WHAT DOES THE STATE SEEK TO ESTABLISH: POLISH POPULATION OR SOCIALIST SOCIETY?

Systemic change by means of population politics: comparing East Prussia and Lower Silesia

Claudia Kraft

This contribution examines the connection between forced migration and political system transformation in Poland after World War II, a state which had been moved to the west in its entirety and which had to contend with multiple migration processes. Using the southern part of East Prussia and Lower Silesia, two recently acquired territories, as example, the author demonstrates how communist and nationalist lines of argumentation and actions taken along these lines mutually influenced each other, and that measures aimed at influencing the social and/or national makeup of the population ranked highly on the agenda of the post-war political elites. These actions must not be viewed separately, they exerted an influence on each other that
cannot be disregarded. Arguments favoring homogenization of the population along either national or social lines did not necessarily exclude each other. In many situations, they could be fused together when the aim was to consolidate political power or to establish legitimacy with the population.

NEW SOCIETY ON NEW TERRITORY: DISINTEGRATIVE AND INTEGRATIVE FACTORS IN THE SZCZECIN DISTRICT, 1945-1956

Katrin Steffen

After the Szczecin region, later an administrative district of its own, had become part of Poland as one of many changes to the territory of the Polish state in the wake of World War II, the new rulers undertook many efforts to gainfully employ the newly added territory in order that Poland as a whole would benefit politically, ideologically, economically, and socially. By means of a quick influx of Polish colonists concurrently with the ethnic German population being made to leave, the authorities sought to form a new, homogeneous society where Polish nationality would be combined with the communist system. However, there were a number of detrimental factors, among which were the scarcity of elementary goods which was noticeable throughout the country, as well as a nationalities policy which would not take into serious consideration the possibility of persons having more than one ethnic affiliation and which sought to accelerate homogenization by means of oppression, stigmatization, and forced migration. Another burden for the region was the presence of the Red Army. Thus, although in contrast to wartime conditions a degree of stability was doubtless reached, the population was subject to disintegrative factors as well. These led to people leaving the region, to local conflicts, and to a sense of the new accommodation not being permanent. With some of the new arrivals, this suspicion would not disappear even after decades had passed.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES OF THE POPULATION IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF HUNGARY, 1945-1950

Agnes Táth

After World War II, the Communist party in Hungary established itself as the sole ruler. However, Sovietization did not occur as a one-time, radical turnaround, but gradually as a series of changes, fundamental though each of them might have been. One element of this process was the reform of land ownership, which brought about an influx as well as an efflux of people, voluntarily as well as forcibly. These migration processes were linked in every aspect and on every level – locally, regionally, and nationwide – to the aspiration of taking over political power and to endeavours to restructure a society with many peasant traits. The present study is not limited to