Zwischen den Kapiteln fallen einige Redundanzen auf, die zwar bei der Fokussierung auf einen Zeitabschnitt sicherlich eine Hilfe bei der Einordnung des Migrationsgeschehens bieten, jedoch ein wenig die Freude beim Lesen trüben. Mehrere Abbildungen, Tabellen und Karten lockern den umfangreichen Textteil etwas auf. Von den Karten hätte man sich ein paar mehr gewünscht, um die behandelten Orte lokalisieren und die Bedeutung der im Text dargestellten Zusammenhänge (Sprachverteilung, Wahlverhalten, Herkunftsorte) zwischen ihnen besser einschätzen zu können, wie z. B. zur Tabelle mit den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung von 1910 in ausgewählten Orten (S. 35 f.).

Bei einigen Aussagen, die andere Disziplinen als die Geschichte betreffen, hätte eine etwas differenziertere Auseinandersetzung mit der Materie der Argumentation geholfen. Dies gilt etwa für die Ausführungen zu den Migrationsverlusten zwischen der Mitte des 19. Jh. und 1939 (S. 75), wo nicht berücksichtigt wird, dass sich in jenem Zeitraum sowohl die Grundlagen als auch die Qualität der Erfassung änderten, oder bei der Beschreibung der rechtlichen, sozioökonomischen und demografischen Rahmenbedingungen nach 1989 (S. 413–418), wo die – durchaus in der einschlägigen Literatur zur oberschlesischen Migration besprochenen – Unzulänglichkeiten der Instrumente zur statistischen Erfassung der Migration unberücksichtigt bleiben. Insgesamt weist das Buch jedoch nur wenige Schwächen auf. Nicht nur die innovative Herangehensweise, die mehrere Akteursperspektiven jeweils am Ursprungs- und am Zielort der Migrationsbewegung aufzeigt (Ausgewanderte, Daheimgebliebene, Verwaltung, Arbeitgeber usw.) sondern auch die in den beiden letzten Kapiteln von Michalczyk gezogenen Vergleiche zwischen den Migrationsprozessen des 19. und des 21. Jh. bringen neue Erkenntnisse für die Migrationsforschung. Diese sind umso wertvoller, als sie hier ohne nationale Narrative bzw. Perspektiven auskommen, was in der Erforschung der oberschlesischen Migration immer noch zu selten vorkommt.

Marburg Dariusz Gierczak

Diana Siebert: Die Territorialisierung der Belarus als BSSR 1918–1941. Politische Willkür, Geografismus oder Ethnizismus? Harrassowitz Verlag. Wiesbaden 2024. 450 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-447-12201-6. (€ 78,–.)

In recent years interest in the history of Belarus as both a state and nation has been increasing. In terms of its earlier history as a geographic region, its time as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and its relationship with Russia as part of the USSR, recent events have caused a notable increase in the attention given to Belarussian national history. To meet this need, several years ago Harrassowitz Publishing House created the book series: *Historische Belarus-Studien*, edited by Thomas M. B o h n, which already includes more than a dozen volumes devoted mainly to the history of the twentieth century. Diana S i e b e r t, author of the volume under review here, is a renowned researcher of the social and economic history of Belarus in the twentieth century. Her recent work on the study of the notoriously economically backward region of Polesia has garnered considerable attention from the scientific community.

In her latest book however, S. deals with another issue, namely the territorial development of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR). The author asks what influenced the shape of the borders of modern Belarus. Was it ethnicity, the result of a united nationality within a particular region asserting its will? Was it geography, special land forms and conditions creating natural barriers? Perhaps it had nothing to do with either, and was a purely political division. In the pages of the monograph, S. asks these questions, poses many hypotheses, and generally tries to reveal the answer through viewing the problem from many different perspectives.

The text is supplemented by maps, which make it much easier to follow the narrative. The author reflects on the development of the concept of Belarusian borders following the end of World War I. At that time, the collapse of the Russian monarchy created the possibility of a new arrangement of the political map of Eastern Europe. On the outskirts of the former

Russian empire, non-Russian national leaders initially put forward demands for the creation of autonomous areas within the borders of a future—as planned—democratic Russia, and then moved on to more daring slogans, ending with the proclamation of independent states. S. points out that among Belarusian national activists the concept of Belarusian borders was formed quite late, in 1918, and significantly, already after the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic on 25 March 1918.

S. rightly emphasizes, that the basis for the concept of Belarusian borders was the linguistic map developed by Professor Yefim Karski. Considered the founder of Belarussian linguistics, this polyglot scholar had a deep interest in ethnography and Slavic studies, working within the University of Petrograd to create some of the first maps of the extent of the Belarusian language. Importantly, it must be emphasized that his scientific research showed for the first time that Belarusian is an independent language, not a dialect of Russian. The map he created in 1903 had no political significance, but was the result of research. According to the state of research at the time, the Polesian dialect was classified as part of the Ukrainian language, so Western Polesie, including Brest and Kobryn, was presented as being within the Ukrainian language range. This map was later used as a basis for establishing the borders of the Belarusian People's Republic. S., however, attaches little importance to the creation of the concept of the borders of the BPR, which was based not only on Karski's map. It should be noted that the concept of the Belarusian-Ukrainian state border evolved from April 1918. This was prompted by the experts of the Belarusian People's Republic delegation, which came to Kyiv for talks on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border with representatives of the UNR government. These experts were historians Mitrofana Downar-Zapolsky (a well-known researcher of the folklore of Polesie and the economy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) and Ivan Kraskovsky, who worked simultaneously for the establishment of the Belarusian People's Republic and the Ukrainian People's Republic (he was an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the UNR, and then became the UNR ambassador to Georgia). Both historians believed that the border with Ukraine should coincide with the former border of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Downar-Zapolski also emphasized Belarusian folklore and the rituals of Polesie. These two arguments—historical and ethnographic, as well as a strategic argument based on possible benefits of the railway and waterway along the Pripyat River—proved decisive for the Belarusian delegation. Although the talks ended abruptly and inconclusively due to Pavlo Skoropadskyi's coup in Kyiv, a decisive step was taken in establishing a position on the border among the members of the Belarusian delegation. The concept of the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, developed at that time under the influence of experts, proved significant.

Towards the end of 1918 a map for the Paris Peace Conference was prepared (*Carte de la République Democratique Blanche-Ruthénienne*) showing eastern and western Polesie (including Brest and Kobryn) on the Belarusian side. This concept of Belarus's borders, developed in 1918, was never implemented. The Belarusian People's Republic was never established, and the Belarusian Soviet Republic encompassed a very small territory. However, it is worth noting that after World War II, when the territory of the BSSR expanded significantly, the border between the Belarusian and Ukrainian Soviet republics essentially followed this concept (including Western Polesie on the Belarusian side).

Rather than focusing on abstract concepts, S. is interested in the practical side of the formation of borders, as well as the BSSR's territorial development throughout the twentieth century. Wondering about the reasons for the creation of this entity (which was fully dependent on the government of Soviet Russia and later the central government of the USSR) the author is able to confirm previous research by demonstrating how the main reason for the creation of the BSSR was rooted in the need for Russian Communists to respond to Józef Piłsudski's federation plans.

An interesting thread is the analysis of the reasons behind the expansion of the borders and territory of the BSSR in the interwar period and at the beginning of World War II. From a

mini-state with six districts, the BSSR became a republic, which in the autumn of 1939 reached in the west to Lomza and Kolno—areas with an exclusively Polish and Jewish population. Earlier, by a decision of the central Soviet authorities, the territory of the BSSR was increased at the expense of the Ukrainian SSR and the Russian Federative SSR. Most strangely, this was taking place at a time when nationality policy changed to the disadvantage of non-Russian peoples in the USSR, and in the BSSR itself there was an intense struggle against all manifestations of national life. According to the author, the expansion of the borders of the BSSR was possible only because its inhabitants were characterized by low national consciousness and little capacity for self-organization. This guaranteed that the territorial strengthening of the BSSR would not strengthen the national spirit of the Belarusians.

Another equally interesting thread taken up in the monograph is the analysis of the formation of Belarusian statehood in relation to the Jewish question, and the Jewish settlement zones within the Russian Empire. These topics are just a small handful of the many threads S. tackles. Many of these are quite well known issues which have long been present in Polish and Belarusian historiography, but the author consistently forces the reader to approach them from new perspectives.

According to S., the expansion of Belarus's borders in the 1920s, carried out by the central authorities of the USSR, was possible because Belarusians lacked national elites and did not threaten the integrity of the Soviet state. This is an interesting conclusion, but additional and more rigorously confirmed sources would be needed in order to verify it. In any case, this issue is a stimulus for further research.

The monograph was created in a very difficult period for archival research in Belarus and Russia (2020–2023). All the more reason to appreciate the library search conducted by the author, which itself affirms that S. is well versed not only in archival resources (which she has repeatedly proved), but also in Belarusian, Russian, Polish and German historiography within the journalism of the period under study.

Toruń Dorota Michaluk

Nicole Eaton: German Blood, Slavic Soil. How Nazi Königsberg became Soviet Kaliningrad. Cornell University Press. Ithaca 2023. IX, 315 S. ISBN 978-1-5017-6736-4. ($ 35,95.)

For several decades, Königsberg/Kaliningrad has been an object of interest for historians of World War II. While most of the existing literature primarily addresses the military aspects and its place along the Eastern Front, Nicole Eaton's research instead explores the social aspect, documenting how the city transformed following the political decision to transition German Königsberg into Soviet Kaliningrad.

E. grounded her analysis in extensive archival research spanning from Russia to the United States. Adeptly combining social history with spatial analysis, the author cleanly identifies and tracks social changes within the borderland environment. Despite the academic nature of the book, its style and language are compelling. The book's narrative, both accessible and engaging, unfolds within seven chapters, with its content following and corresponding thematically with the chronological order of events. In an analysis spanning two decades (while also referencing earlier and later periods) E. unfolds the transformation processes in Kaliningrad: a Baltic port on the Vistula Lagoon, from a city belong to East Prussia for centuries, to a port that has been under Russian control since 1945.

Chapter 1 ("The Bridge and the Bulwark") begins with an overview of the socio-historical conditions that lead to the mythologized self-identity of Königsberg's residents. With a particular focus on the 1930's and the Nazi regime, E. untangles the cultural patchwork of the port town and broader East Prussia.

The Nazi political movement and its direct effects on the town are handled by the second chapter ("Empire in the East"). Examining the systematic implementation of Nazi polices, the