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AT THE ORIGINS OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF RURAL  
AREAS IN THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN TERRITORIES  
OF PEOPLE'S POLAND \*

*On the basis of his own studies the author analyses social problems of the village on Recovered Territories and describes the formation of new local societies of autochthons, repatriates who came from the lands on the other side of the Bug line, and re-settlers from the overpopulated regions of central Poland. He shows factors that favoured and impeded integration processes.*

The factors that shape the structure of farms, a comparison of the old and the new status of peasant settler families, as well as the barriers and ties appearing in the nascent rural community—these are the main problems we propose to discuss in the present article. The silence in our historiography with regard to these problems was not a matter of fortuity. It was accounted for by the absence of necessary statistical material which was being prepared for several years by teams of more than ten people each. I deliberately limit myself to the available statistics which is not always precise enough. It permits, all the same, to grasp the main trends and relationships in the evolution of the

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\* The article is based entirely on the results of regional questionnaire pollings carried out between 1960 and 1968 by students attending the M.A. diploma seminars under my direction a fuller documentation than this one, mostly statistical, I published for the first time in 1973 in the periodical "Rocznik Dziejów Ruchu Ludowego" (No. 15).

phenomena without an analysis and description of which one can hardly expect success in so numerous research projects under way, concerning the political history of peasants.

In fixing the area of a farm in the Recovered Territories, the authorities did not take into account the class origin of the family. In order not to arouse unnecessary suspicions, settlers coming from Poland's other provinces were not required to furnish information on property left behind. With regard to repatriates, on the other hand, whose former property situation was known, the principle of compensation was applied in sporadic cases only.

The speedy bringing of land under cultivation and the optimum development of agriculture having been recognized as the prime objective, the size of a farm was made dependent on the factors that determined its productive capacity, above all on the resources of labour force and livestock at the disposal of the prospective settler. Families better prepared to carry out production tasks, i.e. those more numerous and possessing more farm animals, were taking over farms of larger area (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

A relatively strong tractive force left behind by the former German owners, and an adequate number of members of the family, capable of work, were sufficient conditions for acquiring a larger apportionment of land. Such a chance was available, above all, to a part of those families which were among the first to settle in the southern districts of Lower Silesia and in certain regions of the Voivodship of Szczecin.<sup>2</sup>

(As shown in Table 1 the number of farms taken over by repatriates, surveyed in the various districts: Braniewo — 200,

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<sup>1</sup> The table has been compiled on the basis of a random selection of settlement records kept in the repositories of District People's Councils. Since it is impossible to determine to what extent these figures are representative, the data in this table as well as in the subsequent ones should be interpreted as indicative; at the same time, however, they provide sufficient information to grasp the more general phenomena and trends that interest us here.

<sup>2</sup> If we put at 100 the total number of horses and oxen, both brought along by the new settlers and allotted to them, then the number of the animals allotted in the various regions was as follows: south-western region (the Voivodships of Wrocław and Zielona Góra) — 51.8; north-western region (the Voivodships of Szczecin and Koszalin) — 50.3. (The above data, relating to 2 districts only, seem overstated). The terms "voivodship" and "district" refer to the administrative units before the administration reform of June 1975.

Table 1: Area of Farms. Size of Family and Number of Livestock

Categories of acquired farms (before regulation)	Number of farms investigated	Average number of persons in family		Number of animals (brought and allotted) per 100 farms		Number of farm machines and implements (brought and allotted) per 100 farms	
		total	14-16 years	total	horses and oxen	total	1 st cl.
<i>A. Northern Region*</i>							
up to 5 ha.	220	3.3	2.0	112.1	14.1	292	16
5-9 ha.	790	3.8	2.3	241.8	43.7	292	48.3
9-15 ha.	1563	4.5	2.6	311.6	66.6	388	67.2
above 15 ha.	401	5.1	3.0	433.2	105	635	137
Total	2974	4.3	2.5	295.6	61.9	389	69.8
<i>B. North-Western Region**</i>							
up to 5 ha.	333	3.7	2.0	187.5	30.3	189	38.5
5-9 ha.	542	4.0	2.8	250	58	300	79
9-15 ha.	666	4.9	3.3	330	83.9	486	138
above 15 ha.	111	5.2	3.3	380	102.6	836	227
Total	1652	4.3	3.1	278	65.8	389	103
<i>C. South-Western Region***</i>							
up to 5 ha.	878	3.7	2.2	131	17.6	182	57
5-9 ha.	1063	4.3	2.5	272	42.3	471	175
9-15 ha.	644	4.7	2.9	308	69.7	603	226
above 15 ha.	33	4.0	2.8	378	88	689	328
Total	2618	4.2	2.5	242	49.3	408	149

\* The Voivodship of Olsztyn. Basing ourselves on the findings of the Institute of Agricultural Economics, we have adopted the division into regions as the more useful.

\*\* At present, the Voivodships of Szczecin and Koszalin.

\*\*\* At present, approximately, the Voivodships of Wrocław and Zielona Góra.

Kętrzyn 220, Nidzica — 103, Elbląg — 70, Biskupin — 201, Węgorzewo — 151, Działdowo — 52 (Northern region), Szczecinek — 612, Łębork — 100 (North-western region), Krosno Odrzańskie — 125, Zielona Góra — 198, Środa Śląska — 200, Wrocław — 250, Dzierżoniów — 150, Legnica — 200, Kłodzko — 200, Głogów — 154. The number of surveyed farms taken over by re-settlers from other provinces, in the various districts: Braniewo — 200,

Kętrzyn — 200, Nidzica — 402, Pisz — 327, Elbląg — 236, Biskupiec — 200, Węgorzewo — 177, Działdowo — 235, Szczecinek — 710, Lębork — 200, Krosno Odrzańskie — 175, Zielona Góra — 201, Środa Śląska — 200, Legnica — 200, Kłodzko — 209, Głogów — 156.)

From the summer of 1945, on the other hand, when the allotments of livestock were even more limited, in the decidedly greater part of the Recovered Territories, larger apportionments of land were obtained above all by families with big resources of labour force which were bringing along an adequate number of farm animals, especially of draught animals.<sup>3</sup>

The area of granted land determined in turn the question of allotment of the other elements of the farmstead. The number of assigned animals, agricultural machines and implements increased conformably to the area of the farm. As compared to farms of less than 5 ha., 100 farms in the largest-area category (over 15 ha.) were allotted in the various regions from 3 to 10 times more draught animals and several times more machines.

In most cases, the allotment of land proportional in area to the resources of livestock brought by the settler, was tantamount to the implementation of this principle: those families which arrived with greater resources of their own tractive force, enjoyed larger grants in livestock and machinery. As a result of the positive correlation: one's own livestock and equipment—the area of the farm acquired—the quantity of livestock and equipment acquired, the differences existing among families at the moment of settling in the Recovered Territories, with regard to the quantity of livestock and equipment in their possession, were even growing deeper for a certain period of time. None the less, the property divisions existing among the various groups of farms were not too sharp.

The differences in the number of farm animals between farms belonging to the two extreme groups (up to 4 ha, and above 12 ha.,

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<sup>3</sup> If we put at 100 the total number of animals, both brought along and allotted, then the number of those allotted (in all the 3 regions) amounted in the various years to: 1945—38.6; 1946—31.3; 1947—48—24.7. The above figures have been computed in the same way as in Table 1, and should be considered as indicative.

respectively) were about twice smaller than in prewar Poland's provinces. The reason for this was not only and not primarily the lower number of farm animals in the Recovered Territories. Of essential importance was the remarkable inequality of the number of animals within the various groups of farms. E.g., in the group of farms with an area from 4 to 12 ha., the number of horses in the South-western region was only by 25% lower than in the central-eastern region. On the other hand, the number of horseless farms amounted in the former case to as much as 37.3% of the total, in the latter case—to only 13.5%. A drastic inadequacy of the equipment of farms in relation to their area was characteristic of the Recovered Territories.

We should now consider the problem of relationships and interdependences between the new status of the settler families and their former status in the period prior to their arrival to the Recovered Territories.

As regards the quantity of livestock brought along, and partly also of labour force, the worst was the situation of landless and semi-proletarian families. The larger was the farm a family came from, the more numerous that family was and the more animals it brought. E.g., 100 farmers coming to the Recovered Territories from medium-sized (5—15 ha.) and larger farms (over 15 ha.) brought on the average several times more horses and cattle than the landless families.

The existing interdependence between the size of the farm and its equipment, resulted indirectly in a far-reaching correlation between the size of the farm left behind in the old place of residence and the size of the new farm acquired in the Recovered Territories. The average area of farms allotted to families from the two extreme categories, i.e. the formerly landless and the former owners of farms large than 9 ha., differed greatly. After the regulation of the area of farms that difference was lessened but it still retained the character of a phenomenon appearing with the force of regularity. As compared with a formerly landless peasant, the repatriate who had left behind east of the Bug river a farm of more than 9 ha. in area, received in the Recovered Territories, on the average, about 80% more land (before regulation) or up to 58% more land (after regulation).

In the first period of stay in the Recovered Territories, the situation of settlers who had come from bigger farms was also the best with regard to equipment in machinery and animals. In the case of repatriates, the number of machines and draught animals per 100 formerly landless families was as much as 3—4 times lower; in the case of re-settlers — the respective number was about twice lower. So great differences among repatriates can be accounted for by the fact that the formerly landless, bringing meagre possessions of their own, had also the most modest share in the allotments of animals and, especially, of post-German machinery; among the re-settlers, on the other hand, these differences were determined by the unequal number of animals brought along by the various groups of settlers.

The existing positive correlation between the old and the new status of the various groups of peasants was by no means tantamount to a simple reproduction in the Recovered Territories of the old social structures. The distance separating the various groups was considerably reduced and a part of the families interchanged their roles and their social status (Table 2).

As a result of the regulation carried out from 1947, middle sized farms became prevailing, the number of farms in the extreme categories was radically reduced. The process of destratification—even if one leaves out the former landless—becomes manifest when one compares the structure of farms left behind by the repatriates and of those acquired by them. In the case of re-settlers, the dissimilarity of the old and the new structure was even more pronounced.

The structure of farms acquired by those who had left behind medium-sized and larger holdings, was more advantageous.

Unlike the former small holders (up to 5 ha.), however, a part of those who formerly had had medium-sized and big holdings, received farms smaller than those left behind. Among the repatriates who had formerly owned 5—9 ha. of land, those promoted to a higher category of holders outnumbered those degraded to a lower category (38.6% and 9.4% of the total, respectively). Among the former owners of 9—14 ha. of land and of more than 14 ha., on the other hand, those passing to a lower category predominated, the respective percentages amounting to 40% and 93% of the

peasants. The above figures have been obtained by comparing the area of farms after regulation.

On the whole, if we also include in the reckoning the landless families, advancement decidedly predominated over downward movement among the repatriates all over the Recovered Territories. If we take into account only former owners of independent farms, on the other hand, then the overall result of the settlement process shows in one region no change in their status, in the other

Table 2: Farms Left Behind and Acquired

Categories of farms left behind	Number of farms examined	Area of farm acquired (in ha.)								
		Total	up to 2	2—5	5—7	7—9	9—10	10—12	12—14	Above 14
<i>Percentage of farms</i>										
<i>A. Repatriates, before regulation</i>										
Landless	417	100.0	18.5	19.4	19.0	22.3	9.6	7.2	2.6	1.4
up to 5 ha.	1325	100.0	14.8	26.9	18.1	16.5	10.5	6.9	3.1	3.2
5—9 ha.	740	100.0	7.0	6.2	19.8	23.2	16.4	14.5	5.9	7.0
9—14 ha.	459	100.0	5.0	4.6	11.8	13.7	18.3	17.6	13.7	15.3
above 14 ha	193	100.0	6.2	2.6	7.8	11.9	9.3	20.8	11.4	30.0
<i>After regulation</i>										
Landless	417	100.0	16.8	15.1	20.4	28.8	8.9	7.4	1.9	0.7
up to 5 ha.	1325	100.0	10.9	15.5	22.0	29.3	12.0	6.9	2.4	1.0
5—9 ha.	740	100.0	3.9	5.5	17.6	34.4	17.7	14.2	4.1	2.6
9—14 ha.	459	100.0	4.1	4.4	10.7	25.3	22.6	19.4	8.9	4.6
above 14 ha.	193	100.0	2.6	4.1	7.3	21.8	16.1	16.9	14.5	6.7
<i>B. Re-settlers, before regulation</i>										
Landless	1875	100.0	16.8	14.3	12.6	14.3	8.2	12.7	9.9	11.2
up to 5 ha.	778	100.0	10.9	12.6	12.2	17.4	14.1	14.1	7.6	10.7
5—9 ha.	327	100.0	6.4	6.4	10.1	26.6	16.6	12.5	8.9	13.5
9—14 ha.	152	100.0	2.0	3.9	7.2	13.2	18.4	19.1	11.9	24.3
above 14 ha.	93	100.0	6.5	10.7	6.5	6.5	12.8	9.6	7.6	39.8
<i>After regulation</i>										
Landless	1875	100.0	15.0	11.3	13.8	20.3	12.7	13.9	8.6	4.4
up to 5 ha.	778	100.0	7.1	6.7	15.0	25.2	15.0	17.5	8.9	4.6
5—9 ha.	327	100.0	2.7	3.1	9.5	31.2	25.9	16.5	14.4	6.7
9—14 ha.	152	100.0	2.0	3.3	7.2	16.4	19.1	19.2	19.7	13.2
above 14 ha.	93	100.0	3.2	9.7	2.1	12.9	19.4	19.4	15.0	18.3

two regions the balance is adverse. In the northern and north-western territories, farms falling into lower categories outnumbered those advancing to higher categories.

Significantly, however, this decline was relative. Per 100 repatriates—formerly landless and owners of up to 5 ha., 5—9 ha., 9—14 ha., and more than 14 ha., respectively—small holdings (up to 5 ha.), were acquired by : 31.9<sup>0</sup>%, 26.4<sup>0</sup>%, 9.4<sup>0</sup>%, 8.5<sup>0</sup>% and 6.7<sup>0</sup>%, respectively. Thus 90<sup>0</sup>% of the former medium-sized and big holders acquired self-dependent farms. This must have attenuated the discontent of that considerable part of the farmers whose new holdings were somewhat smaller than those they had left behind. The sense of wrong and disappointment could have spread, on the other hand, among the families reduced to the rank of small holders, often broken up and arriving from far-away in the USSR.

Prewar farmers, not to mention the former landless peasants, obtained in the Recovered Territories more advantageous farming conditions. Conducive to the productive development of farms, apart from better buildings and modern infrastructure, was their large stock of highly efficient farming implements. In the surveyed farms held by repatriates, the stock of agricultural machines and tools already in 1948 was by about 70<sup>0</sup>% larger than in 1938 ; in the farms held by re-settlers, it was by 43<sup>0</sup>% larger.

It is true that as compared with the period between the wars, the animal population in 1948 was still lower in both categories of farms ; yet by 1950, the situation was already changed : at that time, the repatriated families had by some 11<sup>0</sup>% more animals than before the war, the resettled families—by some 51<sup>0</sup>% more. Only the number of horses, in the case of repatriates, did not attain the prewar level by 1950.

As a result of immense losses in animal population in the period of war (amounting to about 57<sup>0</sup>% in the farms of repatriates and to about 41<sup>0</sup>% in the case of re-settlers), a comparison with the year 1944 showed decidedly favourable results already in 1948 : the repatriates and the re-settlers owned then more animals by some 57<sup>0</sup>% and 50<sup>0</sup>%, respectively.

Among the re-settlers (i.e. those coming from the other provinces of Poland), the landless constituted the most numerous group.



They accounted for about 57% in the south-western region, to 50% in the north-western region and to 22% in the northern region. It was for them that the settlement operation was the most advantageous.

Among the re-settlers who had formerly owned farms, more advantageous was the situation of those families which had left behind medium-sized and larger holdings, because :

(a) they constituted a considerable part and, in certain territories, even the predominating part of the ensemble of resettling farmers ;

(b) from the land and possessions left behind, from their utilization, leasing-out or sale, those families were drawing means that could be used for a speedier intensification of their new farms ;<sup>4</sup>

(c) these families which acquired in the Recovered Territories farms of an area of more than 5 ha., was bigger than the corresponding part of the formerly small-holder and landless families ;

(d) many of these families enjoyed privileges in obtaining assistance which the authorities were lending above all to medium-sized farms ;

(e) their new farms were richer in labour force, livestock and agricultural machinery.

The formerly landless had the most difficult start. There were among them many families coming from non-agricultural occupations. They were often unprepared for running a farm by themselves. The relatively greatest number of the landless acquired farms up to 5 ha. in area. In spite of the scant quantity of livestock they had brought with them, that group availed themselves of assistance to a small extent only. The families that took over self-dependent farms, with an area of more than 5 ha., found themselves in a different and, a rule, better situation.

The re-settlers who left behind farms in Poland's other provinces had an easier start than the repatriates. However, the share of the latter in the benefits of assistance was somewhat greater

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<sup>4</sup> According to questionnaire surveys, the percentage of families deriving income in the years 1946—1948 from farms left behind, was low (25%), and the percentage of those who invested the means thus obtained in the new farms was even lower (about 15%).

because about two-thirds of the repatriated families settled in the south-western region.

In the first year, the area of the newly-acquired farm was largely determined by the value of the property found there. This often created equal chances for the settler families from all social groups and made them intermingle in respect of affluence. Among the formerly landless families, it was presumably those which were the first to settle that acquired and kept the larger farms. Later, on the other hand, when a close interdependence appeared between the area of the farm acquired and the quantity of livestock brought along, the social status of the settler families was determined, as a rule, by their previous circumstances.

An interdependence existed between the size of the farm acquired and that of the one left behind. Thus the old intergroup divisions were still valid in the Recovered Territories, too; this, combined with the generally better farming conditions (more spacious and solid buildings, access to modern technology, rapid growth of the animal population), attenuated unfavourable repercussions among the formerly better-off families of repatriates. If we take into account the formerly landless as well, decidedly predominating among the repatriates will be families whose situation has become relatively more advantageous than before. The number of farms passing to lower categories was insignificant; the total number of those who experienced such degradation accounted for about 15%, and only a few percent were reduced to the rank of small holders.

The population of the Recovered Territories was a demographic mosaic. Each region was characterized by specific demographic relations. In no region did one of the three main groups of population (original inhabitants, re-settlers, repatriates) constitute a well-marked majority. The distinct predominance of one of the groups was to be found only in smaller administrative units: in rural communities, small towns and some districts. In 1950, out of the total number of 166 districts in Poland's Western Territories, only in 21 the immigratory population was of a rather homogeneous character: predominating in those districts were repatriates. In 50 districts, one group distinguished itself, in 33 districts—two groups. Thus the great migratory movements in the Western

and Northern Territories were characterized by the fact that they brought into contact large groups of people greatly differing from each other ; none of these groups was able to impose—by its numerical predominance—its own impress on the totality of social processes. The new society was to take shape through the obliteration of barriers dividing the various groups, through the emergence of new patterns and ties common to all.

It was not only the numerical proportions of the various groups which came into contact after 1945, however, but also the circumstances under which that first contact took place, that had a considerable influence on the ways of development of the new society. Those circumstances gave rise to a number of problems particularly complex as they concerned extremely differing groups—the original inhabitants and the repatriates.

The native population, mostly rural, speaking an archaic Polish dialect, has retained for centuries the awareness of their ethnic origin, the sense of ties with the Polish culture and of separateness from Germany. The degree of national consciousness among that population varied but it produced in each generation outstanding leaders who struggled against the Germanizing pressure, for Polish culture and for the political reunification with all the Polish territories. On the other hand, the coexistence of many years with the Germans within one State brought about, apart from antagonisms and struggles, the yielding to alien accretions, especially in the field of material culture. Centuries of severance from Polish statehood, the peculiar situation of an ethnic borderland, the cultivation of regional spirit and culture—all this had effects on the shaping of the autochthons' characteristic attitudes and mentality.

The vision of Poland—the Mother, built up for years by their leaders, could not be verified in the last stage of the cruel war, with general chaos accompanying it and with the wrongs done to the native population for the most part identified with the Germans.

The Polish State, the new political and economic system, and thousands of Poles—re-settlers and repatriates—came to the Recovered Territories in the period of postwar difficulties that could

not be quickly overcome. Nor was the Polish administration, in the initial stage of its organization, able to recompense the autochthons for the wrongs done to them during front-line operations, or do away in good time with the looting that was rampant. These first experiences shaped the image of Poland among the autochthons, gave rise to a sense of wrong, contributed to the native population locking themselves up to a certain extent within their own group.

The repatriates were also in a state of shock brought about by the Nazi occupation, the terror of underground armed groups, the ruin of property. As a result of the nightmarish experiences of the occupation period, especially those of the Poles from Volhynia and from South-Eastern Poland, greatly strengthened was the group solidarity and the conviction—widespread already before the war—that the State is a necessary institution safeguarding the existence of the individual and of the collectivity. Hence, the peculiarly conceived national patriotism prevailed over local and regional patriotism and became one of the most important motives inducing the Poles to repatriate.

The parting with one's homeland, own home and farm, was not easy, though. The immediate reason for departure, especially from the territories of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, was often the fear of not yet fully suppressed activities of the armed groups. It was hard to part with the landscape dear to one's heart, with the close or more distant relatives who did not decide to leave or were unable to do so (relatives of the husband or of the wife in the case of nationally mixed marriages).<sup>5</sup>

A considerable part of the repatriated population were at first unwilling to put up with the new system. They did not have confidence in the title deeds issued to them.

The unfulfilled expectations, the strangeness of the new conditions and, frequently, a complete helplessness in the face of them, gave rise to apathy and, with regard to outsiders, aggressiveness. Many families lived from hand to mouth, they were sow-

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<sup>5</sup> Out of the 1530 families surveyed, 23.7% of the families left behind closer relatives, 37.8% left behind more distant relatives.

ing barely enough "to live on," did not care for the farmyard or even for their own external appearance, did not try to equal those doing better. The repatriates were selling for a song the machines, the blessing of which they did not even guess yet; sometimes, they did not even take the scythe in the hand for two or three years, relying on the sickle alone. They furnished the interiors of their homes after the pattern familiar to them; they changed the surroundings according to their own taste and manner of living. Suffering from inferiority complex a considerable part of the population were shunning public life and contacts with strangers in general; they were inclined to rely only on themselves and to lock themselves up within their own milieu.

For the repatriates and, to a certain extent, for the re-settlers as well, the vivid memory of Nazi crimes was a sufficient reason for assuming a distrustful and hostile attitude towards everything that reminded of the oppressors. The local population, with their dialect, with the many German words, bound with Germany by their living conditions, by the compulsory military service and by the way of their everyday life, were often identified with the Germans. The repatriates derided the nattiness of the local people which they found exaggerated, and their thriftiness which they qualified as stinginess. They considered the autochthons egoistic, caring only for material profit, doing everything for remuneration and unable to offer anything disinterestedly, the friendly.

The native population, for their part, looked down on the repatriates. They treated with disapproval and sometimes with scorn, the material culture of the newcomers, their resourcelessness and their way of life. It became common among the local people to treat the repatriate as unthrifty, frittering money away, not thinking of the future, over-fond of merry-making, liquor and women. According to the opinion of the local people, the women repatriates, unlike the autochthonous women, were not resourceful housewives whereas they had a way with men, with the help of lipstick and flirtation. It was in understanding each other and in coming closer together that the two groups of population had the greatest difficulties.

The re-settlers from Poland's other provinces, industrious and enterprising, sought closer contact with the local population and

the repatriates. The latter, however, shifted their resentments and their prejudice onto the re-settlers wherever there was no local population.

These experiences, the sense of provisionality and the apathy accounted for the fact that the repatriates, especially those coming from the Ukrainian SSR, preferred to settle in groups of countrymen. To the question : *When leaving for the Recovered Territories, did you wish to settle close to your former friends and relatives ?*, an answer in the affirmative was given by 41.4<sup>0</sup>% of the re-settlers, and 47<sup>0</sup>% and 59<sup>0</sup>% of the repatriates from the Byelorussian and the Ukrainian SSR, respectively. The course of the settlement process corresponded to these aspirations. Retaining the former group structures after settling in the Recovered Territories were many more repatriates than re-settlers.

Unlike the re-settlers, repatriates did not attach excessive importance to the choice of the farm. It happened more than twice as often as was the case with re-settlers, that repatriates proceeded to the village indicated to them by the authorities, taking no heed of the value of the farm they were taking over.

As time went on, however, they became inclined to interpret wrongly even the results of their own passiveness. Especially the former soldiers, citing their own unquestionable merits in the war and the loss of property, were advancing sharp grudges against those re-settlers who had occupied the better farms. They felt almost robbed and cheated by them.

The sense of wrong among the repatriates was intensified even more by the fact that they were outnumbered in the local authorities and in the institutions engaged in the distribution of aid, granting reductions in charges, etc. Instead of vindicating their rights, the repatriates often confined themselves to lamentations. In many cases, they did not avail themselves of the possibility of strengthening their representation and continued to refrain from active participation in public life. The supremacy of the re-settlers seems to have persisted, without major changes, until 1948. E.g. in the rural commune People's Councils, the re-settlers' representation was more than twice bigger, both in 1946 and in 1948.

Generally speaking, we can cite at least five features distinguishing the repatriates from the re-settlers :

(1) In spite of their somewhat more advantageous start, in the first years the repatriated families were, on the whole, poorer—chiefly because their psychological, civilizational and technological adjustment to the new conditions was taking place at a slower rate.

(2) In the feeling of the repatriates, the cause of their worse situation was often identified with the re-settlers' conduct which they judged negatively (the grabbing of the best farms, taking advantage of the influence in the local authorities for group or individual profit, etc.).

(3) The repatriates' families were less stratified, both in the economic sense (the size and equipment of farms) and as regards social characteristics which was most manifest in the low indices of hire of labour.

(4) Group solidarity and the disposition to lend each other disinterested help were more developed among the repatriates.

(5) Many of the repatriated families were nationally mixed; in some regions of the Recovered Territories they spoke rather widely Ukrainian or Byelorussian, and they distinguished themselves by their way of life, customs and clothes.

However, integration trends were also present at that time already. It was significant that, in spite of all the bias, open antagonisms were not noted. It did not come to such open conflicts because working with ever greater intensity were also the basic ties: ethnical, religious, social and vocational, economic.

All the groups were Polish and they took pride in their nationality which they had documented in the past by their struggle against the partitioning Powers for the Polish culture and for a unified independent Poland.

All the inhabitants of the Recovered Territories had their common holidays, cults, similar customs and traditions. Where the local population was separated from the newcomers by the difference of religion (Masuria), the processes of integration of the rural community made slower progress.

A very beneficial influence on bringing the various groups closer together was exerted by the considerable similarity of the social and occupational structure, increased even more by general postwar transformations. No single group was so different as to

attain a privileged situation. It is true that certain differences existed—e.g. among the repatriates there was a higher percentage of the intelligentsia, and among the autochthons there were more artisans—yet the bulk of the new community was composed of peasants and the intelligentsia. Only the participation in the local authorities was not equal: the immigratory population had a stronger representation.

Finally, of major importance was the fact that the immigratory population was gradually adjusting themselves to the new conditions: the climate, the soil, the farms and their equipment. That population was learning to use the machines, the engines, the farming appliances, they were getting accustomed to the use of fertilizers and to the cultivation of crops that were new to them. In the process, the newcomers were adapting themselves to those new neighbours who had the highest skill in agricultural technique; those were for the most part autochthons or re-settlers from the Poznań region. Even the repatriates were obtaining ever better results in farming; they reduced the distance in incomes that was separating them. The higher incomes became the basis for ever higher living standards—better clothes, a better diet, sending children to secondary school, etc.—and for getting rid gradually of the “poor relative” complexes.

As time went on, all these ties and similarities which had been there from the beginning, were strengthened and developed naturally. Common living, common work and leisure, common organizations and institutions made necessary the contacts of people from various groups and created in the countryside—rather slowly and gradually, it is true—new neighbourly, occupational, comradesly, social and family ties.

The barriers separating people from various groups were gradually dwindling. Accounts and opinions in this respect are quite unanimous; they find a convincing complement in the statistics of marriages contracted in the Recovered Territories (see Table 3).<sup>6</sup>

In the first years, up to 1948, the overwhelming majority of marriages were contracted within the various groups, with the

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<sup>6</sup> The data for both periods (1945—1948 and 1949—1967) relate to marriages contracted in the same villages, and are therefore comparable.



Table 3. Marriages Contracted in the Recovered Territories by the Region of Origin of the Husband and Wife

<i>Region of origin of the</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Repatriates in %</i>		<i>Re-settlers in %</i>	
		<i>from the Lithuanian and Byelorussian SSR</i>	<i>from the Ukrainian SSR</i>	<i>from the Poznań, Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk Voivodships</i>	<i>from Poland's other Voivodships</i>
<i>wife</i>					
<i>husband</i>					
<i>A. Marriages contracted in the years 1945-1948</i>					
<i>Total</i>	534	15.6	30.9	18.5	35.0
<i>Repatriates from the LSSR and BSSR</i>	72	72.2	8.4	6.9	12.5
<i>Repatriates from the Ukr. SSR</i>	206	6.3	64.1	2.9	26.7
<i>Re-settlers from the Poznań, Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk Voivodships</i>	81	8.6	6.2	74.1	11.1
<i>Re-settlers from Poland's other Voivodships</i>	175	6.3	12.6	16.0	65.1
<i>B. Marriages contracted in the years 1949-1967</i>					
<i>Total</i>	2091	7.2	26.7	16.5	49.6
<i>Repatriates from the LSSR and BSSR</i>	255	18.4	11.0	21.2	49.4
<i>Repatriates from the Ukr. SSR</i>	745	3.2	44.3	9.4	43.1
<i>Re-settlers from the Poznań, Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk Voivodship</i>	321	6.8	11.2	36.8	45.2
<i>Re-settlers from Poland's other Voivodships</i>	770	7.4	21.3	13.3	58.0

re-settlers from Poland's western voivodships and the repatriates from the Lithuanian and the Byelorussian SSR being the two groups isolating themselves the most. In the subsequent period, the situation changed radically. Inter-group marriages now predominated. This was not due, above all, to the fact that young people came to know each other better—although, unlike with

regard to the situation in Poland's old territories, this element must not be left out of account. The relaxation of the initial barriers resulted, above all, from the dying-out of the mutual animosities and bias. A comparison of mixed marriages in the two periods under discussion provides a telling evidence thereof. The initial isolation between the two groups of repatriates was distinctly and decidedly less marked than between the various groups of re-settlers or between the repatriates and the re-settlers. Among the spouses of repatriates from the Lithuanian and Byelorussian SSR, originating from other groups, the share of persons coming from the Ukrainian SSR dropped in the second period by as much as 65.2<sup>0</sup>/<sub>0</sub> and the share of re-settlers increased by more than 54<sup>0</sup>/<sub>0</sub>. Similarly, among the spouses of re-settlers from the region of Poznań, the share of persons coming from the other regions of Poland's old territory also decreased, though insignificantly (by 6.5<sup>0</sup>/<sub>0</sub>). On the other hand, the number of re-settlers among the spouses of repatriates increased very considerably (by 118.4<sup>0</sup>/<sub>0</sub>).

The reasons for the greatest isolation of the re-settlers from the region of Poznań and of the repatriates from the LSSR and the BSSR must have been manifold. It was a characteristic phenomenon that the repatriates from the BSSR were boycotted with particular fierceness by re-settlers from Central Poland. The fact that the people from Poznań formed an exclusive circle within their own group, on the other hand, can rather be explained—it may be assumed—by their own free will and decision, by their tendency to “look down” on all the other groups. It is significant that this applied the least to people from the LSSR and the BSSR (the men from Poznań turned most readily to girls from that group) while it was the most marked in relation to people from the SSR.

In the first period, the stiffest barriers separated re-settlers from the region of Poznań from repatriates from the Ukrainian SSR, and re-settlers from Central Poland from repatriates from the Lithuanian and Byelorussian SSR. This is comprehensible in so far as in certain parts of the Recovered Territories those groups were the most numerous and the most competitive. In the regions of Zielona Góra and Wrocław, there came to sharp collisions of interests between the people from Poznań and the repatriates

from the Ukrainian SSR ; in the region of Szczecin and especially in the region of Olsztyn, an acute competition existed between the two most numerous groups there : the re-settlers from Central Poland and the repatriates from the BSSR.

The re-settlers, aspiring to priority, were inclined to ally themselves with the less numerous and weaker group of repatriates against the stronger one : thus the people from the region of Poznań would join forces with the repatriates from the BSSR, not numerous in the south-eastern region, and the re-settlers from Central Poland—with the people from the Ukr. SSR who formed in the north-western region a dispersed group, weaker than the repatriates from the LSSR and the BSSR. Acting on the same principle, the repatriates from the BSSR associated more readily with people from Poznań in the north-western region, and the repatriates from the Ukr. SSR—with the re-settlers from Central Poland in the south-western region. The law of cross-connections between the weakest groups must have surely functioned also in relation to people from the Poznań region and the repatriates from the Ukr. SSR in the north-western region, as well as in relation to re-settlers and the repatriates from the BSSR in the south-western region. This tendency was weaker though. It did not level the barriers originating from the main conflict which is the object of our interest here.

*(Translated by Jan Aleksandrowicz)*