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THE NEW TERRITORIAL SHAPE OF THE POLISH STATE
AND EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES
OF POLISH SOCIETY (1944 - 1948)

The dilemma of frontiers and national aspect of the State was not solved in restored, independent Poland (1918 - 1939). The revolutionary authorities which emerged in 1944 combined democratization of the State with its new territorial shape. The modern structure of the nation and national State established between 1944 and 1948 was an important factor in the evolution of positive attitudes towards the new system in the community. The decision on resettlement of population and its implementation also played an important role (Polish settlement in the western territories and beginnings of re-development of these provinces).

I

Undertaking discussion of any problem related to the question of Poland's post World War II frontiers, her new frontier in the West in particular, a scholar might be accused of encroaching upon a sphere already penetrated in detail by scholars from every branch of the social sciences: historians, sociologists, demographers, jurists and economists. Bibliography on the subject would take up many volumes. This interest is perfectly understandable, considering the importance of the role which the territorial question played in the history of the Polish nation and State and the very

special weight which this problem gained in course of the present century. Twice in this century, after the First and Second World Wars, the future of millions was decided at the conference table. Naturally, in a situation of this sort, most objective publications, and occasionally subjective ones also, were weapons committed to the defence of rights and reasons represented by a given political orientation or ideological direction, and in a broader sense, by social groups or national communities.

Sharp, often dramatic conflicts were provoked by the problem of Poland's frontiers and her territorial shape, conflicts waged both on an international and internal plane, determined either by State frontiers (during the 2nd Republic), or by ties of nationality and citizenship. The latter were a consequence of the nationality structure, at first in the Commonwealth of Polish gentry which was dominated by the nobility and later in the Polish State restored after Warld War I.

Even a cursory review of scientific and publicistic literature of various type, memoirs and even belletristic literature dealing with specific characteristics of Poland's present territorial aspect, published both at home and abroad, in Polish or foreign milieus, will confirm the often repeated truism that the question of frontiers was one of the most momentous elements of the historical turning point reached in 1944 - 1945. The consequences of the change of frontiers extended to every sector of social life. For the Polish State and nation, the change of frontiers brought about a sequence of social changes of which there are few analoguous examples in history. Many reasons contributed to this effect: first and foremost the interrelation between Poland's position on the political map of Europe and processes which were shaping the nature of a community within the forntiers of a given State, an interrelation which in Poland's case from the beginning of the modern era and emergence of modern nations, acquired increasing significance and was particularly pronounced. This was due to the asynchronistic course of Polish history, disrupted by loss of independence, which intensified and petrified the backwardness which had its roots in the period of decline of the Commonwealth of Polish gentry. Delay in the process which shaped the modern Polish nation was rendered worse by the heritage of a State organization

established in pre-Partition Poland, which was already anachronistic in the 19th century and all the more so in the 20th. The territorial model and the consequences it entailed, were a fundamental element of this anachronistic organization.

Definite rejection of the heritage from the past, beginning with the economic system, the social structure and nationality aspect, right down to ideology and culture, was an essential condition for attainment of full national maturity. Revolution was the fullest, most effective and radical method of attaining this end. Many historians stressed the relationship between nationality forming processes and revolutionary movements. Marceli Handelsman emphasized this relationship with special force, going as far as to affirm that trends of social and national liberation are an integral part of each other.[1] H. Seton Watson's essays on the close connection between great processes which determined the course of history in the 19th and 20th century: social revolution and evolution of nations, written several decades later, were equally noteworthy.[2]

Without delving more deeply into these problems which are of an extremely complex nature and would require theoretical reflection aligned strictly with principles of historism, we shall confine ourselves to stating that in countries which after World War II entered a new stage in their history with the establishment of the people's authority, the mutual dependence between social changes and national development was extremely strong from the outset, its positive correlations being decidedly dominant. In each of these countries, which differed from each other through their past history, socio-economic structure and nationality component, as well as through characteristic shaped by complex historical entanglements, currently termed as the national character, these processes took a somewhat different course. However, there would be no difficulty in finding many common characteristics due partly to the influence of external factors, but above all reflecting the spe-

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[1] M. H a n d e l s m a n, *Rozwój narodowości nowoczesnej na zachodzie europejskim*, (w:) *Rozwój narodowości nowoczesnej [Evolution of Modern Nationality in Western Europe*, in: *Evolution of Modern Nationality]*, Warszawa 1973 pp. 25 - 44.

[2] H. S e t o n W a t s o n, *Nationalism and Communism. Essays 1946 - 1963*, London 1964.

cific stage in national development in which East-Central Europe found itself in the mid-20th century, hundred years behind highly developed West European countries.[3]

The trend towards a national State played an extremely significant role in the proces by which contemporary nations were shaped.[4] This trend took various shape and from, depending on the historical situation of a given community. Two basic principles may be distinguished at the basis of the political and juridical doctrines which were the theoretical expression of this trend. The first principle identified citizenship with nationality, placed on equation mark between the category of "State" and such categories as "citizen," "fatherland" and even the "people." This principle originated from the French Revolution. It was considered proper to the bourgeois-democratic model of nationality shaping processes. However, this model also contained another principle: nationality as the basis of the State. This principle was included in the programme of struggle for national liberation, and subsequently attained a leading position among ideals which proclaimed that every nation has a right to its own State. According to this principle, the nation becomes ultimately crystallized in a national State, since the national State represents the leading concepts shaping national awareness and provides objective foundations for a national fatherland. The "principle of nationality," explicitly formulated in the mid-19th century by one of the greatest Italian jurists, Pasquale Stanislao Manzini, celebrated its greatest triumph in the first two decades of this century, echoing loudly at international

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[3] Of the many works dealing with these problems only the best known and most recent ones are quoted here: H. K o h n, *The Age of Nationalism*, New York 1962; J. C a r l t o n, H. H a y e s, *Nationalism. A Religion*, New York 1960; H. K o h n, *Nationalism, its Meaning and History*, Princeton 1955; E. L e m b e r g, *Nationalismus*, Hamburg 1964; A. C o b b a n, *National Self-Determination*, London 1944; J. W i a t r, *Państwo i naród [State and Nation]*, 2nd ed., Warszawa 1973.

[4] This question is dealt with most fully in relation to nationalities forming part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Cf. one of the latest works on the subject by R. A. K a n n, *Das Nationalitätenproblem der Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. I - II, Graz-Köln 1964.

congresses which dealt with nationality problems.[5] It penetrated deeply to the official circles in Entente countries, to be finally recognized at the Versailles Peace Conference as a primary factor deciding on the new political map of Europe. The right of nations to self-determination was an integral part of the "nationality principle".

Manzini's doctrine was rightly considered by some scholars as the first step towards nationalism, pregnant, as Robert Aron was to write, of the future policies of Cavour and Mussolini, Bismark and Adolf Hitler,[6] ascribed, surely erroneosly, exclusively to the conservative model of the bourgeois national State.[7] This doctrine expressed the ideals which millions of people had held in specific historical conditions, seeing them as a triumph of liberty and humanitarian ideals, of respect for the rights of small nations and abandonment of practices leading to national oppression. Nations which had failed to attain statehood refered to this doctrine during the interwar period. It is likely that much time will have to pass before this doctrine becomes anachronistic, obstructing progress and hampering the natural course of history. On the other hand, progress in the democratization of social life, spread of education and growth of general prosperity, trends of emancipation in different ethnical groups at various stages of the nation-forming process, showed marked intensification in almost every part of Europe.[8] It would be difficult to foresee the consequences of these trends, but it may be affirmed that we are dealing with an objective law of social progress which cannot be prevented, and keeps progressive independently of the historical situation, regardless of efforts to obstruct them, whether by reactionary conservative concepts or on the contrary, by excessively advanced ideas.

[5] J. G a b r y s, *Le problème de nationalités et la paix durable,* Lausanne 1917; T. R u y s s e n, *Les minorités nationales d'Europe et la Guerre Mondiale,* Paris 1923; R. J o h a n n e t, *Le principe des nationalités,* Paris 1918; E. B e n e s z, *Odrodzenie narodów [Renaissance of Nations],* (no date), E. Z n a n i e c k i, *Modern Nationalities,* Urbana 1952.

[6] R. A r o n, *L'Histoire contemporaine depuis 1945,* Paris 1969, p. 7.

[7] J. W i a t r, *op. cit.* pp. 333 - 334.

[8] M. R u y s, *The Flemings. A People on the Move. A Nation in Being,* Utrecht 1973.

The profound concern which the principle of nationality gener-
ated in many outstanding people, right from its beginning, their
warnings against the tragic consequences which were bound to
follow, could not prevent it gaining the successes it did and still
continues to win.[9] In fact, the principle of nationality has a dual
aspect: on the one hand, is carries the noble features of a Garibal-
di, and on the other, national discrimination, and, even extermina-
tion of entire ethnical groups.[10] Both sides of the medal should be
considered, since both continue to exist to this day as a result of
irregularities in historical developments on a European scale, not
to mention other continents. It would seem that in this case, we are
dealing with processes which from part of recrring social phenom-
ena, subject to specific rules, hence, in their case, historical stud-
ies have direct utility value and not merely cognitive.[11] They pro-
vide a key to analyses of the present and forecasts of the future,
which, when put to correct use, may prevent the dangerous con-
sequences of actions contrary to the objective laws of social
progress.

Adoption of the nationality principle as a corner-stone of the
State implies the formation of a State within ethnical frontiers,
and in consequence, since in the 20th century such frontiers were
practically non-existent, led to massive migratory movements of

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[9] In 1968, the Belgian publicist Émile de L a v e l e y e wrote: *Ce n'est
pas, je l'avoue, sans une vive émotion que j'aborde la question de nationali-
tés. Je suis convaincu qu'elle favorisera en définitive de progrès de la civi-
lisation; elle me remplis néanmoins d'inquiétude et parfois d'angoisse.* An
opinion stated by Ernest R e n a n in an article on the Franco-German War
published in "Revue des Deux Mondes" on 15 September 1970, was even
more significant: *J'ai toujours craint que le principe des nationalités substi-
tué au doux et paternel symbole de légitimité fit dégénérer la lutte des peu-
ples et extermination des races.* Quoted after R. A r o n *op. cit.,* p. 389.

[10] H. S e t o n W a t s o n, *Nationalism,* p. 236.

[11] Already at the end of the 19th century, Lord A c t o n wrote that
"history is a compass for the coming century". See: *The Cambridge Modern
History. An Account of its Origin, Authorship and Production,* Cambridge
1907. See also A. J. T a y l o r, *History in an Age of Growth,* Leeds Univer-
sity Press 1964, inaugurating lecture. Also, F. D o w r i n g, *History as a So-
cial Science. An Essay on the Nature and Purpose of Historical Studies,* The
Hague 1960, p. 8 ff; J. S i n o r, *Traité d'Histoire,* 1ère partie: *Histoire Théori-
que,* "Collection de Synthèses Scientifiques", No, 1, Paris 1966, p. 11 ff.

an unprecedented nature: to transfers of populations based on the nationality criterion.[12] In turn, such transfers entailed a further series of consequences in the economic and social sphere, as well as in awareness. Moreover, their influence was not limited to States and national groups directly involved, but reflected on the international community in general. When in 1918 a new order was established in Europe, radical solutions of this kind were not introduced, apart from certain minor transfers of population in the Balkans. The nationality principle was affirmed but a different system was introduced, based on protection of national-minority rights, as a natural right of man. We saw how that system ended in utter failure. In fact, after the Second World War the fiasco of the system protecting national minorities significantly facilitated progress towards coinciding State borders with national ethnical territory.

The best solution was attained in Poland. The favourable balance of forces on the international platform enabled settlement of this tragic dilema which had rankled Polish politicians during every debate on the future territorial shape of the Polish State. This dilema was clearly formulated on the eve of restoration of Polish independence in the *aide-mémoire* sent by Roman Dmowski to Arthur James Balfour in March 1917. Explaining Polish territorial demands, Dmowski contended that Poland should not be reconstituted in her historical frontiers, which were over extended, nor limited to the Polish ethnical area, which would be excessively narrow. Some time later, the eminent historian Stanisław Kutrzeba wrote that: "nobody in Poland ever considered the possibility of massive expulsions of population such as Germany intended during the war, at the time when her armies were temporarily victorious." [13] Hence it was inevitable that large compact groups of non-Polish population remained within Polish State frontiers.

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[12] I wrote in greater detail on this subject in *Międzynarodowe przesiedlenia XX wieku [International Migrations in the 20th Century]*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny", vol. LXXIII 1966, No. 1, and *International Migration in Poland after World War II*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. XIX, 1969.

[13] S. Kutrzeba, *Kongres, traktat i państwo polskie [Congress, Treaty and the Polish State]*, Warszawa 1919, p. 144.

Dmowski stated this clearly at a debate of the Polish National Committee in Paris on 2 March, 1919: "The weakest point in Poland's territory is the region east of Brest-Litovsk (Brześć), which Count Łubieński mentioned. This territory, as well as the Grodno Province, contain large compact groups of non-Polish population, but unfortunately this area forms a geographical part of Poland. If we want to retain possession of Vilna on the one hand and Eastern Galicia on the other, we cannot allow a wedge of foreign territory to penetrate right up to the river Bug." [14] Opposing excessive expansion of frontiers to include territories inhabited by a non-Polish population, this leader of the nationalist movement saw no possibility of delineating Poland's territory in a way to assure that the country becomes a national State *sensu stricto,* and confined himself to demanding that the strength of national minorities should be limited to the indispenables minimum.

Poland's ethnical frontier in the East was outlined in approximation only in 1919 by the Committee for Polish Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference, known after its chairman as the Cambon Committee. The Protocol issued by this Committee stated that this was the best attainable line of ethnical division, which should decide the final delineation of the State frontier.

The demographic conclusions reached by the Cambon Committee were based on the Russian population census of 1897, supplemented by official Russian statistics for 1912 - 1913. According to these documents, 750,000 "Great- Little and Byelorussians and 40,000 Lithuanians would remain West of the proposed Polish frontier". Nothing was said about the number of Poles who would be left east of this frontier. All the Committee said was that Poland would be left with only a slightly smaller Polish population

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[14] *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r. Dokumenty i materiały [Polish Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Documents and Materials],* vol. I, Warszawa 1965, p. 90, Protocol from a session of the Polish National Committee on the question of Poland's eastern frontier, held on 2 March, 1919; also R. D m o w s k i, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa [Polish Policy and Restoration of the State],* Warszawa 1926, p. 524.

than she had demanded, the difference amounting to 300,000 people.[15]

The declaration on Poland's provisional frontiers issued by the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference on 8 December, 1919, confirmed the frontier delineated by the Cambon Committee, stressing that "this decision would not be prejudicial to any future stipulations regarding Poland's eastern frontier."[16] In course of negotiations conducted in Spaa at the time of the Polish-Soviet war, this line was the basis of proposals in the note dispatched by Lord Curzon, British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to the Russian Council of People's Commissars.[17]

Known as the Curzon Line, the proposed frontier ran from the south-northwards to a point where the former Austro-Hungarian frontier reached the Bug and followed that river to Brest Litovsk. From Brest Litovsk it turned north-eastwards to a point 1.5 km west of Baranowicze, then sharply north-westwards to follow the administrative border of Suwałki District up to the former frontier between Russia and East Prussia. Thus outlined, this line was consistently accepted in principle by Soviet Russia and the Ukraine. It formed the basis of Soviet proposals during negotiations with Poland in 1920. However, by that time Poland had gained the stronger position and refused to consider the "nationality principle" as a determinant of her eastern frontier during the peace negotiations. Even from Poland's point of view, the frontier established by the Peace Treaty of Riga in 1921 had no pretence at being an ethnographic line of division.[18]

This compromise resulted in the inclusion into the Polish State of territories inhabited by Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithua-

[15] B. H. M i l l e r, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris. With Documents,* vol. IX, New York 1933, pp. 14 - 21, Polish text: *Sprawy polskie na konferencji...,* pp. 157 - 163.

[16] *Sprawy polskie na konferencji...,* pp. 255 - 257.

[17] *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919 - 1939,* ed. by E. L. Woodward and R. Butler, lst series, vol. III, London 1949, p. 842.

[18] Peace treaty between Poland, Russia and the Ukraine signed in Riga on 18 March, 1921; also J. D ą b s k i, *Pokój Ryski* [*The Peace of Riga*], Warszawa 1931, *passim,* in particular, see Polish Declaration of 23 September, 1920 in Riga.

nian populations thus creating a situation condemned *a priori* to instability, since it violated the laws of historical progress. It sanctioned the existence of anachronistic relations, regardless of whether real progress would have been attained by the development of national States or through a voluntary union of free nations in a federal State, which was the aim of the workers movement. From the point of view of long sequels of history, the shift of Poland's eastern frontier closer to the line of ethnographical division which occured in 1944, was inevitable.[19] The historical situation in which the new frontier was established and consolidated played a secondary role only, although in contemporary eyes, it seemed of primary importance and was considered the decisive factor.

The problem of Poland's western frontier was far more complex: although historically and geographically justified, in the 20th century the line of the Odra and Lusatian Nysa, was not a line of ethnographical division. No matter how we judge the extent and significance of the natural movement of the population from the east westwards in the course of the last two centuries, this often elemental reversal of the trend known as *Drang nach Osten* which persisted despite anything the authorities could do, the Polish-German frontier established after World War II could not be considered a historical necessity resulting from processes

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[19] Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archives of New Records, later cited as AAN], Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego [Polish Committee of National Liberation, later cited as PKWN], Protocol from session f. 22 - 25 of 23 July, 1944; f. 27 of 25 July, 1944 and f. 31, a second session held that same day. See also Archiwum Wojskowego Instytutu Historycznego (Archives of Military History Institute), E. Osóbka - Morawski, *Wspomnienia* [*Memoirs*], p. 447. A formal agreemant on frontiers was signed in Moscow on 16 August, 1945. Polish text in "Rzeczypospolita", No. 222, of 18 August, 1945. Reprinted in: *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej. Zbiór dokumentów* [*The Polish Question on the International Arena during World War II. Collection of Documents*], Warszawa 1965, pp. 765 - 767. Russian text: *Sbornik dejstvujuščih dogovorov, soglašenij i konvencij... SSSR...*, vol. XII, Moskva 1956, pp. 76 - 77. See also, *Archiwum Rady Państwa. Protokoły posiedzeń Prezydium KRN, 21 VIII 1945, sprawozdanie B. Bieruta* [*Archives of the Council of State, Protocols of Sessions Held by the Presidium of the National People's Council on 21 August 1945. Report by B. Bierut*].

of development in either nation.[20] The group of characteristics particular to the Polish community, which defines its place among other European communities, was only one determinant of the changes which had taken place. In this case, the balance of power between the victorious powers deciding the future of the postwar world favourable to Poland, was of decisive importance. A combination of those two factors resulted in Poland's western frontier being moved westward simultaneously with the establishment of the new frontier in the east:

This operation, which decided Poland's new place in Europe and, let us stress it again, concorded with the principal trends of development in European nations, would not have had such momentous significance for the contemporary evolution of the Polish nation, had it not been accompanied by a transfer of population. Had this not been done, the Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Byelorussian minorities would simply have been replaced by a German minority, larger than the three combined together. The results might have been disastrous, both from the point of view of internal relations and for the social mentality. Being aware of the importance the change of frontiers had for Poland's international relations, her economy and different spheres of social life, appreciating the changes in mentality which this measure was bound to entail, I think it was only thanks to transfers of population in accordance with the nationality criterion that the shift of frontiers played the crucial role it did. Here, two processes combined: establishment of a national State thanks to the nationally homogeneous population, and social democratization achieved the elimination of antagonistic classes, an essential condition for the development of modern nations: ultimate "nationalization" of the peasants, or, as Handelsman put it, "taking over of the State by the peasant."

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[20] Discussion on the historical significance of the demographic eastward trend (*Ostflucht*) conducted by an important group of historians holding different views on this subject. See M. O r z e c h o w s k i, *Le retour de la Pologne sur l'Odra et la Nysa Lusacienne et la Baltique: un débat*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. XXV, 1971. E. K u l i s c h e r discussed the broader aspect of the process which included all Europe, in *Europe on the Move. War and Population Changes 1917 - 1947*, New York 1948, p. 127 ff.

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In historiography dealing with the latest period, with a few exceptions the second process, namely reconstruction of the political system, took decided precedence over the first, namely establishment of a nationally homogeneous State, which, to a lesser or greater extent, occured in a series of people's democracies, but nowhere so completely and consistently as in Poland.[21] In Poland, the scale of this process was decided by a combination of circumstances, the origins of which were rooted in the distant past, which exerted influence on the situation in the country during the World War II. Poland did not become a nationally homogeneous State because of any specific programme, the "nationality principle" never figured on the revolutionary banners of the social Left. National homogeneity was both a direct and indirect consequence of twelve years of German Fascism, the most extreme form of unfettered nationalism Europe had ever known. Direct, because the Nazis murdered almost the entire Jewish minority in Poland, and indirect because the intense antagonism it aroused between Poles and Germans and Poles and Ukranians made massive resettlement of populations acceptable, whereas only 30 years earlier, such a measure would have been unthinkable as a method of settling nationality problems between civilised countries. It took the experiences of the interwar years and above all the terrible period of World War II, to change the opinion of politicians, scholars and abroad ranks of the public on this matter. Personally, I would attach less importance to transfer of population operated by Nazi Germany. A historical assessment of those transfers would be problematic, since in the majority of cases, their plans never actually materialized. Contrary to appearances, the racial concepts which lay at the basis of resettlement plans were not so much an apogee of modern nationalism as a materialization of the ideals of a national State, an effort to reactivate national and social rela-

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[21] I discussed the subject at greater length in the article *Międzypaństwowe przesiedlenia* [*Interstate Migrations*] mentioned above, and in *Przemiany struktury narodowościowej Polski po II wojnie światowej* [*Changes in the Polish Nationality Structure Following World War II*], "Kwartalnik Historyczny", vol. LXXVI, 1969, No. 2, p. 342 ff.

tions based on models borrowed from the period when feudalism was just beginning to take shape in Europe.[22]

The concept of repatriation of national minorities gained a significant number of supporters. Eduard Beneš was one of them. He exerted great energy to this end, stressing that transfer of populations was the only measure which could effectively prevent a mass murder of minorities, and argued that in the concrete post-war conditions it could not be regarded as a nationalistic measure.[23] Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin inclined towards a similar attitude. In Poland, every political line, from the extreme Right down to the revolutionary Left, agreed that the change of frontiers should be accompanied by a transfer of populations.[24] The convergent nature of these opinions proved that repatriation of national minorities in East-Central Europe, Poland in particular, was a question placed on the agenda by history. The organized transfer of populations carried out with the support of the majesty of International Law, was deemed the relatively best solution to adopt. That was how the problem was understood by members of the intellectual Left, people who did not disguise their reservations regarding unconditional affirmation of the actual principle: nation — State. It was generally realized that exchange

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[22] This was demonstrated with particular clarity by German policy in Alsace-Lorraine. See J. L o r r a i n e, *Les Allemands en France*, Paris 1945; also I. K a m e n e t s k y, *Hitlers' Occupation of Ukraine, 1941 - 1944*, Milwaukee 1956; Polish problems discussed by C. M a d a j c z y k in *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce* [*Third Reich Policy in Occupied Poland*], Warszawa 1970. I omitted mention of works by S c h e c h t m a n n, P r o u d f o o t and K o e h l, because they do not reflect this aspect of population transfers.

[23] E. B e n e š, *The New Order in Europe*, published in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, London 1941. J. W. B r ü g e l discusses speeches by Beneš in *Die Aussiedlung der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslovakei, Versuch einer Darstelung der Vorgeschichte*, "Vierteljahrahefte für Zeitgeschichte", vol. VIII, 1960, p. 145ff., also E. B e n e š *The Organization of Postwar Europe*, "Foreign Affairs", January 1942, pp. 227 - 242; also *Sovetsko-čehoslovatskije otnošenija vo vremija velikoj otečestvennoj wojny 1941 - 1945 gg.* Moskva 1960, p. 77.

[24] M. O r z e c h o w s k i, *Odra, Nysa Łużycka, Bałtyk w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu II wojny światowej* [*The Odra, Lusation Nysa and Baltic in Polish Political Thought during World War II*], Wrocław 1969.

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and transfer of populations would intensify trends aimed at a national State and might provoke a chain reaction, leading to progressive political disorganization and the emergence of new, increasingly smaller State organisms, as ethnical and nationality groups developed and gained maturity.

The course and scale of population transfers which followed World War II is known. Here, it will be sufficient to recall that in Europe alone, close on 10 million people were involved. In Poland, the transfer of populations included almost all the German and Ukrainian minorities. Also, the great majority of Polish people from the eastern territories of the 2nd Republic moved west to settle within the present bounderies of Poland.[25] The enclosed Table shows the balance of this migratory movement.

II

The formation and consolidation of the new territorial shape of the Polish State with an almost homogeneous nationality component after World War II, entailed long-term consequences which can be fully appreciated and judged only from a longer perspective of history. The scope of this work is extremely limited, both as concerns chronology and actual substance. Chronologically, it deals only with the first few years of People's Poland up to 1948 inclusively. As regards substance, it is confined to the sphere of social awareness, and endeavours to analyze the influence which the processes mentioned above exerted on the attitude of the population towards the authorities responsible for these changes. The scope of this article does not permit us to go beyond general conclusions, theses one might say, without any possibility of detailed references which would take account of divisions into social classes and strata or groups formed by territorial and historical ties, or simply by the vicissitudes of fate.

Prior to considering the problems posed by social attitudes, an effort must first be made to establish them in systematic order. Three principal groups of problems become apparent:

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[25] K. K e r s t e n, *Przemiany struktury narodowościowej [Changes in the Nationality Structure]*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny," vol. LXXVI, 1969, No. 2, pp. 337 - 364.

(1) the direct influence of the change of frontiers and ensuing transfer of populations on political life and attitudes towards the people's authority;

(2) the indirect consequences of massive migratory movements, both internal and external;

(3) the influence of socio-economic processes on social awareness, naturally within the limits of the accepted chronological order only.

T a b l e : Balance sheet of external population movements 1945 - 1950
(in terms of thousands)

	Left[a]	Returned				Balance
	Total	Repatriates	Transfer from the USSR	Reemigrants	Total	
1945	1121.7	1481.1	837.8	—	2318.9	+1197.2
1946	2225.2	698.3	389.6	ap.70.0	1147.9	−1077.3
1947	538.5	173.3	2.8	49.9	226.0	−312.5
1948	42.7	45.8	—	24.2	70.0	+27.3
1949	34.1	14.2	—	4.5	19.7	−14.4
1950	87.2	3.3	—	—	3.3	−83.9
1945-50	4049.4	2416.0	1230.2	148.6	3794.8	−254.6

[a] since 9 May, 1945

Leaving aside specific divisions and considering the Polish community as a whole, it may be affirmed that the new territorial shape, establishment of which was accompanied by population transfers leading to the formation of a nationally homogeneous State, was one of the dominant factors in the evolution of attitudes towards changes of the socio-political system in the broadest sense of the term. To a large extent, it decided attitudes towards the USSR, influenced attitudes towards the new "system" or "regime" as it was called at the time, which often went as far as to apply the term "revolution". Władysław Gomułka said in 1945 that the question of western frontiers tied the nation to the "sys-

tem"; the direction taken by the ideological offensive of the party confirmed this statement.[26]

At present, we dispose of many detailed works which present in a penetrating and interesting manner, the role the question of frontiers played during the war in every section of the community, from the extreme Right to the revolutionary Left.[27] On the other hand, less is known about political attitudes in different regions of the country. The only effort to give a characteristic of these attitudes based on contemporary source materials, undertaken by M. Orzechowski, obtained relatively satisfactory results only as regards the western territories, where he disposed of detailed analyses carried out by the Delegature of the London Government.[28] Further studies are necessary to establish the mutual relationship between political attitudes and the programmes of different political groups.

On the basis of the present state of knowledge, all that can be affirmed is that at the time when the Polish Committee of National Liberation took over power, to be followed by the Provisional Government and in turn succeeded by the Government of National Unity, the political attitude towards the new territorial boundaries of the State was, to say, least ambivalent. In fact, the change of frontiers in the west was universally accepted, whereas resistance to the new frontier in the east, persisted. This resistance derived from two sources: first and foremost the Polish population inhabiting the area between the 1939 frontier and the postwar frontier, was faced by the extremely hard dilemma of choice between their native parts and their national country, between remaining on their heritage at the price of living within an alien State, and repatriation to Poland, abandoning their land and the

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[26] Protocols from Plenary Sessions of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party, 20 - 21 May, 1945 and 11 - 12 July, 1945.

[27] M. Orzechowski, op. cit., also S. Dąbrowski, *Koncepcje powojennych granic Polski w programach i działalności ruchu ludowego w latach 1939 - 1945 [Concepts of Poland's Postwar Frontiers in the Programmes and Activity of the Peasant Movement between 1939 - 1945]*; N. Kołomejczyk, *Ziemie zachodnie w działalności PPR [The Role of Western Territories in Polish Workers Party' Activity]*, Poznań 1966.

[28] M. Orzechowski, op. cit., p. 84 ff.

graves of their fathers and forefathers. Those people found it was most difficult to reconcile themselves to the exchange of Lvov and Vilna for Szczecin and Wrocław. Resettled on the banks of the Odra, in answer to the question of the Referendum regarding the western frontier, they answered "yes" with a stipulation regarding the eastern frontier.[19] Research conducted by historians and sociologists disclosed that at first, the attitude of so-called repatriates from eastern territories was highly apathetic, despondent and negative towards the people's authority. Several years were needed before this attitude could be gradually overcome.[20] It would be a simplification to ascribe this attitude to resettlement exclusively, although this factor undoubtedly played an important role.

Looked at from this angle, the motivation behind decisions in favour of resettlement, which on the whole were voluntary, acquires important significance. What lay at the basis of some two million individual decisions, what reasons and emotions, conscious or subconscious, decided those people to opt in favour of their national country? It must be kept in mind that at the time the exchange of populations was beginning, those people could have thought that the question of frontiers in the east had not been definitely settled. The London Government still enjoyed recognition by the western Allies, the three statesmen, the Big Three, had not as yet met at the Yalta conference table. The voluntary departure of Poles from the Vilna Region, Volhynia and Podolia denoted acceptance of the new frontier, was one of the demographic *fait-accomplis* which were to decide the irrevocable nature of postwar frontiers. Agitation in favour of "staying out" was wery strong and appealed to patriotism of the people and attachement to their

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[19] K. K e r s t e n, *Początki stabilizacji życia społecznego w środowisku wiejskim na Pomorzu Zachodnim [Beginnings of Stabilization of Social Life in Rural Environment of Western Pomerania]* "Polska Ludowa", vol. IV, 1965, p. 29 ff; K. Ż y g u l s k i, *Repatrianci na Ziemiach Zachodnich. Studium socjologiczne [Repatriates in the Western Territories. Sociological Study]*, Poznań 1962.

[20] K. Ż y g u l s k i, *op. cit., passim.* A selection of the most interesting essays on the subject in *Ziemie Zachodnie w polskiej literaturze socjologicznej [Western Territories in Polish Sociological Literature]*, ed. by A. Kwilecki, Poznań 1970, p. 301 ff.

native parts.[31] Universally recognized authorities, such as the
Church hierarchy, if they did not actually endeavour to deter
people from leaving, certainly did nothing to commit themselves
in favour of resettlement.

Analyzing the problem of attitudes towards repatriation of the
Polish population living east of the 1944 frontier, in an essay on
the exchange of populations between Poland and the Soviet
Union,[32] I distinguished the following principal factors which
exerted influence on individual decisions:

(a) in favour of leaving — the sense of national unity which
had been greatly intensified at the time of war;

(b) in favour of remaining — local ties, fear of the unknown
and the conviction that the patriotic duty was to stand fast and
endure.

It must be stressed that factors in favour of departure were
strongly predominant. This was proved by results of the resettle-
ment action, as well as by the statistical data of people registered
for repatriation, who remained behind because of circumstances
beyond their control.

The motives behind departure played an important role in the
evolution of attitudes towards the people's authority in Poland.
To put it in a nutshell, it can be said that at first the consequences
of negative motivations were predominant: The saying "I left
because I couldn't stay," in the mind of many people, was equi-
valent to admission of compulsory resettlement, although in the
majority of cases, the most that could be said was that a compul-
sory situation had existed, but no actual compulsion. Even now,
this type of answer to the question of motives behind departure
is frequently advanced in one form or another. It was this type of
motivation which provoked the attitudes of illwill and non-confi-

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[31] AAN, *Zespół Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Repatriacji* [*Office of
the Government Plenipotentiary for Repatriation Affairs*] vol. XIII, Notes
on the state of repatriation, 19 March, 1945. Also vol. XII, *Memoriał pełno-
mocnika d/s repatriacji we Lwowie* [*Memorandum of the Plenipotentiary
for Repatriation Affairs in Lvov*], April 1945.

[32] *Polish - Soviet Exchange of Populations*: chapter in an unpublished
doctor's thesis on: *Migracje ludności polskiej po II wojnie Światowej* [*Mi-
grations of the Polish Population Following World War II*], p. 450.

dence mentioned above. This however, was only the superficial aspect of these phenomena and one should not fall to the suggestion implied by these answers, which reflected the state of awareness at the time. Personally, I would ascribe greater significance to national identification, particularly as concerns "long endurance", although many people were not as fully aware of this as the peasant from Novogrodek region, who wrote in 1948 that: "A struggle began in the conscience of every Pole who loved his country truly but who also loved his native village where he had first seen the light of day, the surrounding forests and rivers, the land tilled by his fathers and forefather and the graves where they lay buried." [33]

Tradition, which drew its strength from the past, was the second source of opposition to the eastern frontier. A final break with the system of values accumulated over the centuries, combined with a specific system of political thinking, realization that territories and cities which formed an integral part of the country's history would no longer be part of Poland, was a difficult and painful operation. Here, detailed reference must unquestionably be made to different social strata and regional groups; for instance it may be assumed that these matters played a lesser role in the western part of the country and among the rural population, than they did in Poland's eastern and central voivodships and among the intelligentsia. As a most general conclusion, it may be affirmed that the significance of the loss of the so-called eastern confines was a function of their influence on the national culture in the broad sense of the term, which evolved under the predominant influence of the rule of the nobility in the Polish monarchy.

Assuming that further studies confirm these conclusions, we shall have an answer to the question of how the establishment of an ethnic frontier in the east influenced attitudes towards the people's authority in the first years of its existence, and what was its role in the evolution of the Polish nation over longer cycles of

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[33] K. K e r s t e n, T. S z a r o t a, *Wieś polska 1939 - 1948. Materiały konkursowe [Rural Poland 1939 - 1948. Competition Materials]*, vol. I, Warszawa 1967, p. 398.

history. It would seem that the historical inevitability of this process, stressed at the beginning of this article, implicated its place in social awareness, though of course only indirectly so. Nothing could be more erroneous than the opinion that the community as a whole was aware of this inevitability. If its necessity was realized at all, it was only in connection with the current international situation.

Actions intended to neutralize the negative atmosphere and attitudes provoked by non-acceptance of the new frontiers in the east, must be viewed in this context. Their convergence with the line of historical evolution lay at the basis of their effectiveness. Propaganda, in the broadest sense of the term served as an analgesic relieving the pangs of delivery at the brith of the modern Polish nation. In fact, contrary to appearances created by numerous records written during the war and in the first postwar years, as well as by an unwritten myth rooted in the collective memory, in the final account the position of the people's authority on the question of eastern frontiers proved a trump card, not only on an international scale but also at home. This was not realized by politicians who viewed the abandonment of Vilna and Lvov as a symbol of "national betrayal". In fact, the Polish Workers' Party had every right to affirm that it represented the future of the Polish nation.

The problem of western frontiers presented a somewhat different aspect. As stressed by Orzechowski, the Odra-Lusatian Nysa Line was demanded by almost everybody who saw their place on Earth within the borders of the Polish State, as well as by the majority of Poles living abroad. The concept, first proclaimed in the memorable enunciation by Arciszewski [Premier of the émigré London Government — *note ed.*] and subsequently repeatedly reaffirmed, which questioned the justice of an important extension of Poland's frontier to the west from the point of view of international treaties, was not expounded or developed before mid-1944, after authority on liberated Polish territory had been taken over by the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

In the present state of research on the problem, it would be difficult to provide an answer to the question of why the irrational concept of Poland "from sea to sea" found so many supporters.

Apparently, it was the result, or rather the reflection on an international scale, of the theory of two enemies, which represented an apogee of ahistorism in the history of Polish political thought, as well as of extreme nationalism. It should be sufficient to note that the "empire" which was supposed to emerge "from our blood" — according to a contemporary poem which later became a popular song — was to extend both to the east and west.

The obviously Utopian nature of such concepts, which the historian Franciszek Ryszka ascribed to great-power aspirations resulting from the anachronistic, reactionary nature of the Polish State,[14] was symptomatic of the decline of national-conservative ideology. It was characteristic that many politicians, such as M. Seyda, Minister of Congress Affairs in the émigré London Government, who represented the moderate liberal wing in the National Camp, at first held the opinion that Poland should limit her demands in the west rather than give up her 1939 frontier in the east. This attitude was not due to unwillingness to include a large compact German minority within Poland's frontiers, since almost from the beginning of the war the émigré Government envisaged repatriation of the German minority in Poland, a solution to which the western Allies consented in 1943.[15] The real trouble was lack of political realism and the influence of the past, which encouraged compromise solutions contrary to the general trends of historical progress. In the meantime, accomplished facts occured: the people's authority was established on liberated Polish territories. This authority accepted the Curzon Line as Poland's eastern frontier and the Western Powers expressed their agreement to this solution. This resulted in a polarization of opinions. Already at the time of the Lublin Government, a division became apparent between intransigent defenders of the former order, whose anti-communist, anti-Russian bias and anti-Semitism prevented them forming an objective opinion on the situa-

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[14] F. R y s z k a, *PPR a koncepcja państwa polskiego* [*The Polish Workers Party and Concepts of the Polist State*], "Dzieje Najnowsze", April 1965, No. 4, p. 39 ff.

[15] M. O r z e c h o w s k i, *op. cit.*, p. 13 ff.; K. K e r s t e n, *Przemiany struktury narodowościowej*, p. 343 ff.

tion, and realists who perceived a great opportunity for the Polish nation in the territorial programme of the new authorities. Without accepting the social revolution and remaining in political opposition, those people considered it their duty to participate in the great work of Poland's return to "her ancient Piast provinces of Pomerania and Silesia", that is to the territorial shape Poland presented in the early Middle Ages. The western frontiers proved a bridge which enabled a large part of the Polish community, the intelligentsia in particular, to cross the chasm which separated them from the revolutionary Left. This motive was most pronounced in the western territories; this was due to differences in the nature of national awareness specified above, to the traditional struggle against Germanization for the Polishness of Silesia, Pomerania, Varmia and Mazuria, to special sensitiveness as regards the security of western frontiers, which demanded that German aggression and eastward expansion should be rendered impossible once and for all. These motives, which comprised both rational and emotional elements of awareness, were characteristic not only of the narrow circle of active members of the Polish Western Union (*Polski Związek Zachodni*), the Masurian Union (*Związek Mazurów*) and other similar organizations, it was also proper to the entire population of the western provinces of the country.

Thanks to such attitudes, the people's authority could count, from the outset, on a limited measure of support from its political opponents, not to mention that part of the community which remained passive, but ill-disposed towards the government, the Polish Workers' Party and the Soviet Union. Already in Lublin, leaders of the Polish Western Union and the Mazurian Union were among the first to announce their access.[36] Reactivated, the Polish Western Union supported the programme of the Polish Committee

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[36] K. K e r s t e n, *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego [The Polish Committee of National Liberation]*, Lublin 1965, pp. 209 - 210; AAN PKWN, vol. I/46 *Polski Związek Zachodni do Przewodniczącego PKWN [Polish Western Union to the Chairman of the Polish Committee of National Liberation]*, 13 November, 1944; AAN, PKWN, vol. I/50, *Związek Mazurów do B. Bieruta [Mazurian Union to B. Bierut]*, pp. 2, 3, 25 November, 1944; also AAN, PKWN, vol. I/49, *Memorial Prusy Wschodnie [Memorandum on East Prussia]*.

of National Liberation, set itself the task of mobilizing its forces in the struggle for the restoration of Poland's ancient provinces in the west, popularizing the government's western policy and cooperating in the establishment of Polish administration on these territories. The Mazurian Union supported similar aims and handed over to the authorities materials relative to future operations on territories which were to revert to Poland. At the beginning of 1945, a group of people, centered during the occupation in the Office for New Territories of the London Government Delegature in Poland, proclaimed readiness to cooperate with the Provisional Government;[37] the names of many people who helped to form the Western Programme of the London Government were to figure prominently in documents and articles which proclaimed establishment of the Polish State within its new frontiers.

To simplify the matter, it can be said that establishment of the people's authority forced the Polish community and all trends in Polish political thought to the right of the Communist Left, to recognize the modern model of the nation and National State at the cost of values which history had already relegated to the past. At the same time, it must be realized that analogously, historically essential processes were at the source of changes to which political concepts of the revolutionary Left were subject. This, however, did not merely concern propaganda tactics, which drew extensively on the arsenal of national ideology. The sense of realism, which meant not only bowing to necessities created by the current situation and the balance of power both internal and international, and, above all, the tendency to remain in agreement with the objective trends of historical progress, enforced a modification of concepts which had emerged in various conditions. To a lesser or greater extent, this fact was realized by many communists. For instance, this was what J. Siekierska wrote in 1948 on directions taken by the re-Polonizing action: "Awakening the Mazurian spirit and internationalism. Yes, but this approach must provide

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[37] K. K e r s t e n, T. S z a r o t a, *Kształtowanie się pierwszego planu osadnictwa Ziem Zachodnich w 1945 r* [*Evolution of the First Plan of Settlement on the Western Territories in 1945*], "Polska Ludowa", vol. V, 1966, p. 127 ff.

a bridge for their transition over to Polish culture, to Polishness in the sense of nation and State [...]. In present conditions, and in view of the difficulties and specific nature of Mazurian problems, internationalism, unless clearly founded on Polish national grounds, would be a doubtful ideological antidote for the poison of Teutonic influence [...]".[38] The problems of a new theoretical and practical approach to national questions and to internationalism, which can only be signalled here, were among the most significant and most difficult in the history of postwar Poland.

Without ascertaining to what extent the ideological trends based on broad-scale, anti-German slogans influenced the community, references to historical traditions and the tragic experiences of the last war had a tactical purpose, and in the extent in which they expressed new trends in the Polish workers' movement, were intended to neutralize existing attitudes of the society. This was a risky operation, since in propaganda and partly in practical action too, it oscillated on the verge of nationalism, in the hope that the minds and feelings of the whole community would be directed westward, counter-balancing the negative determinants of the attitude to the people's authority caused by its attitude on the question of eastern frontiers, and consolidating the positive determinants connected with the frontier on the Odra and Lusatian Nysa.

The direct effects of the territorial shift of the Polish State hundreds of kilometres to the west were not confined to the sphere of ideology and patriotic feelings only. The Polish community as such, ruined and disorganized by war, gained a great opportunity to improve its conditions in the broadest sense of the word. People expelled by the Germans from territories incorporated in the Reich, peasants whose cottages were razed to the ground, Varsovians, repatriates, dispersed by the fortunes of war to different parts of the world, refugees and people repatriated from the eastern territories, were able to rebuild their lives thanks to the

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[38] Quoted after T. F i l i p k o w s k i, *Rola szkoły w przeobrażeniach społecznych na Warmii i Mazurach w latach 1945 - 1960* [*The Role of Schools in Social Changes which Occured in Warmia and Mazuria between 1945 and 1960*], doctor's thesis in the Polish Academy of Science History Institute.

western territories. It may be assumed that had it not been for the war and occupation, social commitment in support of territorial expansion in the west would have been incomparably lesser. Almost half the Polish postwar population had been radically and permanently erradicated from its environment during the war. This fact intensified the migratory movement by facilitating decisions to settle on the western territories and increasing the economic incentives. Personal accounts, frequently settled in the western territories, were another aspect of the problem. The hatred and thirst for revenge which the Nazis had aroused in the Polish population and which directly after the war turned against the whole German nation as such, facilitated acceptance of the programme of territorial expansion in the west, in compensation for the loss of territories in the east. Wartime experiences also, convinced many people that "recognition of the rights of our eastern neighbour", as Jerzy Borejsza put it, was essential from the point of view of Polish national interests.[99]

The role played by migration in shaping social and political attitudes of the population may be viewed from many angles. Unquestionably, the living conditions of several million citizens must come foremost. Here, we are dealing with a chain of interdependent circumstances: independently of the reasons which caused people to change their place of domicile, regardless of whether their attitude to that fact was negative or positive, from the moment they had settled on territories incorporated in the Polish State after World War II, migrants established a personal ties with the territorial programme in the west and committed themselves to the defence of the new frontiers. Settlers, whose livelyhood depended on the western territories remaining part of Poland, demanded stabilization first and foremost. Even if, for one reason or another, they were ill-disposed to and lacked confidence in the people's authority, if they supported the legal opposition represented by the Polish Peasant Party, the problem of western frontiers blunted the edge of such attitudes. In fact, to a lesser or greater extent, people realized that the people's authority guar-

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[99] J. B o r e j s z a, *W sprawie granic* [*The Question of Frontiers*], Lublin 1944.

anteed the permanence of the frontier on the Odra and Lusatian Nysa. Of the two existing mutually contradictory attitudes, at first illwill may have been dominant and emerged in the forefront of social and political life, but understanding of the national interest, identical with personal interests, made ultimate support for the democratic camp a foregone conclusion. In those conditions any international action regarding Poland's western frontier acquired special weight, and exerted a dual influence. On the one hand, following Churchill's Fulton Speech and particularly Byrnes' Stuttgart Speech, a wave of panick broke out, possibly incited by opponents of stabilization.[40] Since the question of the Odra-Nysa frontier was one of the principal bridges between the people's authority and the community, any move which threatened the stability of this frontier was a blow directed against the people's authority. It must be recalled, that opinions expressed by both those statesmen — a summary of their speeches was published at the time in "Gazeta Ludowa" [People's Gazette] — were of an ambiguous nature, permitting the surmise that eventual support of the Western Powers for Poland's frontiers at a future peace conference would depend on the extent in which Poland would remain within the orbit of western influence.[41] By the same, from a positive determinant of the attitude towards the people's authority, the problem of frontiers became a negative one. I shall quote the example of so-called "whispered propaganda." There was a rumour current at the time that "the western frontiers would not be recognized and that Poland would not receive assistance from abroad", because the government had refused agreement to the presence of "American observers" at the forthcoming elections.[42]

The vast political campaign organized throughout the country after the Byrnes Speech, aimed to prove that the speeches by these Anglo-Saxon statesmen in fact constituted an attack on "the

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[40] K. Kersten, *Początki stabilizacji...*, p. 38.

[41] *Ibidem.*

[42] AAN, Ministry of Information and Propaganda, vol. I, 37, 39, *Materiały dotyczące nastrojów ludności* [*Materials on Attitudes Prevailing among the Population*], Bulletin No. 15.

very existence of independent Poland." [43] Simultaneously, the Soviet Government reiterated its firm declaration that "the historical decision taken by the Berlin Conference regarding Poland's frontiers could not be revoked by anybody" and added that "Those who took the decision to deport Germans from these territories in order to make room for their immediate resettlement by Poles from other regions of Poland, could not now suggest a complete reversal of these decisions". [44] Comparison between these two positions, the Anglo-American and the Soviet one, where the latter was widely popularized throughout the country, was intended to convince the Polish people that from an objective point of view, supporters of so-called pro-western policy held positions contrary to the fundamental interests of the Polish nation. In conformity with this truth, the political campaign around the Byrnes speech was conducted parallel with action aimed against the Polish Peasant Party. In accordance with expectations held by the Polish Workers' Party leadership, the slogan of defence of the western frontiers, without which the very existence of Poland as an independent state would be in doubt, was one of the most important points in the preelectoral campaign, most important, as well as most effective. A significant improvement in the general atmosphere was particularly notable in the western territories, marked by a fall in pro-western and increase of pro-Soviet sympathies.

Regardless of how it was interpreted, the victory of the Democratic Bloc in the elections of January 1957, consolidated the evolution of the standard type of Polish political thought, since it signified further stabilization and consolidation of the people's authority as the sole guarantee that the western territories would remain Polish. In its negative version, this standard type of political thought extended to the most stubborn opponents of communism and the Soviet Union, both at home and even more so among

[43] Open letter of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party and the Supreme Executive Committee, of the Polish Socialist Party to the Main Executive Committee of the Polish Peasant Party.

[44] Statement by V. Molotov to the Paris Correspondent of the Polish Press Agency made on 16 September, 1946: *Zagadnienia polityki zagranicznej* [*Problems of Foreign Policy*], Warszawa 1950, p. 83; *ibidem* Stalin's Reply to Winston Churchill's Speech, *Vnešnaja politika SSR,* 1946, p. 47 ff.

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émigrés abroad. In their interpretation, by agreeing to the frontier on the Odra and Nysa, Poland condemned herself to dependence from the USSR.

Ties between the people's authority and a great part of the Polish society, founded on the question of western frontiers, which existed independently of political convictions, prejudices, barriers formed by lack of confidence, etc., often subconsciously, varied in strength in different social, professional and regional environments. These ties took on special significance in the case of millions of people whose prospects of livelyhood depended on the permanence of the new frontier in the west. This applied not only to people resettled from other parts of the country, but also to those repatriated from the western republics of the USSR, despite the existence of circumstances which combined to form a specific compulsory situation tending to impede and weaken ties with their new place of domicile. For instance, repatriates from "across the Bug" (the river Bug was the new frontier with the USSR — *note ed.*), as a rule considered themselves wronged; were dissatisfied and discouraged by the hardship of their new conditions. Considering resettlement a necessary evil, but an evil nonetheless, those people tended to hold lasting grudges and constant claims against those they held responsible for the new aspect of social relations, namely the people's authority. Hence the strength of the influence exerted by the Polish Peasant Party on this part of the population, their susceptibility to rumour, their apathy and disheartenment.

Although it was impossible to ignore their initial importance, these attitudes gradually lost significance as the process of assimilation evolved, a process which was less pronounced perhaps, but nonetheless remained constant and shaped ultimate social attitudes. Homesickness and yearning for the native parts they had left behind persisted in people's consciousness for a long time, sometimes to an extent bordering on the absurd. I recently talked to an old peasant in Lover Silesia, who had come from the neighbourhood of Zloczov in 1956. He complained of leaving his native parts, said he regretted his decision and grumbled that "the air here is bad," and he had lost all his teeth because of that. People who conducted opinion polls among repatriates could quote hundreds of similar examples. However, concrete attitudes and above all concrete be-

haviour was not influenced by such frames of mind but tended to sink roots in new places of domicile. Sooner or later the time would come when people would answer negatively to the question: would you return to your native parts? Living conditions were usually decisive in such cases. In rural areas, first repairs of farm buildings, first crops, new livestock, agricultural tools and machinery; in the towns, professional stabilization, participation in organizing collective life: schools, the Church, followed by first ties formed in the new community, first friendships, weddings, all that combined to form an objective determinant of positive attitudes to the people's authority, and supported the endeavours to consolidate the existing state of affairs.

These spontaneous processes, which at first were strongly predominant over organized activity, lay at the basis of state policy, both at home and in the international arena. Investigating any given sphere of social life, we shall see that a vast field of action remained open for social initiative. It seems unlikely that this could be ascribed solely to the weakness of the authorities, which at the time were incapable of extending control to the whole of social life, as they were to do in future. Regardless of the subjective intentions of those who made them, these initiatives helped to stabilize the people's authority, moreover, they were a condition of its success. This was particularly apparent in the western territories. It is generally known that the authorities seriously feared that unless these territories were immediately resettled and re-developed, a situation might arise which would threaten their loss. (W. Gomułka expressed this fear at a Plenum of the Central Committee, Polish Workers' Party, in May 1945). Thus, spontaneous activity from "down below" converged with the intentions of the authorities to establish ties of mutual dependence.

The significance of the migration provoked by the change of frontiers did not end with the direct commitment of all settlers and people indirectly tied with them to the consolidation of the Polishness of western territories and the implications which this commitment had for attitudes towards the people's authority — by the time the resettlement process was completed it had involved approximately twenty per cent of the country's population. It is necessary to reach deeper down. Migration caused further disrup-

tion and disintegration of former home ties, former local communities, ties based on tradition; entailed a mixing of populations of different mentality and customs. This process was trigerred off by the war, but the changes which occured in 1944 intensified and accelerated it significantly. Repatriates from the USSR endeavoured to preserve their former local communities, to settle in the new environment by the whole village, complete with parish priest and schoolmaster, but seldom succeeded in attaining this purpose. 1946 saw the peak of the resettlement movement from the east. By then the first wave of settlers from the "former territories" as they were called at the time, had already been resettled. It was simply out of the question to respect the trend aimed at retaining former territorial groups intact, on such a massive scale in course of the resettlement operation on the western territories, if only because there were no uninhabitted villages left available.

The resulting dispersal and mixing of populations entailed both positive and negative consequences; the latter were dominant in the period immediately following resettlement, the former emerged gradually with the passage of time. It must be stressed that the term "positive" and "negative" applies only to attitudes towards the people's authority.

First in the group of negative consequences were all the major difficulties of adaptation to the new conditions of life which helped to prolong the atmosphere of uncertainty, intensified apathetic and passive attitudes, unwillingness to active assimilation. A positive consequence was the facility of integrating processes: feelings of loneliness cased by erradication from their former environment forced people to search for new ties, new social values, which they could adopt. This paved the road to a higher level of national awareness, facilitated assimilation in the community which represented the whole nation, by eliminating the intermediary stage of "local fatherlands". The term "local" lost all significance for people from Poleshia, Mazuria and Silesia.

Breaking off former ties, not only regional but social and professional ones also, facilitated acceptance of the new authority, which often went as far as active commitment on its side. Lacking support from the collective, from the customs, hierarchies, traditions, etc., proper to it, they tried to replace the old values with

new ones. Many such "worlds" which had receded into the past, had been a function of the revolutionary changes taking place. The breakdown of former structures often proceeded parallel with awareness of the historical inevitability of what had happened, awareness of the progressive nature of the turning point which the Polish community had reached.

The sense of alienation caused by the breakdown of former social and ideological ties, intensified trends of revaluation and efforts to find a new system of references. From there, the next step led to commitment in the great process of Poland's reconstruction and remodelling, launched by the people's authority.

The last problem I wish to mention here in the greatest abbreviation only, regards the significance of consequences entailed by the shift of Poland's frontiers westwards, for the evolution of social awareness. Contrary to the two preceding ones, in principle, this problem belongs to the long historical sequence of evolution rather than to the first years in the history of People's Poland, when the first elements of future processes were only just becoming outlined. It is also a particularly complex problem, since the influence exerted by economic factors is usually indirect, if we exclude the material advantages of an immediate and long-term nature which settlement on the western territories entailed.

In the period discussed in this essay, the question of land and the integral connection between resettlement and the agrarian reform, changes in the country's agrarian structure and elimination of overpopulation in rural areas, emerged in the forefront. Another group of problems was related to the social consequences of the vast scale of industrialization and urbanization in the western territories, of the various elements which combined to form the aspect of the cultural landscape. These consequences involved the settlers in these territories, and subsequently extended their influence to social processes throughout the country. They were one of the factors which helped to develop the new type of awareness.

The problems discussed here represent a fragment of the historical process which involved the population living on the territory of the Polish State, problems selected because of their genetic connection with changes in Poland's territory, they are important for several different reasons. I shall confine myself to mentioning

only two, which are particularly significant from the point of view of a historian.

Even this incomplete and superficial outline illustrates the great role of the historical situation formed by economic conditions, social structure, balance of social forces and the extent of progress attained by the nationality-forming processes in the 19th and 20th century. They determined the changes which occured in ideological trends and political systems. This statement may seem a truism, ever since the time of Marx, nonetheless it is frequently used in studies of latest history. This entails a second conclusion, namely, the great importance of historical analyses for current events and future prospects.

(Translated by Stanisław Tarnowski)