

## 2 Resettlement and the First Phase of Adaptation<sup>136</sup>

### The Journey: Autobiographical Memory and its Transmission

One of the most important factors that affected the adaptation of the new inhabitants of Krzyż and Zhovkva to their surroundings was the extent to which their migration was voluntary or forced.<sup>137</sup> Forced migrants differed from voluntary ones not just in terms of access to various resources, but also in their mindsets when they arrived at their new places of residence. The more forced the migration, the more negatively inclined people are to their new surroundings; the more free will was exercised in the decision to leave one's old home, the greater the readiness to accept a new one. This first categorization shows from the outset that many different aspects of the adaptation process,<sup>138</sup> which will be discussed in the following two chapters, affected different groups of residents in different ways.

The first such element that occupies divergent places in the accounts of different groups of respondents is resettlement itself – an experience that was constitutive for two groups of forced migrants: “repatriates” from the former eastern provinces of interwar Poland, and Ukrainians resettled from eastern Poland to Ukraine. Their stories share a common theme of highly emotive remembrance of

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136 An earlier version of this chapter was previously published as an article: “Społeczna pamięć przesiedlenia: studium porównawcze na przykładzie dwóch powojennych społeczności lokalnych Polski i Ukrainy,” *Studia Socjologiczne*, Vol. 2 (2013), pp. 149–172.

137 Zdzisław Mach observed this rule in his book *Niechciane miasta*.

138 I use the term “adaptation” in this chapter and subsequent ones in the most broad and general sense. I understand adaptation as the process whereby an individual or group adjusts to new life conditions. In instances that call for a more specific concept of the kind of adjustment, I use adjectival inflections such as “cultural adaptation,” etc. Because I am more interested in subjective memory of adaptation than in objective processes, I consciously refrain from elaborate references to existing literature on adaptation as a subject of inquiry (which in any case, as with memory, represents something of a conceptual chaos rather than established and accepted conventions); see: Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska, “Integracja – próba rekonstrukcji pojęcia,” in: *Problemy integracji imigrantów. Koncepcje, badania, polityki*, ed. Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska and Sławomir Łodziński (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008), pp. 29–50.

the journey: each of the interviewees described it as a long, arduous experience that was made difficult by the poor sanitary conditions and lack of food.

We set off for Ukraine. It was 1946, towards the end of February or the beginning of March. It was very cold. They gave us all two carts each, two for each family, so that we could get in them, and we got in them. [...] At that time there was no railway station in Berezhany, there was a siding about two or three kilometers away. That was where we arrived, a whole trainload of people, with animals if some had taken them, with small children, with everything, horses, the livestock. [...] I was still a small boy then, but I remember how my mother wrapped me in a shawl, because it was very cold, there was such a wind, such terrible weather (Z15Am).

We sang "Go to Sleep Jesus" [a Christmas carol "Lulajże Jezuniu"] in the cattle cars at Lubań Śląski. [...] We learned at Lubań that my father's family was living in Legnica. There was nothing to eat, nor, well... there was water to drink, but no food. Frozen potatoes and onions on Christmas Eve, because we had nothing when we arrived from Russia, you know, we had no clothes and we were cheerful. That was real life, there was no relaxing here (K24Am).

The accounts of Poles who traveled from the eastern territories are also abundant in tales of the makeshift organization of everyday life, forced by the circumstance of several weeks spent traveling by rail: they cooked under the open sky during stopovers and gathered food supplies in diverse ways. The Polish interviews differ from the Ukrainian ones in that they contain, as a rule, elaborate accounts of the journey to Krzyż. Such stories were told in almost every interview, with certain variations; they differ only in the narrative competence of the respondent and the level of emotional involvement. In Ukrainian accounts, there were a number of longer narratives, but usually the process of deportation was told in a more restrained way:

What was it like? Well they gave us carts, and in Lubaczów there was a train, and we got on the train... They took us to the train in the carts, packed us into the train, and we went. We stopped at... how far was it from Rava [Ruska], not far, about 30km. We stopped, my father was already here, and he kind of came out to get us, and we stayed here (Z4Af).

This laconicism is easy to understand when we take into account that most Ukrainian resettlers from Poland traveled to Zhovkva over a distance of 100km at most; the Poles traveling in the other direction had several hundred kilometers to cover before arriving in the new western territories. The objectively greater distance is conducive to a more elaborate narration in the Polish interviews: longer, more detailed, and with more different threads. Many of these threads do not feature at all in the Ukrainian interviews. There are several explanations to this observation: first, the journey undertaken by the

Polish “repatriates” was not only longer, but was richer in various incidents and adventures. Also, awareness of the great distance led to a keener appreciation of the liminality of their situation and a greater sense of threat. The overwhelming sense of pity at abandoning their homes (“we lost everything, everything we had, the entire livelihood of my father and mother” (K2Af)) was made worse for the Krzyż “repatriates” by the fact that Poles in central Poland, whom they encountered during stopovers, treated them with disdain:

A few curious types came over and asked “where, where are you going? Where are you going?” “Well, they’re repatriating us, because over there it will be Ukraine now.” “You’re lying, you’re going to hunt for German fortunes. Throw them under the wheels, under the wheels!” That is how they talked to us. It was a terrible experience, because it’s not enough that you’ve lost your house [...] now it turns out that you’re traveling in search of a gold rush (K35Af).

A further factor that differentiates Polish accounts from Ukrainian ones is the social formation of narrative models, which are distinct in each language and culture and which form a basic grounding for remembrance.<sup>139</sup> In Poland, a societal working through of the memory of resettlement was to an extent carried out as a result of the easing of state censorship from the 1970s onwards; this fact has an observable effect on the accounts of Poles resettled from the East, which is absent in the Ukrainian testimonies. It was at this time that the classic film *All Friends Here* [*Sami swoi*, dir. by Sylwester Chęciński, 1967] was released, introducing an account of the resettlement to official discourse in comedic form. Although the film’s plot concentrates on the lives of “repatriates” only after their arrival in the “Recovered Territories,” it was significant that a certain taboo was broken. Unlike in Ukraine, where the ideological regime was part of everyday life until the late 1980s, the Polish “Little Stabilization”<sup>140</sup> allowed at least a partial release of memories about resettlement. This explains why accounts of Krzyż residents resettled from the East sometimes contain elements of humor, indicating that years of

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139 Harald Welzer is one of the scholars who have commented on the construction of narrative through culture and the influence of social communication on individual autobiographical memory, see: Welzer, “Communicative Memory;” Harald Welzer, *Das kommunikative Gedächtnis: Eine Theorie der Erinnerung* (München: CH Beck, 2002), pp. 171–192.

140 The “Little Stabilization” [*Mała Stabilizacja*] is the name given to a short-lived period of liberalization of the political system during the first years of Władysław Gomułka’s tenure as Party Secretary (the late 1950s and early 1960s). The term originates from a play by Tadeusz Różewicz, entitled *Witnesses, or Our Little Stabilization* [*Świadkowie, albo nasza mała stabilizacja*, 1964].

“working through” have enabled a certain emotional distance to be gained from past traumatic experiences; for example, they told stories about chasing after departing trains.

The fact that some of the Krzyż interviews contained direct references to *All Friends Here* shows the extent to which autobiographical memory is formed not just by individual experience, but also through interaction with other social agents and under the influence of factors such as the media. As one of the respondents said:

And then they transported us across, just like that, in those cattle cars of course. Three... three weeks we spent traveling to the west. Like in... like the Karguls and Pawlaks [the main characters of *Sami swoi*] in the film, that was how we went, with those cows (K4Af).

In order to describe their own individual experiences, narrators reach for images memorized from the film; it can only be assumed that in some ways, the image from the film acquires in their memories the status of something that was actually lived through. Similar mechanisms of memory have been discussed on several occasions in the scholarly literature. Thus, Christopher R. Browning, in his analysis of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, discusses ways in which so-called later accounts of the Holocaust included themes that witnesses had borrowed from other testimonies, popular iconography, and other sources – for example, fear of gas being emitted from showers instead of water, or recollections of shootings above mass graves.<sup>141</sup> Harald Welzer *et al.*, in turn, write about the phenomenon of Germans of the “Günter Grass generation” inscribing events from the film *The Bridge* [*Die Brücke*, dir. by Bernhard Wicki, 1959] into their autobiographical memory; in the film, set in the closing days of the Second World War, a division of young army recruits desperately defends a bridge that has little strategic significance. Welzer *et al.* call this phenomenon a “source amnesia.”<sup>142</sup> As David Lowenthal has rightly noted, the mechanisms of memory convert macro-scale history into individual remembrance, and the experiences of others into personal recollection; the more often such a memory is verbalized, the more it becomes one’s “own.”<sup>143</sup>

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141 Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories. Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

142 Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall, “*Opa war kein Nazi: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002).

143 Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.

Accounts of resettlement are usually accompanied by retrospective evaluation and reflection on the themes of guilt and responsibility. Among Ukrainian resettlers, the assessment tends to depend on whether they left Poland in the first population transfer operation (which was *de facto* still voluntary) or the second (which was fully forced). People who departed in 1944–1945 spoke of a relative voluntariness of their decision, noting only that the reality of the move did not correspond to the propaganda (“It was meant to be voluntary, and it wasn’t forced. [...] It was just that they lied to us. We arrived at the station in Odessa, and what did we find... Some marshes, a couple horses, two cows, and that was it” [Z13Am]). Later resettlers, however, claimed that they were coerced into moving to Ukraine, and more frequently complained of the brutality of the resettlement operation itself.<sup>144</sup>

The most important thing was that the Poles forced us to leave. First they said we should leave, and there was a Soviet commission organized for us. But people didn’t go, because how were they supposed to leave what they had, their households, and go who knows where. [...] Later, when they started killing people, that was the worst, and people had to leave (Z6Am).

Both groups blame the Poles and the Soviets in similar measure for the loss of their homes. For a large portion of people, the fault does not lie directly with either of these sides, and is not an essential category for the experience of deportation. Their testimonies are characterized by the use of impersonal constructions. Also, on several occasions, interviewees were unable to select vocabulary appropriate to what they had experienced; they either did not have the words, or still struggled to sufficiently understand what had happened so as to describe it properly, e.g.: “They resettled us. [When was it, still during the war?] In 1945. When the war finished, because Poland was what it was then... I don’t know how to describe it. Things happened, and [people] left” (Z4Af). The formulation “voluntary forced resettlement” appears in many accounts, suggesting helplessness of memory against the extremity of experience, and defenselessness of memory that is not equipped with suitable social frames to provide concepts and terminology.

The Poles spoke more of a voluntary “repatriation operation,” although they also frequently underlined the illusoriness of the free choice being exercised. Among the factors that diminished the voluntariness were: the threat of new political persecutions; the threat from the Ukrainians; and simple patriotism

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144 Halyna Bodnar notes a similar split in the evaluation of the resettlement experience in her research on adaptation among people transferred to Ukraine from Poland: Bodnar, “Tam bulo dobre.”

which demanded that they go to the territory that would now be Poland. This last factor in particular is completely absent from Ukrainian accounts. It is clear that the fact of having lived in the interwar Polish republic, in their own state, had a significant influence on the formation of civic and patriotic values among the migrating Poles. The Ukrainians had had no such experience, and the idea of “Great [i.e. reunited] Ukraine” was for them a much bigger abstraction than the new Polish state was for the Poles coming from the East.

The eastern lands of Poland were annexed to the USSR and we were given a choice – signing up for Soviet citizenship or leaving. Of course, we didn’t even have to think about it – we chose the second option. [...] Of course on the one hand it was a pity, it was difficult, we were being evicted from our homelands – and we were evicted, it wasn’t a deal, it might have been a deal on paper, but people were deported. [...] So were we supposed to sign up as Russian citizens, even though we were Poles? (K17Am).

Besides patriotic sentiment, people also remembered coercion – whether direct or indirect. Words such as “order,” “evacuation,” “deportation” feature in the interviews. Nonetheless, such statements are much less common, and in most cases a political context lies in the background. In addition, the very common use of the expression “repatriation” suggests that post-war propaganda had a substantial effect; this was the phrase coined by official memory to describe the resettlement operation from the “Eastern Borderlands” to the “Recovered Territories.”

A common feature among the Polish interviewees is a conviction that the Russians were responsible for the loss of their homelands. The names used by them varied: from the “Russkies” (i.e. *Ruscy*, a mild pejorative distinct from the neutral *Rosjanie*, Russians) and “Soviets,” to the “Reds” or “communists.” Sometimes, a fellow group of perpetrators is named: the Ukrainians, in cases where interviewees moved from Ukraine; more politically aware respondents named the Allies, who had “sold” Poland. Interestingly, unlike in Ukraine, there were no instances of an inability to verbally place oneself as an individual in the wider context of resettlement as a macro-scale political process – even among the least educated interviewees originally from rural areas. It is clear that in Poland, the many years of active memory work related to this specific historical experience – in the family, in local communities, and later (especially after 1989) in wider public discourse – have enabled resettlers to come to terms with their plight. Polish respondents had no difficulties in clearly assessing and articulating the events they had lived through, because they had done so many times previously. Ukrainian interviewees, on the other hand, had had no such opportunity,

and they came across in comparison as people who were lost and helpless with regard to their own unprocessed traumas.

Details are what is most readily lost in the intergenerational transmission of memory. This was especially visible in the interviews from Zhovkva, where I only heard a detailed account of the resettlement process from younger respondents a handful of times. Much more frequent were generalized statements, encapsulating in a few sentences what the respondent wanted or was able to say about the experiences of their parents or grandparents.

Well, what I know about Granny's history is that she was, what do you call it, a participant of that "Operation Vistula,"<sup>145</sup> that's all I know. And that she lived in Poland to start with, and then they moved her over here. And Granny told me that when they arrived here, they chose this house because it had windows. [...] What else is there to say? (Z4Dm).

In Krzyż, more young people gave detailed accounts of the resettlements, and their ability and willingness to do so was directly correlated to the declared intensiveness of the preservation of memory within the family and a general interest in history. Piotr T. Kwiatkowski has described such dependence on the basis of qualitative data.<sup>146</sup> In these extended stretches of interviews about the resettlement process, powerful themes from the tales of grandparents recur, such as the tough sanitary conditions or the lack of food in the "cattle cars;" Welzer *et al.* have coined the term "topoi of memory" to describe such ideas that traverse intergenerational narratives.<sup>147</sup>

[Granny] always used to tell us about how they were transported, in what conditions. She always said that they were transported in those, in these wagons for animals, that there was one hole that served as a toilet. There were lots of people in the wagon and it was incredibly stuffy (K29Df).

Both in Krzyż and in Zhovkva, the accounts of resettlement told by younger people contain echoes of the voices of the older generation, although it is the theme of coercion that dominates – suggesting that this trope served as a basis

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145 In Ukraine it is common in informal discourse to use the name "Operation Vistula" for all of the resettlements of Ukrainians to Poland between 1944 and 1947. However, "Operation Vistula" was the name of a specific resettlement operation carried out by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic in 1947.

146 Piotr T. Kwiatkowski, "The Second World War in the Memory of Contemporary Polish society," in: *Memory and Change in Europe. Eastern Perspectives*, ed. Małgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak (New York-Oxford: Berhahn Books, 2016), pp. 231–245.

147 Welzer, Moller and Tschuggnall, "Opa war kein Nazi."

for the creation of family memory, due to its potency and its simple division of roles into “our own” and “other.” In the younger people’s renditions, coercion is usually direct; indirect coercion is mentioned more in the accounts of Krzyż residents with roots in today’s Ukraine, as a fear of the Ukrainians, and also in interviews in Zhovkva where families preserved a narrative of antagonistic relations between Poles and Ukrainians during the war. Interestingly, some respondents in Ukraine understood the resettlement process as a political act of population exchange between Poland and Ukraine (or Poland and the USSR).

You of course know fully well that this whole resettlement business began in September 1944, when an agreement was signed between Bolshevik Poland and the Soviet Union that they would exchange populations in accordance with the borders that were in force then. And this process was supposed to take place on an exclusively voluntary basis, or in other words, those who wanted to return to Ukraine could go, and people who wanted to go over there, could go over there (Z33Bm).

Such an explanation of the reasons behind the resettlement did not appear even once in the interviews with residents of Krzyż. It seems that the deportation of Polish Ukrainians, as a second component of the resettlement process, simply has no place in their memories. Several reasons lie behind this fact. Krzyż residents who arrived from what is now Ukraine did not usually meet Ukrainian resettlers; they did not witness the Ukrainians’ arrival in their former hometowns. Also, schools and media discourse in the Polish People’s Republic omitted this question entirely, while after 1989, the issue did not become a topic of public discussion, unlike the later “Operation Vistula” of 1947. Instead of explanations that refer to official inter-state agreements, younger residents of Krzyż focused on the difficult choices faced by their parents. Such statements were most common among more introspective interviewees, those with a general interest in history, and people who grew up with a strong family tradition of memory preservation.

They felt Polish, it was difficult for them to leave. Mother says to this day that she opens her eyes at night, then closes them, and, she says, she sees the streets of [her hometown], she walks in those streets. [Were they forced to leave...?] Well the situation forced them to go to Poland, because after all, staying in a place that isn’t your home country, is not an option for someone who has any kind of patriotic feeling... [...] That was the decision, even though it was painful, though it ruined their lives, because they were leaving everything and going into the unknown. The decision was to go to Poland (K2Bm).

Compared to older respondents, younger residents of Krzyż and Zhovkva appear more inclined towards categorical statements and naming of specific perpetrators. It is possible that this observation is a consequence of the structure of the interviews themselves: in conversations with the older generation,

narrative description of the individual experience predominates, or in other words – borrowing terms proposed by Fritz Schütze<sup>148</sup> – the interviewees supplied purely narrative segments, sometimes completely void of any theoretical consideration. Conversations with younger people were primarily comprised of argumentative units and elaborate theoretical consideration on short narrative segments. Another factor could be the greater feeling of security among younger respondents – neither in Zhovkva nor in Krzyż does the younger generation feel the sort of fear that might have prevented their parents and grandparents from directly naming perpetrators. Interviewees in both towns considered the Soviets to have been at fault for the plight of their families (“I don’t remember exactly, I can’t tell you in any detail, but I remember that it was the Soviet authorities that did it, not the Polish side” [Z4Dm]). At the same time, there was a reluctance to blame specific individuals for the resettlements; instead, greater political processes were responsible. In other words, laying blame on the Soviets did not mean that respondents held a distaste for individual Russians from the past, and even less so in the present. Having a temporal distance enables younger people to emotionally detach themselves from the assessment of the past, at least partially.

I know from what my great-grandmother told me that they don’t really blame anyone in particular. What happened had to happen. But they are filled with pretense towards the government of that time, precisely because of this resettlement, they were afraid in these parts, afraid to move people here, and they were forced to live here, afraid that the Germans would come back and evict the population that lived here now, wanting to take back their land (K29Df).

I think that ordinary people weren’t to blame for this resettlement. Because ordinary people lived side by side in peace, the different communities got on well, building relationships, and there were even marriages between the two groups, so ordinary people were not to blame. It was politics, it seems to me, it was the politics of Stalin and Hitler (Z18Bf).

In both towns, there was a contingent within the younger cohort who had little or no idea what the resettlements actually were. In Zhovkva this group was a little larger than in Krzyż; most such individuals were from the fourth generation, with a smaller number from the third. There were no instances of such lack

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148 Fritz Schütze, *Biography Analysis on the Empirical Base of the Autobiographical Narratives: How to Analyse Autobiographical Narrative Interviews*, Part II, INVITE – Biographical Counselling in Rehabilitative Vocational Training. Further Educational Curriculum. EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme (14 May 2018) [http://www.zsm.ovgu.de/zsm\\_media/Das+Zentrum/Forschungsprojekte/INVITE/B2\\_1-p-140.pdf](http://www.zsm.ovgu.de/zsm_media/Das+Zentrum/Forschungsprojekte/INVITE/B2_1-p-140.pdf), last accessed 18.02.2019.

of knowledge among the second generation, who were born shortly after the war. Respondents most often knew in general terms where their older relatives came from, but could not explain how and why they had arrived in Krzyż or Zhovkva; also, they could not repeat any family histories or anecdotes, and were unable to relate the fate of their family to the broader context of historical processes. It was also evident that they were simply uninterested in such issues.

My father came, he actually came from Kalush, that's somewhere in Ukraine. As to how he came here, well I think, that he, you know, emigrated to Poland (K15Cf).

Oh, I don't know, my mother was resettled too, my father was born in Poland, in the Chelm area or something like that. Then they came here, in like, I don't know, maybe it was the fifties or the sixties (Z17Cf).<sup>149</sup>

In other instances, respondents did not know which part of the generalized "East" their grandparents had come from, but they were able to reproduce family stories from everyday life, both before resettlement and during the migration itself.

[Where did your grandparents come from, Ukraine or Belarus?] You know, I don't even really know... [So why did they come here from Ukraine or Belarus?] How was it...? It was after the war and those resettlements happened, and they left everything over there, their house and farmstead. They owned a forest there, Granny told me, they also had a meadow and they came to Poland. I'm not sure whether it was from Ukraine or Belarus (K33Df).

Such statements are striking because of their ahistoricity – the fates of the grandparents are suspended for these speakers in a kind of timeless realm, and resettlement is not given any residual meaning. From the present-day perspective of these young people, it is something completely incomprehensible – “some kind of emigration,” or “those resettlements.” It appears that in both towns, such views on the resettlements were voiced by people with an insignificant interest in other aspects of family history, and also in history more generally. Perhaps it should simply be assumed that in any society and in any socio-political conditions, there would be a certain percentage of the population who are indifferent to the past – whether that means family, local or national history. Perhaps (especially in Zhovkva) the loss of interest in one's roots can be attributed to difficult material circumstances and political insecurity. Elżbieta Tarkowska refers to such temporal outlook as a “presentist orientation,”<sup>150</sup> while Maria Lewicka argues in her analysis of attitudes towards the past that individual psychological

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149 In reality, the interviewee's father moved to Zhovkva in 1947.

150 Elżbieta Tarkowska, *Czas w życiu Polaków* (Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2005).

traits can determine an absence of historical interest.<sup>151</sup> At the same time it holds true that forgetting within a family, which is the organically closest sphere of influence on individual identity, precedes forgetting in all the other spheres. As Piotr Kwiatkowski argues, family memory is intimately connected with collective (social) memory; if memories cease to be preserved in the family – for a variety of possible reasons, from force of circumstance to intentional suppression – then they will also disappear from society at large.<sup>152</sup>

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Meanwhile, memory processes were very different among people who migrated voluntarily, whether “pioneers” – i.e. those who arrived in Krzyż from central Poland, and people who came to Zhovkva from eastern regions of Ukraine and other areas of the USSR – or “neighbors,” i.e. people who came from neighboring villages in both towns. If in the memories of people who were resettled, the journey plays a central role in their remembrance of the ordeal, individuals who migrated of their own accord place much less emphasis on this aspect in their testimonies. Although it happened that voluntary migrants underwent longer journeys to their new homes than “repatriates,” and sometimes suffered equally bad or worse conditions of transport, they were frequently surprised that I should ask about the journey: it had not registered as an important or constitutive event, rather like an average act of moving house. In the second generation there were no received memories at all about the trip to Krzyż or Zhovkva. Accounts of the parents’ or grandparents’ arrival lack drama; they are matter-of-fact statements that often explicitly emphasize that there was nothing out of the ordinary in the experiences of the older generation.

We came to Krzyż in 1945, because granddad found a restaurant here, and he had worked in a restaurant. He had his own restaurant somewhere near Kraków – that is where I come from, from Kraków. He heard about this restaurant in Krzyż, that he could open it here, and that was when my whole family on my father’s side came here (K25Bf).

The memory of voluntary migrants (and their families) convincingly shows the importance of the decision to move being at least partially one’s own. A forced journey, being the final element in a sequence of violence, becomes embedded in the memory of deported individuals as yet another traumatic

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151 Maria Lewicka, “Place attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 28, No. 3, (2008), pp. 209–231.

152 Kwiatkowski, “The Second World War.”

experience that must be worked through. For voluntary migrants, the experiential baggage was already a little lighter at the stage when they moved to the new place.

### **Fear, Violence, Poverty: After Arrival**

Whilst the strength of memories about the migration itself was differentiated above all by the extent to which the move was forced, the first period after arrival is remembered by all of the resettlers in both towns as an intense event. Some of these stories even took on an apocalyptic resonance, despite the amount of time that had lapsed. The reality with which the migrants were faced at their places of arrival was horrifying, in particular because scenes were still filled with traces of wartime violence.

What did I find in Zhovkva? The first thing I noticed, my first impression, was fear. My husband was waiting for me at the station, and next to it was a big park, which seemed so dark to me then, and next to the police building lay three dead bodies. That sight just made me shiver, it really shook me up. It was just... I said I was going home, that I was going back, I said I don't want to be here, there are murders happening here! (Z24Af).

The first moment I arrived in Krzyż [...] One of them [Russians] was drunk and he started to shoot, like he wanted to kill us. I remember the first words I heard in Russian: "Ochen horoshaia dochenka!" ["Very nice daughter!"] Someone from down below, one of those officers, was shouting that "a nice daughter" was coming. I was walking in front, and my mother behind me. And he was saying they shouldn't shoot because of the "nice daughter." We went down those stairs, and of course, right in front of my eyes, they shot that Russian (K23Bf).

For the new Polish arrivals, the town of Krzyż was not only unsafe because of the ongoing situation of war, it was also painfully foreign – and for that reason it seemed all the more oppressive and threatening. The migrants from the eastern territories and others who were not from Wielkopolska found both the space, saturated as it was with German influence, and the people to be foreign: often, the first encounters with human beings other than the staff of the railway were with Germans. Both the townscape and the German locals, who were negatively disposed towards the Polish settlers, made the newly arriving migrants feel even more insecure.

My father went to the town here in Krzyż, and I went to have a look around. [...] A German woman was in the window, and when she saw me, she shouted: "Polnische Schweinerei!" ["Polish scum!"] That's how she welcomed me here – because there were some Germans left here. I'm not surprised they reacted like that, because the

deportations of Germans had already started – you know what that was like – but it was still an unpleasant experience. “My first time in Krzyż,” I thought to myself. “What a nice welcome” (K17Am).

In the Zhovkva testimonies, on the other hand, a sense of foreignness was not a major thread of memories about the initial period; there are also no stories about contact with Poles. This is easy to explain, because the largest group of new residents of Zhovkva – Ukrainians resettled from Poland – did not overlap with the Poles who left the town. Moreover, the urban landscape of Zhovkva may have seemed different to some (especially those who arrived from Soviet Ukraine and Russia), but in such cases it was usually welcomed as a pleasant surprise.

Another feature that is specific to the interviews in Krzyż is a sense of relief that was felt after arrival, often mixed in perplexing ways with feelings of fear, insecurity and nostalgia.<sup>153</sup> Such contradictory emotions were experienced primarily by migrants from the East who had left regions affected by Polish-Ukrainian conflict; on the one hand, they felt all of the anxieties of other resettlers, and on the other, they were happy that the troubles of the recent past were now behind them.<sup>154</sup>

Once we were here in Poland, we had finally arrived, and we slept so soundly that we couldn't get up [laughter], we didn't need to eat, we didn't need... [...] Here we had peace, quiet, and over there it was such a tough life, that we never thought we would survive it, but somehow God helped (K20Af).

It might appear that there would be no shortage of Ukrainians resettled from Poland who would similarly breathe a sigh of relief upon arriving in a new place after their difficult wartime experiences. However, the Zhovkva testimonies contain no such statements. Perhaps the Ukrainian migrants found it hard to sleep soundly in unfamiliar Polish and Jewish homes. The more likely reason, however, is that the first post-war years in Zhovkva were so arduous and insecure, in

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153 In his study of the post-war period, Frank Biess argues that the three dominant emotions were fear, hope and resentment, see: Frank Biess, “Feelings in the Aftermath. Towards a History of Postwar Emotions,” in: *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, ed. Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (New York-Oxford: Bergham Books, 2010), pp. 30–48.

154 The emotional state of this group of respondents can be compared to what Hanna Malewska-Peyre, in relation to ordinary migrants, calls the “emigrant’s honeymoon period:” this is a period when positive emotions dominate in the perception of the new place, partly triggered by a comparison of the new home country with the old one, see: Hanna Malewska-Peyre, “Ja wśród swoich i obcych,” in: *Tożsamość a odmiennność kulturowa*, ed. Paweł Boski, Maria Jarymowicz and Hanna Malewska-Peyre (Warszawa: Instytut Psychologii PAN, 1992), pp. 15–70.

comparison to Krzyż, that they did not register in my respondents' memories as qualitatively very different from the war period.

A theme that is indisputably common to both towns is the strenuous, piecemeal construction of a new life upon arrival, above all in its most elementary and everyday dimensions. Many people spoke about the difficulties they experienced in finding a house or apartment, having to wander from homestead to homestead, and sitting in the station for weeks whilst waiting for help that had been promised by the state. Another recurring theme is unwillingness to live in someone else's house<sup>155</sup> – these people who had just been expelled from their own homes were now being offered to settle in properties that lay empty (or were about to be emptied) after similar evictions.

We came here, to Zhovkva, and how much time did we spend at the station, on the platform? Three weeks. And they sent us here and there, here and there, on wild goose chases. We went to Dobrosyn [a village near Zhovkva], and in Dobrosyn the people had been deported to Siberia, and only some young girls were left. They were crying, walking around this house that we were supposed to get... I said, "I don't want this house, it's full of tears" (Z18Af).

In Krzyż, when we arrived [...] we didn't have a place to live, because in these houses here there were still some German women who lived in them. And they sent us to school [...] When J. [respondent's sister] and I were a little older, we used to ask our father why he chose such a shack to live in [...] And he would always say: "there were German women living everywhere with their kids, and I wasn't going to evict them" (K32Bf).

Everyday problems were severest for forced migrants, who had been torn away from their home territory and were now at the mercy of new authorities; the state, however, was often barely interested in the fate of these new arrivals. Even today their testimonies contain tones of embitterment and a feeling that they were deceived and abandoned by the state.

This West was made out to be some kind of Mecca, like it was something new, that everything would be waiting for us here. That's what they used to say, that those [eastern] territories were given away, but that these "Recovered Territories," as they called them then, would be compensation. And some kind of paradise was supposed to await us here. But it was no paradise! There were houses, there were apartments – but we had to do everything ourselves. There was no one here waiting for us with open arms (K17Am).

At the same time, complaints about lack of assistance from the state were also heard from a number of Poles who moved to Krzyż from central Poland and Wielkopolska, under the centrally organized scheme for migration to the

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155 Cf. Halicka, *Polski Dziki Zachód*.

“Recovered Territories.” Tempted by the promises of the poster campaign, when they arrived they had to go to considerable lengths to ensure their own survival, and then spent years repaying state loans. One interviewee bitterly underlined that “we didn’t get anything for free here” (K27Af). Between the lines of such statements, it is possible to discern a conviction that these resettlers were duped, and also that other groups of migrants – in this case those resettled from the pre-war eastern provinces, who did not have to pay the local authorities to obtain land in the “Recovered Territories” – received a better deal. Interestingly, however, such a conviction of being “the biggest victims” is shared among practically all of the different groups of settlers in both Zhovkva and Krzyż, irrespective of their objective situation. Whereas the Poles from central regions complained about material difficulties, those from the eastern regions of pre-war Poland believed that “Poles from Poland” (i.e. from within the post-war borders) had adapted most easily to life in the new town – above all because they unscrupulously commandeered German property that had been earmarked for the eastern Poles. In Zhovkva, on the other hand, mutual incriminations were forthcoming most often between Ukrainians born in the town or its surroundings (the “neighbors,”) and those deported from Poland. The former argued that whilst they had huddled in ruined houses after the war, the new arrivals always received accommodation from the state.

Ukrainians did not go there [to houses abandoned by Poles]. Firstly, no one invited them, and secondly, they wouldn’t have had any business there. I mean Ukrainians as in people born here. Because those who arrived from Poland, they always found [a house] one way or another (Z36Af).

Meanwhile among younger respondents, stories about the difficulties experienced in the first phase of adaptation featured rarely as fully fledged topoi of memory. Interviewees born in the 1940s and early 1950s (the second generation) did speak about post-war poverty, but treated it as something obvious and characteristic of that period, rarely making connections with the fact of migration. The few testimonies that did link material difficulty with resettlement were given exclusively by the children<sup>156</sup> of forced migrants – reinforcing the additional

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156 Children in general were much more vulnerable to the postwar poverty and insecurity, see: Heide Fehrenbach, “War Orphans and Postfascist Families: Kinship and Belonging after 1945,” in: *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, ed. Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 175–195.

strain of this type of migration. Most probably, these families did indeed suffer more in comparison to others.

We had to start everything from scratch. Over there we had something, a house from our parents at least. But here, we had to build everything all over again. And it was tough for sure: children, everything. It was very tough; I remember that alright, we were poor, just poor (K20Cf).

You know, it's not as if the people who came here were poor and had nothing. The people who came here were landowners, who had everything, everything. And they came here and they had to work for others. They went to work as laborers. You know how hard that was? [...] And in that whirlwind after the war, they were also... There wasn't much to eat (Z18Bf).

Similarly to the memory of the resettlement process itself, memories about the first phase of adaptation are richer and more abundant in the Krzyż testimonies. Two themes that stand out are looting and the town's poor state of repair;<sup>157</sup> both issues are perceived by respondents as key factors that made settling into the new place difficult.<sup>158</sup> The perpetrators of looting were identified unanimously as residents of the villages surrounding Krzyż. Poles resettled from the East were particularly vociferous in their criticism of this specific post-war form of "enterprise:"

Drawsko [a Polish village on the other side of the Noteć river] did well for itself, they did well for themselves. I remember, there are some people who are still around, they took away the property of Germans, they took those beautiful German embroidered sheets, and they would wash them and hang them out to dry. But now they're gone, those linens, as if they never existed [i.e. the speaker suspects that people did not take proper care of them]. They were beautiful German embroidered sheets, you know? And now they're gone. It was a long time ago. They had nothing then, and they have nothing now (K31Af).

Interestingly, younger respondents spoke of post-war looting with an even greater sorrow than the older people, irrespective of their family background. If the older generation's accounts centered on their own personal grievances, younger residents displayed a more civic attitude to the issue: they treated the phenomenon as something that diminished the present-day potential of Krzyż and impoverished the town. Accounts by people with an active interest in the

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157 On looting in Poland during and immediately after the Second World War, see: Marcin Zaremba, "Gorączka szabru," *Zagłada Żydów*, Vol. 5 (2009), pp. 193–220.

158 On looting in the "Recovered Territories," see: Halicka, *Polski Dziki Zachód*, pp. 199–202; Service, *Germans to Poles*, pp. 88–89.

German history of Krzyż are characterized by a particular grief, and sometimes also sarcasm; for instance, one such person told me in an unrecorded interview that he had always wondered which houses in Drawsko were still hiding the German clocks and porcelain stolen from Krzyż, which the Polish “village folk” were still unable to appreciate.

Not many people admitted to taking part in looting – as a rule, the Krzyż residents who had lived in the region before the war insisted that everyone had looted, but that their own family did not participate.<sup>159</sup> The few who openly admitted to plundering goods always placed their statements in a specific context, pointing to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the post-war period, in which the boundaries of the permissible were significantly extended. Theft of German property is conveyed in these testimonies as the frivolous indulgence of youths who have unexpectedly encountered freedom; such actions, it is implied, should not be judged seriously, according to any standards of moral responsibility.

When he [a German from Krzyż, for whom this interviewee had worked] left, I started to look for a bicycle, we found some gramophones and things, various things, there were lots of us, scoundrels. At that time we took whatever we could find, and I had about fifteen bikes in the attic. Then someone tipped off the Russians and they came by. They took all of the bikes (K11Am).

The carnivalesque slackening of moral norms and suspension of reality between the old and new worlds are poignantly conveyed by the testimony of a man who arrived in Krzyż as a twenty-year old, to work on the redevelopment of the railways. Post-war Krzyż appears in his account as a kind of Polish Wild West, in which diverse characters interact, and where local residents strive to acquire as much gain from the situation as possible.<sup>160</sup> The man still remembers this time with a sense of reverie, although this sentiment is also mixed with a certain embarrassment:

In 1945 there were more bars than anything else in Krzyż. There were five or six of them. Because all of those looters came from Warsaw or wherever, and the first thing they did

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159 This is a fairly typical narrative strategy for events that are now seen as amoral or are simply not accepted; the speaker can recall the event without taking personal responsibility, see: Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (München: CH Beck, 2006), pp. 169–182.

160 Julita Makaro has written about many institutions, often of dubious repute, that characterized the typical townscape in the “Recovered Territories,” for the example of Gubin, see: Julita Makaro, *Gubin – miasto graniczne. Studium socjologiczne* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2007).

was... There was even a hotel here, so they could have a rest. [...] And they spent a day acclimatizing and went on further to plunder, and later they came back here and went their separate ways. [...] You could get anything here. Dollars, girls, food, and a place to sleep. [...] And they all drank, both the Russians and the Poles (K2Am).

The carnivalization of life in Krzyż was sometimes amusing, but on the everyday level it was certainly also a burden, because it strengthened the sense of insecurity and being under threat. People lived on a minefield – both in a figurative sense and literally. After its destruction by the Soviets, the town was on a slow road to recovery, and the necessity of contributing to the rebuilding process was an additional strain for many residents.<sup>161</sup> However, the post-war reconstruction of Krzyż also features in many accounts as a patriotic deed, which released the best emotions and energy in people and cemented a new sense of community.

When we arrived, we had to do everything from scratch. Above all – I remember for example that we, the scouts, signed up to remove debris [...], the bricks had to be transported to a square somewhere, and we were told that those bricks would go towards the reconstruction of Warsaw. There was this great goal: all of society was building its capital city.<sup>162</sup> Later it turned out that these bricks were going to [the village of] Drawsko, and to all kinds of other places for other building projects, and the whole communal effort was wasted. [...] But obviously, people didn't complain, because all of that was necessary (K17Am).

The theme of sincere post-war enthusiasm is also present in interviews with younger people, especially in families that preserve a tradition of telling stories about wartime and post-war experiences. The following statement, for example, shows the genuine pride of a son towards his father's commitment to rebuilding the town of Krzyż:

In 1945, when Krzyż found itself on the Polish side, we gained independence here as the "Recovered Territories," and they started to launch rail connections. [...] There were

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161 Statistical data gives a good idea of the scale of destruction in the "Recovered Territories." As Czesław Osękowski shows, post-war destruction affected 97 % of the railway rolling stock, 70 % of river bridges, 63 % of the railway lines, and 27.5 % of agricultural estates, see: Czesław Osękowski, *Spółeczeństwo Polski Zachodniej i Północnej w latach 1945–56* (Zielona Góra: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego, 1994).

162 "The Whole Nation is Building its Capital City" ["Cały naród buduje swoją stolicę"] was one of the propaganda slogans of the early post-war years in Poland, emphasizing the contribution of all Poles to the reconstruction of Warsaw after its destruction by the Germans. This phrase is still visible on a building from that era in the center of Warsaw.

announcements in Poznań, my dad told me, that they needed people to work on the railways. He was 18 years old then, in 1945. He got on a train and went. Those were the times when he was practically one of the first, although he wasn't the most important person. He had no idea about railways (K2Bm).

Despite their awareness that lofty ideals often were not matched by reality, both of the above respondents expressed the idea that participating in the reconstruction of the town was a formative and bonding experience (or, for the second-generation interviewees, the received memory of this deed had a similar value); it contributed both to personal identity and to the creation of bonds between the new residents of Krzyż. Such statements are abundant in the Krzyż testimonies. It is striking that people in Krzyż saw participation in reconstruction as a positive experience, whereas Zhovkva had no such opportunity. In Krzyż, memories about the difficulties of the first phase of post-war adaptation are offset by a joy at building a new homeland – both the new regional home in western Poland, and the greater ideological home of the nation, for which bricks from the debris in Krzyż would be sent to Warsaw. Even when the brick turned out to have been “wasted” and those bricks went to Drawsko, the effort itself strengthened a feeling of community among the new Krzyż residents and allowed people to experience their own agency, at least at the local level. The new people of Zhovkva, meanwhile could not benefit from an equivalent endeavor. The town of Zhovkva did not suffer as much during the war, which was of course a positive circumstance. But it did mean that the lack of a formative phase of reconstruction was another lost opportunity for the building of social bonds. Whereas in Krzyż in the first post-war period, people were united in their hope for a new reality (not necessarily in a political dimension), in Zhovkva the totalitarian regime consigned the community to enforced passivity from the very beginning.<sup>163</sup>

In both towns, the first phase of adaptation was accompanied by a sense of threat.<sup>164</sup> This was connected above all to the militarization of everyday life and

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163 Zdzisław Mach identifies the necessity and possibility of independently organizing social life as one of the conditions of successful migration, see: Mach, *Niechciane miasta*.

164 The existing literature points to the feeling of being under threat (including by the presence of and behavior of Soviet soldiers) as one of the most significant factors that destabilized resettled persons in the “Recovered Territories” in the first years after the war, see: Janusz Chumiński, “Czynniki destabilizujące proces osadnictwa we Wrocławiu (1945–1949),” in: *Studia nad procesami integracji i dezintegracji społeczności Śląska*, ed. Władysław Misiak (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1993), pp. 55–78.

the organization of social space – in the immediate post-war period, the Red Army was in charge in both places, and this fact was tangible on an everyday basis. Residents of Krzyż and Zhovkva recall shootouts, brawls and bust-ups being caused by Red Army soldiers. Memories about the first weeks and months in both towns are distinguished by an extreme sense of insecurity, including in one's own house. Respondents recalled that they were constantly afraid of being attacked: by *Banderites*,<sup>165</sup> Ukrainians, *Moskals*, Red Army soldiers or simply ordinary bandits.<sup>166</sup>

The worst thing was, when it started to get dark, I was scared. My husband and I, we were scared, and we blacked out the windows. [What were you afraid of?] That the Germans would come and murder us right here. I was scared, honest to God. I kept listening out to see if it was quiet. The nights were almost sleepless, because we were so afraid. [...] And [we were afraid of] criminals too, there were various people from the East, and maybe they were even worse than the Germans (K27Af).

I still remember how people walked around our house. They had these long cloaks, these bloody enormous coats. Their hands and arms were completely covered up. There, where we have our garden now, just before the forest, that's where they would come out of the forest, and they would walk around our garden. [...] And we would straight away sit still, closed up inside, and that was it. [So you were afraid of them?] Well yes, for sure. Because who knows who those people were and what they were up to (Z12Bf).

Both fragments illustrate not only a constant state of fear, but also mutual distrust – different settlers were mindful of each other, often not even wanting to find out who really was walking in their garden. These perceptions of new neighbors signal the extent to which mutual prejudice was prevalent; this was one of the greatest obstacles to the building of social bonds in the new community. In the majority of interviews, everyone but the most narrowly understood

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165 In this and similar contexts, residents of both towns use the word *Banderites* to refer not just to supporters of Stepan Bandera (who, at the point in question here, had long left Ukraine and had little real direct influence in the country), but more generally to all of the diverse underground movements of Ukrainian nationalists.

166 Marcin Zaremba argues that fear of attacks by criminals was one of the most common emotions in Poland in the immediate post-war period. There was a particularly heightened tension in the “Recovered Territories” and in places with a large concentration of Red Army personnel in important transport hubs – such as, for example, Krzyż. It was also common in the “Recovered Territories” for different groups of settlers to be mutually suspicious of each other, such as “repatriates” from the East and other Poles, see: Marcin Zaremba, *Wielka Trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys* (Warszawa: Znak, 2012), pp. 157, 316, 330.

in-group was seen as a potential enemy in the initial period. Stories about fear of diverse “bandits” are mixed with feelings of alienation and loneliness, of a need for self-reliance; in time, the constant sensation of surrounding enmity could result in withdrawal and conscious self-alienation:

Different things were going on here. [...] You don't know... I can't tell you ... It was a time when they were closing the Greek Catholic churches and turning them all into Orthodox ones. They didn't want them... Different things were happening here. People were so angry. The *Banderites* were everywhere. There were... there were the Red Epauettes,<sup>167</sup> the Red Army, and... It was awful. But I'm telling you, we didn't understand anything, didn't see anything, nothing... (Z16Af).

The universal feeling of fear affected all the new arrivals equally, including those who belonged to the privileged social layers, of whom others were most afraid – such as the Soviet “pioneers” in Zhovkva. Whereas autochthonous locals and Ukrainians resettled from Poland trembled before the ruthless “party” officials and “political” comrades, the wives of the communist functionaries traveled to work in fear, convinced that they were always being watched by the local population.

I trembled every night when I was on duty. Because there would always be some Russian chairman in one of the villages or in a different district, and he was bound to be tracked down, and we were bound to receive a corpse in the end. There were such cases. I don't remember anything else about those incidents. The *Banderites* were active, but what kind of *Banderites*? They would capture people, track them down, kill them, and later bring us a dead body (Z26Af).

Despite the enormous objective differences in the experiences of Ukrainian resettlers and the wives of party dignitaries, there are striking similarities in their inability to place themselves in the new reality. The woman cited above stated with a disarming sincerity that she had, and still has, no idea why whole villages around Zhovkva had been emptied out after the war: “That was my job – I worked in the hospital. I only did good to people, and I am totally incompetent when it comes to those other issues” (Z26Af).

Although various groups of Zhovkva residents were similarly afraid of unspecified things and people, declaring an ostentatious disinterest in the threats that were encircling their houses, the reasons behind their attitude were different. This characteristic detachment from reality has its roots not in real lack

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167 The respondent probably means the functionaries of the NKVD, who were informally called the “Red Epauettes” [*krasnopogonniki*] because of the decoration of their uniforms.

of knowledge, but in a deep-seated conviction that this is the only strategy that will provide protection from further repressions. The ignorance of the women representing officialdom shows that they lived in a completely different world to the Ukrainian resettlers, not knowing how the locals lived and died – often at the hands of their own husbands. Such statements prove that the integration of Soviet newcomers with the rest of Zhovkva society was superficial at best, notwithstanding their heated assurances that, with time, they had grown to enjoy living in Zhovkva in peace and prosperity.

A final significant difference between the testimonies in Krzyż and Zhovkva is that the latter contain no elements of humor. Residents of Krzyż today are capable of talking about the post-war carnival with certain ironic distance, if they did not suffer a grave personal loss during this time.

We went to this town, this German town. What would it look like? [...] There was someone shouting: “Hey! Washing powder, there is washing soda!” “Where?!” And he says: “Over there by the church.” [...] We hadn’t seen washing powder for ages. It was tough, everything was dirty, because we had traveled for about ten days. And we go in, and there is whole courtyard covered in feathers: “What on earth? Where is the powder?” we shout. “In the feathers! You have to look for it!” So we completely covered ourselves in feathers and dug around in there. It turned out that the soldiers who were leaving had unstitched German bedding to look for hidden treasures [laughter]. And the whole courtyard was covered in feathers. And we, repatriates had feathers all over us as we looked for soap! We searched, and we had paper bags, and we collected feathers on our bodies and soda and soap in the bags. We did find some treasures though! (K17Af).

Such stories are practically unthinkable in the Zhovkva context. The difference in respondents’ emotional distance towards the events they describe is striking. People in Krzyż remember moments of danger in the past tense, not only in terms of grammar, but also in their emotional attitudes. Zhovkva residents to this day speak in hushed tones when recalling people walking around in their gardens, and humor is the last thing they would associate with the reality of the 1940s.

## Yearning, Temporariness, Alienation

In his book *Unwanted Towns* [*Niechciane miasta*], Zdzisław Mach compares migration to a rite of passage and, adopting and modifying the classic theory of Arnold van Gennep, distinguishes three phases of the migration process: separation (exclusion stage), liminality (marginal stage) and aggregation (incorporation stage).<sup>168</sup> The first period of adaptation for the migrants in Krzyż and

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168 Cf. Mach, *Niechciane miasta*.

Zhovkva – especially for forced migrants – was a liminal phase, a time of transition, in which individual subjectivities were suspended; they had not severed their ties with the old home, but were yet to create a bond with the new one. For the vast majority of respondents, the most important emotion associated with this period was a feeling of longing. Interviewees remembered that for a considerable amount of time, they lived with what they had left behind. Although the feeling of yearning was universal for all settlers in both towns, different groups of settlers in fact longed for different things. Poles from the eastern territories spoke above all about their native town or village and the area they saw as their “small homeland,” and also about the specific regional Polish identity that they could not take with them to the West. Ukrainians resettled from Poland missed their homes, understood as their own pieces of land that had belonged in the family for generations – together with the surrounding neighborhood, these homesteads comprised the “native land.” Eastern migrants in Zhovkva spoke relatively little about their feelings of yearning. When related themes cropped up in their testimonies, they spoke less of their former houses and places of residence than about a certain type of social and political bond. No one missed the stern totalitarian system of the Soviet 1930s, but several people recalled a certain nostalgia for the Soviet culture of “equality” and “cosmopolitanism.” Such statements were especially prominent in the accounts of individuals whose relations with the local population later became strained.

The whole time the children were small, I felt a real yearning for home. [...] Our people over there are better, there's no Nazism over there. When my son-in-law learned that I am a Pole, and that we have Polish roots, he said to my daughter: “I would never have married you if I had known you were Polish” – that's what he said. And I laughed and said: “Well it would have been a great loss” [laughter] [...] At home that would have never happened. We had different ethnicities living together. [Was it difficult for you to get accustomed to the life in Zhovkva?] Yes, very, very difficult. Every part of me was splitting inside, every part of me wanted to go home (Z10Af).

Whilst forced migrants described their nostalgia in more acute terms, there were also instances of people who moved voluntarily – at least in theory – speaking with longing about their old homes. This is illustrated by the accounts of a mother and son, whose family came from the area surrounding Warsaw, which was in ruins after the uprising,<sup>169</sup> to Krzyż in search of better living conditions. The transgenerational dialogue also allows a comparison between the memory of

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169 The Warsaw Uprising was an armed insurgency against the German occupation, led by the Polish Underground State, which began on August 1, 1944. In its aftermath, the Polish capital city was largely destroyed (in districts where fighting was most intense,

a woman who experienced resettlement as an adult, and a man who left his first home as a young boy. The nostalgia of the mother is despairing and filled with agony, whereas that of the son is more akin to a mild nostalgia that mythologizes the native territory as an Arcadian land of childhood innocence. The mother is riven by a desire to return; the son is satisfied with reminiscence.

How many tears I shed, how much health I lost, because of the fact that I had to come here. Here, everything was foreign, everything was wild, everything was so empty, and I couldn't cope with it. It was like, we arrived at this house and, dear Lord, it was a complete ruin... (K27Af).

I remember that I missed home, even as a small boy... I remember the stream, the alley of willows, that big forest we used to go to. And under the hill, I used to play there as a child and I remembered that quite often. And how we sang "Warsaw my Warsaw" ["Warszawo, ty moja Warszawo"], quite often, and how it made me feel comfortable inside; I sang that song a lot as a child, about that Warsaw of ours (K27Bm).

Of course there were also respondents who did not recall feeling any sense of yearning for their former places of abode in the immediate post-war years. However, among the several dozen interviews in both towns, these were only a handful of individuals. These respondents came from different groups of settlers; absence of nostalgia was therefore not correlated with a migrant group. Level of education was also not a factor. It appears that the decisive trait was rather a certain type of sensitivity and ability to construct a deep emotional bond with one's place of residence. Respondents who claimed that they never missed home were more prone than others to commenting on material conditions, and they perceived resettlement exclusively using the pragmatic categories of social and economic gain and loss.

[You didn't miss home?] No, no, why should I? [Well you said that you had your own field and...] Yes I said that, but what would we have done there? Work in the kolkhoz? Never in my life! I used to work in Mir [a town in today's Belarus] in a bakery, but never in a kolkhoz. My mother did, she worked there, because what else was there for her? But my brother also refused to go. He was in the military, he came back, and we left straight away, as soon as he came back from the army. What were we going to do in the kolkhoz? (K33Af).

A second dominant emotion that yet more strongly underlines the liminality of the first phase of adaptation is a feeling of temporariness, of impermanence.<sup>170</sup>

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up to 90 % of buildings were ruined). Approximately 200,000 people died, and many thousands of Polish survivors left the city permanently after the event.

170 Cf. Głowacka-Grajper, *Transmisja pamięci*, pp. 189–190.

This is partly an extension of yearning for the home that had been left behind, whereby people were inclined to believe in a quick return home and to resist accepting the changes that had affected their lives. Another factor that contributed to this feeling was a belief that the post-war political reality was not final, and that the state borders would revert to their pre-war alignments. Almost all of the forced migrants (and a significant part of the voluntary settlers, with the notable exception of the Poles from nearby western regions in Krzyż) claimed that they were convinced for many months – sometimes even years – that they would not remain in Krzyż or Zhovkva permanently.<sup>171</sup>

To begin with – after all, no one knew anything about what would happen to us, who would come, whether we were in Russia or whether it would be Poland. [...] People always said in 1945 that “Anders<sup>172</sup> would arrive on his white horse and we would all go back to Lwów.” Everyone from the East had this hope [...], that this whole history of Europe, those wars, all of that would somehow change, and the Russians would leave, and those lands over there would return to us (K3Af).

What were people’s attitudes then? That we would “stay here for another year, we won’t stay long.” [Did you think you would go back?] Yes, we believed we would return home. [...] It was the politics of that time that the they [the Poles] would come back to reclaim their houses, that they would somehow punish people, those owners. There was a fear around. I chose not to take this building, I told you about that Polish woman. [...] I bought it in the end, officially, all above board, and now I am not afraid of anyone here (Z33Am).

As the second quote shows, the feeling of temporariness was often combined with a fear of the return of previous homeowners.<sup>173</sup> Although the authorities

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171 There was a specific group of respondents whose sense of instability and temporariness was heightened by a fear of being forced to go back. These were just a few individuals whose lives in their old homes had been especially difficult and arduous. These interviewees were also affected by rumours of the imminent downfall of the post-war order, but unlike the majority of others, they did not look forward to this eventuality.

172 Władysław Anders was a Polish military commander and politician, who during the Second World War led the Polish Second Corps and was the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces in the West. He lived in exile after the war. In the first post-war period, many people believed that he would work with the Allied forces and Polish divisions that had remained in western countries to regain the eastern provinces that had been ceded to the Soviet Union.

173 Many publications, by both historians and sociologists, show that temporariness was a common experience among “repatriates” from the East (see the works by Andrzej Sakson, Andrzej Brencz, Czesław Ośkowski, Wojciech Łukowski, Zdzisław Mach and Beata Halicka). Research on other deported people confirms that this was a universal

used various means to persuade settlers that there was no such threat in reality, people were still afraid. Many people therefore tried to “legalize” and “ensure” their ownership of the homes they had occupied, by gathering appropriate documents or by simply buying the property without the mediation of the state.

My father was so precautionous that as soon as he moved here, we lived here for a bit, and he made arrangements to buy the whole house [...]. And it's paid up, in the ownership deeds, everything is organized in such a way that the Germans can't come back (K15Bf).

It was not only the individuals who migrated who felt longing for the old; successive generations, who were born in Krzyż or Zhovkva, were also affected by these emotions. For members of the second generation and a part of the third, the sense of impermanence became one of the most important and intense memories from their childhood, often shaping the life of the entire family; it was an oppressive post-memory. Almost all respondents now in their sixties and seventies mentioned the ever-present sense of insecurity and their parents' constant mental harking back to a distant home. The ubiquity of a long-time inability to part with an old life suggests the strength of these emotions. People who were born in the new place spoke about a yearning that sometimes abated somewhat, but never vanished entirely. There was a recurring theme in the interviews of living in suitcases and being always ready to move back:

When my parents arrived, they said that the buildings were all empty and everything was closed up. We had everything, furniture, crockery, but my parents said that none of this was ours, that we couldn't just move into someone else's house, maybe we'll go home in two weeks or so. Maybe things will normalize and they will tell us that we can go home. It wasn't like we had arrived and we were going to live here forever (K26Bf).

I know that my grandmother, my mother's mother, was also moved here from Poland, and she used to say that they always thought that they would go back there. That she didn't even bring many things with her, that her mother had stayed behind, saying that “you'll come back here.” They thought it was temporary, that they would still go back, and be home again (Z6Cf).

The sense of temporariness affected all aspects of life, disrupting it in a variety of ways. The suffering of parents are often stretched to grotesque proportions in the memories of descendants – one person remembered a large suitcase that belonged to their grandmother and was never put away in the attic, while

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feeling throughout this part of Europe, see Alexandra Wangler's work on the Lemkos deported to North-West of Poland in 1947: Alexandra Wangler, *Rethinking History, Reframing Identity. Memory, Generations, and the Dynamics of National Identity in Poland* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012).

another recalled that their grandfather missed out on a place in the local cemetery because the family refused to believe that he would not find his final resting place in his former hometown in eastern Poland, and failed to make the proper arrangements.

The sense of temporariness that resulted from anxiety about the Germans returning is also carried into the memories of the younger generations. Whilst they insist that they themselves have no fear of former inhabitants coming to claim their properties, they remember well the anxiety that their parents' generation suffered in their childhood. Interestingly, even the youngest generation, of people born after 1989, spoke about this feeling: "They were afraid when they moved here that the Germans would come back and push out the people who had moved into these territories, trying to reclaim their land and their houses" (K29Df). A fear of the Germans is also still alive, to an extent, in the younger generations, although it is usually expressed as a mediated emotion – neighbors and friends are afraid of a German invasion, but we ourselves take this fear with a pinch of salt.

[Were your parents afraid of the Germans coming back?] I think everyone thought about this. And not only in my parents' generation, because even in my generation, when we started to build our house, I met people who told me "you know, I would never build a house on this side of the Noteć [river]" (K30Cf).

It is worth noting that statements about insecurity, especially connected to the potential return of former landlords, were found much more frequently in the Krzyż interviews than in Zhovkva. The second and third generations of new residents in Zhovkva remember the fears of their parents from their own childhood, but these sentiments have a smaller bearing on their daily lives and consciousness. Not one person suggested that their parents, let alone the speakers themselves, were afraid of the Poles returning and repossessing their homes. An important factor here is the effect of propaganda fed to the first generation of people born in the "Recovered Territories" and "timelessly Ukrainian Galicia." In Krzyż, as everywhere else in the formerly German areas of Poland, the authorities intended both to persuade people of the Polishness of the territories in which they were settling, and to maintain a state of tension by constantly emphasizing the threat of German revanchism.<sup>174</sup> Even if people did not take these messages

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174 Cf. Jakub Tyszkiewicz, "Communist Propaganda in the German Provinces Ceded to Poland," in: *1945: A Break with the Past. A History of Central European Countries at the End of World War Two*, ed. Zdenko Cepic (Ljubljana: Institute of Contemporary History, 2008), pp. 91–100.

at face value, they must have nonetheless been affected by them at some level, especially if they were children at the time.<sup>175</sup> In Zhovkva, state propaganda had a diametrically opposite objective – the authorities were also keen to emphasize the historical Ukrainianness of the area, but because of the doctrine of socialist friendship between nations, Polish revanchism was never used as a tool of persuasion. The Soviet state, after all, had much more effective means of control.

The feeling of insecurity and instability also contributed to a reluctance to invest in the inherited space. If such attitudes were less common in Zhovkva, because of the relative absence of anxiety about the return of the Poles, in Krzyż they were almost ubiquitous. Spacious German houses were only partially used, refurbishment was not carried out for years after the war, and farming premises and machinery were also allowed to deteriorate. Characteristically, it was the younger respondents who tended to observe this tendency the most, and especially those who had no roots in the East; the first generation either did not remember these events or did not want to remember.

There was a big influx of people from the East. It was about 1946 that they all came. Maybe they were more scared than the rest of us that they could be driven out at some point. [...] For a certain time, about 12 or 15 or even 20 years, there was no proper investment in the farms. No one was really investing. There were even cases, I know, when a roof started to need repairing, and it wasn't repaired. Some houses just collapsed by themselves. [...] Because after all, we were here, but nobody knew how long we would be staying (K37Bm).

It appears that temporal distance allows younger respondents to more calmly and objectively assess the processes by which the new residents of Krzyż gradually set roots in the town. In their statements, understanding and empathy for the fears of their parents and grandparents is mixed with a certain regret at the damage that was done as a result of this behavior.

Another factor that made adaptation difficult for many settlers was the foreignness of the geographical surroundings, the economic conditions, material culture, and climate.<sup>176</sup> Resettlers did not only have to deal with the

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175 For the ideologization of education and schooling in the Stalinist period, see: Kosiński, *O nową mentalność*.

176 Andrzej Brenzc has written on this issue, using the collective category of “cultural landscape” [*krajobraz kulturowy*], see: Brenzc, “Oswajanie niemieckiego dziedzictwa kulturowego.” Beata Halicka employs the term “cultural familiarization” [*kulturowe oswajanie*]. Similar findings in the context of comparative research on Polish and German resettlers were proposed by the German historian Philipp Ther, in: Philipp Ther, “The Integration of Expellees in Germany and Poland after World War II: A Historical Reassessment,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55 (1996), pp. 779–805.

straightforward issue of arranging their material lives in the new place; they also, above all, had to go through a process of cultural adaptation, understood as a holistic process of changing one's symbolic universum.<sup>177</sup> Krzyż residents originally from the East were affected most of all; Poles from central regions more rarely. Issues of cultural and geographic difference do not feature in the testimonies of Ukrainians resettled from Poland to Zhovkva; in their case, the change was objectively small, with a move of a few dozen kilometers meaning essentially the same climate, architectural styles and agrarian organization. There was no such problem, for similar reasons, for the Poles who came to Krzyż from the neighboring areas. Soviet pioneers, on the other hand, had been prepared for the worst, with stories of “wild Banderaville” and awful living conditions in western Ukraine influencing their expectations. Thus, if the conditions they found in Zhovkva were surprising, it was often a positive surprise, and feelings of foreignness were less prominent. For the embittered and mournful eastern Poles in Krzyż, the German cultural and geographic landscape was a hostile and foreign environment, which demanded additional effort in order to feel at home there. Many individuals, especially those who never again saw their ancestral homes, tended to idealize their native lands at the expense of the new, “foreign” reality in which they had to live after the war. In the East, the land was more fertile, the architecture was more attractive and even the air was cleaner:

We had no brick-walled houses, for example; we had wooden ones. They were beautiful houses, really beautiful, and they all had a red roof. [...] And here we had arrived, and everything was made of this brick, bricks everywhere, and we couldn't get used to it. [...] It was somehow damp everywhere, or maybe it wasn't damp, but the air was so different, it was wet. We had better, drier air over there (K19Af).

Sometimes, the encounter with a different material culture had a positive effect. Some interviewees, especially among those who came from less privileged rural backgrounds, emphasized the civilizational superiority of the new town and praised German furnishings and technology.<sup>178</sup> These same characteristics of “new” houses could arouse different emotions in different groups of settlers, as well as mixed reactions from individuals.

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177 I use the concepts of cultural adaptation and symbolic universum in the meanings proposed by Józef Niżnik, see: Józef Niżnik, *Symbola a adaptacja kulturowa* (Warszawa: Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, 1985).

178 Zbigniew Czarnuch has analyzed the issue of civilizational difference and its various effects on the adaptation of settlers to new conditions in: Czarnuch, “Oswajanie krajobrazu.”

In the East we had those clay huts, and very few people had brick walls. Even more popular were those low, wooden houses. But here we found these big, pretty houses, strong ones. It was certainly a difference, my God! [...] The furniture was different, it was so rich. They even had sofas, and those beds, and elegant mattresses, everything. There was a big difference, a huge difference. The culture was different. German culture was much better (K21Af).

For the “repatriates” for whom migration did not entail a radical change for the worse in material terms (as was the case, for example, with people who moved from a town in former eastern Poland to a small village near Krzyż), the objective civilizational differences between the old and new places were undeniable. Living conditions in Krzyż itself were better than in the small towns of former eastern Poland, whilst German villages were completely different from the rural areas people had left behind. Nonetheless, this forced civilizational advancement was, for the most part, imposed and unwanted, and for this reason, people often declined to take advantage – especially those from rural backgrounds.<sup>179</sup> The majority of farmers from eastern villages struggled to feel at home in German homesteads, because they were used to a different way of working the land. Wasteful attitudes towards German farm machinery had their roots not only in the sense of impermanence among “repatriates,” but also often in a simple lack of knowledge about how to use it. The oldest interviewees spoke about their encounters with “civilizational advancement” reluctantly; people from the younger generation were much more willing to raise this issue, especially the children of migrants from nearby Wielkopolska. The children of eastern Poles, however, never spoke on this topic, as if they were ashamed of the incompetence of their parents. Statements by the descendants of settlers from Wielkopolska contain a distinct tone of superiority and pride that, unlike others, their own parents would have known what to do with German equipment.

There were some funny situations. When I was working on various local censuses, I would visit the homes of various newcomers, and they didn't always have, so to say, orderliness like in Poznań [laughter].<sup>180</sup> Hens were laying eggs in pianos, and other such pearls. [...] For example, newcomers would just leave farm machinery standing in the

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179 On this topic see also: Andrzej Sakson, “Procesy integracji i dezintegracji społecznej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych Polski po 1945 roku,” in: *Pomorze – trudna ojczyzna? Kształtowanie się nowej tożsamości 1945–1995*, ed. Andrzej Sakson (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1996), pp. 131–154.

180 According to stereotype, people from Poznań and Wielkopolska more generally are believed to be fastidious and orderly, or pedantic – or in the negative version of this image, miserly.

field. After finishing the tilling, they would leave a plough for the whole winter on the spot where they finished using it. [...] It was funny, if you're used to something different. Now they have learned a bit more, it's different now, subtler, they've got to grips with that new [culture], it's been a few years after all (K1Bf).

Another aspect of migration that made post-war integration difficult – both in Zhovkva and Krzyż – was the change of environment from a rural to an urban setting or *vice versa*. In both cases, moving from a village to a town was more common; this entailed a dual process of change. On the one hand, because of the minimal presence or – in the case of Krzyż – complete absence of the town's former inhabitants, both places underwent a radical re-ruralization. Urban lifestyles simply disappeared, and the visual landscapes of the towns were transformed – humorous stories about chickens being reared on balconies and pigsties being installed in laundry rooms were not just myths. On the other hand, even the little remaining urbanism, such as the buildings themselves, demanded that new arrivals from villages adapt their ways to fit the new setting. Both levels of this two-directional process – individual and social (urbanistic) – are powerfully illustrated by the following statements of two Krzyż residents, who arrived respectively from near Lwów (now western Ukraine) and Bełchatów (central Poland).

To begin with, I was ashamed to buy bread, because I came from a farm, and I thought: would I buy bread on the farm? I was embarrassed that someone might see me. Later we started to buy bread and I got used to it (K20Af).

I lived just like in a village. My husband was sick, and his pension was small. So I had rams, five rams, pigs, the lot. There were unused fields on the side [of the house] facing the countryside, but in the town centre I wouldn't have been able to keep animals like that. In the laundry room I made a kind of pigsty, for the chickens and pigs. And that's how we lived (K36Af).

Interestingly, Ukrainians who moved from Poland to Zhovkva did not talk a great deal about problems adapting to an urban style, although this group above all would have been the main driver of sustained changes in the cultural practices of Zhovkva. Ukrainians from Poland, however, very rarely settled in the town center: the most prestigious properties in streets lined with villas were reserved for Soviet incomers, but they themselves, if given a choice, often preferred to look for a house in the suburbs and to lead a rural life as before.

Movement from a larger town to a smaller one was less common, but is also worth consideration. I met people in both Zhovkva and Krzyż who had had lived in much bigger urban settings before 1945, such as Lwów (Lviv), Kołomyja (now Kolomyia in western Ukraine), Łódź and Poznań. Moving to a small town was

for such individuals a step down and felt like a reduction of their social status. Many of them felt deceived, because the authorities had presented the end goal of their journey as a town comparable to the place they were leaving.

I was very disappointed when we came here. On arrival, my father didn't say anything to us, he looked around, and there was just nothing here. A small town, with one main street. But we had come to feed ourselves, what could we do? There was no other choice. So we had to make the journey – to the place where we had been sent (K2Af).

My father said: "Oh that Zhovkva, it's a big town, they have trams!" When we arrived, we saw all these buildings that were falling apart, ruined by the war. It was awful! (Z9Af).

People who had no choice in where to go and expected few favors from the Soviet authorities – such as representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia returning from Siberian exile – were no less embittered when they arrived in Zhovkva. The feelings of alienation and loss, as well as a certain "superiority" over the "rural" surroundings, were in fact carried on into the second generation.

We felt foreign here, to a certain extent. [...] My parents were from Lviv after all... I remember I had a friend who used to say that my parents and aunt were so different. They were so... well, upper class. In their hats... They had come from Lviv in their gloves and all that... They were more bourgeois than the people here in Zhovkva (Z41Bf).

In addition to changing the appearances and cultures of the towns, both directions of migration entailed serious consequences for processes of individual adaptation to the new reality. It is a truism that the more the new place resembles the old home, the easier the process of adaptation becomes. Thus, whether it was an undesired social advancement resulting from a move to a larger town, or an equally unwanted reduction in status associated with moving from a city to a provincial town, the change itself acted as a barrier. In both situations, settlers had to acquire a completely new set of skills that were indispensable to daily living. Whether the challenge was to buy groceries at an "urban" marketplace, or to learn something typically rural such as rearing animals or growing one's own vegetables, it was an additional strain and effort, which had to be faced alongside all of the other difficulties of post-migratory life. Migration thus turned out to be a challenge in yet another way, through a need for social and cultural adaptation; it certainly did not mean simply moving in space.

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Around the middle of the 1950s, when the political situation had stabilized somewhat, groups of forced migrants in Krzyż and Zhovkva made their first journeys to their former home regions. They traveled with diverse intentions and emotions: some wanted to visit relatives who had remained behind; others

went to scout the possibility of going back; others simply wanted to see their houses. Regardless of the reasons behind the visit, all of the travelers discovered that the possibility of returning home was an illusion, and their impressions of their “old homeland” were abysmal. Nothing was the same as before: the people had changed, the space had changed, and the dominant customs and social relations had changed.

I went to Poland, to my relatives, but my relatives were no longer there – they had died. So I went to see my nephews ... [What year was this in? How long ago was it, roughly?] *I don't remember any more, all of our children were still small... My sister was married to a Pole and arranged for a visa [invitation], and we went, spent a week here, nothing more, we had a look at the place and came running back. [...]* They were afraid to speak our own language [*po nashomu*] we spoke to them in Ukrainian, but they were afraid, they spoke Ukrainian in whispers, otherwise it was all Polish. [...] [And who lives in your old house?] Our former neighbor, in the house was our neighbor, he was in Germany before. My uncle and nephews were supposed to sell it and send me the money, but... Then the house was taken apart and that was it... *My sister said to me: “Come, come to the church,” but imagine what they had done to this church... The services were in Polish, and everyone was staring at us...<sup>181</sup> They were giving us such nasty looks! And we left the church, we got out of there straight away, we got out, because people were acting like we were God knows what. And we left that place. I couldn't stand it, I said: “Let's get out of here, back to the kids,” and that was it, we left (Z18Am/Z18Af).*

With the passing of time, the places that resettlers had left behind had changed beyond recognition; their former homes were now foreign and often even hostile. This was especially true for the formerly eastern Poles from what became western Ukraine, whom locals were not very keen to greet. Sometimes, other than shreds of physical matter, there was nothing at all in these landscapes that reminded one of home. Such journeys made to native lands in the first decade or two of post-war life convinced resettlers that the changes they had lived through were now irreversible. The transformation and foreignness of their “old homes” strengthened their conviction that there was nothing left to return to. This

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181 Before 1945 the church in this locality was a Greek Catholic church. After the resettlement of most of the local Ukrainian population to the Ukrainian SSR in 1944–46 and the arrival of significant numbers of Polish Roman Catholics, the parish was probably transferred to the Catholic Church. This is why the speaker was surprised to find mass being celebrated according to the Latin rite when they visited in the 1950s or 1960s and (in large part or in whole, if the visit occurred after 1962) in the Polish language.

revelation was extremely difficult and painful, but it was also a necessary step towards closing one phase of migration and embarking on a new one. Referring once again to Mach and van Gennep, the liminal phase of transition was finally over, and it became possible to move on to the final, definitive phase; it became possible, potentially, to successfully integrate into the new social reality.