphosen einer Stadt von 1945 bis 2005, Darmstadt 2010.

75 Kateřina Čapková: Dilemmas of Minority Politics: Jewish Migrants in Postwar Czechoslovakia and Poland, in: Francoise S. Ouzan, Manfred Gerstenfeld (eds.): Postwar Jewish Displacement and Rebirth 1945–1967, Leiden 2014, pp. 63–75.

76 Kinga Siewior: Wielkie poruszenie: Pojałtańskie narracje migracyjne w kulturze polskiej [The Great Move: Post-Yalta Migration Narratives in Polish Culture], Warszawa 2018.

studies. Consequently, their works—like the phenomenon of "refugees in Poland" in general—are often overlooked by scholars of contemporary refugeeism. Having said that, the German historian Gregor Thum recently published a thoughtful reexamination of these terms in which he questions why Polish "repatriates" have never been considered refugees. He believes that it is because they arrived into "a situation without a host society to speak of."[77] Although on many occasions they felt discriminated against, they were very much needed as settlers in the vacated lands. One could add that they were celebrated in the state's heroic narrative of pioneers and reclaimers of Polish territory, which symbolically validated their experience and lessened the discrimination they faced compared with German "repatriates" who returned to an unwelcoming postwar *Kalte Heimat*.[78] Although identity problems persist, the integration of Polish repatriates in postwar Poland did not leave similar scars to those of the German "returnees." Also, some Polish intellectuals who are not academically oriented are more prone to apply the term "refugees" to "repatriates" from the *kresy* (borderlands) into postwar Poland. Konstanty Gebert, for example, compares Poles who opted to find new homes within Poland's postwar borders with the Jews who made aliyah in the first years after the establishment of the Israeli state, because the refugee status of both groups was contested in their home countries.[79]

The forced displacements of the mid-1940s in Poland have been studied from a broader regional perspective, as well. In several studies, historians have examined the unprecedented scale of World War II expulsions within the context of panoramic analysis of Europe and the East Central European region. Historians such as Philipp Ther, Jan Piskorski, and Dariusz Stola focus on the intentions of leaders of nation-states to homogenize their populations by means of forced migration, displacement, ethnic cleansing, and refugeeism.[80] Poland features prominently in a burgeoning body of literature on the general mayhem of displacement, in which the term "refugee" is much more frequently used and in a less restrictive sense.[81] In both academic treatises and popular histories of

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77 GREGOR THUM: Integrating without a Host Society: The Repopulation of Poland's Western Territories after 1945, in: JAN C. JANSEN, SIMONE LÄSSIG (eds.): Refugee Crises 1945–2000, Cambridge 2020, pp. 55–82, here pp. 81–82.

78 ANDREAS KOSSERT: Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945, München 2008.

79 From a conversation with Konstanty Gebert.

80 STOLA, Forced Migrations; JAN PISKORSKI: Wygnańcy: Przesiedlenia i uchodźcy w dwudziestowiecznej Europie [Displaced People: Resettlement and Refugees in Twentieth-Century Europe], Warszawa 2011; PERTTI AHONEN, GUSTAVO CORNI, JERZY KOCHANOWSKI, TAMÁS STARK, RAINER SCHULZE, BARBARA STELZL-MARX: People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and Its Aftermath, London 2008; JACEK WOŁOSZYN (ed.): Wysiedlenia jako narzędzie polityki ludnościowej w Europie XX wieku [Displacement as a Tool of Population Policy in Twentieth-Century Europe], Lublin 2015.

81 ANDREAS KOSSERT: Flucht: Eine Menschheitsgeschichte, München 2020.

postwar Europe, authors such as David Nasaw, Ben Shepard, and Gerhard Daniel Cohen have discussed the trajectories of Polish citizens who found themselves in the west of Europe around the year 1945, the involuntary nature of their repatriation, and the efforts of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to assist them.[82]

The final topic of interest in relation to postwar displacement and internal refugees is a phenomenon known as "failed repatriation." It refers to the difficulty experienced by people of Polish origin who were either deported outside of Poland (to the depths of the USSR) or were in the eastern Polish territories lost in the aftermath of the war, and who attempted to "return" to their home country some years or decades after the war. Those people were again not typical refugees because they had Polish origins and were granted Polish citizenship upon arrival. They had some help from relevant institutions. Their status was different from that of non-native Polish immigrants, but the numbers of those accepted were far less than the numbers of applicants.[83] The literature describes the tedious return of ethnic Poles from the late 1950s to the 1990s, and strongly criticizes the generally unwelcoming, inflexible policy of the Polish state toward its own people.[84] Only recently did the Polish state open its arms (and the right to full citizenship) to the descendants of Poles who were deported to Russia or Kazakhstan. While the restrictive repatriation policies that have delayed this return migration were motivated by economic rather than cultural concerns, it is also worth noting that not all of those who were allowed to come back were unanimously welcomed as fellow Poles. Studies show that many of the returnees felt stigmatized and ridiculed, if not openly for their eastern accents, then for their alleged loss of cultural ties to Poland and other cultural credentials.

2.4 In Search of "Refugees": The Literature on Socialist and Post-Socialist Times

During the socialist era, when Poland's borders were frozen shut by the Cold War, very few refugees came into the country. Nevertheless, it is in this period that scholars unanimously identify refugees in Poland, based on the normative

82 GERHARD DANIEL COHEN: In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order, Oxford 2012; DANIEL NASAW: The Last Million: Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War, New York 2020; REINISCH/WHITE; MATTHEW FRANK, JESSICA REINISCH (eds.): Refugees in Europe, 1919–1959: A Forty Years' Crisis?, London 2017; BEN SHEPARD: The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War, London 2011; SHARIFF GEMIE, LAURE HUMBERT, FIONA REID: Outcast Europe: Refugees and Relief Workers in an Era of Total War 1936–1949, London 2012.

83 JOANNA KSIĄŻEK: Stamtąd—tu: Obrazy tożsamości kazachstańskich Polaków w kontekście repatriacji [From There—Here: Images of Identity of Kazakh Poles in the Context of Repatriation], Toruń 2018.

84 For example: PAWEŁ HUT: Warunki życia i proces adaptacji repatriantów w Polsce w latach 1992–2000 [Living Conditions and Adaptation of Repatriates in Poland, 1992–2000], Warszawa 2002.

definition of a "refugee" as a "foreigner" who crosses a border and remains in exile. As a result, there is a correspondingly "classic" literature on Cold War–era refugees. World War II transformed the multi-ethnic character of Poland into one of homogeneity, and the policies of the communist government reinforced this trend. The new monoethnic Polish society, which was an official aspiration of the socialist regime, but also very close to reality, was not to be contaminated by the diversity coming with foreigners or minorities.[85]

The only exception to the rule was Article 99 of the 1952 Constitution, which specified the process for granting asylum on political grounds. Asylum was exclusively reserved for persons socialist Poland considered highly worthy of protection.[86] Unlike the Second Polish Republic, the socialist state did not fear admitting a few refugees, because by then Poland was monoethnic enough to ensure its desired "cultural balance." Moreover, it could use its hand-picked refugees for propaganda purposes. Historians do not hesitate to call them "refugees" or *azylanci*—asylum seekers. Greeks, Macedonians, Persians (after the overthrow of Muhammad Mosaddegh in 1953), and Koreans were granted asylum in Poland in the 1950s. So were Chileans in the 1970s.[87] The historians Jerzy Kochanowski and Patryk Pleskot count a number of pro-Stalinist, anti-Tito Yugoslavs and also some immigrants from Anglo-Saxon countries as political refugees.[88] The stories of the so-called Palestinians, who were actually Jewish communists arriving from Palestine, and ethnically Polish "return migrants" from South America, are told by Tadeusz Paleczny.[89] No historian has ever taken up the case of the few dozen American communists, most of them Jewish, who were granted asylum in Poland in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[90]

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85 Foreigners included Soviet citizens (mostly spouses of Polish citizens) who were forcibly deported to the USSR and whose earlier decision to reside in Poland had motivations very similar to those of the refugees.

86 Polish law on the granting of asylum was born in tension with the Western practice of granting refugee status to inhabitants of communist Europe, which the Eastern Bloc viewed as a tool for "kidnapping" people. See ALEKSANDRA HADZIŃSKA-WYROBEK: Uchodźcy—Azyl polityczny i status uchodźcy w Polsce po 1945 roku [Refugees—Political Asylum and Refugee Status in Poland after 1945], Poznań 2015, p. 198.

87 SŁAWOMIR ŁODZIŃSKI: Foreigners in Poland: Selected Issues in Poland's Migrational Policy 1989–1998, in: Polish Sociological Review (1999), 126, pp. 301–321.

88 JERZY KOCHANOWSKI: Warszawiacy nie z tej ziemi: Cudzoziemscy mieszkańcy stolicy 1945–1989 [Varsovians Not of This Earth: Foreign Residents of the Capital], Warszawa 2013; PATRYK PLESKOT: Cudzoziemcy w Warszawie 1945–1989: Studia i materiały [Foreigners in Warsaw, 1945–1989: Studies and Materials], Warszawa 2021.

89 TADEUSZ PALECZNY: Idea powrotu wśród emigrantów polskich w Brazylii i Argentynie [The Idea of Return among Polish Emigrants in Brazil and Argentina], Wrocław et al. 1992.

90 Discussion of them was silenced in the early 1950s after spying accusations were leveled against the Americans Noel and Hermann Field, whose activities were part of the evidence used in the international conspiracy trials of László Rajk and Władysław Gomułka.

These individuals were Cold War exceptions to the closed-door policy, taken in out of ideological solidarity.

Refugees from the civil war in Greece were transported into Poland almost surreptitiously, but later were the subject of numerous monographs and dozens of articles. Mieczysław Wojecki, Kazimierz Pudło, and Anna Kurpiel are among the most prolific authors on the subject of the Greek refugees.[91] Early works analyze the practicalities of resettling the refugees, presenting it as a well-organized operation where help was granted in the name of socialist solidarity. Historians' interest in refugees from Greece has been relatively constant across the years, but their works have evolved slightly from purely empirical explorations of the admission of refugees (their distribution, subsequent relocations, associations, and even their children's school curricula) to greater recognition of interference by the state apparatus in their lives (the secret character of their reception, their surveillance by the secret police, their lack of freedom of movement, and their intensive indoctrination).

The latest literature pays attention to internal ethnic divisions among the refugees and the cultural identities they held on to. Marcin Gołębniak gives voice to the refugees themselves. He has discovered that the Greeks who came to Poland as children now question whether they can be described as "political refugees" at all (due to their age at the time). They are also dismayed that their experience has been forced out of Polish consciousness and memory since 1989, along with much else related to the internationalist communist program.[92] Accordingly, post-2015 and before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the story of the Greeks represented a valuable episode in the difficult search for Poland's lost refugees. Both in the context of academic scholarship and popular literature, this story was a rediscovered chance to demonstrate that there had been times when Poland was able and willing to offer help. In his bestselling book, Dionisos Sturis maintains that Poles reacted to Greek refugees with sympathy that went beyond their communist ideology.[93] In his eyes, ideology was "not the most important thing in this story." More important was solidarity and the fact that "Poles had just emerged from the war, had nothing themselves, and yet provided the Greeks with everything they needed."[94]

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91 For example: Mieczysław Wojecki: Uchodźcy polityczni z Grecji w Polsce 1948–1975 [Political Refugees from Greece in Poland, 1948–1975], Jelenia Góra 1989; Kazimierz Pudło: Grecy i Macedończycy w Polsce 1948–1993: Imigracja, przemiany i zanikanie grupy [Greeks and Macedonians in Poland, 1948–1993: Immigration, Transformation, and Disappearance of the Group], in: Sprawy Narodowościowe 4 (1995), 1, pp. 133–151; Anna Kurpiel: Uchodźcy z Greckiej wojny domowej na Dolnym Śląsku—Zarys problematyki [Refugees from the Greek Civil War in Upper Silesia—Outline of Problems], Wrocław 2012.

92 Marcin Gołębniak: Dzieci z rozbitego statku [Children from a Shipwreck], Wrocław 2016.

93 Dionisos Sturis: Nowe życie: Jak Polacy pomogli uchodźcom z Grecji [New Life: How Poles Helped Refugees from Greece], Warszawa 2017.

94 Sturis, pp. 14, 22.

Sturis's emphasis on Poles' eagerness to provide refugees with aid was possibly meant to encourage a positive response to the challenges of the refugee situation in Europe around the year 2015. His use of Greeks and Macedonians to illustrate his thesis was hardly random: they remain the emblematic refugees to the Polish People's Republic, mentioned even by contemporary social scientists as an exception to—what they see as—the refugee-less history of Poland.[95]

In contrast, the story of Korean refugees in Poland is less well-known and less studied, although it was the theme of two novels by Marian Brandys, a popular author of the mid-1950s.[96] Like the Greeks and Macedonians, the Korean refugees and their experiences have become the subject of growing interest, both in academia and beyond (in film and radio broadcasts, for example).[97] Research by Łukasz Sołtysik and Sylwia Szyc has shown that the "Korean operation" in Lower Silesia was surrounded by an air of confidentiality similar to the Greek one. It has only recently been "rediscovered."[98] The exact reasons for the secrecy of the project are not known, but researchers take a critical approach to refugee policy in socialist Poland. They pay the most attention to the abrupt return of Korean refugee children from Poland to North Korea. The Koreans had no possibility of expressing an objection to their own return.

Unlike the arrival of the Greek, Macedonian, and Korean refugees, the political asylum granted to communist veterans of the Spanish Civil War, who were expelled from France in September 1950, was never hidden. In fact, it was even exploited by socialist propaganda. The brevity of the Spanish refugees' sojourn in Poland may explain why they are the group that has received

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95 As in the following article: "The European socialist countries did not have to deal with the refugee problem, and even an example of an inflow of refugees to a socialist country—such as the coming of Greek refugees to Poland—was only an exception confirming the rule." Bogdan Wierzbicki: Co-operation in the Refugee Problem in Europe: A New Perspective, in: International Journal of Refugee Law 2 (1990), 1, pp. 118–123, here p. 120.

96 Marian Brandys: Dom odzyskanego dzieciństwa [A Home of Regained Childhood], Warszawa 1953; Marian Brandys: Koreańczycy z Gołotczyzny [Koreans from Gołotczyzna], Warszawa 1954.

97 Łukasz Sołtysik: Dzieci i młodzież północnokoreańska na Dolnym Śląsku i Mazowszu w latach 1951–1959 [North Korean Children and Youth in Lower Silesia and Masovia in 1951–1959], in: Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka 65 (2010), 1, pp. 57–95; Sylwia Szyc: Tragiczne rozstania—historia koreańskich sierot w Polsce [Tragic Partings—the Story of Korean Orphans in Poland], https://historia.org.pl/2012/09/02/tragiczne-rozstania-historia-koreanskich-sierot-w-polsce/ (2022-11-24); Jolanta Krysowata: Skrzydło anioła: Historia tajnego ośrodka koreańskich sierot [The Angel's Wing: The Story of a Secret Center for Korean Orphans], Warszawa 2013; films: "Children Gone to Poland" (2019) by Chu Sang-mi; "Kim Ki Dok" (2006) by Patryk Yoka and Jolanta Krysowata.

98 Arkadiusz Słabig: Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych na Pomorzu Zachodnim [The Security Apparatus against National Minorities in Western Pomerania], Szczecin 2008.

the least attention from historians. In that regard, they resemble the Chilean refugees of the 1970s, who were also used in communist propaganda, but who nevertheless have not been popular subjects for Polish historians. A few sources mention the group of Salvador Allende's followers, but they have not taken up much space in the literature. In fact, most of them left Poland for exile in Western Europe shortly after their arrival in the country.

In the socialist era, besides the larger groups mentioned above, there were also other migrants who turned to Poland after 1956 in the period of temporary liberalization or "Gomułka's thaw." They included Hungarians, Bulgarians, residents of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and USSR, and a few individuals from Argentina and Ecuador. They viewed Poland as an oasis of relative freedom within the socialist bloc and have largely avoided the attention of historians. In a short study of Hungarian refugees from the 1956 revolution, Tadeusz Kopyś maintains that the need to deal with this group had an important influence on Polish asylum policies.[99] Legislation was passed in 1957 that authorized the issuance of certificates of statelessness, equivalent to national ID cards, which was in force until 1989. Finally, there were some non-refugee students from the Arab countries and the global South (including about 4,000 people from Vietnam)[100] who have received some scholarly attention, mostly focused on the process of their integration into Polish society.

The very low number of refugees admitted to Poland started to increase around the time the communist regime fell. In 1989, citizens of the GDR began to transit to the West via Warsaw.[101] Later, African refugees heading for Scandinavia were redirected to Poland—officially as a sign that Poland was now a "safe" country that was joining the community of democratic states. Interestingly, a similar narrative was in place after Poland gained independence in 1918.[102] After 1989, it was again possible to cross the borders and restrictions on travel were largely lifted. This development attracted refugees seeking political asylum who wanted nothing more than to cross the Polish border on their way to Western Europe.[103] Social scientists (but not historians) analyzed the practicalities of Poland's accepting asylum seekers from Chechnya and Armenia (two groups that dominated among asylum seekers and transiting refu-

99 TADEUSZ KOPYŚ: Azyl dla Węgra w PRL [Asylum for a Hungarian in the People's Republic of Poland], in: Biuletyn IPN (2004), 2, pp. 74–75.

100 TERESA HALIK, EWA NOWICKA: Wietnamczycy w Polsce: Integracja czy izolacja [Vietnamese in Poland: Integration or Isolation], Warszawa 2002; EWA NOWICKA, SŁAWOMIR ŁODZIŃSKI: Gość w dom: Studenci z krajów Trzeciego Świata w Polsce [Guest at Home: Students from Third World Countries in Poland], Warszawa 1993.

101 JAN DRAUS, MACIEJ SZYMANOWSKI: Before the Berlin Wall Fell: Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland towards the Refugees from East Germany in 1989, Warszawa 2019; JADWIGA KIWERSKA: Über Budapest, Prag und Warschau in den Westen: Die Flucht von DDR-Bürgern im Jahre 1989, Poznań 2020.

102 E.g.: WILLIAM C. BOYDEN: My Impressions of New Poland, Chicago 1920, p. 17.

103 IZA PUR-RAHNAMA: Dawniej przedmurzem, dziś przedsionkiem [Formerly a Bulwark, Today an Antechamber], in: Gazeta Wyborcza from 1997-10-06, p. 5.

gees, around 90,000 of whom were Chechens),[104] from African countries,[105] Tamils from Sri Lanka,[106] and a few people from the war in Yugoslavia, most of whom opted to travel on to Western Europe where some of their family members resided.

The final group of migrants to Poland in the 1990s (whose potential for refugee status was not even considered) included "economic migrants" coming from other regions of the former Eastern Bloc where the consequences of economic transformation proved to be more dire than in Poland. Albanians were quite numerous among this group, but it was Roma from Romania who left the greatest impression on Poles, since their material situation was so difficult.[107] The closer we get to the present (humanitarian crisis on the border with Belarus 2021/22, war in Ukraine 2022), the more—albeit non-historical—literature there is on the Polish reception of refugees and Poles' common attitudes toward forced migrants. Before Poland received Ukrainian women and children, social scientists judged the response of the Polish state and society negatively, unanimously criticizing the inefficiencies of Polish asylum policy.[108] This mutual consensus has become object of study and critique on its own.[109] At the same time, social scientists are oblivious to the presence of refugees in Poland prior

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104 For works on Armenian and Chechen refugees, see Barbara Cieślińska, Kamil Pietrasik, Tomasz Marciniak, Katarzyna Potoniec, Łukasz Łotocki, Grzegorz Pełczyński, and Dorota Ziętek; for example: KRYSTYNA IGLICKA, ANTONI PODOLSKI, JERZY UKLAŃSKI: Uchodźcy z Czeczenii w Polsce: Przystanek czy nowy raj utracony? [Refugees from Chechnya in Poland: A Stopover or a New Paradise Lost?], Warszawa 2004.

105 Maciej Ząbek is the most prolific author dealing with refugees to Poland from Africa. See, for example, MACIEJ ZĄBEK: Afrykanie ubiegający się o status uchodźcy w Polsce w latach dziewięćdziesiątych [Africans Seeking Refugee Status in Poland in the 1990s], in: SŁAWOMIR ŁODZIŃSKI, J. J. MILEWSKI (eds.): Do stołu dla zamożnych: Ruchy migracyjne w Afryce oraz ich znaczenie dla Polski, Warszawa 1999, pp. 148–156.

106 ALEKSANDRA KRZYŻANIAK: Uchodźcy ze Sri Lanki [Refugees from Sri Lanka], in: MACIEJ ZĄBEK (ed.): Między piekłem a rajem: Problemy adaptacji kulturowej uchodźców i imigrantów w Polsce, Warszawa 2002, pp. 43–71.

107 JOANNA KOSTKA: The Migrating Poor: Romanian Roma under Social Authoritarianism in Poland, in: TINA MAGAZZINI, STEFANO PIEMONTESE (eds.): Constructing Roma Migrants: European Narratives and Local Governance, Cham 2019, pp. 155–174. More on Roma in Poland: PIOTR JACEK KRZYŻANOWSKI: Między przymusowym osiedleniem a presją asymilacyjną państwa: Cyganie/Romowie w Polsce w latach 1964–1989 [Between Forced Settlement and State Assimilation Pressure: Gypsies/Roma in Poland 1964–1989], Gorzów Wielkopolski 2021.

108 For detailed overviews of the literature, see ANNA HOROLETS, MAGDALENA LESIŃSKA, MAREK OKÓLSKI: Stan badań nad migracjami w Polsce na przełomie wieków: Próba diagnozy [The State of Research on Migration in Poland at the Turn of the Century: An Attempt at Diagnosis], in: Studia Migracyjne—Przegląd Polonijny (2019), 2 (172), pp. 7–42; KRYSTYNA IGLICKA: Migration Research in a Transformation Country: The Polish Case, in: DIETRICH THRÄNHARDT, MICHAEL BOMMES (eds.): National Paradigms of Migration Research, Osnabrück 2010, pp. 259–269.

109 MIKOŁAJ PAWLAK: Asymetrie i klisze pojęciowe w analizach uchodźstwa w Polsce [Asymmetries and Conceptual Clichés in the Analysis of Refugees in Poland], in: Studia Migracyjne—Przegląd Polonijny 38 (2012), 2, pp. 163–185.

to the contemporary period they study. Their unawareness to this history confirms the continued influence of historiographic norms that exclude "refugees at home" on other disciplines and on popular understanding, a problem which has been diagnosed and illuminated in this paper.

3 Conclusion: Native Refugees in a National Jigsaw Puzzle

When appraising the historiography related to refugees in Poland, one might conclude that its deficiencies are the result of a lack of major refugee waves into the country. This limited view is upheld by the more recent postwar history of Poland. However, the abundance of works that deal with immigration during earlier times in Poland's history shows that the smaller body of literature on "refugees" per se does not reflect the full scope of the scholarship on forced movements in and to Polish lands by people sharing the "refugee condition." It rather proves that the understanding of refugeedom in the literature was conditional upon migrants' crossing of state borders, their foreignness, and their status as exiles, which were constituent elements of the dominant normative definition of a refugee. Rejecting this national framing of the term "refugee" invites us to challenge the established semantic borders of the concept and reconceptualize the various movements of internally displaced people in Poland. Placing the individual human's experience of forced movement at the center of our research may help to unlearn the nationalized vision of migration patterns and thus to recognize, and then more critically analyze, Poland's history as a country of asylum.

A large number of the forced migrants on Polish lands were considered natives of Poland, or at least considered themselves to be such. Because they were moving into or within the country of their nationality, their original citizenship, or their birthplace, neither the state nor the society at large accorded them the refugee status. In the case of ethnic Poles, their experience was a matter of rejoining the nation, repatriation, or, in a later interpretation, displacement. The main emphasis was more on the causes for their movement and less on how it felt to be a DP and what assistance they required.

The hesitance to use the term "refugee" to refer to "repatriates" has a persisting functional impact. In the past, it has been conducive to their rapid integration, and to this day it often masks their strangeness and reinforces the sense of the Polish nation's homogeneity (i.e., covers its heterogeneity). It is a little as if Poland's individual groups could be arranged freely on the map like a jigsaw puzzle and one could assume that they were all so similar that any arbitrary arrangement would yield the same picture and any relocation would naturally result in swift integration.

Historians often derive their terminology from "official sources" rather than the accounts of forced migrants themselves. In this case, they thereby diverted attention from the fact that Poles were actively dealing with migrants all the way up into the postwar period. In each case, the national framework of under-

standing migration exerted a major influence on their interpretations. Still today, the local literature struggles with the thought that most of these people could actually be seen as (modern) refugees who were the victims of the consolidation of nation-states. They were people who did not fit into Hannah Arendt's triad: state, people, territory.[110]

The national vision of exile as a commonplace in the history of Poland (the victimhood paradigm) distracted local historians from studying the refugeedom of non-Polish groups, even when they migrated across Polish territory. A victimized Polish nation has viewed outsiders as a danger to Poland's national integrity. Studies of the Polish response to refugee flows have also been scarce because there was no independent Polish state operating as an effective actor in either of the two periods that generated the greatest number of refugees in the Polish lands—World War I and World War II. Although it is possible to study the reception of refugees without referring to the role of the state, the most trenchant works on refugeedom in Poland thus far concern periods when Poland was independent. In its discussion of solidarity with and indifference toward internal refugees in the stateless periods, the historiography of Poland still has ample room to explore the role of localism, kinship, personal identification, and "belonging/non-belonging." The well-proven method of network analysis would be productive here, allowing systematic examination of the density, strength, symmetry, and asymmetry of the ties that bind, or do not bind, internal refugees with their potential hosts and helpers in Poland, especially on the individual, human level.[111]

This essay has reviewed a broad spectrum of phenomena that could fall under the rubric of "refugeedom." A valid question for further research remains: which migrations to Poland do not fall within the scope of this category? In the context of Poland, historians have opted for a narrow definition of "refugee" and have not recognized certain features of the phenomenon where they certainly could be found. There is also a risk, on the other hand, of "terminological overstretch." In light of all the above, to fully comprehend the scale of refugee movements in Poland, the status of "refugee" should be scrutinized according to the analytical approach of conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), its relations to neighboring terms, and its shifting meaning in different times and places.[112]

There are many reasons to reflect critically on current research on the reception of refugees in Polish lands and to approach the extant historiography with caution. Admittedly, historiography often fails to address or accurately name

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[110] ARISTIDE ZOLBERG: The Formation of New States as a Refugee-Generating Process, in: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (1983), 467, pp. 24–48.

[111] MUSTAFA EMIRBAYER, JEFF GOODWIN: Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency, in: The American Journal of Sociology 99 (1994), pp. 1411–1454.

[112] REINHART KOSELLECK (ed.): Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte, Stuttgart 1979.

important social phenomena from the recent past. Historians often join in to co-create discourses only later, when triggered by present concerns. As the events on the Belarusian and Ukrainian parts of the eastern Polish border continue to spark new interest and new perspectives on the refugee experience in Poland, the field will no doubt grow in unanticipated ways.[113]

[113] LIDIA ZESSIN-JUREK: Trapped in No Man's Land: Comparing Refugee Crises in the Past and Present, in: Cultures of History Forum from 2021-12-20, https://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/poland/trapped-in-no-mans-land-comparing-refugee-crises (2022-12-05).

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