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The Resettlement of Poles Expelled from the East

Inter-ethnic violence flared throughout World War II in Poland and Ukraine; as the

Soviets moved west, population transfers began. Ethnic poles in Ukrainian controlled areas were

encouraged to move west, to Silesian lands newly confiscated from Nazi Germany. Boundary

lines were in flux, and uncertainty characterized this stage of the transfers. Migration was not yet

forced, but it was the desire of the USSR.[1] Following the Potsdam Conference, national lines

were redrawn and Poland was translated 200 kilometers to the west. German territory east of the

Oder-Neisse Line was ceded to the Polish government and Eastern Polish land was split between

Ukraine, Belorussia, and Lithuania; Poland shrank in the exchange, as Ukraine absorbed the

Kresy region of Poland. Ethnic tensions in the region were high, and had been before national

boundaries were redrawn; these tensions provided a justification for the forced migration of

ethnic Poles from the region. These Poles were settled in lands formerly belonging to Germany,

that had been recently "cleansed" of ethnic Germans. As Poles were expelled from Ukraine,

ethnic Ukrainians were driven east from Poland. There was not appropriate or informed press

coverage of the Polish migration, and it is still understudied, especially in English. I have

brought together a wide, if not comprehensive, collection of English language secondary sources

concerned with Polish resettlement and the departure of Germans from lands granted to Poland.

Hopefully this bibliography can be used as a syllabus by those interested in a serious study of

what happened.

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[1] Catherine Gousseff, "Evacuation versus Repatriation: The Polish-Ukrainian Population Exchange, 1944-6," in *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, ed. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 93.

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