

History and Memory: mass expulsions and transfers 1939-1945-1949

Maria Rutowska
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- The most radical Nazi Generalplan Ost (General Plan East) envisaged the shift of the German border 1000 km eastwards and the relocation of 31 mln people (mainly Poles) into Siberia, as well as the extermination of another 5 mln people;

- The territories of the „new living space” (Lebensraum), gained as a result of mass displacements, were settled by ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe;

- From 1939 to 1944 Nazis displaced, resettled or deported to forced labor 4.2 mln citizens of occupied Poland. At that time, 631 thousand Germans were resettled into Poland;

- After the Second World War – on the strength of decisions adopted by the Potsdam “Big Three” – Germans had to leave Poland and Czechoslovakia. 3.2 mln people were forcibly relocated from Poland, and another 4 mln escaped to Germany during the mass flight.

- For many years after the war, German society did not want to remember the Nazi mass crimes committed during the occupation; instead, they emphasized the victimhood of German civilian people exposed to the violence from the victors and the suffering of the expellees;

- In 1958, the Federation of German Expellees (Bund der Vertriebenen - BdV) was founded to popularize the memory of the displaced Germans; however, their fates and experiences were isolated from the historical context;

- BdV’s representatives claim the German nation a victim of II World War; by placing it next to the nations that suffered from the German Nazi regime they try to recreate the „community of victims”. They treat the perpetrators of the postwar relocations of German people, equally to the Nazis responsible for making the “new living space” for Germans.

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to announce the first issue of „IZ Policy Papers”, a new series presenting the research of scholars working for the Institute for Western Affairs (IZ).

The Institute for Western Affairs is an interdisciplinary research unit established in 1944, conducting research within the field of politics, history, sociology, economics, and law. The Institute holds the first and highest category in the ranking of Polish research institutions, received after their parametric evaluation carried out by The Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2006. In terms of research quality, the Institute was ranked 7th in the list of Polish humanities institutes, including university departments and other scientific-research institutions, which denotes the value and quality of its research. In 2008, the primary themes of research conducted in the Institute were: the history and current affairs of Germany and Polish-German relations; the political culture, national identity and internal changes of Germany; the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany (in the European Union, towards other world superpowers and developing countries), as well as the processes of European integration, the partnership building between EU members and the countries of recent accession, and transatlantic relations during the Poland – Europe –USA changes. Important elements of our research are also an issue of German occupation of Poland during World War II and social changes on Polish western and northern territories.

The publications of the Institute for Western Affairs reveal the multidimensional character of our research. They include historical works, the analyses of modern times, comparative studies and theoretical models applied to verify the research outcome. The results of our research are used in political practice.

I am convinced that the new series, we are pleased to offer, will win your interest and recognition.

Good reading,

Professor Andrzej Sakson,
The Director of the Western Institute

Introduction

2008 was a year of a lively discussion on ways to commemorate and present the common Polish-German history both in Poland and Germany. It was triggered by the government of the German Federal Republic which undertook steps to determine how to commemorate the forced resettlement of Germans after the Second World War, and proposed the “Visible Sign” Centre Bill to regulate the foundation and status of the memorial against the flight and expulsion (*Sichtbares Zeichen gegen Flucht und Vertreibung*)¹.

The debate on the legitimacy and form of the commemoration of the German refugees, held in both countries, has revealed the selective character of national collective memory. Its elements and forms of presentation have been chosen according to the national trend of historical creation. Selected and properly highlighted facts make the common (national) memory of the past. Therefore, in the neighbouring countries and nations, a different “truth” of the past might be remembered (and cultivated) and the (hi)stories – each nation writes on its own – might contradict one another.

The presentation of the tangled histories of European nations, especially those related to the tragedy of WW II, requires particular circumspection. The war is one of the points that have influenced the development of the new historical perspectives. Therefore, the sensitivity to how the course and results of the most tragic wars of the last century have been presented seems justified.

The increased caution, Polish society express towards German aspirations to commemorate the war and postwar suffering of the German nation, results from their fear of the possibility to distort the contemporary history of Europe, where the difference between aggressors, who started the war (and embraced the policy of extermination), and their victims might be blurred. All the European nations as well as ethnic and religious suffered as a consequence of the war and its aftermath. Many of them were deliberately exterminated, or experienced mass relocations due to the organized violence of states or international agreements of the Allies. But it was the German Nazi policy that led to the outbreak of WW II, and shaped its destructive course. Poles fear the false changes in history - changes that will call them the perpetrators of mass suffering. Especially since the main burden of martyrdom does not in the least lie with the Germans.

What Poles also fear is that the German suffering, isolated from the context of the war, might create favourable conditions for false and harmful convictions to arise from the negative associations. International press (due to the ignorance of the authors) has released slogans such as “Polish concentration camps”, while places like Auschwitz-Birkenau were German Nazi camps es-

¹ To read the full text of the bill see: R. F o r m u s z e w i c z, The future legal status of the Visible Sign. The government bill for the setting up of the German History Museum Foundation (in Polish), „Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego” (3) 2008 / 25 September 2008.

established in occupied Poland to exterminate Jews, Poles, the Roma and other ethnic groups, Nazis found unworthy .

The following book is dedicated to the issue of forming historical memory. It examines to what extent the perpetrators, responsible for the displacements of Poles during the Second World War, realize their role in the process, and how the historical memory of the German nation refers to the dishonourable past. All the problems are discussed in three separate papers. The first paper presents the plans, scale and range of the resettlements Germans implemented on the occupied Polish territories from 1939 to 1945, and the fates of the Polish people who fell victim to the Nazi pursuit of the “new living space” for Germans. Another paper deals with the selectiveness of collective memory. It analyses the changes in German national historical memory related to the process of emphasizing the victimhood and suffering of the German nation, and ways of denying the blame for the cruelties committed during the war. The last paper focuses on the institutionalized (and non-institutionalized) violence of the state and explores its representations in the historical politics of governments and social-cultural identity of nations. It interprets notions used to describe displacements and defines their emotional references. The articles present the problems differently and show different analytical approaches. But set together, they point to the complexities of collective memory and the process of its creation.

Joanna Dobrowolska-Polak

Maria Rutowska

The expulsions and resettlement of people in the German-occupied territories of Poland (1939 – 1945)

In the countries occupied by the Third Reich, the resettlements of indigenous people were connected with plans to Germanize the occupied territories and rebuild Europe on racial basis. The most radical of them was the *Generalplan Ost* (GPO) [„General Plan for the East“], prepared by the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt - RSHA*) between 1941-1942. It laid basis for the reconstruction of Central-East Europe in the spirit of National Socialism and *Lebensraum* (necessity to create sufficient living space for German people). It envisaged moving the ethnic borders of the German Reich („*Volkstumsgrenze*“) about a thousand kilometers eastwards, and in the South, almost as far as the Crimea. The colonization was to embrace 10 million people in the East, including ethnic Germans. The territories selected for the purpose were: the occupied areas of Poland (territories incorporated into the Third Reich, the General Government and the Bialystok region), the Baltic States, the Ukrainian oblasts of Zhytomyr, Kamieniec Poldolskiy and Vinnitsa, as well as the incorporated territories of Petersburg, Crimea and the Dnieper Basin. According to the *RSHA* estimates, the territories were inhabited by 45 million people, including 5-6 million Jews. 31 million were viewed as racially undesirable and intended for the relocation to western Siberia. The February 1943 version of *GPO* envisaged the displacement of the following number of Polish people: 6-7 million from some parts of the territories incorporated to the Reich, 10 million from the General Government, 3 million from the Baltic States, 6-7 million from Galicia and western Ukraine, and 5-6 million from Belarus. Jews were intended for total elimination. The rest of the population was planned to be reduced to forced laborers. The plans of mass displacement were preconditioned with the Reich victory in the war against the Soviet Union¹. As a result of the course of military actions, the largest resettlements of indigenous people

¹ There were several plan of the colonization of Central-East Europe, prepared by institutions subordinated to *Reichsführer SS* H. Himmler. Described by historiography as GPO, the project physically consisted of 4 plans. The literature on GPO is very extensive, e.g.: Cz. M a d a j - c z y k, *Faszyzm i okupacje 1938-1945*, v. I. Poznań 1983; H. H e i b e r, *Der Generalplan Ost. Dokumentation*, „Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte“ (6)1958; *Generalny Plan Wschodni. Zbiór dokumentów*. ed. Cz. Madajczyk. Warszawa 1990; W. W i p p e r m a n n, *Jak dalece nowoczesny był „Generalplan Ost“? Tezy i antytezy*, in: *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza a procesy modernizacji*. ed. H. Orłowski. Poznań 2000.

were eventually carried out in the occupied Polish areas and the Yugoslav and French Reich-affiliated territories. In the remaining German-occupied, displacements were implemented on a smaller scale².

Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 September 1939, and the Polish military defeat in the war of 1939, Poland faced German and Soviet occupation. 51% of the Republic of Poland was annexed by the Soviet Union, and approximately 25% of Polish eastern territories were incorporated into the Reich in October 1939. The area of these territories amounted to 91.9 thousand km² with a population of 10.138 million people, including 8.9 million Poles, 607 thousand Germans, 600 thousand Jews, 11 thousand Ukrainians and 21 thousand citizens of other nationalities. By Hitler's decree of 12 October 1939 (with effect from 26 October), the remaining territories of German-controlled central Poland were placed under an administration of the General Government (*Generalgouvernement* GG), which was entirely subdued by the Third Reich and managed by Hans Frank as General Governor. The GG spread over an area of 95 742 km². In December 1938, it was inhabited by 11.4 million people. After the Third Reich's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, on August 1, former voivodships of Eastern Galicia (Stanislaw, Tarnopol and Lvov) were added to the General Government as the Galician District (*Distrikt Galizien*). The overall area expanded therefore to 145 180 km². The short-term goal of the Nazi authorities was the maximum exploitation of the area for the Empire, but at the same time, they prepared it for future German colonization³.

The annexed Polish territories formed four new administrative units: two provinces *Gau Danzig-and-Westpreussen* (Danzig-West Prussia) and *Reichsgau Wartheland* (the Warta Country) and two districts Katowice (*Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz*) and Ciechanów (*Regierungsbezirk Zichenau*).

German plans towards the occupied Polish territories during World War II fundamentally differed from the colonization policy implemented in the Prussian partition area before the First World War. They envisaged finding Germans additional living space in the East (*Lebensraum*) by adding Germanized colonies, free from the indigenous people. The choice of the method arose from the nationalistic Nazi program that objected to the Germanization of ethnically and racially alien people, but called for the "Germanization of land." The removal of the Polish population from the areas incorporated into the Third Reich and the settlement of German people were basic steps on the way to implement the policy of Germanization. They did not, however, preclude the use of other instruments of NS policy that aimed to reduce the number of Polish people in these areas. They were: the murder of Jews, the extermination of Poles, deportation to forced labor, inclusion in the German People's list, raising the marriage age, etc.

² Cz. M a d a j c z y k, *Faszyzm i okupacje 1938-1945*, v. II. Poznań 1984, p. 257-280.

³ W. B o n u s i a k, *Polska podczas II wojny światowej*. Rzeszów 2003, p. 55, 68.

The implementation of national policy in the newly created provinces of the Reich was entrusted to the SS and police Chief Heinrich Himmler (*Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei*), who, under the decree of 7 October 1939, became Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums RKFDV*). Apart from the appointment, the decree gave Himmler power to designate settlement areas in the occupied territories and to introduce changes onto the ethnic and demographic map of Europe⁴.

The primary task of the Reich Commissioner for Consolidation of German Nationhood was, after the expulsion of Polish people, to populate the new districts of the Reich with "ethnic Germans" (*Volksdeutsche*), resettled from the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – the so-called *Balten-deutsche*), as well as from Volhyn, Eastern Galicia and the Bialystok region. The population transfer from these areas became possible after the signing of an official border and friendship agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany, concluded in Moscow on 28 September 1939 by Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Vjačeslav Molotov and German Foreign Minister, Joachim Ribbentrop. The consent to the exchange of population was expressed in the minutes annexed to the pact.

Another group of people displaced from the areas that remained under the Soviet occupation in February and March 1941 were Germans from Lithuania. Moreover, in the fall of 1940 and during the first months of 1941, 25 475 Germans from the district of Lublin were relocated to the incorporated areas. In the years 1939-1941, the Polish territories that had been annexed to the Reich were populated by 360 929 ethnic Germans.

The last group of people resettled into the annexed territories in the second half of 1944 were Germans, originating mostly from the areas along the Black Sea. This action resulted from the military defeat of the Third Reich on the Eastern Front. Most of the people (more than 241 thousand) were transferred onto the annexed territories in Poland. The total number of Germans who settled in this part of Poland by 1944 was 631 485 people - 85% in the Warta Country, 7.9% in Danzig-West Prussia, 5.8% in Silesia and 1.2% in the Polish areas that had been incorporated into East Prussia. Moreover, the resettlement also embraced the inhabitants of the Reich, mainly government officials and white-collar workers employed in the economy, as well as merchants, industrialists, workers peasants and farmers⁵.

To facilitate the resettlement of Germans from the above mentioned areas of Southeast Europe to the territories that had been incorporated into the Third Reich, the Nazi government appointed a number of special institutions, such as the Immigrants Central Bureau (*Einwandererzentralstelle*),

⁴ Cz. Madańczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, v. I. Warszawa 1970, p.81-82.

⁵ Cz. Łuczak, *Polska i Polacy w drugiej wojnie światowej*, Poznań 1993, p. 167; J. Marcze-wski, *Hitlerowska koncepcja polityki kolonizacyjno-wysiedleńczej i jej realizacja w „Okregu Warty”*. Poznań 1979, p. 333-347; J. Sobczak, *Hitlerowskie przesiedlenia ludności niemieckiej w dobie II wojny światowej*. Poznań 1966, p. 27-32.

founded in October 1939, and the Ethnic Germans' Welfare Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*)⁶.

Moreover, the plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner as well as his deputy cooperated with a number of institutions dealing with the confiscated Polish property. One of them was The Trustee Office (*Treuhandstelle*) that confiscated and administered Polish property, which was eventually transferred into German hands. Similarly to Poland, the institutions responsible for the expulsion of native citizens and the settlement of Germans onto the abandoned territories were also organized in other German-occupied areas: in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Lorraine, Alsace, Slovenia, the Baltic States and the occupied regions of the Soviet Union.

Apart from the long-term plan of expulsions, there were other plans gradually introduced in the annexed territories. The beginning of the expulsions of the Polish people from German-controlled Poland was preceded by considerations of the German Highest Authorities on their actual numerical size. The first short-term plan (*1. Nahplan*), implemented between 1 and 17 December 1939, envisioned the resettlement of 80 thousand people from the annexed territories to the General Government. Another plan, called "Interim Plan" (*Zwischenplan*) planned to expel 600 thousand people, and the other short-term plan (*2. Nahplan*), whose execution was expected in 1941 – 800 thousand people. All the plans, except for the first, were implemented only partially.

In early November 1939, the task to expel the Polish and Jewish people from the annexed territories was given to the SD and Gestapo inspectors of individual districts and the area of the General Government. Following Himmler's command, the task of the central planning of the resettlement of Poles and Jews was commissioned to the Reich Security Main Office led by *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich. The management of the expulsions was entrusted into the RSHA's office (*Amt IV*), headed by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Reichmann⁷, but the direct implementation of the expulsions was carried out by various police units. The fact that the expulsions – like the extermination of the Polish people – were implemented by Gestapo and the involved SS apparatus, increased the brutality of the process that involved the loss of property as well as endangered the lives and health of the resettled.

In the annexed areas, the preparations for the resettlement of Poles and Jews to the General Government began in mid-October 1939, when the first agencies for the expulsion and settlement were founded. Their names changed very often, and no sooner than in 1940, Posen started the Central Emigration Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle UWZ*), which, together with other related institutions, was responsible for the resettlement of Polish

⁶ J. Marczewski, *Hitlerowska koncepcja polityki...*, p.134-135.

⁷ Cz. Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna hitlerowskich Niemiec w okupowanej Polsce*. Poznań 1979, p.118; E. Bedürftig, *Lexikon III. Reich*. Hamburg 1994, p. 98 and 326, 327.

people to the GG and for their relocation within individual districts of the annexed territories⁸.

The area intended for the most intensive settlement and colonization was the Warta Country. It became the most important settlement area within the annexed territories, which resulted in the biggest mass expulsions of Polish people from the region. The actions were approved by Arthur Greiser – the province’s governor, who was rejected the idea of even the partial Germanization of Poles as a method that had failed during the Prussian rule. He claimed: “The Germanization of *Warthegau* means that any other people but Germans are allowed to live here. That is the difference between my colonization and the old colonization of Bismarck”⁹.

The resettlement of the Polish people from the region of *Warthegau* was carried out in several stages. During the first stage, Germans registered 87 883 people (mainly Poles but also Jews) deported from the Warta Country by 7 December 1939. During another stage, from 10 to 15 March 1940, Germans expelled 40 128 Polish people.

In March 1940, Germans suspended resettlements to the GG, due to military preparations to the war in western Europe. The resettlements were resumed in May 1940, after the establishment of the Central Emigration Office. That organizational change aimed at facilitating the resettlement actions, and as such it was regarded by the occupying forces. It started the largest mass expulsions of Polish people to the General Government. From May 1940 to January 1941, the GG allowed 121 594 people into its territory. By 12 March 1941, the Warta Country was abandoned by 19 226 people, including 17 086 Poles and 2140 Jews. The total number of people resettled to the General Government from December 1939 to March 1941 was 280 600 people¹⁰.

In the remaining area of the annexed lands, the resettlements of Polish people to the GG were performed on a smaller scale. The governors of Danzig-West Prussia (Albert Forster) and Upper Silesia (Josef Wagner, and later Fritz Bracht) disagreed to colonize the regions with the resettled Germans, whom they accepted in a limited number. In Pomerania, Forster planned to execute the idea of the Germanization of people and not the land, since he was convinced that after the mass extermination of Polish intellectuals in September 1939, Polish local people would easily undergo Germanization. Nevertheless, the actions of resettlement in the region were still realized on a very large scale. Germans did not also give up the resettlements to

⁸ Its full name was: *Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD Umwandererzentralstelle in Posen*.

⁹ Quote from: J. Gumkowski, T. Kułakowski, *Zbrodniarze hitlerowscy przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym*. Warszawa (Warsaw)1961, p. 38.

¹⁰ Archiwum II wojny światowej Instytutu Zachodniego /quote I.Z.Dok/ sygn. I.Z.Dok. I-152, Monatsbericht der UWZ-Litzmannstadt . October 1944. W. J a s t r z ę b s k i, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia z ziem polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy w latach 1939-1945*, Poznań 1968, p. 73-74; M. R u t o w s k a, *Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z Kraju Warty do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939-1941*, Poznań 2003, p.57-58.

the GG; they were carried out in May, and then in September and October 1940. Among the people particularly affected by the actions were the Polish inhabitants of Pomerania who had been born in central and eastern Poland, as well as “undestroyed anti-German and asocial elements” – as Germans described them. The number of people resettled to the GG during the first action, organized in May 1940, was 7136 – including the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz, Gdynia, Gdańsk (*Danzig*), Wejherowo, Tczew, Grudziądz and Toruń. Another action led to the relocation of 1700 Poles from Bydgoszcz, and 21 922 from Gdynia. Between 1940-1941, to make room for 400 families of German settlers from the GG, 2500 German families from Lithuania, and 12 thousand families from Bessarabia, 10 123 Poles and 381 thousand Jews were displaced to the GG through resettlers’ camps in Łódź (Lodz). By March 1941, the total number of people deported in the ‘resettlement actions’ from the province of Danzig-West Prussia to the General Government was 41 262¹¹.

The resettlement of the Poles from Upper Silesia to the GG, carried out through the agency of the Central Emigration Office in Łódź, embraced 17 413 people. They were inhabitants of rural areas and the citizens of Żywiec and the surrounding territories, exchanged by 600-800 families of German miners from Galicia, who settled in their place¹².

In the area of Ciechanów District, deportations to the General Government affected the Poles and Jews who had inhabited the district and Małwa town. The first resettlement action, that took place between 10 – 20 November led to the displacement of 10 700 people. The other action, conducted from 5 to 17 December, embraced 6687 Poles and 3259 Jews. Altogether, 20 646 people from the region were displaced to the GG¹³.

There were several criteria for the selection of Poles intended for expulsion. The relocations embraced Polish people who: had the political past, belonged to Polish intelligentsia, exhibited the potential for leadership or the membership in the national independence conspiracy, and had possessions. Another criteria were: the place of living and the dislike of local Germans. Among those intended for displacement were also people who had settled in the annexed lands after 1918 (the so-called *Kongresspolen*), as well as people referred to as asocial, and criminals. Another group

¹¹ W. Jastrzębski, J. Sziling, *Okupacja hitlerowska na Pomorzu Gdańskim w latach 1939-1945*. Gdańsk 1979, p.141-159; W. Jastrzębski, *Bilans rządów na ziemiach polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy (1939-1945)*, in: *Wrzesień 1939 roku i jego konsekwencje dla ziem zachodnich i północnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. (Eds.). R. Sudziński and W. Jastrzębski. Toruń Bydgoszcz 2001, p.175-183.

¹² A. Konięczyński, *Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej powiatu żywieckiego w 1940 r. (Saybusch-Aktion)*, „*Studia Śląskie*”. Seria nowa, v. XX. Opole 1971, p. 246; Sz. Datner, J. Gukowski, J. Leszczyński, *Wysiedlanie ludności polskiej z ziem polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy*, „*Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*” /quote BGK/, v. XII. Warszawa 1960, doc. no 43, p. 98; doc. no 80, p.136; doc. no 83, p. 133; S. Steinhilber, *„Musterstadt” Auschwitz, Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien*, München 2000, p. 136.

¹³ W. Jastrzębski, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia...*, p. 70-74, 81; Cz. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p. 336.

recommended for resettlement were craftsmen, merchants and people who possessed any other property that could be taken over by the settling Germans. But the economic needs of the Reich did not allow for getting rid of all the Polish craftsmen and officials, and the corresponding number of those who were not "politically burdened" was allowed to remain. In the first period of resettlements, the displaced adults were allowed only hand luggage with a maximum weight of 12 kg, and since the Spring of 1940, the weight of the luggage was 25 – 30 kg per adult. As for children, the restriction was a half of the adult allowed weight. Jewelry (except for wedding rings), works of art, foreign currency and other valuables had to be left behind.

On the basis of Himmler's circular letter of 10 November 1939, the abandoned property of the displaced went to the Reich, and those who took items other than specified, were threatened with a severe punishment. In the first period of the resettlements, Poles were allowed to retain 200 zloty, and Jews 100 zloty per person. Later, the amount was restricted to 50 RM for a Pole and 25 RM for a Jew. Searches that accompanied the displacements, carried out in houses, in resettlement camps and before transportation, aimed to confiscate the money and valuables Poles were suspected to hide¹⁴.

The aforementioned Himmler's directive of 30 October 1939 envisaged the removal of Jews from the annexed territories of Poland between November 1939 and February 1940, and a foundation of a separate reserve in the country of Lublin (between Bug, Vistula and San), where they could reside. From November 1939 to February 1940, almost all the Jews that inhabited the western counties of Poland (where their populations were very limited) were relocated to the GG. At the same time, only an insignificant part of Jews were displaced from the eastern territories. In February 1940, Göring's order postponed the relocation of Jews from the Warta Country to the GG; in the summer and fall of the same year, the mass expulsion of Poles was carried out. The decision of restarting the deportation of Jewish people to the GG was taken in October 1940; the last transports into the area were sent in February and March 1941. The Jews who remained on the annexed lands were relocated to ghettos for further extermination¹⁵.

Before each expulsion, Germans surrounded the target village, town or streets (in the cities) with a police cordon. It took place late in the evening or early in the morning. Poles were removed within 15- 30 minutes, and only sometimes they were allowed an hour to pack their things. Most of the

¹⁴ BGK, v. XII, p. 24 - 28.

¹⁵ D. Dąbrowska, *Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w „Kraju Warty” w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, „Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego” (13-14)1955, p. 122-184. *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*. Documents coll. by T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, A. Rutkowski, Warszawa 1957, p. 33.

Poles and Jews were first taken to temporary resettlers' camps. By the spring of 1940, in the areas with good railway connections, people were directed to stations and taken straight to the territory of the GG.

The first camps for the displaced Polish people (where they could stop before being deported to the GG) were built in Greater Poland (Wielkopolska). They were usually located in farm, industrial or military buildings, or the houses that belonged to social, educational or religious organizations. After the expulsion from their own homes, the resettlers were imprisoned in primitive conditions for several (or more) days to be finally deported to the GG. Although they were known as "transition camps" (*Übergangslager* or *Durchgangslager*), they were referred to with various names: *Lager* (camp), *Internierungslager* (internment camp), *Umsiedlungslager* (resettlement camp) or *Sammellager* (collection camp).

One of the first camps was established in November 1939 in Posen. It was a resettlement camp in the Główna quarter (*Durchgangslager Głowna*), from where, since May 1940, 33 thousand citizens of Posen and Greater Poland were deported to the GG. By the spring of 1940, all the Poles who had been deported from the area were directed to similar camps in Lodz. They had a capacity of 15 thousand people. The largest were: the camp in Konstantynów near Lodz (*Lager in Konstantinow*), and the so called central transition camp (*Durchgangslager*) in Lodz, which functioned as a distribution place from which people were sent to other camps. But first, the resettlers underwent a racial selection, and those able to work were picked for forced labor in the Reich. Those intended for displacement stayed in the camps to be later deported to the GG¹⁶.

The biggest resettlers' collection camp was founded in 1940 in Toruń (Szmalcówka), for the Polish people that had been displaced from the province of Danzig-West Prussia. Another camps were located in Tczew (*Dirshau*), Jabłonowo, Potulice (*Potulitz*) and Smukała. Five out of 22 transition camps for Poles, established in the districts of Katowice and Opole, had functioned until the occupation ended. They were camps in Czechowice (*Czechowitz*), Gorzyce, Kietrz (*Katscher*), Kochłowice (*Kolchowitz*), and Siemianowice. Since 1941, some of them were also labor camps¹⁷.

After they had arrived at the camps, the resettlers were registered, and then searched to confiscate their valuable items. The majority of camp buildings were not prepared to accommodate people even for short stay. Especially intolerable and dangerous were the prevailing cold temperatures and wretched food. The position of the first Polish expellees was particularly impossible,

¹⁶ S. Abramowicz, *Obozy przejściowe i przesiedleńcze*, in: *Obozy hitlerowskie w Łodzi*. (Eds.) A. Głowacki i S. Abramowicz, Łódź 1998, p. 101-132.

¹⁷ M. Wardzyńska, *Obozy hitlerowskie i ich rola w polityce okupacyjnej III Rzeszy*, in: *Obozy hitlerowskie w Łodzi...*, p.19-21; *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939-1945*. Informator encyklopedyczny. Warszawa 1979; W. Jastrzębski, *Potulice hitlerowski obóz przesiedleńczy i pracy 1941-1945*. Bydgoszcz 1967; A. Konieczny, *Polenlager obozy dla wysiedlonej ludności polskiej na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1942-1945*, „Studia Śląskie”. Seria nowa, v. XXI, Opole 1972.

since they were given beggarly rations of food only after a few days from the arrival in camps. Hardly imaginable were also the sanitary conditions that, together with other inconveniences, led to illness or death, especially among children or the elderly people.

The Polish expellees were transported from the annexed lands to the territory of the GG by train. The journey usually lasted several days, and the Polish expellees "travelled" crowded in unheated goods wagons or passenger coaches. They suffered from hunger and the piercing cold, especially during the harsh winter of 1939/1940. Those transported in the summer or early fall suffered from heat, thirst and lack of fresh air. All the circumstances were the direct cause of deaths during transportation, particularly of children, the elderly and sick¹⁸.

An important chronological caesura in the implementation of deportations was March 1941, when the resettlement of the Polish people to the General Government was suspended (without determining the end of the restrictions). But since the military situation of the Reich did not let return the previous resettlement conditions, Germans decided to continue deportation of Poles to the General Government but in a different form.

It was probably *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Hermann Krumej – the head of UWZ in Lodz – who proposed the idea of the internal displacements (*Verdrängung*) and relocations (*Umquartierung*) of Polish people within individual counties or districts¹⁹. These mainly embraced Poles of Jewish descent.

The internal resettlements became particularly extensive in 1942, and they were carried out by the departments of the Central Emigration Office in the annexed territories and the General Government. They particularly affected rural people, workers and people without profession. The Polish inhabitants of towns and cities were removed from better flats and houses, and located in primitive abodes in the suburbs. There were people and families who experienced several such "removals".

In the country, the displacements of Polish peasants were carried out due to the necessity to prepare bigger farms for German colonists; the abandoned grounds were dedicated for military purposes or afforestation. Some of the Polish resettlers, especially the young, were sent to forced labors; the remaining people were located in the same local district, and if possible, stayed at relatives or friends. The increased displacements led to the shortage of even the most primitive dwellings for the displaced. The problem affected several local districts in the area of Kalisz, Ostrów and Wieluń. The regions were

¹⁸ The conditions experienced by the resettlers during transportation were described by German official (*starosta*) Becht from Tarnów in the GG in one of the reports: "The transports were completely unorganized. ..., Just recently, the transport from Posen departed on Tuesday and arrived on Friday with no supplies. It stopped in Cracow to unload 40 children that died in the journey." (Quote from J. M a r c z e w s k i, *Hitlerowska koncepcja polityki...*, s. 166.) At the Berlin conference of RSHA called by A. Eichmann on 4 January 1940, the officer responsible for expulsions SS-Hauptsturmführer Möhr said: „People were closed in the wagons for several days where they had no possibility to relieve themselves. Moreover, during the great cold 100 froze to death in one of the transports." (BGK, v. XII/1960, doc. no 12, p.56.)

¹⁹ Cz. M a d a j c z y k, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p. 320.

ordered to establish special reserves for the Polish people (*Polenreservate*), where the displaced remained under close police surveillance, and which they could not leave without permission. People able to work were engaged to perform public works. The reserves, however, were finally closed owing to the growing demand for Polish workers in the Reich and the annexed territories. They ceased to exist in 1943; however, German authorities were planning to return them after the end of the war²⁰.

The extensive subject literature refers to various and often very different figures and estimates concerning the displacements and resettlements of Polish citizens from the German controlled territories of Poland between 1939-1945. In order to specify the number of the organized displacements, researchers have used the data from the reports of the Central Emigration Office (*UWZ*). It shows that from December 1939 to March 1941, 365 thousand people were displaced from the areas annexed to the Reich to the GG, and by the end of 1944, 893 thousand were resettled and expelled.

Table 1.
The expulsions into the GG and the internal displacements of Polish people in the territories incorporated to the Reich between 1939-1944 (numerical summary)

Region	Number of people resettled to the GG (from December 1939 to 5 March 1941)	Number of the relocated and expelled from the inhabited regions	Total number of expellees
Warta Country (Wartheland)	280 609	345 022	625 631
Danzig-West Prussia	41 262	70 000	111 262
Upper Silesia	22 148	59 191	81 339
Ciechanów District (Regierungsbezirk Zichenau)	20 646	4 000	24 646
Total (people):	364 665	474 213	842 878

Source: I.Z. Dok.I-152, Monatsbericht der UWZ Litzmannstadt. Oktober 1944; Cz. Ma d a j - c z y k, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, v. I. Warszawa 1970, p. 336, table 30; W. J a s t r z ę b s k i, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia z ziem polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy w latach 1939-1945*. Poznań 1968, p. 132-134; M. B r o s z a t, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939 – 1945*, Stuttgart 1961, p.101; A. K o n i e c z n y, *Wysiedlenia ludności powiatu żywieckiego w 1940 r. (Saybusch-Aktion)*, „Studia Śląskie”. Seria nowa, v. XX. Opole 1971, p. 246, 247; M. R u t o w s k a, *Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z Kraju Warty do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939-1941*, Poznań 2003, p. 37; S. S t e i n b a c h e r, „Musterstadt” Auschwitz. Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien, München (Munich) 2000, p.131-138.

²⁰ W. J a s t r z ę b s k i, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia z ziem polskich...*, p. 93, 94; J. S t o c h, „Polenreservate” w tzw. Kraju Warty, BGK, v. XVII, Warszawa 1967.

According to the summary, the most extensive expulsions to the GG affected the inhabitants of the Warta Country. A considerable number of people resettled from the area (over 118 thousand) were sent to forced labor in the Reich and within the area of the Warta Country; over 23 thousand people were sent to France, and 17 423 were deported to the Reich for Germanization.

In the case of Danzig-West Prussia, apart from the expulsions to the GG, 30 232 people were resettled, located in labor camps and subjected to forced labor, as well as Germanized (by the end of 1942). Apart from the organized displacements, Germans carried out the so called "wild" expulsions. For example, from 12 to 26 October 1939, 12 thousand citizens of Danzig were expelled, and another 28 thousand left the city, before they had been given the police order. Almost 8000 of these people moved to Warsaw, and nearly 10.000 to Posen and the surrounding areas. The remaining 10 thousand were transported to the region of Kielce. In February 1940, the governor of Danzig-West Prussia, Albert Forster, provided that the total number of the expelled from Gdynia was 40 thousand people²¹. It means that the overall number of people resettled and expelled from Danzig-West Prussia to the GG was 131 thousand. 9016 out of the people displaced in Upper Silesia were located in *Polenlagers*, and 5100 sent to forced labor in the Reich²².

The thing difficult to establish is the number of Poles and Jews who arrived at the GG to take shelter from the arrest or the inevitable expulsion. Figures from the German records of people displaced during the organized expulsions were substantially smaller than the actual number of Poles and Jews who arrived at the General Government. According to the data of the Main Welfare Council, in March 1942 the area of the GG was inhabited by 391 thousand people who, before the war had started, had lived in the territories later annexed to the Reich²³. Therefore, the "difference" between the number of people resettled by the occupying forces (365 thousand) and the number of people who actually lived in the GG was about 26 thousand. It might be assumed that the number of people who arrived at the territory of the GG was 400 thousand Poles and Jews who fled, evacuated or were forcibly expelled from the areas annexed to the Reich²⁴.

The quoted figures concerning the resettlement of Polish people to the GG, based on German source materials, do not specify the number of Poles and the number of Jews (separately) relocated into the area. It is difficult to isolate the quantities since German expulsion statistics did not detail per-

²¹ W. Jastrzębski, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia...*, p. 51; Cz. Małajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p.308; G. Berendt, *Ludność Gdyni 1939-1945 – znaki zapytania*, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, (4) 2005. p. 195; M. Tomkiewicz, *Wysiedlenia z Gdyni w 1939 roku*, „Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej”, (12-1) 2003-2004, p.33-38.

²² W. Jastrzębski, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia...*, p. 51; Cz. Małajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p.308; G. Berendt, *Ludność Gdyni 1939-1945 – znaki zapytania*, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, (4) 2005. p. 195; M. Tomkiewicz, *Wysiedlenia z Gdyni w 1939 roku*, „Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej”, (12-1) 2003-2004, p.33-38.

²³ Cz. Małajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p. 335.

²⁴ B. Kroll, *Rada Główna Opiekuńcza 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1985, p. 201-202.

sonal data by nationality. The number of Jews resettled from the territories of Poland annexed to the Reich from 1939 to 1941, given by the literature is approximate and inaccurate. Cz. Majdajczyk speaks of 70 thousand people, Cz. Łuczak of 100 thousand people, and A. Eisenbach estimates that by the spring of 1940, about 78 thousand Jews²⁵ were expelled from the Warta Country. What we know, however, is the number of Jews deported from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich to the area of the Lublin district. The total number of Jews resettled into the Lublin district was 32 thousand, including those who came from the Polish land annexed to the Reich (30 800) and from Szczecin (1200)²⁶.

The prepared inclusion of the General Government into the project of Germanization in 1941, led to the mass resettlement and expulsion of indigenous population. The largest relocation was planned in the southeastern part of the Lublin country (in the area of Zamość). Germans chose this area for the first mass evacuation within the GG since they wanted it to become "Germanic rampart in the East". The preparations to the resettlement of the people from the area were attentively followed by Himmler himself, who took particularly much interest in the whole action and participated in the 1942 Cracow conference on this matter. The person responsible for the implementation of the resettlement was SS-Gruppenführer Odilo Globocnik.

The displacements in the area of Zamość, carried out from late November 1942 to August 1943, embraced over 300 villages that were forcibly abandoned by 110 thousand Poles. The methods of evacuation differed from those employed during the expulsions in the annexed territories. The actions were carried out by strong and numerous police, SS and *Wehrmacht* units, and extended to the whole villages. They often involved the pacification of selected villages. Eventually, 10 thousand Germans settled on these territories, but the dogged resistance of Poles and the deteriorating military situation of the German side stopped further colonization in the area of Zamość. After they had been displaced, the expellees went to transition camps in Zamość, Zwierzyniec and Budzyń, where they were racially investigated, selected and divided into four groups. The first and second group comprised of people who qualified for Germanization and who were sent to the Reich. The third group included Poles able to work in the Reich or the GG; the fourth group consisted of people destined for concentration camps. But those who suffered most were children. About 4.5 thousand kids were sent to the Reich to be Germanized. Other were loaded onto wagons and transported into different

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 331; Cz. Łuczak, *Pod niemieckim jarzmem*. (Kraj Warty 1939-1945). Poznań 1996, p. 56; A. Eisenbach, *Przesiedlenia ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, in: *Przesiedlenia ludności przez III Rzeszę i jej sojuszników podczas II wojny światowej*. Międzynarodowe Kolokwium, Zamość 17-20 X 1972. Lublin 1974. The estimates of Germans authorities referred to the similar number of 30-40 thousand Poles and Jews who, by December 1939, fled to the GG, cf. T. Prekeroła, *Wojna i okupacja*, in: *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce w zarysie (do 1950 roku)*, (Ed.) J. Tomaszewski. Warszawa 1993, p. 279.

²⁶ J. Kiełboń, *Migracje ludności w Dystrykcie lubelskim w latach 1939-1944*, Lublin 1995, p.133.

parts of the GG. The cold weather and the long "journey" in unheated wagons led to the deaths of several hundred children. Apart from children, many elderly and sick lost their lives in the transit camps, as well²⁷.

The individual years of German occupation differed in the extent, form and territorial distribution of the expulsions or resettlements of people. In 1941, Germans stopped the expulsions from the annexed territories to start mass relocations of Polish people in the areas intended for training grounds for the troops of the *Whermacht* and *Waffen-SS*. It led to the displacement of people from 160 villages in the county of Radom and 28 villages in the county of Kolbuszowa. The expulsions were carried out from 1940 to 1942, and were followed by the 1943 displacements of people from another 38 German colonies in Galicia. The number of people forced to leave their homes at that time was 171 thousand people.

The methods used in these cases differed from those employed in the region of Zamość. The inhabitants of the villages were publicly called to abandon their residences within the given time. Those who disobeyed were forcibly removed. The families that followed the order were allowed to take their possessions. Moreover, they were sometimes given 100 zlotys per person and promised compensations that were never paid²⁸.

The expulsions from the districts of Białystok, Kowno and Vilnius, carried out by Germans after taking the eastern territories of Poland in mid-1940, also affected the Polish inhabitants of the regions. They started in 1942 and were stopped at the end of 1943. By the spring of 1943, 28 465 people were displaced from the district of Białystok, and transported to the Reich. In the district of Kowno, the expulsions mainly embraced the Polish populated counties of Poniewież, Olita, Rosienie, Uciana, and Wołkowysk and local districts (*gminy*) in the area of Kowno and Kiejdany. The displaced Poles were located in the transit camp in Olita and, after a selection, sent to labor in the Reich or to labor camps. Women and children were allowed to serve at friends or relatives. The sick and elderly were located in workhomes. In the country of Vilnius, the expellees were sent to temporary transition camps and, after a selection, subjected to forced labor. Those who had no profession or skills were released²⁹.

The last mass displacement was the expulsion of 500 thousand citizens of the left-bank part of Warsaw, carried out in the fall of 1944 after the Warsaw Uprising. About 67 thousand of the people were sent to forced labor in the Reich. Like other Polish expellees before, they had been deprived of their possessions, except for small hand baggage.

²⁷ Z. Mańkowski, *Hitlerowska akcja wysiedleń i osadnictwa na Zamojszczyźnie (model czy improvisacja)*. Zamość 1972.

²⁸ Cz. Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa ...*, p.133.

²⁹ Cz. Małajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, p. 325 i 325; M. Wardzyńska, *Obozy hitlerowskie...*, p.22, 23.

Table 2.
The number of Polish people displaced, resettled and expelled from their homelands by German authorities during the German occupation from 1939 to 1944 (in thousands)

Name of the area	Number of the displaced and resettled
Warta Country	626
Upper Silesia	81
Danzig- West Prussia	111
Ciechanów District	25
„Wild” expulsions (mainly in Pomerania)	20
Incorporated areas (total)	863
Białystok District	28
Zamosc District	110
General Government (troop training grounds)	171
Warsaw (after the Uprising)	500
German-occupied Polish territories (total)	1 672

Source: I.Z. Dok.I-152, Monatsbericht der UWZ Litzmannstadt. Oktober 1944; I.Z. Dok.I-120, Abschlussbericht über die Aussiedlungen im Rahmen der Ansetzung der Bessarabiendeutschen (3.Nahplan) vom 21.1.1941.-20.1.1942 im Reichsgau Wartheland; Cz. Mada jczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, v. I. Warszawa 1970, p. 333-336, table 30; W. Jastrzębski, *Hitlerowskie wysiedlenia z ziem polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy w latach 1939-1945*. Poznań 1968, p. 132-134; M. Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939-1945*. Stuttgart 1961, p.101; A. Koneczny, *Wysiedlenia ludności powiatu żywieckiego w 1940 r. (Saybusch-Aktion), „Studia Śląskie”*. Seria nowa, v. XX. Opole 1971, p. 246, 247; S. Steinbacher, *„Musterstadt” Auschwitz. Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien*, München (Munich) 2000, p.131-138; Z. Mańkowski, *Między Wisłą a Bugiem 1939-1945*, Lublin 1978, p. 299; *Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939-1959. Atlas ziem Polski*, (Eds.) W. Sienkiewicz, G. Hryciuk, Warszawa (Warsaw) 2008, p. 62-67.

According to German sources and the assumed estimates, from 1939 to 1944 in the area of German-occupied Poland, Germans displaced and resettled 1 672 000 people, including 365 thousand deported to the GG, over 37 thousand transported to the Reich as candidates for Germanization, 170 thousands sent to the forced labor in the Reich or the annexed territories, and 23.5 thousand taken to work in Nazi occupied France³⁰.

We must not forget about over 2.7 million Jews, for whom the expulsion and concentration in ghettos were the first step on the way to the Holocaust. The historical literature often overlooks the displacements since they have been considered an initial stage of the mass extermination of Jews.

³⁰ Cz. Mada jczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy...*, v. I, table 30, p. 336; Cz. Łuczak, *Polska i Polacy...*, p. 145.

The territories of German-occupied Poland were a reservoir of cheap and forcibly recruited workers, used for the purpose of German war economy. By the fall of 1944, 700 thousand Poles from the annexed lands, mainly from the Warta Country, were sent to forced labor in the Third Reich. By December 1944, the General Government was left by over 1 297 thousand people, including 67 thousand expelled after the fall of the Uprising. The most difficult seems the estimation of the number of people taken to work in the Reich from the eastern territories of the Second Republic of Poland, excluding the part annexed to the General Government and the region of Bialystok (Reich Ostland commissariats and the Ukraine). The literature refers to the data prepared in 1945-1946 by the War Compensation Bureau, which mentions 500 thousand people deported from the area to force labor. The total number of the deported to worked in the Reich during the Second World War was 2.5 million inhabitants of prewar Poland³¹.

³¹ Cz. Ł u c z a k, *Polska i Polacy...*, p. 177 -179; i d e m: *Praca przymusowa Polaków w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Fundacja „Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie”, 1999, p. 61. Among the people subjected to force labor in the Reich were also the Polish prisoners of war – privates and non-commissioned officers - taken in September 1939.

Zbigniew Mazur

Germans as perpetrators and victims

A few years ago, Aleida Assmann remarked that the living memory of the German massacre of Jews had influenced and changed the social assessment of the past: the previously dominant division into the winners and the defeated has been replaced by the criminological division into perpetrators and victims. The first pair of opposites have manifested itself in a confrontation and fight, the other, in unilateral and systematic violence towards defenseless civilian people. The winner is not the same as the perpetrator, and the defeated is not the same as the victim. In the German language, as in Polish, the notion of victim refers to two different situations: the sacrifice of life for somebody or something (*sacrificium*) or the passive submission to violence (*victima*). In the first case, death is given a particular meaning, in the other, it is utterly senseless. Therefore, the memory of these two kinds of victims must be completely different. A soldier's death on the battlefield has been codified into "heroic national semantics", taken from the religious semantics of martyrdom. The soldier dies for his community and his homeland; his death is revered and glorified. The memory of him undergoes sacralizing heroization. None of these can be applied to the defenseless and passive victimhood of civilian people, subjected to physical extermination. Their fate cannot be rendered by means of a heroic narrative, but requires the narrative of traumatic suffering and pain (experience of sacrifice). According to Assmann, over the last decades of the past century, there has been a distinct shift in collective memory: from sacralizing to victimizing forms of remembrance and commemoration (*victima* as a moral construct present in a public space)¹. And sometimes, the emergence of post-heroic collective memory is mentioned, as well.

Apart from sociological-psychological studies, both terms, "perpetrators" and "victims", have been applied, though limitedly, to professional historical analyses. Although they seem too metaphoric and strongly emotional, and represent the categories of criminal law, they are particularly well qualified to describe the collective memory, mentality and behaviors of individuals and entire social groups. The classifying of a nation as a collective perpetrator or a collective victim is an act of a great moral and political significance. The title of "winner" or "the defeated" is rarely objected when gained in a heroic fight against a stronger enemy. But no one wants to be identified as the perpetrator - much better seems "the community of victims". Nevertheless, both categories do not exhaust the catalogue of historical roles, especially those of World War II. By definition, a victim (*victima*) is incapable of defeating the perpetrator; it is

¹ A. A s s m a n n, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*, Munich 2006, p.72-84, 89.

warriors and heroes who resist, fight and turn the perpetrator into the defeated. Aleida Assman is right when writing about the growing victimization of collective memory, but at the same time, she underestimates the impoverishment and narrowness of images the tendency leads to. In Poland, the memory of victims of German, Soviet or Ukrainian extermination (*victima*) is parallel to the memory of those killed in combat (*sacrificium*). German memory is utterly concentrated on the binary of the perpetrator and victim.

After the war, Germans had problems with internalizing their perpetration. Even after the Nazi crimes had been fully disclosed, there was no sign of a moral shock on their part. It was immediately noticed by three intellectuals who knew German culture well and who, after many years, revisited Germany occupied by the Allies. They were: the outstanding Polish essayist Jerzy Stempowski, the well-known German historian-emigrant Hajo Holborn, and the Jewish thinker Hannah Arendt. They later left Germany with feelings of disappointment, letdown, as anxiety. During the stay, Jerzy Stempowski observed that German society had manifested no will to exonerate themselves². Hajo Holborn was particularly alarmed by the attempts at whitewashing, devious reactions and casuistry in intellectual milieus, and warned against the revival of antidemocratic and nationalist tendencies³. Hannah Arendt was surprised by the lack of reaction to the horror of revealed crimes; instead, she saw the inability to regret, the unwillingness to realize what had happened, self-pitying, constant complaints about the Allied reprisal, and evasion of guilt and responsibility⁴. Stempowski tried to justify the situation with chaos, poverty and a lack of actual leadership. Many years later, Christian Meier was trying to prove that tough post-war conditions had not favored deep reflections concerning the past, especially in the country that had been deprived of elites able to an independent crackdown on the Nazi heritage. Big communities need time for spiritual transformation (Ch. Maier)⁵; one should not have expected a rapid and miraculous alteration of German nation (H.-U. Wehler).⁶

It is true that for decades, German society have remained the post-Nazi society, where defense mechanisms have dictated an approach towards the criminal past. In 1983, Hermann Lübke met with a strong opposition after he had claimed that the silence on the Nazi past was a precondition for successful development of democracy in the Federal Republic⁷. Currently, the claim is not that strongly resisted. Many historians think that the collective silence about the crimes, prevented the integration of old function elites and even the whole nation (J. Rüsen)⁸. It was a

² J. St e m p o w s k i, *Od Berdyczowa do Lafitów*, Wołowiec 2001, p. 214-215.

³ E.J.C. H a h n, H. H o l b o r n, *Bericht zur deutschen Frage. Beobachtungen und Empfehlungen vom Herbst 1947*, in: „Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte“, (1) 1987, p.150.

⁴ H. A r e n d t, *Salon berliński i inne eseje* [Original English Title: *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*], Warsaw 2008, p.278-279.

⁵ Ch. M e i e r, *Vierzig Jahre nach Auschwitz. Deutsche Geschichtserinnerung heute*, München 1990, p. 86-89.

⁶ H.-U. W e h l e r, *Umbruch und Kontinuität. Essays zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2000, p.13.

⁷ H. L ü b k e, *Der Nationalsozialismus im deutschen Nachkriegsbewusstsein*, in: „Historische Zeitschrift“ (3) 1983, p.585.

⁸ J. R ü s e n, *Holocaust, Erinnerung, Identität. Drei Formen generationeller Praktiken des*

well-thought strategy for building democracy in the post-Nazi society. Herman Lübbe inconveniently asked why the silence strategy had actually been necessary. He claimed that it would not have been necessary if Nazism had penetrated a narrow group of people, who could be later charged in lawsuits or removed from public functions. But Nazism had affected the majority of the nation that was later engaged into the common building of the edifice of democracy, and whose feelings had to be respected due to its people's electoral power. Lübbe jeered at the thesis of "denying the dishonorable past". He argued, it did not explain anything, but let one forget what millions of people had seen every day. He claimed that the moral and political issue was being altered into a therapeutic problem, that the thesis of denying the past by social masses had been invented to authorize claims of intellectual elites to moral and political domination.

The society of the German Federal Republic had ignored the problem of responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich until the end of the 50s. They unanimously condemned Hitler and his "clique", mainly for the misfortune they had brought onto the nation, as well as for territorial losses and hardship of everyday life during the post-war years. Hitler was blamed for crimes that had been impossible to hide from the public, but a sharp line was drawn between the handful of evident perpetrators and the innocent German nation, whose patriotism had been reprehensibly used and abused. Nazis disappeared in a miraculous way and anti-Nazis multiplied. A slogan on crimes "in the name of the German nation" was coined to emphasize that they were not committed by the nation, but by those who impersonated it. The evil was not born inside the German nation but came from outside of Germany and remained outside its people. The war criminals were deprived of an ethnic attribute – those who murdered were not Germans but Nazis. In the GDR (German Democratic Republic), the blame was put on the class-defined "fascists", "capitalists" and "imperialists". Linguistic deceptions appeared to be particularly long-lasting - they have existed until the present times. Aleida Assmann described them as psychological externalization of the evil, based on the mechanism of escaping the blame and pushing it onto others, as well as on donning the robes of an innocent victim - deceived, betrayed, oppressed, made to obey orders, and unable to resist in the conditions of ubiquitous dictatorship⁹. The true and deep internalization of perpetration had been impossible as long as Germans believed to be a victim of external evil powers.

Christian Meier pointed out that when speaking of the Third Reich, Germans had never used the pronoun of the first person plural ("we"), but the third person plural ("they"). The Third Reich was alienated, pushed out of German identity. Otherwise, the crimes would have been referred to as "ours" and not "theirs".¹⁰ The approach was good in so far as it helped to assimilate the dark sides of the past (whose "own"-ership was not recognized). Initially, the trauma

Erinnerns, in: H. Welzer (Ed.), *Das soziale Gedächtnis. Geschichte, Erinnerung, Tradierung*, Hamburg 2001, p.248.

⁹ A. A s s m a n n, *op. cit.*, p.172.

¹⁰ Ch. M e i e r, *Vierzig Jahre nach Auschwitz. Deutsche Geschichtserinnerung heute*, Munich 1990, p.62.

of the Jewish massacre was hoped to subside since Germans believed in the healing effects of the so called historisation. When it had appeared impossible, they turned away from their past - they remained aloof from it, as if it was a history of another nation. Only then, argues Meier, did Germans show readiness to accept the truth about war crimes. They did not, however, agreed to assess the Third Reich through their own identity. Nevertheless, at the end of the 50s and the beginning of the 60s, the collective silence was eventually broken, starting the period of "overcoming the past" and the public confrontation with Nazism. It begun with the questioning of the claim that the problem of responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich had not been addressed to maintain the stability of West German democracy. In 1960, the prominent *SPD* politician Carlo Schmid said in the Bundestag that the avoidance of settling the legacy of the Third Reich contributed to the instability of West German democracy¹¹. In the early 60s, it was continued with the trial of Eichmann, Auschwitz processes and the public discussion over the statute of limitations for Nazi crimes.

At the beginning of the 60s, a significant part of the society accepted German perpetration, mainly with respect to the extermination of Jewish people. West German reactions to the 1979 four-part U.S. series "The Holocaust", which *nota bene* popularized the term "holocaust" (a burnt offering), has been considered a turning point in the social perception of the theme. But contrary to what has been claimed, the reactions were not alike, and traditional defense mechanisms against the inconvenient truth surfaced again. The series was not the first TV production on the extermination of Jews, shown in the Federal Republic. Its power, however, lay in the individualized approach towards the presentation of the increasing persecution of Jews. For the first time, a German mass audience could identify with Jewish victims. The film did not refer to big numbers and anonymous mechanisms of a criminal system; it showed everyday persecutions as well as illustrated (and questioned) the conduct of the ordinary German people. Given in the form of a soap opera, the theme profoundly moved the mass audience¹². The society began to internalize the necessity of preservation and cultivation of the memory of Jewish massacre and the "civilizational disaster" of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. A German identity assimilated a negative component – the cultural memory of criminal Nazism, which was parallel with the acceptance of the role of the perpetrator and identification with Jewish victims.

There were, of course, fundamental differences between West German memory culture and the cultural memory of the German Democratic Republic. East Germany attached significance to the commemoration of the war, notably, the German attack on the Soviet Union - the first communist state and a mainstay of the international labor movement. The GDR's propaganda did not waste time on "psychology" but operated with the categories of struggle

¹¹ H. D u b i e l, *Niemand ist frei von der Geschichte. Die nationalsozialistische Herrschaft in den Debatten des Deutschen Bundestages*, Munich, Vienna 1999 , p.84-85

¹² P. S t e i n b a c h, *Nationalsozialistische Gewaltverbrechen. Die Diskussion in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit nach 1945*, Berlin 1981, p. 87.

between major ideological, social and political systems. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union was regarded as the greatest crime of World War II, the Eastern Front - as the most important and decisive (not without reason) battleground, the victory of the Soviet Army - as a turning point in the European history and the beginning of the new history of Germany. The war in the East and in the West was regarded as totally Hitlerian. Anti-Fascism legitimized the East German system, and the victory of the Soviet Union legitimized the GDR's international role. The words "perpetrators" and "victims" were limitedly used, and the issue of extraordinary and well-organized Jewish massacre was pushed into the background, or rather disappeared. The difference between the two German states was striking. Christina Morina points to the difference and writes that whereas the West German official culture of remembrance was focused on the Holocaust of European Jews, the official memory of the GDR revolved around the aggressive war of Wehrmacht against the Soviet Army¹³. The situation changed after the GDR had joined the FRG, and when the West German patterns of collective memory spread to the east, returning the words "perpetrator" and "victim" to the public use.

The social acceptance of German responsibility for the Holocaust was vividly and deeply impressed on German cultural memory; but when it comes to communicative memory, the situation seemed more complicated. Firstly, the universalized vision of the Holocaust distracted the vision of the European catastrophe caused by two World Wars, both started by Germans. The collective memory of certain facts started to fade away; the fact that the European catastrophe had been initiated by German aggressions, that World War I triggered the spread of communism all over Tsarist Russia, that the Second World War condemned the Eastern part of central Europe to civilizational collapse and the Soviet dictatorship, slowly dimmed. Secondly, the issue of the Holocaust, pushed other German and non-German war and post-war crimes into the shade. It is often forgotten that the war did not begin in 1940 or 1941, but after the 1939 German-Soviet aggression against Poland. One also tends to forget about the extermination of Polish elites, the numerous mass executions known as "pacifications of villages", Polish concentration camp prisoners, round-ups and shootings of civilian people, forced laborers, the exploitation of human and material resources, the robbery of private possessions and the destruction of Polish culture, mass relocations, and finally, the comprehensive system of destruction and humiliation of Polish people, implemented in the area of the General Government (German: *Generalgouvernement*) and the territories incorporated into the German Empire. „Hierarchization of victims“ leads to nothing good; it may consolidate the long-forgotten stereotypes.

Thirdly, the internalization of culpability strongly emphasized the problem of German victimhood because both of the issues were closely related.

¹³ Ch. Morina, *Vernichtungskrieg, Kalter Krieg und politisches Gedächtnis: zum Umgang mit dem Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion im geteilten Deutschland*, „Geschichte und Gesellschaft“, (2) 2008, p. 257-258.

The silence about the culpability or its denial went hand in hand with the manifestation of German suffering, and the acceptance of the Holocaust favored the relative reduction of the commemorative status of German victims. Therefore, after unification, the defense reactions increased significantly and manifested themselves in the struggle for the endangered status of German victims and the exposition of German war and postwar suffering. It must be stressed that when speaking of victims, Germans refer to defenseless civilian people, exposed to violence from the victors; the people, implicitly or explicitly, regarded as the innocent part of German society that had nothing to do with the National Social regime. This prerequisite was necessary for the creation of a convincing representation of German victimhood (*victima*) and an effective implementation of policy that would victimize the German nation. There have been attempts to heroize German soldiers and sacralize their heroic deaths (*sacrificium*). The attempts, however, have been occasional and of a limited scope. Obviously, in the Federal Republic, they could only concern the Eastern Front and the war with the Soviet Union, or in a broader perspective - the defense against the Bolshevik onslaught threatening Europe. A special attention has been paid to the memory of the German-Soviet battle in the ruins of Stalingrad, to the defense of East Prussia against the Soviet offensive, and the support, the navy and army provided for escaping and evacuated civilians.

Germans possess a well-developed catalog of their own victims. The image of Germans as a collective victim has arisen from the conviction that the Allied policy towards Germany was allegedly guided by the principle of collective guilt and collective responsibility. As a result, the German nation has often fallen victim to exclusion from the generally applied and respected rules of justice. In the Wilhelmine era, they were denied a superpower status, the Treaty of Versailles deprived Germany of a considerable portion of its prewar territories, breaching the principle where ethnicity helped delimitate boundaries. Moreover, it necessitated payment of war reparations and limited German military strength, as well as turned Germany into the pariah of Europe. The humiliation is presumed to give birth to Nazism, whose first victims had been Germans themselves. The end of the Second World War brought the German people an even greater injustice – the loss of eastern territories that had always belonged to Germans, and whose vernacular people escape or were forcibly displaced. The list of German sufferings could be longer and more detailed. But there is no need to enumerate them; suffice it to look at the general image of the great and highly civilized nation, whose contribution to the European culture seems inestimable – it was destined for a victim by powers of injustice historical fate. The image - widespread in the inter-war period - survived the fall of the Third Reich, and can be still noticeable. It is hard to say how strongly it has been entrenched in the hidden layers of German collective memory.

Shortly after the war, German collective memory was reigned supreme by the motif of German victim. In communicative memory, there was no room for other victims. Germans dwelled upon individual sufferings: the loss of

relatives, the horror of the Allied blanket bombings, the escape from the Soviet Army, rapes, lootings, the enforced displacements, the destruction of goods and chattels. They brood over the fate of those kept in captivity or deported deep into the Soviet Union. Their whole attention revolved around strains of everyday life: housing problems, unemployment and the struggle for daily survival, in a word – the general poverty. The future did not seem bright, as well. Nobody knew what to expect from denazification policy – how far it would extend; people feared it would transform into a mass revenge. The future of families, local communities, the nation and the state was uncertain. All this fell onto a society – brainwashed into thinking that Germans had been created to rule over “sub-humans”. It must have been painful to be shaken out of the Nazi dream; the humiliation of the defeat and the Allied occupation had been experienced twice as intensely; the German sufferings were taken as an affront to civilized standards; many Germans found their fates equal with the fates of people who suffered from the Hitlerian regime; they counted and compared the losses. When Hannah Arendt would admit her Jewish origins, the Germans reportedly flooded her with stories of their hardships; better-educated Germans drew balance between German and non-German sufferings, claiming them equal and mutually canceling out¹⁴.

The image of Germans as a collective victim was promoted even by individuals unengaged in the National Socialism. A former concentration camp inmate, Paul Löbe (SPD) claimed that the German people had experienced double suffering: from their own tyrants and from the Allies. Theodor Steltzer (CDU), a member of The Kreisau Circle (German: *Kreisauer Kreis*) was convinced that German Nazi victimhood extended to the entire nation. Carlo Schmid (SPD) placed the following among German victims: German prisoners of war, expellees from the East, German resistance fighters and German Jews. Shortly after his return from exile, Max Brauer (SPD) counted the entire German nation among the victims of Hitler and his “demonic purposes.” In the Soviet Occupied Zone, victims defined by class-groupings. According to the local propaganda, the first victim of Hitler was the working class, whose organizations had been immediately broken up, and their members and leaders persecuted. The labor movement and the Communist Party – the movement’s representative and exponent - were heroically stylized as an epitome of the anti-fascist resistance. The communists were presented as victims who sacrificed their lives or endured persecutions in the name of lofty ideals (*sacrificium*).¹⁵ In West Germany, the heroic motif had been absent for many years, and the Hitler would-be assassins of July the 20th, 1944 were considered traitors. Undoubtedly, communicative memory in both East and West Germany was dominated by the image of a nation of double victims – who suffered both from fascism and from the Allies. Differences between the two

¹⁴ H. A r e n d t, *Salon berliński i inne eseje*, Warsaw 2008, p. 278.

¹⁵ P. R e i c h e l, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur von 1945 bis heute*, München 2001, p.77-79.

partial German states existed in officially cultivated cultural memory.

Both German states pursued the politics of victimization, however, their collections of victims, as well as the methods of their representation, interpretation and commemoration differed substantially. The FRG was reticent about remembering victims of American and British air attacks, in order not to annoy the western allies, who decided over the future of West Germany. In a book *Germans as Victims. Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* by Bill Niven, one may find a very interesting remark: the Polish film by Jan Rybkowski "Dziś w nocy umrze miasto" [Tonight A City Will Die (1961)], about the bombing of Dresden in February 1945, was shown to the West German audience with information, added at the beginning, that it pictured the futility of war caused by dictatorships – the comment was to subtly distract the audience's attention from the direct British-American responsibility¹⁶. The situation was different in the GDR; under the influence of deteriorating East-West relations and the dawn of the Cold War, at the beginning of the 50s, the matter of Anglo-American bombing of Dresden started to be questioned. The British-American imperialism was openly accused of aiming to undermine the established division into occupational zones, manifesting its military power in the relations with The Soviet Union, and the destruction of the part of Germany that should have remained under Soviet control. Dresden was an important argument in the campaign against the Anglo-American „warmongers“, used to discredit the Western powers whose policy was often compared to Hitler's dictatorship. The people of Dresden were presented as innocent victims of imperialist barbarism. This strongly anti-American motif continued to evolve in the unified Germany¹⁷.

Fundamental differences between East and west Germany have been observed in their dealing with the problem of the transfer of German people from the east. Let us remind ourselves that 3.2 million Germans had been forcibly dislocated from Polish territories. However, if one adds refugees to that count, a much larger number of the citizens of the pre-war Poland ended up staying in Germany (7.1 mln). In 1950, both German states registered 11.9 mln refugees and resettlers (Federal Republic: 7.8 million; GDR: 4.3 million); it was held that, as a result of the flight and expulsions, about 2 million Germans had died; today a much smaller number of 600,000 has been assumed (including about 400,000 people who died east of the Odra and Nysa rivers (German: Oder and Neisse), and the Kaliningrad region)¹⁸. Those people died in varying circumstances - mainly, during the mass exodus, as well as during the poorly carried out evacuations. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the actual responsibility of Polish communist authorities for the procedure. There is no doubt that German people were treated worst during the so-called "wild"

¹⁶ B. N i v e n, *Introduction: German Victimhood At the Turn of the Millennium*, in: B. Niven (Ed.), *Germans as Victims. Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, New York, 2006, p.3.

¹⁷ B. N i v e n, *The GDR and Memory of the Bombing of Dresden*, in: B. N i v e n (Ed.), *Germans as Victims...*, ibid. p.109-129.

¹⁸ I. H a r, *Die demographische Konstruktion der 'Vertreibungsverluste' – Forschungsstand, Probleme, Perspektiven*, in: *Historie*,(1) 2007/2008, p.108-120.

resettlements, both before and in the course of the Potsdam Conference. But also the sanctioning of expulsions by the Potsdam Treaty (August 2, 1945) did not bring much improvement into the treatment of Germans. Disastrous conditions in transit camps often led the death of the detainees; but the situation of Polish prisoners was not even better. After 1989, Polish academic literature described the problem in an excellent and well-documented source volume¹⁹. There has been, however, no documents that would support the thesis that the Polish communist authorities planned and pursued the policy of extermination of the German people. They wanted to get rid of them fast – but not to murder them.

In the GDR, the public commemoration of the flight and expulsions, the ensuing persecutions and human losses, was impossible, since the East German state belonged to the same camp as the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary - the countries that had carried out the resettlements. In the Federal Republic, no external influences blocked the commemoration, particularly that those who had displaced were in the enemy camp; hardships experienced by the displaced people supported the official anti-Polish border revisionism. The “harm” and “injustice” (*das Unrecht*) suffered by innocent civilians who had been forced to flee from the approaching Soviet Army or forcibly resettled from their eastern homeland, were regularly reminded. Without limitations and with an active support of the federal government, Germans commemorated those events on a large scale. From the perspective of German collective memory, their importance was impossible to overestimate. The image of German people as a collective victim of Hitler was not very convincing, just like the image of the working class steadfastly resisting fascism and imperialism. The Wehrmacht soldiers, bravely fulfilling their duty towards the Motherland and shamefully betrayed by the Nazi clique, were also a representation difficult to maintain. Human losses resulting from the Allied blanket bombing were more convincing; once the military significance of the air strikes had been questioned, the bombings became perceived as a consistently implemented program for the extermination of civilians. Nevertheless, the refugees and resettles from the East made the best component of the image of German victim, especially when the historical context blurred memory, and the general attention was shifted onto the violation of human rights.

In the FRG, a group of 8 million resettles from the East, whose number was constantly growing, brought with themselves extremely diversified, and in no case homogeneous, “invisible baggage” of historical experiences. Nevertheless, the group felt integrated by the sense of profound “harm” and “injustice”, experienced first, from the winners, and then, from their own countrymen, who welcomed them with unhidden reluctance²⁰. It triggered memories characterized by idealization of the lost little homeland (*Heimat*),

¹⁹ W. Borodziej, H. Lemberg (Ed.), *Niemcy w Polsce 1945-1950. Wybór dokumentów*, vol. I-IV, Warsaw 2000-2001.

²⁰ Comp. A. Kosert, *Kalte Heimat. Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945*, Munich 2008, passim.

as well as resentment, accusation and claims towards nations and states that took the land they had been forced to leave. They were also reflected in cultural memory: in accordance to Paragraph 96 of “expellees” act (1953; amended 1973), the federal government became obliged to support cultural activities of the expellees organizations. The memories were also cultivated and preserved in the compatriots’ associations, which grouped the displaced persons according to their former homeland areas; in 1958, they became a part of the superior Federation of Expellees [aka ‘League of Expellees’] (Bund der Vertriebenen – Vereinigte Landsmannschaften und Landesverbände). The collective memory of the refugees and resettlers was preserved by numerous institutions, foundations, museums, archives and libraries²¹. In the Martin-Opitz Library (Herne), 200,000 titles and 400 journals on the theme of “expulsions” have been collected; currently, there are about 1,500 memorial sites, dedicated to the flight and expulsions (memorial stones, plaques, monuments, etc.).

There has been a view, occasionally expressed, that for many years the flight and expulsions had been tabooed in West Germany. It is nonsensical and absurd for the simple reason that the memory of the phenomenon played an extremely important role in the relativisation of German perpetration. It is true, however, that in the sixties and the seventies, having embraced the policy of opening to the east (*Ostpolitik*), the openly and undeniably nationalist and revisionist organizations and publications of the expellees became inconvenient for the governing coalition of Social Democrats and Liberals, and to some extent, the Christian Democratic opposition, as well. Since then, the only political support the expellees could expect, came from the right-wing CDU and the Bavarian CSU. As long as the minimal agreement with Warsaw and Prague was desired, the anti-Polish and anti-Czech Federation of the Expellees (BdV) could not be officially approved. Left-liberal intellectual circles regarded the expellees milieu as a bastion of the Right, or a bastion of reactionaries (“ewigestrigen” – “yesterday’s eternal”), whose votes they could not count on for, anyway. The ‘68 generation did not want to be linked with the xenophobic environments of the Federation. Particularly unfavorable to the memory of the flight and expulsions was the internalization of the Holocaust guilt. The “expellees” suddenly slipped down the hierarchy of victims, where they had previously occupied the very top position. No wonder they took it as a great distress. They complained about the lack of compassion. Although they subjectively felt pushed to the sidelines of collective memory, they were in fact not tabooed.

After the GDR and the FRG had unified, the situation of organizations and institutions embracing the refugees and resettlers became slightly complicated. The chances for the, at least, partial revision of the western Polish border in the foreseeable future fell to zero (1990: the Two-plus-Four Treaty, as well as

²¹ *Ostdeutsches Kulturgut in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ein Handbuch der Sammlungen, Vereinigungen und Einrichtungen mit ihren Beständen*, (Edit. by W. Kessler), Stiftung Ostdeutscher Kulturrat, K.G. Saur, Munich, London, New York, Paris, 1989, *passim*.

the German-Polish Treaty). Proposals to “Europeanize” or “autonomize” the western regions of Poland were rejected. The expellees were refused the right to mass return onto the territories of former homelands. Moreover, Poland did not consent to the restitution of immovable property and compensation payments. The contractual confirmation of the Oder-Neisse border, signed by the unified Germany, was taken by the *BdV*-circles, as an act of abandoning the “completion” of German unity through the re-incorporation of Polish Western territories. It was another German disaster... The subsequent attempt came in the form of trying to influence the Czech and Polish admission into the European Union by making it conditional on the clarification of the so-called “outstanding issues” (ownership, right of return, German minority status, expulsions commemoration). At the turn of the 20th Century, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Federation of Expellees (*BdV*) would have to modify their operational strategy because 1989 brought new opportunities in relations with Poland and the Czech Republic. The compatriots’ associations and cultural organizations of the expellees started to establish direct relations with German minorities abroad, and with local governments and cultural institutions in the former German settlement areas. It demanded aggressive rhetoric equipped with rich phraseology addressing “reconciliation” and “Europeanism”.

The Federation of Expellees began to concentrate on historical politics that would allow them to actively influence German collective memory, mainly among the resettlers, German minorities and West German society. Their ambitions reached higher; they also wanted to shape the European memory, including its imposition on the Czech and Polish visions of the past. That strategy was not entirely new – it was based on the post-war practices of expellees’ organizations. What made it new, however, was the value attached to the activeness in this field, as well as its gradual separation from material claims. The previously practiced expression of German suffering resembled the fairly primitive legitimization of group material interests, based on aggressive material claims, and so it continued until a few years ago. In 2005, the Federation of Expellees abandoned the idea of combining material and symbolic claims. They were formally separated: the material claims were taken by the Prussian Trust and political history went into the hands of the “Centre Against Expulsions” foundation. Both institutions declare their autonomy and independence from the Federation of Expellees, which is a pure fiction. But it plays an important function - it widens the institutions’ room for maneuver. And one must admit that the Centre Against Expulsions foundation can be hardly accused of raising material claims.

For nearly ten years, the *BdV* had struggled for the establishment of a special center to commemorate expulsions. The “campaign” ended up with success, and the project was launched in 1999 as the “Center of the 15 million”, which meant it would be dedicated exclusively to German expellees. The name was politically awkward, thus “Center of the 15 million”, was replaced by

more universal "Center Against Expulsions". The project was planned to be designed, managed and supervised by the members of the BdV, but financed with money from the federal budget. The project was so big that it could not be started without public money and implemented without the engagement of the institutions responsible for the national historical policy. The idea enjoyed explicit support from the right-wing *CSU*, slightly restrained support from the *CDU*, and only partial support - provided with many reservations - from the *SPD*; the Greens treated it with reserve, and the post-communist *PDS* stood up against it from the very beginning. In fact, the political parties of the Federal Republic reached a consensus that the suffering of refugees and resettlers should be commemorated in a particular way - even the Greens consented - though under certain conditions. Main reservations were addressed to the project's initiator (Federation of Expellees); some feared the negative reactions from Jews, as well as Czech and Polish societies.

Consequently, the project for the new and special commemoration center developed three different versions. The first one, called "national" to render the centre's ideological message, its foundation and the intended management (emphasis on German suffering, the board of directors filled by the expellees), was promoted by the Federation of Expellees. The second "European" version, favored by some of Social Democrats and some Polish journalists, advocated for an international character of the center (jointly negotiated message and the international board of directors). The third version (version of network) was strongly approved by Social Democracy and, to some extent, the Polish government. It planned an increased cooperation between the already existing (mainly German and Polish) institutions responsible for the documentation and commemoration of historical events, including forced relocations. The "European" variant was quickly dropped, and the "network" idea was formally endorsed (2005), but never realized. The winner was the slightly modified "national" version. In 2005, the coalition government of *SPD* and *CDU/CSU* (2005) - represented by Angela Merkel, who from the very beginning, eagerly supported the initiative - committed themselves to implement the project. In 2008, known by the peculiar name of "Visible Sign" (*Sichtbares Zeichen*), the government project entered the realization phase, shortly after the Bundestag had enacted the law establishing a special foundation to cooperate with the German Historical Museum in Berlin. The whole project will be entirely financed by the federal government, and the executive committee will be chosen from among members of the Federation (*BdV*).

One may wonder what determined the ultimate commemorative success of the Federation. The 1998 events in Kosovo (but not only them) have been considered to contribute to a substantial increase in international interest in the problem of "ethnic cleansing". Although the analogy with German mass exodus and expulsions seems more than doubtful, Kosovo could still serve as a catalyst for the political history of German expellees, who wanted to counterbalance the memory of the Holocaust. In 1999, the Bundestag decided on building the

Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, which was immediately followed by the idea to set up the "Center of the 15 million". Planned on a grand scale, the commemoration of the massacre of European Jews threatened the commemorative status of German end-of-the-war and postwar victims, whose position was additionally challenged by the competitive victims of the Berlin Wall. The excessive exhibition of Jewish victims goaded the aggrieved refugees and resettlers into struggle for the proper and exceptional commemoration of their suffering in the capital of the new Germany. The erection of the Holocaust Memorial paradoxically appeared an advantageous opportunity. Nobody could accuse the German side of hiding the Jewish massacre and focusing on commemorating only their own suffering. The Federation's leaders publicly stressed the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but at the same time underlined that Germans also have right to remember and commemorate their own victims.

The Federation of Expellees has proved to be a strong lobby. Nevertheless, they would not have been able to implement their designs, had it not been for general changes in social attitude that took place in the Berlin Republic. It was clear that the unification of Germany would reshape German collective memory and alter the perception and representation of the past. German society has become more self-confident, more willing to open wide for the national past and able to break their Nazi fixation. Moreover, the generation directly involved in the crimes of the Nazi regime have gradually disappeared; those who felt (at least partially) guilty or responsible for the atrocities committed "in the name of the German nation" have been passing away. German political and intellectual lives came to be dominated by a new generation whose experiences remain unrelated to the happenings of the war. In the case of the FRG, they have been shaped by the experiences of great economic success, well-functioning democracy, a well-developed system of welfare, and restrictions followed in foreign policy. Zdzisław Krasnodębski, a Polish sociologist and expert on Germany, said: "The historical consciousness of modern Germans is limited to the democratic post-war history of their country. Widespread is the feeling that today's Germany is a country that 'does good' and conducts the policy of reason."²² If one combines the feeling with the general tendency to anthropologize memory - to approach the past through an individual fate - the career of refugees and resettlers as victims becomes more understandable.

The unification of Germany has led to abolishing the limitations imposed on collective memory. The limitations resulted from the German states' dependence on major superpowers, and their constant ideological rivalry. The new Germany has now more freedom in practicing historical politics, and wants to make use of it. It aspires to the role of a "normal" power comparable to France and Britain, free from the burden of the responsibility for the brutal past. Germany strives after "normalization" of its attitude towards history. These aspirations are not new - they previously appeared in the days of the

²² Niemcy piszą historię na nowo (Interview with Zdzisław Krasnodębski), „Frona” (46) 2008, p. 229

„old“ Federal Republic - but the unification allowed their vigorous execution. Particularly symbolic was the redefinition of the unconditional capitulation of the Third Reich (May 8, 1945) from „defeat“ into „liberation“. In 2004, during the anniversary celebration of the Allied landing in Normandy (June 6, 1944), German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder went even further, and symbolically introduced Germany into the circle of the „victors“. In the new historical politics, the German victims of bombings as well as the victims of the flight and expulsions began to play a prominent role in a project to “normalize” the national attitude towards the past. It seems that the Federation of Expellees started to act in a particularly favorable historical moment. At the end of 1998, „German Ostdienst“, the Federation’s press organ, released a slogan: „Who wants to dominate the future, must first master the past”²³ – being a slight travesty of a party slogan from the Orwellian novel „1984”²⁴. It is hard to predict how they will „dominate” the future; it is easier to judge how they have „mastered” the past.

The most peculiar thing about the project of the past promoted by the „expellees”, was that it de-contextualized the flight and resettlements. They were pushed out of the context of war started by the Third Reich, the Nazi occupational policy in Poland, the reorganization of European relations triggered by German aggressions, and finally, the international situation after the war. The post-war propaganda of the resettlers popularized the theory that the Germans from the East had fallen victim to Czech and Polish nationalists, who obsessively desired to create ethnically homogeneous states with no national minorities. In 1945, Poland was actually controlled neither by nationalists nor even by ultra-conservatives, but by political forces that fought these two groupings with particular determination. The influence of the Polish government had no influence (the one in exile or that imposed by Moscow) on Poland’s political shift towards the west. The decision to the transfer of Germans was issued by the major superpowers. Nevertheless, it corresponded with the general feelings of the Polish people, and the stand of main political forces in Poland and in exile. The westward shift of the Polish border required the relocation of Germans, otherwise it would have been nonsensical. Theoretically, some part of the German population could have remained, however, Polish experiences with the German minority as well as the German occupation, the destruction of Warsaw and the expulsion of its inhabitants, made it impossible.

From the German point of view, the de-contextualization was almost indispensable for the promotion of victims of the flight and expulsion. German political language describes them as the „displaced”. This projects the fates of people unjustly, and without any reason, uprooted from their homeland,

²³ „Deutscher Ostdienst” December 11, 1998 r.

²⁴ “Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.” (Trans. Note)

people hurt by usurpers who removed them - the only rightful owners – from their land, and expropriated their property. The “Charter of the Ethnic German Expellees” of August 5, 1950, does not even mention the non-German victims; it advances the status of German “expellee” to the victim of the worst suffering who is magnanimous enough to renounce “revenge and retaliation” (sic!). That charter, proclaimed more than half a century ago, could be considered a historical document, if the Federation of Expellees did not keep referring to it. German politicians read the charter as a gesture of generosity; they are even thinking of establishing a public holiday to commemorate the day it had been declared. All major political parties are of the view that the German “expellees” experienced great “suffering” and “injustice” (das Unrecht). The Federation of Expellees claims that German suffering was one the most unique and extraordinary phenomena *in the history of twentieth-century Europe*. The “displaced” are obviously trying to possess German and European collective visions of the past by encoding into their (long-term) memories the image of two fundamental European catastrophes: the Holocaust and the forced relocation of Germans. They do not deny the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but demand the recognition of “expulsions” as almost equally unique. They define the twentieth century as the “Century of Expulsions”.

The federal government presents a more moderate stand, especially since the tacit agreement of Polish authorities to musealize the “expulsions” in Berlin (2008) was not easy to obtain. The government officials ensure that the newly established institution will commemorate the expulsions in accordance with the actual sequence of events: from the war started by the Third Reich, to the transfer of the German population from East to West. From the German viewpoint, however, the most important seems the general acceptance for the project to include the refugees and resettlers into the vast “community of victims” comprising the Armenians, Albanians, Finns and Poles. It is obvious that, at the same time, the opposite group – the “community of perpetrators” has also expanded, which, in the opinion of Germans, automatically involves the extension by the expelling nations, including the Czech and Polish people. What is thus being attempted is the creation of two big communities: of perpetrators and of victims, to give an impression that every nation, in fact, is both a perpetrator and a victim. Every nation - so are the Germans, the Poles and the Czechs. Instead of a clear black-and-white image, there is an image full of grays that blurs German responsibility for two major European catastrophes. If the image is accepted, no one will ever be able to point to the actual victims and perpetrators of World War II.

Hubert Orłowski

The memory of institutionalized violence and historical semantics

*“As long as something lasts,
It never remains
what it will become.”¹*

*“Past events do not suddenly
transform into memories;
they become memories through the collective
desire for meaning,
through traditions and perceptions
deriving from social milieus”²*

It cannot be denied that the title of the essay is awkward and uninviting. It embraces several terms, each requiring a separate definitional explanation, which should not be, however, expected in the introduction, but searched for within the general discourse of the text.

Reflections over the text's key category - “expulsion” - will revolve around the following “parameters” of the discourse:

- questions of the simultaneity of the unsimultaneous of Polish and German war and postwar experiences;
- role of deprivation (sense of injustice) in building cultural memory;
- tension between the culturally “pro war” narrative and the narrative stigmatizing violence “as such”;
- changes in understanding the ethnic (“tribal”) and/or political character of the nation of victims and/or perpetrators.

To examine the above categories, one should rely on evidence that, after being selected from the huge mass of source materials and secondary literature on the extensive field of relations between “deprivation and national identity building”, remains hidden in one's “operational memory” to be used in need. I refer to facts established long ago, at the beginning of the 90s. I reintroduce my term *Der Topos der ‘verlorenen Heimat’* [*The Topos of ‘the Lost Homeland’*], originally mentioned in the lexicon *Deutsche und Polen. 100 Schlüsselbegriffe* [*Germany and Poland. 100 Key Terms*] (1992), and refer to the term's modi-

¹ M. W a l s e r, : *Ein springender Brunnen*. Frankfurt am Main 1998, p. 9. [Trans. A. M.].

² E. F r a n ç o i s, H. S c h u l z, *Einleitung*, in: E. François, H. Schulze (Eds.): *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. Munich 2001, vol. 1, p. 13. [Trans. A. M.].

fied version, presented in *Semantyka deprywacji* [*Semantics of depravation*] (2003), as well as to *Utracona ojczyzna. Przymusowe wysiedlenia, deportacje i przesiedlenia jako wspólne doświadczenie* [*Lost Homeland. Enforced Displacements, Deportations and Relocations*] (1996) – a post-conference volume issued by the Instytut Zachodni [Institute for Western Affairs], but primarily to a series of texts, whose most important part have been collected in the volume *Zrozumieć świat* [*To Understand the World*] (2003). I refer to them but also deny them since, “for the present moment”, I can see no reason for deconstructing the central theses I had stated before.

The “operational memory” of expulsion discourse should contain the following perspectivizations: (1) the organization of memory in accordance with the rule “Deconstruction-Recycling-Performance” (e.g. from negative identity towards the identity of a victim community), (2) the referential ubiquity of Polish and German deprivation literature (mainly fiction), (3) the sequence of elements used in constructing the memory of identity.

On the necessity of historical semantics

The meaning and function of the background assumptions of historical semantics are extremely important. For precision’s sake, I will confine myself to the expressive theories of an outstanding historical semanticist, Dietrich Busse that discuss the extent and depth of the effect of terms, were terms represent (co-)causative factors in constructing the framework of collective memory, and collective memory is understood as defined by Halbwachs. Such an understanding coincides with powerful arguments of the leading orientations in the field of German historical semantics, represented, among many others, by Reinhart Koselleck or Hans Friedrich Bödeke. “A significant part of political activity – states Busse – relies on symbolic actions. A struggle for terms is nothing else but the struggle for the area of the central symbolic elements of political activity and public political communication. As an element of power structures and an object of discussion on participation in power or its distribution, political language enters the gaze of political actors and public perception, only when the hegemony of power over the language and its contents is broken. Political terms do not only describe facts and circumstances. In case of the semantics of central political key terms (*Leitvokabeln*), the aim is to enforce one’s own interpretation of reality. Who wants to enforce the interpretation of a term, aims to enforce the interpretation of reality. Therefore, the dominance of political semantics has been synonymous with an attempt to dominate the interpretation of social and political reality”³.

The long quote should always be with those who deal with the discourse of expulsions, especially when one assumes that the hermeneutic edge of Busse’s disquisition is, in fact, the idea of thought-styles (and collectives), understood

³ D. B u s s e, *Anmerkungen zur politischen Semantik*, in: P. S i l l e r, G. P i t z (Ed.): *Politik als Inszenierung. Zur Ästhetik im Medienzeitalter*, Baden-Baden 2000, p. 93 [Trans. A. M].

as “a directed perception and the adequate mental and material processing of what has been perceived”, which comes from, almost completely forgotten, Ludwik Fleck (1935/1986)⁴. At this point, it is necessary to give his definition of the “product of collective thinking” that he takes to be “a certain picture, which is visible only to anybody who takes part in this social activity, or a thought, which is also clear to the members of the collective only. What we do think and how we do see depends on the thought-collective to which we belong. (...) ‘To see’ means: to recreate a picture, at a suitable moment created by the mental collective to which one belongs”⁵. That is how – in the consequence of a particular thinking style – a “scientific fact” comes into being, which for the present discussion stands for the “fact of historical identity”.

And now, the time has come to look at the previously stated “parameters” of the discourse of expulsions.

The simultaneity of the unsimultaneous of Polish and German war and post war experiences

Polish and German comparative literary studies confirm the hypothesis of the “common experience”, and at the same time, accept the theory that points two common (culture of) memory. I lean towards José Ortega y Gasset’s thesis of the unsimultaneous acquisition (and maintenance) of everyday consciousness. The view, advocating for the the considerable and significant hiatus between the nature and complexity of deprivation in the fates of Polish and German writers is of key importance. The roots of deprivation lie in the different algorithmization of biographies and in divergent key group experiences. In his essay *O pamięci zbiorowej* [*On the collective memory*], Jerzy Jedlicki wrote: “Collective memory? There is no such a thing as collective memory. The memory is always and exclusively individual, which does not change the fact that some of its contents are common to many individuals, and that there exists - as the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs wrote – ‘the social framework of memory’.” Jedlicki had preceded Jan Assmann in formulating the thesis that people are “editing their own biographies”, which corresponds to Pierre Bourdieu’s idea of the “biographical illusion”: “the memories of individual human beings do not sum up - they do not give one collective sum, but are often in a fierce conflict. [...] what gets inscribed into the memory depends on the personal situation of the witness of events, his observational position, and his intellectual equipment. A traumatic experience must be - even if only for personal use - expressed in linguistic categories through which a participant, a witness or a victim of events, communicates the experience and adjusts it to the system of his moral, religious and national

⁴ Cf. L. Fleck, *Powstanie i rozwój faktu naukowego. Wprowadzenie do nauki o stylu myślowym i kolektywie myślowym*, trans. from German. M. Tuskiewicz [Title of English Translation: *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*], Lublin 1986, p. 131.

⁵ L. Fleck, *O obserwacji naukowej postrzeganiu w ogóle* (*Scientific Observation and Perception*) „Przegląd Filozoficzny” 1935, s. 76

beliefs, or revises the system itself. Historical upheavals are known to be the moments of radical changes of historical perspective that, in consequence, may alter entire plots of autobiographic narrative."⁶

Wilhelm Pinder once suggested - under the "time cube" formula - an ingenious idea for defining the "simultaneity of the unsimultaneous". The counterfactual comparison between two states of consciousness in people with two birth certificates and affiliations, and hence two historical sensibilities and generational experiences, allows a dual perception that contributes to the confrontation of two perspectives of historical time. "For every man - states Pinder - the same time is different, namely, a different era. For every man, every single moment has a different meaning, not only because it is experienced in an individual aura, but - as a real 'moment', beyond any individualization - one and the same year is for a fifty-year-old a different moment of life than for a man in his twenties."⁷

The literary thematization of deportations, relocations and expulsions should be looked at in the context of a literary-historical "grand narrative". It is tantamount to a search for indicators reconstructing its specificity at the point where the mental processes of the historical experiences of the communities that lost their "little homelands" (mainly in the eastern Europe) are absorbed by key discourses of post war German and Polish literature.

The literary testimony to the unsimultaneous of the collective experiences of Polish and German communities is strong and clear. The German post war literature largely addresses the twilight of the Third Reich, its defeat and this defeat's consequences. The thesis of a dividing line between the themes of Polish and German war and occupation literature is not exaggerated and derives from three different kinds of collective experiences. The Polish fiction of the war and post-war period tackles mainly with the mid-September Polish defeat (1st and 17th of September) that has been seen as a downfall of the world of cultural values, the wartime daily life, in other words, the "pretend life" (Kazimierz Wyka), and finally, experiences of the "stony world" (Tadeusz Borowski), and the "world apart" (Gustaw Herling-Grudziński) that names the suffering of a concentration camp or Gulag. People "driven to slaughter" who escaped death (Tadeusz Różewicz), and experienced extreme violence are a motif that (not accidentally) dominates this chapter of Polish literature. German contemporary literature treats of a relatively different collective experiences: the Shock of Stalingrad - a herald of an ignominious military defeat, the inferno of Dresden - a metaphor of life or rather dying under bombs, and finally, the war's end - the time of mass flight and enforced displacement.

Even a cursory reading of Polish research literature on the Polish eastern borderland (Kresy) is enough to notice the growing interest in the literature of the lost little homeland. The scholars agree that, in Polish literature, the

⁶ J. Jedliński, *O panięci zbiorowej*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, July 26.-27, 1997, [Trans. A. M.].

⁷ W. Pinder, *Das Problem der Generationen in der Kunstgeschichte Europas* [1926]. Leipzig 1941 p. 11f, [Trans. A. M.].

exodus or deportations have been emotionally of relatively small importance. Central issues addressed by the works in question are the portrayals of suffering: in prisons, in camps, during the deportations or exile, and finally, the threat of civil war. In the German literature of the “homeland lost”, the central theme or issue is the (enforced) marching itself (*Weg- und Fortbewegung* – motion and movement). In Polish literature, the theme of the exodus has been peripheral since the loss of homeland was the first and less vital stage of suffering. More fundamental, almost existential experiences refer to the destination – the place where the deportation or banishment ended up. Thus, the term “resettlement literature” seems more adequate when speaking of literary works on the relocation to Kazakhstan, Siberia, Kołyma, Auschwitz, Workuta and Treblinka. The Polish literature, both in the country and in exile, labelled the “displacement” literature as the literature of “exile”. There was also another term, “Soviet-labour-camp literature”, a variant of “camp literature”, associated with the motif of journey, which also referred to the Tyrtaiian-heroic trend of Polish romantic tradition. The journey is a motif of a “fundamental structural function”; “not only in the physical sense, but primarily, in the symbolic one. A keystone of sense, or rather, nonsense is the destination, the final point of a journey. It is hard to expect from authors who went through the dramatic pacification of Volhynian civil war, and the deeply traumatic borderland events to perceive resettlement (e.g. from Lvov to Breslau) as an act of particular deprivation.

With different plots and themes, the “subliminal history” settled firmly into the literature of the German eastern territories. German “borderlands”, abandoned due to military activities and forced deportations, manifested themselves in German postwar literature in a different, less comprehensive, manner - synthetically imperfect and (a)historically selective. German borderlands, unlike the Polish ones, were not a cultural border area, but a cultural periphery, and as such we find them in the literature.

Between the culturally ‘pro war’ narrative and the narrative stigmatizing violence ‘as such’

Modern assessment of violence, in the context of both the perpetrator and the victim, splits into two areas: legitimate and illegitimate violence. While the former, the limited violence is largely internalized and given deeper psychological and moral acceptance, the unlicensed violence is totally morally stigmatized, exciting fear and horror. This allocation of resources, mechanisms and strategies of violence has deep cultural roots and comes close to the mechanisms of tabooed behaviors. Recent studies have substantially progressed our knowledge in this respect, releasing works such as Herfried Münkler’s *Gewalt und Ordnung. Das Bild des Krieges im politischen Denken* [*Violence and Order. The Image of War in Political Thought*] (1992), Heinrich von Stietencron and Jörg Rüpke’s excellent anthology *Töten im Krieg* [*Killing at War*] (1995),

and finally, the written reflections of Jan Philipp Reemtsma, Wolfgang Sofsky and Zygmunt Bauman on modernity and the Holocaust.

In *Odpominania* [*Remini-senses*], I wrote years ago: “Why do acts of ‘legitimate’ violence - far crueler and more sinister, represented by hundreds of thousands dying in trenches, thousands of burned or killed by blanket bombings - excite less terror than equally awful acts of cutting off genitals or ripping intestines out, or rapes of women in front of their husbands, fathers or children? Why are slaughters - in the literal sense of the word – carried out on defenseless civilians, always discussed in terms of bestiality of perpetrators, whereas soldiers who decimate their own and the enemy’s troops receive medals for bravery and get absolved, even if thousand civilians were killed? It is due to the pressure of symbolic culture, mental matrices, that over millennia have been instilled in communities. Unlike legitimate violence, violence culturally ‘il-legalized’, is believed to affront personal dignity and violate the sense of security, while the former has been successfully tamed and mollified. Moreover, legitimate violence often help climb up the latter of social prestige. Clausewitz promulgated his great – since highly acclaimed and respected (from Hitler to Mao) – truths (whatever one might think of them) that talked about laws of war and not its lawlessness!”⁸

In the process of war sanctioning, which strives to give sense to the senseless phenomenon of war, a human being experiences a kind of division in which his physical and ideological realities become separated, “the incontestable reality of the body – the body in pain, the body maimed, the body dead and hard to dispose of – is separated from its source and conferred onto an ideology or issue or instance of political authority”⁹. Those deeply moving and analytically perceptive words of the American scholar Elaine Scarry, from her philippic against harm done to people and by people, *The Body in Pain* (1985), are still apt today.

To expropriate disability and death in favor of a target, usually dressed in an ideological euphemism, a dense network of metaphors and evasive words have been invented: the “field of glory”, the “harvest of war”, the “unknown soldier”. These phrases suggest that one goes to war to kill, and not to fall. Those killed and mutilated are reduced to “side effects” since wars “are” waged, and only sometimes things end up (collaterally) with failure. Hegemonic cultural memory needs to find a strategy for communing with mass death for a society that has witnessed death. The necessity is discussed in Heinrich von Stietencron’s *Killing at War*, where the author refers to sites of memory that legitimize ex post killing “as a specific power correlate”¹⁰. Legitimization of violence involves misery and suffering that is inherent to killing; the suffering should not be allowed (legitimately!) to roam unsupervised. Emmanuel

⁸ H. Orłowski, *Warmia z oddali. Odpominania*, Olsztyn 2000, p. 49f, [Trans. A. M.].

⁹ E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford New York Toronto, 1985, p. 65.

¹⁰ Cf. H. von Stietencron, *Töten im Krieg. Grundlagen und Entwicklungen*, w: H. von Stietencron, J. Rüpk e (Ed.): *Töten im Krieg*, Munich 1995, p. 34f.

Levinas' dictum that "the justification of the neighbor's pain is certainly the source of all immorality"¹¹, points to the possible way of "neutralizing" moral doubts.

The violence of World War II as a total war - however great the damage, suffering and deprivation - was given a certificate of cultural civil rights or, in other words, a cultural agreement to sanction the acts of war, whereas the actions conducted "out of control" and after the (symbolic) caesura known as "the war's end", are regarded as culturally stigmatized and morally reprehensible. If one wants to kill, one needs a "killing license" - then the killed fall into the proper bureaucratic folder. If a journalist Günter Franzen sees the drowned on the Gustloff as "murder victims" (*Mordopfer*), if he claims that all those who died in mass escapes deserve a status of the 'murdered' (*ermordete ostdeutsche Flüchtlinge*¹²), we deal with a specific reference that is based on a culturally selective articulation of killing and the related actions.

Therefore - trying to obey the rules of inner referential coherence - one should treat the offer of understanding the cultural memory seriously. The memory of suffering is not given as such, especially that the articulation of suffering, pain and trauma might be different. The articulation of suffering and deprivation is never given as such, but stems from a specific cultural tradition.

Authentic and directly experienced suffering, says Elaine Scarry, escapes verbal expression. The suffering of others, unfortunately, has no spokesmen. "Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned"¹³. The American cultural anthropologist also draws far-reaching conclusions about the (in) definable nature of pain: "its resistance to language is not simply one of the incidental or accidental attributes but is essential to what it is"¹⁴. Pain is a feeling one is not able to communicate, or describe; at the moment of suffering one's state is close to autism. Therefore, "physical pain - unlike any other state of consciousness - has no referential content"¹⁵. Love or hatred are feelings one has for somebody; fear is a feeling of something. Pain takes no external objects; pain is a feeling one has.

¹¹ E. Levinas, *Entre Nous. Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith, Barbara Harshaw, London, 2006, p. 85.

¹² G. Franzen, *Der alte Mann und sein Meer*, „Die Zeit“, (7) February 7, 2002, p.39; and: G. Franzen: *Der alte Mann und sein Meer*, „Die Welt“, (6) February 9, 2002.

¹³ E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford New York Toronto, 1985, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 5.

Deprivation (sense of injustice) in building cultural memory

The academic jargon of arts and humanities defines 'taboo' as an unwritten code that dictates what must not be articulated, enforcing determined patterns of behavior. In this case, I see a taboo as the cultural memory's division of reality into civilian and military, into one's "own" deprivation, experienced in "civilian" conditions ("postwar" violence) and the suffering and loss consequent upon the acts of war. The war was initiated and conducted by the "system", whereas the suffering of the "great flight and expulsions" represents the deprivation of millions of "civilian people" from the East. No other, more accurate observation does better describe the central issue of the founding myth of postwar Germany. In this respect, 'taboo' will refer to the failure of the "male class" as the political heart of the German nation. How much easier it is to write about the failure of abstract institutions than particular people, particular men: husbands, brothers, fathers, sons...

„Sag mir wo die Männer sind / wo sind sie geblieben? / Sag mir wo die Männer sind / was ist geschehen? / Sag mir wo die Männer sind / zogen fort - der Krieg beginnt". These are the words of a song Marlena Dietrich sang many years ago. Although its popularity in Poland has been rather modest, the question remains: „Where have all the young men gone..."? As in the title of Heinrich Böll's story *Where have you been, Adam*, the particular question is the standard issue of the German literature that has asked about the presence or absence, about participation in the world war or its lack. Today, not only is the sense of the cardinal question denied, but its monopoly, in terms of the full problematization of time testimony, has also been relativized.

We have witnessed significant changes in the way the society of the "The Republic of Berlin" perceives their past. Germans' consciousness of their victimhood is being born as a "complement to their national identity" (Wulf Segebrecht). The most spectacular media trigger for that phenomenon was Günter Grass's novella *Im Krebsgang* [*Crabwalk*]. The Nobel laureate announced its main plot at the meeting with Wiesława Szymborska, Czesław Miłosz and Tomas Venclova in 2000 in Vienna: "Bizarre and disturbing it seems, how late and reluctant we are in remembering the suffering, Germans experienced at wartime. The consequences of the carelessly started and feniously continued war - destroyed German cities, hundreds of thousands civilians dead in blanket bombings, and the expulsions involving wandering and homelessness of twelve million Germans from the East - have been reduced to the background."¹⁶ Before Grass, the German victimhood had been mentioned by W. G. Sebald in *Luftkrieg und Literatur* [*Air War and Literature*], through the elaborate construction of the discourse of silence or depreciation, practiced by German writers and intellectuals who had contested the postwar reality.

¹⁶G. Grass, Cz. Miłosz, W. Szymborska, T. Venclova, *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung*. Göttingen 2001, p. 32f., [Trans. A. M.].

In this form, Grass' judgement is inadmissible due to the number of writers who have dealt with the problem of German suffering, as well as the entire myriad of literature on the issues of harm, injustice and "community of victims". On the other hand, the critics point to the reluctance to discuss the traumatic experiences of „brothers and sisters from the East" and to present several millions of Germans, deprived of their little homelands as the collective scapegoat of the Third Reich, which seems symptomatic of the defiance similar to the sixties generation gap conflict. "Those" who were more victims, "must have been" more perpetrators, especially when one thinks of the semantic elimination of the expulsions of German Jews from the Reich after 1933 and from the foundational contribution. "Rivalry" or "victim competition" still exists and will last for a long time. A journalist of a provincial newspaper speaks even of the "genocide of the refugees" (*die tragische Genozid-Geschichte der Flüchtlinge*¹⁷), using the term reserved for the Holocaust of Jews.

In the speech "Germany of many voices. In Herder's spirit. On the necessity of the National Foundation and its expected role", given at the meeting of the Council of the Federal Cultural Foundation on May 21st 2002 in Halle, Gunter Grass emphasized the experience of cultural deprivation that "belongs to Germany's past together with the irreversible loss of provinces and cities. I am thinking of East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, Danzig and Breslau. Now, as in the early 70s, I say it is true, we had lost our land, but no document, no Potsdam Agreement states that the cultural substance of those provinces and cities must be forgotten through negligence"¹⁸.

Through the „cultural substance" of the lost provinces, Günter Grass unconsciously refers to the mnemonic technique categories and procedures proposed by Jan Assmann in his interpretation of cultural memory. According to Assmann, cultural memory has only one main function: to convey meaning. "The cultural memory is oriented at fixed points in the past; its central issue is an institutionalized mnemonic technique. (...) The past freezes in symbolic figures that memory clings on. (...) The cultural memory does not register true history but its recollection."¹⁹ It means that what Gunter Grass demanded was the care of an "institutionalized mnemonic technique".

In that context, I feel allowed to ask this, by no means ironic, question: Can one (already) speak of the inheritability of deprivation - can deprivation be inherited from generation to generation like an expellee status? If everyone born to the expelled parents becomes an expellee themselves, what kind of concept do we deal with – an anticipation or awaiting?

Deprivation is defined as "a mental condition that occurs when essential – biological, sensory, emotional, cultural and social – human needs are not

¹⁷ L. Schröder, *Günter Grass ganz groß*, "Bocholt-Borkener Volksblatt", February 2, 2002.

¹⁸ G. Grass, *Die vielen Stimmen Deutschlands. Im Geiste Herders: Warum eine Nationalstiftung not tut, und was ihre Aufgaben sein müßten*, „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (69) March 22, 2002, p. 44, [Trans. A. M.].

¹⁹ J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. Munich 1999, p. 52, [Trans. A. M.].

satisfied. The feeling of relative deprivation might occur when one's living situation does not deteriorate, or even slightly improves, but the changes in the situation of other people are evaluated as more advantageous."²⁰ The condition includes the feeling of loss of important emotional biotope (for people and their communities) that is followed by the feeling of sacrifice. It is executed through language and not beyond it, not beyond the existent world of concepts, metaphors and formulas. Therefore, hermeneutical consequences seem of no small importance, particularly when one realizes that the key concepts of deprivation - „Heimat” (little homeland) and „Vertreibung” (expulsion) – have not been given by God, but are man-made. Thus, the terminology around the key concept “expulsion” makes itself a factor of hardly imaginable consequences. In the tangled political debates of the immediate postwar period, whoever entered the field, had to support the German reason of state since the key term „Vertreibung” [expulsion] was legitimized by the Constitution of the Federal Republic (article 116.1)! Today in Poland, there are binding official translations of “uciekinier” [refugee] and “wypędzony” [expellee]²¹, therefore their connotations and emotional aura, acquire the strength of popular references.

It appears that the stigmatizing power of the term that is central to German (and Polish) social-political language, originates from German law, and as such, the term functions without previous, and mandatory in science, verification and falsification. The term „Vertreibung” – strengthened by the referential power of the state, and firmly anchored in derivative terminology - „Recht auf Heimat („right for homeland”) and „Heimatverlust” (homeland loss), and the heritability of the expellee status (article 116.1) – affects only a certain part of the phenomenon of the flight and forced deportations (in other words: the forced transfer of people) after 1945.

The purpose of historical semantics is not to reason for this or that terminological option, especially since arbitrary terminological decisions have proved to fail in practice. However, some terminology needs to be organized, and the attempts undertaken by historians (such as Krystyna Kersten²²) or linguists (e.g.: Reinhard Roche²³) should not be allowed to pass without mention. The organizational area is not the matter of semantics, but, whatever criticism one may apply to it, it allows a comprehensive, typological (i.e. in keeping with set-oriented criteria) presentation of the expulsion complex in terms of diversified (in time) mechanisms, intentions, institutions, and

²⁰ *Praktyczny słownik współczesnej polszczyzny*. H. Zgółkowska (Ed.), Poznań 1996, vol. 8, p. 27.

²¹ Cf. the Polish translation of the Fundamental Statute of the Federal Republic of Germany: *Ustawa Zasadnicza (Konstytucja) Republiki Federalnej Niemiec*, Poznań 1997, p. 267.

²² K. K e r s t e n, *Przymusowe przemieszczenia ludności – próba typologii*, in: H. Orłowski, A. Sakson (Eds.): *Utracona ojczyzna. Przymusowe wysiedlenia, deportacje i przesiedlenia jako wspólne doświadczenie*. Poznań 1996, p. 13f.

²³ I refer to the book-keeping (or rather book-altering) typology that resulted from the discussion of the German-Polish Textbook Commission. Cf. R. R o c h e: *„Transfer” statt „Vertreibung”*. *Semantisch-pragmatische Überlegungen zur Lösung einer aktuellen, komplexen Sprachsituation*, *„Muttersprache”* 87 (1977), p. 320.

perpetrators. The thing is not to give up “expulsion” as a generic term, but to make it a term used without exceptions or ideological connotations. “Right” and “wrong” uses of the term “expellees” are still being argued, with much reluctance to extend its meaning to strangers, and not only to one-of-ours. Examples seem countless.

The crucial role in shaping the Polish contemporary public opinion on the issue of the “expulsion syndrome” has been played by Włodzimierz Borodziej’s research team who, under the auspices of the Borussia Cultural Community Association, have prepared collections of documentary sources with extensive notes and comments. In the *Final Report* to the research on the “expulsion complex” in December 1996, Włodzimierz Borodziej and Artur Hajnicz accepted the expellees-as-victims option. They argued that the reconstruction of the expulsion complex should be a narrative from the perspective of objects, and not subjects of that historic event. Their recognition of the term “wypędzenie” [expulsion], the authors justify as follows: ‘Expulsion’ - ‘Vertreibung’ - was a historical process and an event of enormous social and emotional significance. ‘Vertriebene’ is a word used for those, and by those who went through that process. It is a crude word of a strong emotional charge [but, at the same time, the most adequate to name those people’s sentiments²⁴]. Historians, sociologists, lawyers or political scientists must not alter the name that renders the intensity of social sentiments. The regret over German suffering due to the expulsions seems hypocritical when followed by an attempt to designate the event differently from what its victims want it to be called.”²⁵ I think that what has been said exhausts the subject, and there is nothing more to be added.

However, there are reasonable doubts concerning the spontaneous nature of the emergence and origin of the term “expulsion”. Mathias Beer’s thorough monograph on the implementation of the first project to document the German expulsions from Central-Eastern Europe (*Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa, 1951-1961*), substantiates that all crucial thematic documents and works by 1950, referred to the expellees with a use of a completely different term - „Ausweisung”.²⁶ „Kraftausdruck Vertreibung” developed later from the context of the complex policy (of memory) of the young Federal Republic, and under different circumstances – on the fringes of the trauma of the expulsions. Therefore – as argued by Jürgen Joachimsthaler in his dissertation on the “semantics of remembrance”²⁷ – it would be appropriate to use the term “expulsion” always there where we deal with

²⁴ The important syntagm is missing in the Polish translation. Cf. W. Borodziej, A. Hajnicz, *Der Komplex der Vertreibung. Abschlußbericht*. Warsaw, December 7, 1996, p. 1 (transcript in German).

²⁵ W. Borodziej, A. Hajnicz, *Raport końcowy*, in: W. Borodziej, A. Hajnicz (Eds.): *Kompleks wypędzenia*. Cracow 1998, p. 373f.

²⁶ Cf. M. Beer, *Im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Das Großforschungsprojekt „Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa”*, „Vierteljahresschrift für Zeitgeschichte”, 46 (1998), p. 345f.

²⁷ Cf. J. Joachimsthaler, *Die Semantik des Erinnerns. Verlorene Heimat – mythisierte Landschaften*, in: E. Mehnert (Ed.): *Landschaften der Erinnerung*, Frankfurt am Main 2001, p. 195.

“ideologization” of the term, in relation to the expulsions of German people since the Fall of 1944. But then, other “expulsions” would be displaced from the “map of memory”.

That judgment has been argued for by the historians, Eve and Hans Henning Hahn. Under the entry “Flight and Expulsion” of the lexicon *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* [*German Sites of Memory*], the authors write about recollection procedures rather than the unverifiable freshness and quality of sentiments. They see the term “expulsion” as culturally articulated: “The beginning of German memory of the ‘refugees and expellees’ was not triggered by a historical fact; the remembrance has not resulted from the free game of memories, but from the specific politics of memory that appeared after German refugees and the expelled from central Europe had arrived in the western zones of occupation.” Particularly important are their reflections on the construction of terms: “The term ‘refugees and resettlers’ is not descriptive; it is a construct of a peculiar and controversial form of memory that developed in the 50s in the western occupational areas - mainly in the Federal Republic due to the support from all the Bundestag parties and the state - and since then has been cultivated.”²⁸

Let’s return to the previously stated normative directive “they must not alter the name that renders the intensity of social sentiments”. We should also reconsider if the discussed concept actually names “true sentiments of the people”. What is the present discussion about: the elements of pain and sorrow or the (non-indifferent) memory? Memory is never indifferent: there are recollections it rewards for, and recollections it condemns, punishing their author with frustration or the complex of guilt. The above mentioned researchers confuse the exuberant world of feelings with its cultural articulation. The central argument of the editors of *Wypędzeni ze wschodu* [*The Expelled from the East*] is very similar: “we do not perceive the ‘expulsions’ as the category of the comprehensive history of expulsions, but as a tiny part of a phenomenon based on individual and emotionally colored experiences.”²⁹ Only then will “expulsion” or “exile” become superior descriptive terms when their origins and involvement in current politics are suppressed.

The difference between “expulsions” and “forced relocations” is that the first term’s connotations have reduced their subject to the role of a victim only. The victims of expulsions are never respected as witnesses to history; pain and suffering are to absolve them even for the duty of bearing witness to the truth. Götz Aly and Karl Schlögel, experts on the “short century”, claim that “the action of ‘Generalplan Ost’ or Auschwitz [as a slogan] should not be given to its victims [Germans]”³⁰ as arguments for the expulsions. The state-

²⁸ E. Hahn, H. Hahn, *Flucht und Vertreibung*, in: E. François, H. Schulze (Eds.): *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. 1, Munich 2001, p. 338f., [Trans. A. M.].

²⁹ H.-J. Bömelburg, R. Traba, *Wprowadzenie*, in: H.-J. Bömelburg, R. Stößinger, R. Traba (Eds.): *Wypędzeni ze wschodu. Wspomnienia Polaków i Niemców*. Olsztyn 2001, p. 9. [Trans. A. M.]

³⁰ G. Aly, K. Schlögel, *Verschiebebahnhof Europa. Völker, die Geschichte leiden: Umsiedlung, Deportation und Vertreibung prägten das zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung”, (70) March 23-24, 2002, p. 17, [Trans. A. M.].

ment seems impossible to contradict. If one tries to oppose the well preserved deprivation (experienced personally or in a cultural memory) to the textbook truth, one should not expect persuasive success. Both of the arguments belong to the different levels of the memory (or 'remini-sense') discourse. The former refers to the understanding of the mechanisms of institutionalized violence, and therefore to a perpetrators' perspective; the latter, to the emotionally comprehensible, albeit culturally (in varying degrees) adjusted memory of victims. And a considerable part of the memory is taken by the pain and suffering that have (already) been culturally articulated.

Nemmersdorf is a name of a place where the Red Army Soldiers committed their exceptionally cruel crimes - a place that has been an icon, a symbol and a synonym for the suffering of civilian people in Eastern Prussia. The name has obscured the memory of two massacres that took place on two last days of January 1945, and became a part of the German exodus. I am referring to the murder of Jewish inmates of Stutthof, witnessed by many German refugees and assisted by local administration authorities, as well as the cruel murder at Alt-Jablonken (today Małe Zawady), committed on a group of Poles that outnumbered the inhabitants of Nemmersdorf. The German people had suffered agony for weeks and, at the same time, "others" were inflicted pain and suffering in the name of the Reich and by its institutions. In a recognized *East Prussian Journal*, Duke Hans von Lehndorff's³¹ described a visit at his aunt's (von Stein) estate located 2-3 kilometers from Małe Zawady. Although the author refers to the tales of servants and local farm workers about the atrocities that had followed the entrance of the Red Army Soldiers and the Polish looters, no single word did he dedicate to that extremely cruel - even in comparison to savage front-line atrocities - crime on over a hundred Polish civilians. The murder of over a hundred Poles were seen in a different light, as if they were killed in a different dimension: academically sterile and historically distant. Whereas the suffering of every German women hurt in that area has was perceived as a unique human tragedy.

Statistics or the auction of victims

A final scene of "Downfall" (*Der Untergang*), a film depicting the last days of Hitler in his Berlin bunker, details the victims of the Second World War. The significant balance sheet fits into what might be called the "victims market discourse", and into the efforts to create the statistical image of "what had happened". But before I come to this point, I want to tell a few words about the Visible Sign (until recently known as The Centre Against Expulsions). The centre has been widely described by the subject literature. The research of the Western Institute has given the centre a lot of attention, focusing mainly on

³¹ Cf. H. Graf von Lehndorff, *Ostpreußisches Tagebuch (1947)*. Munich 1989, p. 168-213.

its legal-political aspects. This paper, however, is exclusively for the semantic dimension of the “installation to commemorate the century of expulsions”.

One of the most striking thing about the CAE's (Centre Against Expulsions) is that every project of it rises a discussion on its physical, visible character – the “concrete” structure, integrated into the urban landscape of Berlin. From the viewpoint of an archival logistics, the conversion of the already existing complexes or the construction of new objects for the Centre/Sign, seems anachronistic. Yet, this is exactly what will happen when it comes to the installation of the Visible Sign in(to) the building of Deutschlandhaus in the centre of Berlin, close to the Holocaust Memorial. If German political and intellectual class intends to set up a documentation, archival and research centre, they should know “it” does not require an architectural materialization. A network of servers in several European archives and/or museums – supervised by an international academic advisory board, and coordinated by capable managers – containing (all possible) digitalized collections of source materials from German (and foreign) archives, would act as the “centre” and fully meet the stated objectives to document and archive the past history, not to mention the research requirements. The centralization of research in monopolistically defined walls is out of date. And what about the planned museum merits of the “centre”? Today's musealization of memory, invented for historical politics (whatever it exactly means) of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is a re-make of the 19th century idea of the historical panorama. It created the illusion of the past - particularly the battles - to allow the (almost) direct experience by means of sensual, somehow organoleptic contact. It allowed to learn history by eye, by ear, by touch and even by smell. However, “by eye or ear”, history is hardly comprehensible.

Therefore, the Visible Sign is about something else, and one is allowed to believe that the debate around the physical “visible sign” - never mind the name – is about something else; about a symbolic value, about – to use Pierre Bourdieu's term – the symbolic capital of the highest quality. It is about the exclusion of certain victims of World War II and the postwar period in favor of another group, through “the installation to commemorate the century of expulsions”, known as the Visible Sing. I want to emphasize that the division is by no means ethno-national, but based on the criterion that separates the culturally legitimized and “culturally illegitimate” kinds of violence. All the reflections contained in this short text, which intends to raise awareness for the cultural articulation of (postwar) violence, remind of the, more or less, repressed discourse.

It is not very original of me to introduce the term “ligature” as a metaphorical analytical expression since it was already done, more than ten years ago, by none other than Ralph Dahrendorf, who defined ligature as “a cultural bond that helps find a path in the world of options.”³² Here, however, we will read

³² R. D a h r e n d o r f, *Das Zerbrechen der Ligaturen und die Utopie der Weltbürgergesellschaft*, in: U. B e c k, E. Beck-Gernsheim (Eds.): *Riskante Freiheiten*. Frankfurt am Main 1994, p. 424, [Trans. A. M.].

the word, borrowed from the language of typography, as the combination of the memory modules of eliminatory or/and exclusionary evaluative or referential reasons. What is Christian Meier's comment to the idea of building the Centre Against Expulsion in Berlin if not a call for returning the ligatures their right place in remembering the past?! The Centre, wrote the outstanding historian in "The Tagesspiegel" in September 2003, "to commemorate the flight and expulsions from German former territories in the East, faces an extremely difficult challenge. It should confront German passivity (*Untäterschaft*) with German suffering and present their mutual relations. [...] The centre-to-be-built owes us [Germans] more than the confrontation with the displacement of Germans and others expulsions (...). The strong fixation of German commemoration on the Jewish massacre causes that we easily forget (and neglect) the extent of our suffering - murders, harassment and relocations in Poland, where only the nation of slaves, with no educational opportunities, was expected to remain."³³ However, the remarks provided by the German historian came to nothing.

As the place of public gatherings and commemoration (*Mahnmal-Gedenkstätte*), or (in Edmund Stoiber's words) a "national memorial" (*nationale Erinnerungsstätte*), the "centre" acquires a new meaning and even a new dimension. The terms that appear in German discussions are "remember" (*gedenken*) and "warning" (*mahnen*), and also "site of memory" (*Gedenkstätte/Weihestätte*) or "memorial" (*Mahnmal*). All these words point to the foundation's principal motive, namely, the need for significant cultural, or even symbolic, capital. What is, thus, desired, is the physically existing memorial: to lay wreaths, give speeches, organize manifestations, and the terms - *Weihestätte*, *Mahnmal* [place of remembrance, memorial], and even *Requiem-Rotunde* [Requiem-Rotunda] - prove it. It is hardly a coincidence that the Visible Sign will be erected near the Holocaust Memorial and the building of Reichstag, mainly in the context of the equally coincidental or quasi-incident opinions of political actors in the discussion "around the centre". The "Auschwitz-Signature" was given even expressis verbis - albeit rarely - by milieu of the Federation of Expelles. In 2002, Erika Steinbach wrote: "In fact, the problems of Jews and the Expelled complement each other. (...) The racial obsession in both of the cases should also become the theme for our centre."³⁴ A year later, Steinbach attempted to define the term "double way of suffering". According to Steinbach, some Germans went through "double expulsion. First, as a result of the Hitler-Stalin pact, they were deprived of the Baltic and Southeast homeland (...). In 1945, they were re-expelled from the territory of new settlement in the Warta Country [Warthegau]."³⁵

The danger of such a „symbolic capital-oriented commemoration“ was noticed by Reinhard Koselleck in the mid-nineties. He joined the debate jut

³³ C h. M e i e r: *Das ungeteilte Gedenken. Vor dem „Tag der Heimat“: zur Debatte um das geplante Vertriebenen-Zentrum*, „Tagesspiegel“ September 4, 2003, p. 25, [Trans. A. M.].

³⁴ E. Steinbach, [Utterance], „Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik“, (7) 2002, p. 793, [Trans. A. M.].

³⁵ E. Steinbach, *Rede zum Tag der Heimat*, „Deutscher Ostdienst“ September 6, 2003, [Trans. A. M.].

to point to these aspects of memorials. He singled out personal (or individual) memory (*Primärerinnerung*), also described as “em-bodied memory” (*verleiblichte Erinnerung*) or “inscribed into the body” (*ingebrannt*), and therefore, was particularly skeptical about any kind of ideas for memorials that serve political expression. His book *Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne* [*The Political Cult of the Dead. Warriors Monuments in Modernism*] (1994) started a lively discussion on the project of the Holocaust Memorial near the Reichstag. Koselleck spoke against the hierarchization of victims³⁶, for which he was fiercely criticized by Ignatz Bubis, the then chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The conflict over the Koselleck’s decisive objection to the Holocaust Memorial grew from his conviction of the immorality of the “monumental strategy”, based on the exclusion of one (or more) group of victims, and in consequence, another “selection of victims”.

Let’s return, but for only a while, to the statistical research that, apart from a considerable emotional charge, carries – in this context important - arguments for designating “flight and expulsions” as ethnic cleansing, ergo genocide. Hegemonic discourse of statistics, which refers to two categories of data: twelve million refugees and expellees (without clear distinction from the other), and two million dead, murdered or missing, has dominated the public debate on “genocidal ethnic cleansing” after 1945. These estimates do not come out of nowhere but, being official, they have been acknowledged by a number of governmental institutions of the Federal Republic and by certain researchers of unlimited referential confidence. “Half-truths – said Stanisław Jerzy Lec – can never give a full picture of truth”, which also seems apt in this case.

The voices of other researchers find it particularly difficult to penetrate the scene of the public (media) discourses of expulsions. Probably the most recent introduction to the history of statistics (since once can hardly speak of studies), comes from the German historian Ingo Haar. The title of his excellent work *Die demographische Konstruktion der „Vertreibungsverluste“ - Forschungsstand, Probleme, Perspektiven, Opfer* [*The demographic structure of “expulsion losses” – research, problems and perspectives*] tells a lot. Haar draws attention to the suppression of reliable, albeit fragmented (church) studies that refer to the place, time and nature of death. Furthermore, he proposes a methodology for determining (and comparison of) the number of “documented” and “balanced” casualties (deaths).³⁷ It is “estimation” - adding, subtracting, including, excluding - Haar sees as the possibility of manipulation in the interest of the theses of “ethnic cleansing”. He violently contradicts the most recent (but prepared with a use of old methods) statistical information on victims, which has been given by politicians, especially those connected with the Federation of Expellees.

³⁶ Cf. R. K o s e l l e c k, *Die falsche Ungeduld. Wer darf vergessen werden? Das Holocaust-Mahnmal hierarchisiert*, “Die Zeit” (13) 1998.

³⁷ I. H a a r, *Die demographische Konstruktion der „Vertreibungsverluste“ - Forschungsstand, Probleme, Perspektiven, Opfer*, „Historie. Jahrbuch des Zentrums für Historische Forschung Berlin der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften“ (1) 2007/2008, p. 117.

Haar's unusually well-documented narrative concludes with the bitter punch line: "In the history of this construction [that excludes the wartime genocide], German expulsion is figured as a key to the universal history, or the history of the Second World War and the immediate postwar period. The interested public is shown the historical panorama that presents German collective victims together with the victims of Jewish genocide of the Second World War, and the Armenian genocide of World War I."³⁸

Between ethnic and political status as perpetrators and victims

The subsequent stages of the press and academic discussion of political-historical and sociological-psychological character, have shown how far we have departed from the immediate-postwar recognition of responsibility and guilt by national communities, and from estimation under the banner of the "sixty-eight generation", for instance.

The political paradigm abandons the public-scientific-press-and-media arena and is being replaced by an alternative, ethnic paradigm. The tribal or large tribal (i.e. national) approach (also) to the discourse of expulsion raises questions of its nature in the (nearest?) future. The formula of "the revenge of the victim" (introduced by Helga Hirsch) anticipates one of the most probable orientations of the discourse.

The origins of the orientation date back much further. It was proposed and defined shortly after the war's end by the prominent philosopher Günther Anders as a theory of cognitive dissonance. The social psychologist Elliot Aronson, in his famous work *The Social Animal*, used the concept of cognitive dissonance to name an "uncomfortable tension" caused by holding two psychologically inconsistent cognitions simultaneously. Causes of such cognitive dissonance have been explained by Anders' theory. In his postwar *Diaries (Tagebücher)* the emigration philosopher identifies, almost prophetically, the sequential changes in the ethnically arranged cause-and-effect chain of German social responsibility for the Third Reich crimes by an inversion of the principle: *Post hoc ergo propter hoc – Proximum, ergo primum est.*³⁹ After returning from exile to Vienna in 1950, he saw "hatred towards the real culprits" as confronted with "substitute hatred" (*Ersatzhaß*). In his diaries from the postwar period, he analyzed the cognitive dissonance on the example of his conversation with a Viennese on Vienna bombing by the Allies. The private history reverses causality. The bombings of Warsaw, Rotterdam or London were, in the eyes of the Viennese, a fair punishment for the Allied bombing of Vienna: "the ruins occupy his mind so much that, he had seen them before Warsaw and London were destroyed".⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid. p. 119.

³⁹ „*Post hoc ergo propter hoc...*” - (after this therefore because of this) is a logical fallacy which states that in a sequence of events, the first event is always a cause of the second.

⁴⁰ G. Anders: *Tagebücher und Gedichte*. Munich 1985, p. 135f., [Trans. A. M.].

According to Anders, this mental figure is equivalent to a certain model of false thinking: the inversion of “before” and “later” categories, according to the rule *Proximum, ergo primum est*. Therefore, to understand the mindset of “the local”, one should look through this “figure of inversion”. Günther Anders tries to explain this kind of substitution, drawing on the so called philosophy of discrepancy (*Diskrepanzphilosophie*). Mutatis mutandis, the cause and effect inversion could be also applied to the discourse of expulsions.

One can scarcely imagine two more distant categorizations of ‘expulsion discourse’ than the almost ideal-typical narratives and observations of Norman Naimark i Hans Henning Hahn. The German researcher expressed his outrage at the viewpoint, Naimark, an American historian of extremely high media prestige and referential authority, had presented⁴¹ in his essay *The Killing Fields of the East and Europe’s Divided Memory*. Naimark proposed a revision of the current views on the historical processes in (Central-Eastern) Europe: “The starting point for the common history of massacres and deportations should be the European superior narrative of the past, present and future”⁴². The furious reaction of Eve Hahn and Hans Henning Hahn seems more than justified since, just a few years earlier, Naimark formulated a thesis that ethnic cleansing, which had take place in Central-Eastern Europe, had been triggered by “flaming tribal hatred”. The original title (*Fires of Hatred. Ethnic Cleansing In Twentieth-Century Europe*, 2001) and the title of the German translation (*Flammender Haß. Ethnische Säuberung im 20. Jahrhundert*) clearly point to “fierce”, “wild” or even “deadly hatred” of the ethno-national “tribal” basis, although Naimark refers to Zygmunt Bauman’s presentation of the modernizing aspects of mass extermination. It does not, however, fit the ethnic context of personal “flaming hatred”. Bauman’s theory of extermination assumes the cold rationalism of perpetrators, adopted for the time and purpose of vile acts. Moreover, the abuse of the phrase “millions of casualties” has placed Naimark in the discourse of expulsion, understood as the consequence of ethnic cleansing, especially since he points to “the chaotic time of transition from war to peace”⁴³. It again confirms the tension between the narrative culturally “pro war” and the narrative that stigmatizes violence “as such”.

Before I return to the large tribal option of the discourse of expulsions and the discourse of ethnic cleansing as an explanatory formula for the processes of “population transfers” in the 20th century Europe, I will briefly discuss the modernization paradigm in the context of Nazism and the Third Reich. This complex issue was described in a separate volume of a book series “Poznań German Library” (*Trzecia Rzesza, nazizm a procesy modernizacji*) [*The Third Reich – Nazism and Modernisation Processes*] (2000). Unlike in the case of

⁴¹ Cf. E. i H. H. H a h n: *Alte Legenden und neue Besuche des „Ostens“*. Über Norman M. Naimarks Geschichtsbilder, „Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft“ (7/8) 2006, [Trans. A. M].

⁴² N. M. N a i m a r k: *Die Killing Fields des Ostens und Europas geteilte Erinnerung*, „Transit“ 30 (2005/2006), p. 67, [Trans. A. M.].

⁴³ Cf. N. M. N a i m a r k, *Flammender Haß. Ethnische Säuberung im 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 2008, p. 234.

the radical nationalism, the investigation into the influence of totalitarian ideologies, based on the ethos of "historical mission", revolves around the question about the definition of "social engineering", within which the practical eugenics (that refers to one's "valueless life" even if ethnically "own"), the Holocaust and genocide, as well as expulsions constitute various forms of exclusion: from "definitive", which involves the physical extermination, to "partial" - displacements, relocations, expulsions.

Social engineering excludes "the alien": from entire communities to individual socially inconvenient "dissenters".

That issue was brought to the Polish intellectual discussion by Zygmunt Bauman's study *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Bauman's conclusions are disturbing. They are not new, but in Polish literature, the idea of the Nazi Revolution as a „lesson of social engineering“, and genocide as "gardening" in the interest of emergence of a better world, has never been given with so strong narrative coherence and decisiveness. The determination concerns the theory of purpose-rational action (defined by Max Weber) as a condition for civilizational changes in the western Europe, including the bureaucratized mechanisms of genocide. Bauman advocates for the theory that sees genocide as a result of "the short circuit (one almost wishes to say: a chance encounter) between an ideologically obsessed power elite and the tremendous facilities of rational systemic action developed by modern society (...)"⁴⁴. "Modern genocide is genocide with purpose. Getting rid of the adversary is not the end in itself. It is a means to an end. (...) The aim itself is a grand vision of a better, and radically different society. Modern genocide is an element of social engineering (...)"⁴⁵.

The question of the ethnic dimension of "social engineering" in the Third Reich should be asked together with a question of the taxonomic status of the registration and classification of people in a particular historical moment, and the division into *Bekennnisdeutsche* and *Deutschstämmige*, to *Eingedeutschte* and *Rückgedeutschte*. And to "Poles" – those better and more "effective" (*Leistungspolen*). Here it is a starting point of the structuralization of power. Since in this case, the division was not about the creation of an orderly social typology but a classification by division, selection and exclusion (not only in the ethnic, „tribal“ sense). The first step towards the taxonomic registration of people in the occupied province of Wielkopolska (*Wartheland*) was the German People's List (*Deutsche Volksliste, DVL*). The Nazi German dictionary explains it as "a list with a purpose to register and confirm nationality of German people living in 'incorporated eastern territories'; an inclusion in the list certified German ethnicity; the status as Volksdeutsche was given for an unlimited period or until further notice, 'depending on the degree of German descent' and a general attitude during 'the period of Polish domination'"⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, in: A. L. Hinton (Ed.): *Genocide. An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford 2002, p.122.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 120.

⁴⁶ Cf. K.-H. Brackmann, R. Birkenhauer, *NS-Deutsch. „Selbstverständliche“*

Perhaps, the emergence of the ethnic version of institutionalized violence or – as Zygmunt Bauman would say – civilized violence is “just” another step on the tortuous path to building German group or national identity? After attempts to create the “negative” definition of identity (nation of perpetrators) – I am thinking of Thomas Welskopp’s comments on the “identity *ex negativo*”⁴⁷ – and the equally reductive definitional understanding of identity as a community of victims (besides Jews) – carried out with the use of ignorant silence (*Beschweigung* mentioned by Hermann Lübke), the ex-territorialization of the Holocaust (by Jörn Rüsen), the awareness of experience and fabrication of a total defeat in the form of a trauma of “collective auto-respect”⁴⁸ towards the collective “us” who are the “avant-guard in defeating the evil past” (Ilja Kowalczyk), – an attempt at hegemonic building their identity with the use of the paradigm of “flaming hatred” is very probable.

If nearly all mass actions against civilian people (including forced relocations, starting with the Armenians to those that took place in the Balkans) – except the Holocaust as an exceptional and unprecedented phenomenon – are treated according to the rules of the paradigm of ethnic cleansing as genocide, the “bumps” in the form of reservations concerning the cases where violence has been inflicted by the state or its institutions, or/and as a result of modernization processes, will be “ironed out”

Under these circumstances, Germans may feel the identity of pride in:

- the life sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of German civilian citizens and the suffering of those who have survived from the wave of violence: rapes, homelessness and persecution - the sacrifice for the other dozens of Germans “in the West”;
- the dowry in the form of the satisfaction of the “autochthonous” Germans, deriving from the ability to integrate in the local communities of “refugees and resettlers”;
- the contribution of refugees and resettlers into the development of post-war Germany and the renunciation of “revenge and reprisal” (whatever they could be like).

The rule by which more prosperous Germans in the west jointly supported the harmed members of their national community, has determined and shaped - since late 40s – the political discourse of the legal status as “the expelled and members of German minorities in the east”⁴⁹. The founding myth could be ascribed extra traits of the so-called basic narrative in the sense of Trutz von Trotha: “The basic narrative (*Basiserzählung*) is the structure of

Begriffe und Schlagwörter aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Straelen 1988, p. 51.

⁴⁷ Cf. T. W e l s k o p p *Tożsamość ex negativo. „Niemiecka droga odrębna” jako meta-opowieść nauk historycznych w Republice Federalnej lat siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych*, in: H. Orłowski (Ed.): *Sonderweg. Spory o ‘niemiecką drogę odrębną’*. Poznań 2008.

⁴⁸ J. R ü s e n, *Holocaust, Erinnerung, Identität. Drei Formen generationeller Praktiken des Erinnerns*, in: H. W e l z e r (Ed.): *Das soziale Gedächtnis. Geschichte, Erinnerung, Tradierung*. Hamburg 2001, p. 245, [Trans. A. M.].

⁴⁹ R. M ü n z, R. O h l i g e r, *Vergessene Deutsche – Erinnerte Deutsche. Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene, Aussiedler, Transit. “Europäische Revue”*, (15) 1998, p. 144, [Trans. A. M.].

the history of a society and culture together with the dominant legitimization of the structure of the past, which makes it an inescapable point of reference in conflicts about the structures of the past. Therefore, changes in the basic narrative herald changes in political culture"⁵⁰. The central category of violence can be perceived either from the perspective of a perpetrator or the perspective of a victim. The latter, especially when strengthened with proper "memory politics", will no longer require any form of ideological, legal and pragmatic institutionalization.

I believe that this particular situation triggered the debate on the German nation as a community of victims (the debate, which recalls events from over fifty years ago). The trauma suffered by the victims of violence, understood as illegitimate (or unlicensed), allows them to maintain the continuity of identity as well as to find their place in the founding myth of the European community of victims.

⁵⁰ Quote from T. H e r z, *Die „Basiserzählung“ und die NS-Vergangenheit. Zur Veränderung der politischen Kultur in Deutschland, w: Gesellschaften im Umbruch. Verhandlungen des 27. Kongresses der deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie 1995*. Frankfurt am Main 1996, s. 93, [Trans. A. M.]

Conclusions

The German historical memory of WW II revolves around three main injustices experienced by the Germans during and after the war: the mass deaths of soldiers on the Eastern front, the Allied bombing of Dresden, and the displacement of German people from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Although the Germans emphasize the injustices, they remain aware of the German perpetration of the Holocaust. They do not, however, admit their blame for *Lebensraum* that involved the expulsion of several million people from the land “gained” in Poland, the extermination of another millions (of non-Jews) in concentration camps, the resettlement of millions of Poles sent to forced labors to the Reich, the germanization of thousands of the Polish children with “racially valuable traits”, the pacification of those who remained on the German-occupied territories, including the extermination of the Polish intelligentsia.

The non-Jewish and non-German victims of the Second World War do not exist in German national consciousness. German historical politics finds the victims – and makes them – less important and “marginal”; it belittles painfulness of their war experiences, producing the hierarchy of war suffering with the German people at the top.

The Germans avoid calling their nation the main perpetrator of the martyrdom of nations during the WW II – the aggressor responsible for the policy that asserted the superiority of German race and sought to subordinate other nations. They deny their own blame by bestowing it onto other perpetrators, which blurs the historical truth of the war. When a German soldier, responsible for the extermination of Poles and killed by Polish partisans, fighting with the invader, is called a “victim”, historical facts seem to be deformed. Just like when the word “victim” describes a German family displaced from the land they settled after it that had been taken from its Polish owners.

Death, pain, famine or displacement are traumatic experiences impossible to evaluate, regardless of the historical context. But when the consequences of undertaken actions are easy to predict, historical processes must talk about the predominant and determining guilt of states and nations. It is not surprising, then, the German policy of denying the full responsibility for the consequences of the war and blaming other nations for the suffering of German people - which resulted from historical mechanisms started by Germans themselves – raises protests of the unjustly blamed.

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